

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Impact of Modernization on Family Institution

In Asia, family institution has been the foundation and basic social unit of a society. The family system provides social, economic, and emotional support to individual as well as to family itself. Self-reliance and personal responsibility are nurtured within family, but with the increased urbanization and industrialization of Asian countries including Malaysia, the family unit has started to break down. What will happen to the social structure if family is diluted? It is family that shapes character where a child learns values and virtues, as well as norms of his own cultural context. Under the influence of modernization and fast changing environment, today family is under siege! As families prosper, lifestyles have changed. Frequently both parents work outside the home, and grandparents and close relatives are staying separately from the family. The traditional role of the family in the preservation and transmission of values has been seriously jeopardized (Ashraf, 1996).

Studies have shown that modernization has affected every known society, as highlighted by Rosenberg et al. (1987) which includes the “weakening extended kinship system, dissolving lineage patterns, movement towards an independent and mobile conjugal system, emphasis on individual success based on performance rather than family ties, and the allocation of resources to personal ends” (Amer al-Roubaie, 2004, p.7-8). In fact the new economy driven by modernization does not only

encourage migration from rural areas to urban centers but also make people insecure due to the loss of family ties (Amer al-Roubaie, 2004). Under the dominance of globalization, Malaysia as a developing country is also affected. Despite the material success resulted from Malaysia's rapid economic and physical development, social ills that are common to the western developed countries have risen steeply, especially among the younger Malaysians (Mahathir Mohamed, 2004).

The rise of social problems in Malaysia has been an issue of growing concern for over a decade. The 2003 report by the National Population and Family Development Board declared that 27 percent of teenagers in this country committed fornication (*Berita Harian*, April 15th, 2004) and teenage boys turn to prostitutes for first sexual experience, besides doing it with their girlfriends (*Berita Harian*, Feb. 5th, 2004). Another shocking news reported by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Hospital (HUKM) when the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit admitted that the youngest mother ever deliver a child at its ward, was an 11 year old mother whose spouse was only 13 years old (*Berita Harian*, April 15th, 2004). In fact, a 2002 Durex Survey on Malaysian's sexual behavior highlighted that young Malaysians ranging from the age of 18 to 24 years old frequently engaged in pre-marital sex that lead to unwanted pregnancies. According to the survey, 42% teenagers admitted to be sexually active for the past 12 months and most were unsafe sex (Haryati Abdul Karim, 2004).

Besides, the increasing numbers of rape and incest cases are also indicators of social epidemic in this country. Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs statistics indicated that in the past nine years the number of victims below 16 years of age has been increasing more than double, to almost three hundred in the year 2002 (*The Star*, August 5th, 2003 in Ahmad A. Nasr, 2004). According to the Royal Malaysian Police records, between the years 1997 to 2002 there were about 1438 reported incestuous rape cases. There are about two hundred new cases reported annually (*Berita Harian*, November 4th, 2002 in Ahmad A. Nasr, 2004). Ironically, the majority of these offences were committed by the victims' natural fathers, uncles or brothers and half of the reported police cases since the last five years involve the Malay- Muslims. Similarly, in the case of HIV/ AIDS among women in Malaysia, 54.8% cases are due to heterosexual transmission, and the majorities are Malays, who are originally Muslims. In the case of drug abuse, there were around 22 008 addicts in Malaysia consisting of 11,477 (52.15%) new addicts and 10,531 repeated addicts. They are 99% male, in the age group 20-24 years and mostly are Malays, followed by Chinese, Indians and foreigners (Malaysian Medical Association, 2002 in Ahmad A. Nasr, 2004). Naturally the next question that draws our attention is - why is it that the Malays (Muslims) are the one who are mostly affected?

An interesting analysis presented by Amer al-Roubaie (2004) suggested that the rapid socio-economic transformation of the Malay ethnic from rural to urban areas has created a different set of conditions including the worldviews and lifestyles,

which the Malays are not yet ready to deal with. The transformation of worldviews and lifestyles has not only exposed the nation to the risk of global vulnerability, but also allows cultural products, ideas, materialistic goods, media exposure and tourism to penetrate deep into the local society. The new culture is rather alien to the Malay-Muslims culture due to its Western roots and global orientation. The economic developments tend to cause a loss of cultural identity due to the erosion of the local environment and the introduction of a new set of values and institutions. In a nutshell, traditional culture which is founded upon religious values is sacrificed in favor of the economic gains and rapid industrialization (Amer al-Roubaie, 2004). In this regard, it is not surprising that Malaysia, as a developing nation is, in fact following the pattern of the developed western countries.

Demaneing Family Values: Crisis of Character

The basic assumption underlying this alarming phenomenon is that our family institution is declining and losing its sacred role, in spite of the material achievement. Coleman (1985 in Ryan & Lickona, 1992) believes that the downward trends in youth character lie primarily outside the school – in the changes that have taken place in the family institution. Agresto (1982 in Ryan & Lickona, 1992, p. 5) further emphasizes on the erosion of family life and the family’s function as moral educator and traces that erosion to values:

The same principles (that led to the decline of neighbourhood) – individualism, love of mobility and change, self interest, self-fulfillment and personal privacy – have weakened many of the bonds of the central

moral teacher: the family... An emphasis on the principles of individualism and private right hardly makes family ties 'for better and for worse' a solid feature of our society.

The scary overwhelming social epidemic has been critically examined by scholars. According to Lickona (1993) American society is in deep trouble. The disheartening signs are everywhere - breakdown of the family, deterioration of civility in everyday life, rampant greed at a time when one in five children is poor, an omnipresent sexual culture in television and movie screens, beckoning the young towards sexual activity at earlier ages, enormous betrayal of children through sexual abuse; etc. On top of that, the 1992 report of the National Research Council pointed that the United States is the most violent of all industrialized nations. Besides, Brooks and Goble (1997 in Ryan & Lickona, 1992) indicate that crime and other costly forms of irresponsible behavior are increasing with alarming rapidity. American society is in fact, staggering under the burden of violence, street crime, street gangs, truancy, teenage pregnancy, business fraud, political corruption, deterioration of family life, lack of respect for others, and lack of work ethics.

“Parenting for Character”: A Call for Reform

The issue for today's parents is how to raise decent kids in a complex and morally ambiguous world where traditional tether to religious places, school, and neighborhood are badly frayed. There is a sense of desperation in current writings about moral parenting in the sense that, improper child rearing has become a “public health problem” requiring urgent attention (Herbert, 1996). Under the predominant

twentieth-century ideologies including postmodernism, subjectivism, moral relativism, materialism etc., the foundation of ethics and morality has been seriously challenged. In fact, Americans are facing a crisis of character all across the country that is threatening to destroy the goodness, which, according to de Tocqueville is the foundation of America's greatness (McDonnell, 1998). Critics on the right view moral relativity and indulgent parenting as the cause of today's moral confusion and call for the rediscovery of firmness, regimentation, deference and piety to counter our culture's decline (Herbert, 1996).

In reality, changes in the family that occur due to urbanization and modernization process threaten to undermine its crucial role in moral education of the young. Data on the increasing youth crime, juvenile delinquencies, suicides, etc. suggest the impact of demeaning family role and values. However, despite all the threatening influences, adults can still have a formative influence in shaping the character of the young. A Columbia University research project conducted by Collin (1984 in Ryan & Lickona, 1992) over an eight-year period on 300 adolescents of all social class levels in urban, suburban, and rural settings suggested that teenagers are more like their parents in their attitudes and values than they are like their peers. The finding can be either good or bad news, depending on whether the values parents hold are ones worth emulating (Ryan & Lickona, 1992).

The first years are vital in several aspects of the child's development. Habits that lasts a lifetime begin during the pre-school or school age years. Character

development, the formation of many personality traits as well as the fundamentals of intelligence, trace their decisive beginnings to the first eight or ten years in life. Time dedicated to children both inside and outside home environment leaves permanent marks on their lives (Posse & Melgosa, 2001). In fact, extensive research over many years shows that authoritative parents who are more accepting and warm, firmer about rules and discipline and more supportive of their child's individuality produce healthier kids. Herbert (1996, p.113) concluded that:

No research has ever suggested that children fare better when their parents are aloof than when they are accepting, when their parents are lenient rather than firm, or when their parents are psychologically controlling, rather than supportive of their psychological autonomy.

The family is a model and a source of explicit standards of behavior. We cannot ignore the general conclusion: children's characters are the direct result – almost a reproduction – of the way in which their parents treat them. According to Posse & Melgosa (2001), children will treat others the same way their parents treat them (Posse & Melgosa, 2001). According to Einsberg and Fabes (1998 in Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2004) culture in which people live in extended family groups and share works seem to foster prosocial values more than cultures that stress individual achievement. Parents of prosocial children are prosocial themselves. Parents encourage prosocial behavior when they use inductive disciplinary methods instead of power-assertive techniques of discipline (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2004). Discipline is an important tool in molding children's character, teaching them to exercise self-control and engage in moral values and behavior. It is a powerful tool for

socialization with the goal of developing self-discipline. Inductive disciplinary method refers to the disciplinary techniques designed to induce desirable behavior by appealing to a child's sense of reason. On the other hand, power assertion is the disciplinary strategy designed to discourage undesirable behavior through physical or verbal enforcement of parental control (Papalia et al., 2004).

In 1979, Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) presented his 'ecological systems theory' which demonstrated the environmental influences on a child. The innermost environment or the closest to the child contains the family, nursery, playgroup, and school. As far as 'character' is concerned, there are certain genetic predispositions that cause children to tend towards a particular type of character, however, the character is also formed and nourished by environmental influences. There is greater absorption capacity in reference to character during the childhood period. A famous study conducted in 1960's by Robert Peck of Texas University and Robert Havinghurst of the University of Chicago - a study involving parents, teachers, and community members. The study concluded that there were various sources for character development including other children, local environment, school and church, but the most significant of all was the family (Posse & Melgosa, 2001). This findings is in fact consistent with Ibn Khaldun's theory of social influence (Ibn Khaldun, 1981), emphasizing on the family as the first social factor that influence one's character development.

Issue of ‘Character’: A Theoretical Overview

However, due to the erosion of family values and the prevailing dominance of the twentieth-century ideologies like postmodernism, subjectivism, moral relativism, etc., the foundation of ‘character’ has been seriously challenged. It results in the ‘crises of character.’ A leveling of personal and social values reflected in the language of relativist morality. For instance, in 1990s survey conducted by Ulanowsky (1998 in Ryan & Bohlin, 1999), more than 50% parents in United Kingdom were opposed to teaching their children specific moral values, preferring them to settle the issues on their own. In Covey’s (1989 in Ryan & Bohlin, 1999) research of success literature published in the last 200 years, he noticed that after World War 1, the literature on personal development shifted from an emphasis on character ethics to an emphasis on personality ethics. Success became defined more by the development of one’s personality in terms of public image, positive attitude, and influencing techniques, than internal character and virtue. Since 1960s, this issue has been seriously discussed when psychologists like Mowrer (1960 in Griffith & Duesterhaus, 2000, p.48) highlighted his concern:

in becoming amoral, ethically neutral and free, we have cut the very roots of our being, lost our deepest sense of selfhood and identity, and with neurotics, themselves, we find ourselves asking, “Who am I, what is my deepest destiny, what does living (existence) mean?”

Maslow (1959 in Griffith & Duesterhaus, 2000, p.49) himself echoed the same concern when he said: “the ultimate disease of our time is valuelessness”.

In fact, the concept of ‘character’ as the essence of virtue has been undermined and neglected in modern literature of moral philosophy (Quinton, 1984). The concept of ‘moral character’ is also ‘missing’ from the existing studies of psychology and human development and had all but vanished from the psychological literature by the middle of 20th century. The socio-psychological explanations of behavior is more preferable than the individual stable moral traits (Emler, 2005). In the field of education, moral character has not been taught in public schools in US since it is considered as private matters (Williams, 2000).

Historically, the subject of ‘character’ - its formation and development has been discussed by great scholars of the past, since Plato and Aristotle. In fact, the word *character* comes from the Greek word *charassein*, which means “to engrave” – based on this word, it finally evolved the meaning of character as a distinctive mark or sign (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). According to Pierce (1924 in Craighead, 2004), personality and character are equivalent, both reflect the sum of attributes of the person and the agglomeration of all knowledge, innate and acquired, teleological and non-teleological, which force action, and thus taken with environment determines the conduct of behavior. According to Roback (1927 in Craighead, 2004), the term ‘character’ is defined as the disposition to inhibit impulse and narrow self-seeking in light of some value principle. Gordon Allport (1937 in Posse & Melgosa, 2001, p.84) the twentieth humanist psychologist defines character as “the personality evaluated from the ethical point of view.”

However, Quinton's (1984) definition is more accurate for our present discussion. He defines character as the essence of virtue, and the virtuous are the persons of reason who pursue their principled aims without letting passion interfere. He further differentiates 'character' from 'personality' in the sense that character is the reality of which personality is the appearance. Character is essential or fundamental but personality is a matter of surface (Quinton, 1984). Quinton's definition is almost similar to the concept of *khuluq* (character) which has been profoundly and extensively deliberated by Muslim scholars. 'Character' is defined as *khuluq* (pl. *akhlāq*) which means innate peculiarity, natural disposition, character, temper, nature (Wehr, 1974). Al-Ghazali defined character (*khuluq*) as a "firmly established condition or quality of the soul, which refers to the inward form (*al-sūrah al-bātinah*), whereas the physical creation (*khalq*) refers to the outward form (*al-sūrah al-zāhirah*) of a human being" (n.d., vol.3, p.53). It is the inner quality of the soul or character that leads into physical action without any need for deliberation or forethought. If the soul is disposed to produce good deeds, it is named good character trait (*husn al-khuluq*); and if it produces bad deeds, it is called bad character trait (*sū' al-khuluq*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.). Similarly, Ibn Miskawayh (1924) defined character (*khuluq*) as a state of the soul, which performs its action without thought or deliberation. In relation to education, Muslim scholars including al-Mawardi, Ibn Sina, al-Tusi, al-Dawwani, Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Khaldun unanimously agree that character formation should be the focus of childhood education (Yassien

Essid, 1995). Most of them believe that character is susceptible to change through discipline.

Conceptual Frameworks of Parent Education Programs

Traditionally, parents have always been preoccupied with instilling moral values in their children. Nevertheless, in today's fast-paced world, where reliable role models are few and acts of violence by children are increasingly common, the quest to raise a moral child has taken on new urgency (Springen, 2000). Early intervention parent education becomes more critical with the increasing demand of labor force among women, single-parents phenomenon, detachment from extended families etc.

Since 1970s, researchers have found evidence that parenting-focused interventions provide the strongest evidence available on the efficacy of parenting behavior. A number of studies have drawn the attention between parental supervision and delinquency. Utting et al. (1993 in Walker, 1999) suggested that good parenting protects against the acquisition of criminal record. In interventions to improve behavioral-training skill of parents of noncompliant children, Forehand et al. (1977, 1980 in Collins et al., 2004) demonstrated both improvements in parental behavior and behavioral changes in the children, as well as increased parental perceptions of improved child behavior and decreased parental depression.

According to Roberts (1994) and Einzig (1999), main underpinning models to parent education intervention programs are based on the following theoretical frameworks:

- i. Behavioural: emphasizes skills learning, often with behavior modification or management of the child as stimulus and goal (Webster-Stratton & Taylor, 1998 in Einzig, 1999). For instance, parent education programs based on the cause-and-effect behavioral model of parenting developed by Patterson (1975 in Einzig, 1999) and Roberts (1994).
- ii. Cognitive : emphasizes the role and ability of the mind to reconceptualize our beliefs and approaches to problems (Janis-Norton, 1997; Puckering et al., 1994 in Einzig, 1999).
- iii. Adlerian: based on the work of Josef Adler who developed concepts of power and our need for control. Emphasizes respect for the child and his needs (Smith, 1996 in Einzig, 1999). For instance, Adlerian Parent Education (1927) – parent education programs based on democratic model developed by Dreikurs (1964 in Roberts, 1994).
- iv. Psychodynamic: based on the work of Freud, Jung, Klein, Winnicott and other psychoanalysts who place a primacy on the role of past experiences to shape our psyche and current behavioral patterns (Einzig, 1999).
- v. Humanistic: emphasizes on a collaborative, partnership approach, the building of supportive alliances and networks and the sharing of experiences (Einzig, 1999). For instance, Parent Effectiveness Training – a humanistic model of parent education program developed by Gordon (1975 in Roberts, 1994).

- vi. Attachment Theory: emphasizes on the early attachment relationship between parent and child and the need to create a secure environment in the parent education context for trust, learning and change. It helps to foster a secure attachment in repairing the damaged parent-child relationship (Einzig, 1999).
- vii. A Systems Perspective Parent-Education: parent education model based on the concept of family dynamics developed by Roberts (1994).

However, Brems, Baldwin and Baxter (1993 in Roberts, 1994) agreed on the need for alternate parent education programs that are relevant to parents' specific concerns and backgrounds. It is further suggested that if we were to take seriously the word 'education' in this field, then it is important to be able to relate those interests to the curriculum content of parenting programs and to how participants determine desirable outcomes (Einzig, 1999).

Parent Education in Malaysia: An Ethico-Religious Model

In Malaysia, curriculum content of parent education programs are imbued with its ethico-religious and cultural values. In most parent education programs in Malaysia, religious education is regarded as one of the main factors underlying children's character development (National Population and Family Development-NPFDB, 2004; Nury Institute of Family and Child Development, 1992) (Noor Laily Abu Bakar & Mansor Sukaimi, 1992). Parent education programs in Malaysia can be classified into three major categories:

- i. Parent education programs organized by the government agencies, for instance, the Family Development Programs including parenting workshops and training, established by National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB).
- ii. Parent education programs organized by private agencies, for instance, NURY Programme, of Nury Institute of Family and Child Development.
- iii. Parent education as a structured programs organized by the college and university authorities. For instance, the co-curricular Parenting series and workshops organized by the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) for future parents.

The above programs generally acknowledge the ethico-religious foundation as the basis for character formation and development. However, a specific curriculum content for children's character development in these parent education programs is still lacking. In this research therefore, the researcher will propose a curriculum content for children's character development as one of the components for parent education programs in Malaysia. It is the researcher's view that the Malay-Muslims need a specific treatment based on their religious, cultural and socio-economic background.

Accordingly, the researcher proposes that parent education for the Malay-Muslims should be based on the concept and structure of muslim family. It should be focusing on parents as the moral educator who dominantly influence the shaping process. In Islam, parents are the 'trustees of God' – leaders of the family that

occupy a central nucleus position in a structure of Muslims society, as ‘family’ defined by Hammudah ‘Abd al-‘Ati (1977, p. 19):

a special kind of structure whose principles are related to one another through blood ties and/or marital relationships, and whose relatedness is of such a nature to entail “mutual expectations” that are prescribed by religion, reinforced by law, and internalized by the individual .

For this purpose, we would propose a curriculum content for children’s character development based on renowned scholarly works of Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali. The two representative scholars are indisputably and prominently acknowledged for their authority in the field of Muslim Ethics.

Curriculum Content of Children’s Character Development: Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali’s Theoretical Frameworks

Previous Muslim scholars unanimously agreed on the importance of character formation and development during childhood, and dealt with it from various aspects: ethical-pedagogical, theological-juridical as well as from the medical point of view. Philosophers like Ibn Sina (d. 1037) followed by al-Tusi (d. 1274) and al-Dawwani (d. 1503) discussed the subject under the discipline of household management. Moral philosophers and sufis like Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030) and al-Ghazali (d. 1111) discussed childhood in their explication of ethics and morality, while the jurists like al-Sarakhsi (d. 899), Qadhi Khan (d. 1196), Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 1567) and Ibn Qayyim (d. 1350) highlighted their juristic point of view through the legal opinions concerning the rights of children, aspects of nursing and childhood rites. On the other

hand, physicians like al-Zahrawi (d.1013), al-Qayrawani (d. 979/980) and Ibn Sa'ad (d. 980) commented on this subject from the pediatrics point of view (Gil'adi, 1992). Later in the 14th century, Ibn Khaldun (d.1332) continued the discussion from the sociological and educational viewpoints.

Despite the scholars' distinct approaches and expertise, they unanimously agreed on the fact that character formation is the utmost priority during childhood. In fact, Muslim philosophers like Ibn Sina and al-Dawwani suggested that the process of character formation should begin as soon as the weaning stage (Ibn Sina, 1929; al-Tusi, 1964; Asad, 1977). In this research, the researcher purposely opts for Ibn Miskawayh and Ghazalian ethico-religious foundation of character development, since they similarly approached the subject from the educationists' point of view.

Parental Role in Character Development

Family institution, the core nucleus and foundation of a Muslim society plays a fundamental role in the process of transmission of values from one generation to the next. Marriage contract in Islam refers to mutual expectations in terms of rights and responsibilities among the family members, pertaining to lineal identity and maintenance, succession and affection, socialization of the young, security for the aged and maximization of effort to ensure family continuity and welfare which are certainly prescribed by the religion ('Abd al-'Ati, 1977).

Parental Responsibility in Education

Family institution plays a pivotal role in transmitting the religious and ethical values of Islam particularly at the early stage of a person's life. One of the rights of children, according to the Prophet (pbuh) is the right for a proper education:

It is the duty of a father to inculcate proper education (*yuhsina adabahu*) in his son (al-Zabidi, n.d., 6:317)

With regards to the elementary level of education, there are at least three major features of *adab* (education) as mentioned by the Prophet (pbuh), which indicate a symbiotic relationship between the Islamic creed (*'aqīda*) as the foundation of education and good character (*akhlāq*) as the ultimate objective and result of the education itself: (1) Love of the Prophet (s.a.w.); (2) Love of his family members; and (3) Love of reciting the Qur'an (al-Muttaqi, 1993). These three qualities are mentioned in one of his *hadīths*:

Educate your children in possessing three qualities: love of your prophet (*hubb nabiyikum*), love of his family (*hubb ahl baytihi*) and the Qur'anic recitation (*qirā'at al-Qur'ān*)... (al-Muttaqi, 1993, vol.16, p.456)

Indeed, love of the Prophet (pbuh) is based on a true conviction that he is the perfect man, and the best model of conduct (*Sunna*) who not only received the Revelation (al-Qur'an) but was also guided by it. Al-Qur'an and *Sunna* then serve as a foundational framework for every sphere of human life, including the familial rights and responsibilities. Early socialization in a good environment, proper education, and upbringing are undoubtedly the main parental responsibilities, acknowledged in the Qur'an and *hadīths*. Proper education at an early age should begin with the

inculcation of Islamic creed as the foundation of good ethical conduct, which is portrayed in the Qur'an through the admonition of Luqman al-Hakim to his son:

Behold, Luqman said to his son admonishing him, "O my son! Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrongdoing"(Al-Qur'an: 31:13)

It is followed by the inculcation of good ethical conduct and behavior through the enjoinder of good deeds and avoidance of misdeeds:

My son! (said Luqman), If there be (but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah is subtle and aware. O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee, for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs. And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men. Nor walk in insolence through the earth: For Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster. And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass. (Al-Qur'an: 31:16-19)

In one of his *hadīths*, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

A father can confer upon his child no more valuable gift than good education (*adab hasan*) (al-Muttaqi, 1993, p.456).

In another *hadīth*, he said:

It is better that a man should secure an education (*yu'addib*) for his child than that he bestow a *sā'* in charity (Wensick & Mensing, 1936, p.36)

The family is thus, the foundation on which an individual develops the religious values and certain standards of ethical conduct in the process of forming an ideal personality, which represents the identity of the society as a whole.

Character Formation: Focus of Childhood Education

The prophetic instruction pertaining to child education stems from its underlying conception of children as a trust (*al-amāna*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.) and parents as the trustees of God. Every child is naturally born in the state of *fitra* (al-Ghazali, n.d.) an innate disposition and potentiality to recognize and acknowledge the true Lordship of God, and in turn to bear the responsibility or trust (*al-amāna*) of acknowledgment, which is ingrained in every heart of the descendants of Adam (a.s.).(al-Zabidi, n.d.). *Al-amāna*, in this sense, has been interpreted by al-Ghazali, as the gnosis and the unity of God (al-Zabidi, n.d.). The actualization of this inner potentiality requires a comprehensive educational process (*ta'dīb*) (Al-Attas, 1991) which includes the:

- a. Transmission of knowledge (*ta'līm*);
- b. Good breeding (*tarbiyya*);
- c. Self-discipline (*riyāda*);
- d. Purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*); and
- e. The refinement of character (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*).

In the framework of al-Ghazali, education (*ta'dīb*) is a process of disciplining the physical and spiritual self which involves the acquisition of knowledge and the transformation of the soul in order to possess good character traits (*husn al-khuluq*) - the condition of the soul that conforms to the Intellect and Religious Law ('*aql wa Shar'*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.) Character formation thus, becomes the focal point of

education (*ta'dīb*) particularly in the early years. It is due to the child's imitative nature and his immaturity in reasoning at this stage.

Al-Ghazali's emphasis on parental religious responsibility is primarily based on the Qur'anic verse:

O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your family from the Fire (*Al-Qur'an* 66:6)

A father may strive to protect his son from fire in this world, yet it is more crucial to protect him from the Fire in the Hereafter. For this purpose, a father should discipline the child, refine and teach him good character, keep him away from bad companions and not accustom him to luxury (al-Ghazali, 1998). Similar to Ibn Miskawayh, the focus on character formation is thus, given the utmost priority, even before the attainment of his intellectual maturity. It is apparently a preparatory stage for his soul to receive wisdom and virtue (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968), through which he would eventually know the secrets underlying this disciplinary process (al-Ghazali, 1998).

It is mentioned earlier that character (*khuluq*) refers to man's inward form (*al-sūrah al-bātina*). Spiritual health (*Sihat al-nafs*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.) or the balanced character traits (*al-i'tidāl fī al-akhlāq*) are his good inward form which is also referred to the mean (*al-wast*), since the best of all affairs is the mean and both the extremes (excess and deficiency) of character traits are blameworthy (al-Ghazali, 1998). In a man of good character, the four faculties of the soul remain balanced and mutually harmonious (al-Ghazali, n.d., p.53-54):

- i. Faculty of knowledge (*quwwa al-'ilm*);

- ii. Faculty of anger (*quwwa al-ghadab*);
- iii. Faculty of desire (*quwwa al-shahwa*); and
- iv. Faculty of justice (*quwwa al-'adl*).

Since every child is naturally born in a balanced innate disposition (*mu'tadilān saḥīḥ al-fitra*), the aim of character education at this level, is to maintain and develop the harmonious equilibrium amongst these four faculties through discipline (*riyāda*). The equilibrium or balanced character traits refer to a stable condition of the mean (*wast al-'umūr*) (al-Ghazali, 1998) which leads to justice (*al-'adl*) in character. In this regard, the mean (*al-wast*) is rendered by al-Ghazali as adherence to the Straight Path (*Sīrāt al-Mustaqīm*) (al-Ghazali, 1989; *Al-Qur'an* 11:112), that has been perfectly accomplished by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Character Development During Childhood:

Al-Ghazali identifies two developmental stages of the soul during the childhood period (al-Ghazali, 1998):

- a. Begins from birth until the age of discernment (*tamyīz*); and
- b. Begins from the age of discernment until puberty (*bulūgh*).

It is the onset of puberty that indicates the ending of childhood and the beginning of religious accountability (*taḥlīf*) (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968) in Islam. Al-Ghazali generally accepts Ibn Miskawayh's idea of the Divine natural order (*al-nizām al-tabī'iy*), (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968; Walzer, 1962) which describes the inner development of human soul:

- i. First faculty formed since birth is the faculty of desire (*quwwa al-shahwa*) particularly the appetite for food , which is common to all animals and plants;
- ii. It is followed by the faculty of anger (*quwwa al-ghadab*);
- iii. Finally the faculty of intellect or knowledge (*quwwa al-'ilm*) through which knowledge and sciences are acquired and experienced (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968).

a. Birth until the Age of Discernment (*Tamyīz*)

Every child is endowed with the faculty of desire (*al-shahwa*) since birth, indispensable for the purpose of his survival in this world (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995). The faculty of desire, particularly the appetite for food, is the first faculty that appears in a child, as he by instinct seeks for milk without any instruction or direction (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). Since it is the first and the oldest faculty existing in man, it becomes the most difficult to restrain and the least susceptible to discipline. In fact, the first trait to take control over him, according to Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali, is the greed for food.

In relation to the cognitive or the intellectual development, a nursing infant initially apprehends through the sensible spirit (*al-rūh al-hassās*) (al-Ghazali, 1998; Shamma, 1958) that functions via his five external senses (*hassa al-khams*):

- i. The first thing created in man is the sense of touch (*hassa al-lams*) (al-Ghazali, 1987; Shamma, 1958). It perceives certain classes of existence such as heat and cold, moisture and dryness, smoothness and roughness, hardness and softness.

- ii. The next faculty created is the sense of smell (*hassa al-shamm*), through which various pleasant and unpleasant odors are smelled (Shammas, 1958).
- iii. Subsequently, the sense of taste (*hassa al-dhauq*) (al-Ghazali, 1987; Abu Sway, 1996; Ashraf, 1981) is set in the nerves that are spread over the tongue to apprehend the flavors (Shammas, 1958).
- iv. Then the sense of sight (*hassa al-basar*) to perceive colours and shapes, the most extensive world of the senses.
- v. It is followed by the sense of hearing (*hassa al-sam'*) that is created to listen to the sounds and tones.

The next stage is learning through the imaginative spirit (*al-rūh al-khayālīy*) which is responsible for storing the sensible and presenting them to the intellect whenever required (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). It retains the images of the sensory objects after they have disappeared (Shammas, 1958). This faculty does not exist in the nursing infant that he would easily forget a thing upon removing it from his sight. In this case, al-Ghazali gives an example of a child that cries and insists on having an object even if it does not exist in front of him since it has been retained in his faculty of imagination (al-Ghazali, 1998). Another example is a dog that is hit with a stick; it runs away upon seeing the same stick again (al-Ghazali, 1998; Abu Sway, 1996). Thereafter, he would potentially ascend to a higher level upon the accomplishment of all the senses (Abu Sway, 1996; Al-Attas, 1990).

b. Age of Discernment (*Tamyīz*) until Puberty (*Bulūgh*)

The faculty of anger (*al-ghadab*) which subsequently followed by the faculty of discernment (*quwwa al-tamyīz*) exist when a child approaches the age of seven. (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). The faculty of anger is, indeed an indispensable need for man particularly to protect himself from any element that threatens his life and property (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). Subsequently, the faculty of discernment (*tamyīz*) that enables him to distinguish between good and bad will come into existence (al-Ghazali, 1987; Abu Sway, 1996). As far as a child's cognitive development is concerned, his logical aptitude begins to appear at this age, when he starts to discern the possibility of possible things and the impossibility of impossible things, such as two is greater than one and that one individual cannot be in two different places at one time (Abu Sway, 1996) which al-Ghazali refers to as the necessary knowledge (*al-'ulūm al-darūriyya*) (al-Ghazali, 1989). It is the time when the light of intellect (*nūr al-'aql*) is illuminated upon him, then he begins to distinguish between good and evil (al-Ghazali, n.d.). The first sign of discernment is the presence of modesty (*al-hayā'*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Ibn Miskawayh, 1968) in him, by which he starts to feel diffident and ashamed of doing certain things (al-Ghazali, n.d.). At this age, he begins to perceive and apprehend more than the world of the sensible (*'ālam al-mahsūsāt*) (al-Ghazali, 1987). In fact, it

is a gift from God, indicating the balance character trait (*i'tidāl al-akhlāq*) and sound intellect (*kamāl al-'aql*) that he will possess when he enters the age of puberty (*bulūgh*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.). His reasoning faculty begins to appear at the age of discernment, gradually develops until the age of puberty and ultimately qualifies him for the religious accountability (*al-taklīf*) (Quasem, 1978).

Influential Factors in Character Development

There are at least two major factors that influence the formation of good character as mentioned in the *hadīth* of the Prophet (pbuh):

Every child is born endowed with the sound natural disposition (*al-fitra*); it is only his parents who make of him a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian. (al-Ghazali, n.d., 3:74)

The above *hadīth* is very important in determining the two factors that influence the process of character formation: nature and nurture. It involves both influential factors identified by al-Ghazali (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Quasem, 1978) in his explanation of character formation during childhood. Firstly, good character can naturally be granted through the Divine grace (*bi jūd ilāhīy wa kamāl fitrī*); and secondly, it can be attained through acquisition (*bi'l iktisāb*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Quasem, 1978). It is mentioned in *Ihyā'* (al-Ghazali, n.d., 3:58):

This equilibrium [of character] may come about in two ways. One of these is through Divine grace, and perfect innate disposition, whereby a man is born and created with a sound intellect and good character, and is preserved from the faculties of anger and desire, which are created in him moderate and submissive to the Intellect and the Religious Law (*Sharī'a*). Thus, he becomes learned without an instructor, and disciplined without being disciplined in the manner of Prophet Isa, the son of Maryam, and Yahya, the son of Zakariyya (a.s.), and all the other prophets (a.s.). Yet it

is not to be deemed improbable that certain things should exist in a man's nature and disposition which can be obtained through acquisition (*bi'l iktisāb*): some children are created truthful, generous and courageous, while in others the opposite characteristics have been set, so that good qualities can only be acquired through habituation (*bi'l i'tiyād*) and association (*mukhālata*) with those who possess them, and also through learning (*al-ta'allum*).

In the first instance, some children are naturally born in equilibrium, with balanced character traits, by which their faculties of anger and desire are naturally and harmoniously submissive to the authority of reason and the Religious Law (*Shari'a*), particularly in the case of the prophets, who became learned and educated without any instructor (al-Ghazali, n.d.). Whilst it is possible to possess good character through Divine gift, the majority of men genetically possess it through heredity (*al-nasab*), and acquire it through habituation (*al-i'tiyād*), association (*al-mukhālata*) and learning (*al-ta'allum*) (al-Ghazali, 1989).

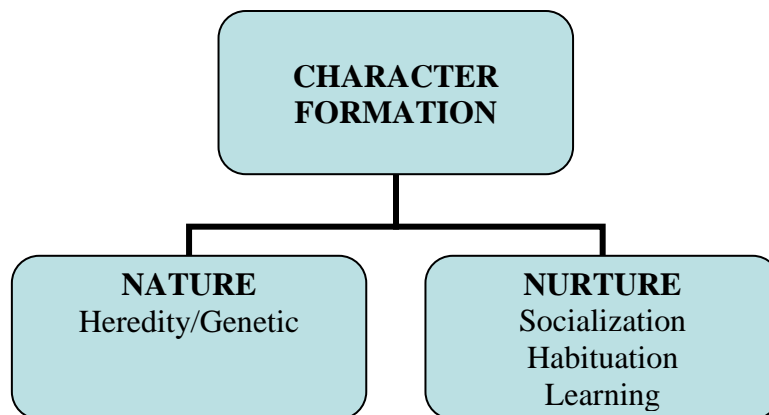


Figure 2. The Influential Factors on Character Formation

a. Heredity (*Al-Nasab*)

Hereditary or genetic factor is highlighted by al-Ghazali in his explication of the criteria for choosing the right wife in his Book of Marriage. Based on a number of prophetic *hadīths*, he believes that character or inner disposition can be inherited through genetic transmission. In one of the *hadīths*, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

Choose the place for your sperm since the hereditary disposition (*al-'irq*) inclines to its descendants (al-Ghazali, n.d., 2:41).

In another *hadīth*, he said:

“Beware of the green vestiges (*khadrā' al-diman*).” Someone asked: “Who are the green vestiges?” He said: “Beautiful women of bad origin” (al-Ghazali, 1989, pp.100-111).

Nobility of lineage is one of the important criteria for the selection of spouses in Islam. Nobility, in this case refers to her noble origin and religious family (al-Ghazali, n.d.). It does not refer to nobility in the worldly affairs, but to the purity of the soul, embellished with knowledge, devotion, and intelligence (al-Ghazali, 1989). Al-Zabidiy (1989) in his commentary of *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* further explained that hereditary disposition has an inclination to the mother's lineage and temperament. A perfectly educated mother will transmit good upbringing and education to her children. In like manner, it is also important for parents to choose a wet nurse based on her noble origin, family and character traits (al-Zabidiy, 1989) since the milk

transmits physical, mental, and moral characteristic from the nurse to the nursing (Giladi, 1999). According to al-Ghazali:

... there is no blessing (*barakah*) in milk, which originates from unlawful food; for should a child be nourished on it, it will knead his native disposition in such a way as to incline his temperament to wrongdoing (al-Ghazali, n.d., 3:72).

Nonetheless, heredity is not an absolute factor in determining one's character traits. In fact, the acquired aspect of character traits is more emphasized and explicitly discussed by al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh than the genetic factor (al-Ghazali, 1989). It implicitly indicates their emphasis on the role of nurture, including the environmental and educational factors in the formation of good character traits. It involves the influence of socialization (*al-mukhālata*), habituation (*al-i'tiyād*) and learning (*al-ta'allum*) along the process of character formation.

b. Socialization (*Al-Mukhālata*)

Socialization, according to al-Ghazali, is the foundation for the acquisition of good character during childhood. This process takes place through the observation and companionship with the righteous and the virtuous companions. It is due to the fact that nature can purloin from another nature both its good and evil, meaning that traits can be acquired from the people with whom he associates (Winter, 1995). Similar to Ibn Miskawayh, al-Ghazali thus emphasizes parental authority in determining the peer group for their child to mingle with, since it is the most

influential factor for his character formation (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968; Al-Ghazali, n.d.). He further says:

The basis of child education is protection from evil associates (al-Ghazali, n.d., vol.3, p.73;. Quasem, 1978, p.96).

Therefore, a child should be prevented from mixing with playmates or peers who could influence him in a contrary manner to what has been taught by his parents (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). He should be prevented from those who talk nonsense, who curse and insult others; and from mixing with children who are accustomed to luxurious and comfortable life (al-Ghazali, n.d.). In this regard, Ibn Miskawayh believes that a poor person is closer to virtues as compared to a rich one. It is more difficult for the rich to acquire good character since the pleasures around him conform with the nature of his carnal soul (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). Since most of his learning during this period is through sense-perception and imagination (Abu Sway, 1996), he inclines to imitate (Abul Quasem, 1978) what he perceives and listens to (al-Ghazali, 1998). In fact, the basic requirement for an elementary teacher (*mu'allim al-sibyān*), according to al-Ghazali, primarily begins with reforming himself (al-Ghazali, 1998), since children would attentively learn through what they see and listen.

Furthermore, Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali agreed that the child should be kept away from men of letters (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Ibn Miskawayh, 1968) or poets (al-Zabidiy, 1989) who claim that poetry is part of elegant and sophisticated culture. Similarly, he should be prevented from listening to the amusements that could

stimulate his desires, i.e. poems which deal with lovers and passion, for this will implant the seeds of corruption in his heart (al-Ghazali, 1989; Winter, 1995). Al-Ghazali gives the example of breaking the power of passion (*al-'ishq*) in its early stage as being like pulling at the reins of a riding-beast when it heads for a gate it would like to enter: to rein it back is much easier. Whereas to treat such a passion after it has taken hold of one is like letting the beast go in, and then catching it by its tail and pulling it from behind which is much more difficult. One should therefore take precautions at an early stage, or else it can only be treated with extra effort, so intense as almost lead to death (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). In this sense, it is the purpose of al-Ghazali, as well as Ibn Miskawayh, to control sexual desire from an early stage of childhood, so much so that it would ultimately achieve a proper state of equilibrium (*i'tidāl*).

c. Habituation (*al-I'tiyād*)

Al-Ghazali also propounded habituation or the formation of habits as one of the most effective means in the acquisition of good character (Quasem, 1978). The habituation process takes place through *riyāda* (self-discipline); by which the actions associated with such character are firstly enforced, until they ultimately become part of his nature or character (al-Ghazali, 1989). In this sense, the child's pure heart is compared to a precious uncut jewel, devoid of any form or carving, which will accept to be cut into any shape, likewise, the child will incline to anything that is imposed upon him (al-Ghazali, 1989; Winter, 1995), whether it is good or bad. Every child is

originally born in a balanced righteous innate disposition. However, parents, according to al-Ghazali, are the first to influence him to acquire a good or an evil character, through the habituation and instruction. He further adds:

If he is made accustomed to good and is so taught, he will grow up in goodness, he will win happiness in this world and the next, and his parents and teachers will have a share in this reward. But if he is accustomed to evil and is neglected like the beasts he will be woeful and lost, and the burden will then be upon the neck of those responsible for him (al-Ghazali, n.d., 3:72; Winter, 1995, p.75).

Habituation, according to Ibn Miskawayh is also beneficial for child upbringing, since he would be accustomed to love virtues (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968) until it becomes spontaneous, habitual and pleasant (Quasem, 1978) to his soul. Simultaneously, it will be easier for the child to avoid vices and submit to the injunctions of wisdom, of the *Sharī'a* and *Sunna*. Furthermore, he will be accustomed to control his inner faculty of the soul from worldly pleasures, which in fact, prepares him for the experience of nearness to God and the angels, beside the happiness in this world (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968).

Since the faculty of desire is the first and the most dominant feature of the childhood period (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Ibn Miskawayh, 1968), habituation at this stage is aimed at preserving the balance and moderation between excess and deficiency of this faculty. Hence, the child particularly at the age of discernment should be supervised carefully (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Ibn Miskawayh: 1968). The first trait to be controlled, according to al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh, is the greed for food. In this regard, habituation in good character should begin with the cultivation

of good manners in eating (al-Ghazali, n.d., Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). He should be trained to pick up food with the right hand and to begin with the name of Allah (al-Ghazali, n.d., Ibn Miskawayh, 1968) to eat the food, which is nearest to him, and not to start eating before others. He should stare neither at the food nor at the person eating. He should be trained not to eat in a hurry, but to chew the food properly. He should not eat one mouthful after another without pause, and not to smear the food on his hands and clothes. He should eat plain or dry bread sometimes, so that he does not think that the presence of other kinds of food is inevitable (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995; Ibn Miskawayh, 1968) He should be trained to enjoy giving preference to others, and encouraged to pay little heed to his food and to be contented (*qanā'a*) with its coarser varieties (Winter, 1995). In his disciplinary method, al-Ghazali uses analogy, praise, and threat. For instance, the child needs to be trained not to eat large quantities of food by associating it with the practice of animals; and by reproaching other children for overeating and praising them for being well-mannered and moderate in eating.

In like manner, he reiterates Ibn Miskawayh's disciplinary approach to the cultivation of good manners through the habits of sleeping, dressing and social conduct (Ibn Miskawayh., 1968; al-Ghazali, n.d.; Giladi, 1992) As it is mentioned earlier, the main focus of self-discipline during childhood, is to counterbalance his inner faculties, particularly the faculties of desire (*al-shahwa*) and anger (*al-ghadab*) which hold sway over his innate equilibrium of the soul (Giladi, 1992). For instance,

he should be prevented from being indolent by walking, moving around, and exercising instead of sleeping during the day. He should also be trained to endure difficulties and to be tough through rough bedding, clothing, and food (al-Ghazali, n.d.). Boys, on the other hand, should be accustomed to wearing plain garments since coloured and silk clothes are meant for women, as well as to protecting them against excessive enjoyment, pleasure, luxury, and pride (Quasem, 1978). The child should neither be accustomed to luxury and comfort, nor to making friends with those who are accustomed to such patterns of life (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995). They should be disciplined and habituated to endure a strenuous life rather than comfort and luxury (Quasem, 1978). For this reason, the virtuous kings of Persia did not bring up their children within their own circles. They used to send them to people whom they trusted in distant regions, where those who took charge of their education experienced hard living and a rough life, and did not experience ease or luxury. During the time of Ibn Miskawayh, the chiefs of the Daylam used to bring up their children in the countryside so that they may acquire proper character, and be kept away from any bad customs and habits (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). Likewise, a child should be habituated in the virtues of humility, hospitality and politeness in his social conduct. He should be prevented from boasting to his friends about his parents' possessions. In fact, the child should be prevented from accepting anything from others, if he belongs to a wealthy and noble family. On the contrary, he should be taught that it is more honorable to give rather than to take from someone. If he

belongs to a poor family, he should be taught that greed and taking from others is a disgraceful and humiliating practice fit only for dogs that wag their tails for a morsel. He should be trained to respect people in the way he behaves in front of others. He should be taught to sit properly, and be prohibited from displaying insolent manners such as speaking excessively, spitting, yawning, or wiping his nose in the presence of others. He should also be trained not to turn his back on anyone, or to cross his legs, or lean on his chin and support his head on his hands, for these practices are the signs of indolence (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995).

Several disciplinary techniques are used by al-Ghazali in the habituation process, such as positive and negative reinforcement, reward and punishment, praise and threat; based on different needs and circumstances. Most of the child's educational approach at the age of discernment, according to al-Ghazali, is through intimidation. Nevertheless, he should neither be punished nor tortured unnecessarily (al-Ghazali, 1998). In fact, al-Ghazali prefers to adopt positive reinforcement in disciplining the child. He should rather be praised or rewarded in front of others for his good behavior instead of being publicly punished for his bad conduct (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Giladi, 1992). It should be overlooked when occasionally he makes a mistake, especially if the child himself realizes his fault and tries to conceal it; for exposing such an act may in fact blunt the child's sensitivity to public disapproval (Giladi, 1992). However, when the mistake is repeated, he should be privately advised and scolded so that he will not repeat it. He should not be spoken to at length every time,

for this will accustom him to being blamed for his misdeeds, and destroy the effectiveness of such words upon his heart (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995). In this regard, paternal authority in disciplining the child is apparently emphasized by al-Ghazali. A father should rather preserve the effectiveness of his speech by irregularly reproaching him, while the mother should frighten him of informing the misconduct to his father (Winter, 1995). It is through repetition (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995) of such discipline that good habits become accustomed and habituated in the soul of the child, until the habits ultimately become part of his natural character.

d. Learning (*Al-Ta'allum*):

A child should begin his formal education when approaching the age of seven years, (al-Ghazali, 1998), as soon as his faculty of discernment (*tamyīz*) (al-Ghazali, n.d.) begins to emerge. At this age, the child should be sent to a *maktab* or *kuttāb* (Shalabiy, 1979) a formal Muslim institution for elementary education, whereby he learns the Qur'an, the Traditions and historical accounts of the devout person, so that love for the righteous will be implanted in his heart (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995). At this stage, the teacher (*mu'allim*) and tutor (*mu'addib*) should be given full authority to supervise his course of action and conduct (al-Ghazali, 1998) as the right to reasonably punish (Giladi, 1992) the child for his bad conduct while his parents need to prepare him to bear the punishment (al-Ghazali, n.d.) In this regard, a teacher carries in fact, a greater responsibility than a father to his child (al-Ghazali, 1989). He emphasizes:

... the first duty (of a teacher) is to be compassionate to students and treat them as his own children. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "I am to you like a father," (Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban) who desires to save the child from the hellfire, which is more important than any of the efforts of parents to save their children from the fires on earth. Thus, the rights of the teacher are greater than the rights of parents since the father is the cause of their present existence in this mortal life while the teacher is the cause of the immortal life (al-Ghazali, p.55; Faris, 1962, p.145).

Since both of them mutually aim for the otherworldly happiness, the relationship between students and teachers should be based on compassion and affection rather than anger or envy (al-Ghazali, 1989).

The process of teaching or instruction (*al-ta'lim*) is the process of bringing forth a thing from its potentiality to actuality. Every child, according to al-Ghazali, is naturally born with his *fitra* (innate disposition), the innate potentiality to know and believe (al-Ghazali, n.d.) in the Lordship of God (al-Ghazali, 1998). He quotes the Holy Qur'an:

If thou ask them who created them, they will certainly say: Allah, how then are they deluded (from the Truth)? (*Al-Qur'an* 43:87)

Each child is born with an inherent knowledge about reality, since it is readily prepared to perceive reality (Faris, 1962). However, the belief, which is naturally instilled in the human soul, is always forgotten due to the passing of time (Abu Sway, 1995). Thus, learning according to al-Ghazali, is a process of recollection (*al-tadhakkur*) (al-Ghazali, 1989) of his own primordial identity. It resembles the unveiling of the veils from the innate nature (*al-fitra*) of the soul; as similar to

digging out the water from the earth (Abu Sway, 1995) or cleansing the mirror for the object to be reflected on it (al-Ghazali, 1989).

Thus, it is the task of parents to prepare him for the above process. In this regard, the acquisition of knowledge necessarily begins with inner purification. Indeed, it is the first pre-requisite for a student to purify his soul from any spiritual impurities, since the acquisition of knowledge is the worship of the heart and the prayer of his inner self, as well as his spiritual intimacy with God (al-Ghazali, n.d.). Just as prayer, which is not accomplished unless the physical body is purified from excrements and impurities, similarly worship of heart through knowledge is not accomplished unless it is purified from vices and blameworthy character traits. (Faris, 1962). Thus, as a student, the child should be trained to observe his first preliminary duty of self-purification. He should firstly, respect his teacher or tutor (al-Ghazali, n.d.) and purify his intention (al-Ghazali, 1987). While the teacher is more concerned with his cognitive development through the instruction (*al-ta'lim*) and transmission of knowledge, the parents should be involved in its practical application. It is the task of the parents to ensure that the child consistently performs his ritual ablutions and prayer; and train him to fast for a few days of *Ramadan* when he reaches the age of discernment. He should also be taught and trained to abide by the limits laid down by Law, for instance, to put in his heart the fear of theft, unlawful gain, lying, treachery, and deceit (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Winter, 1995).

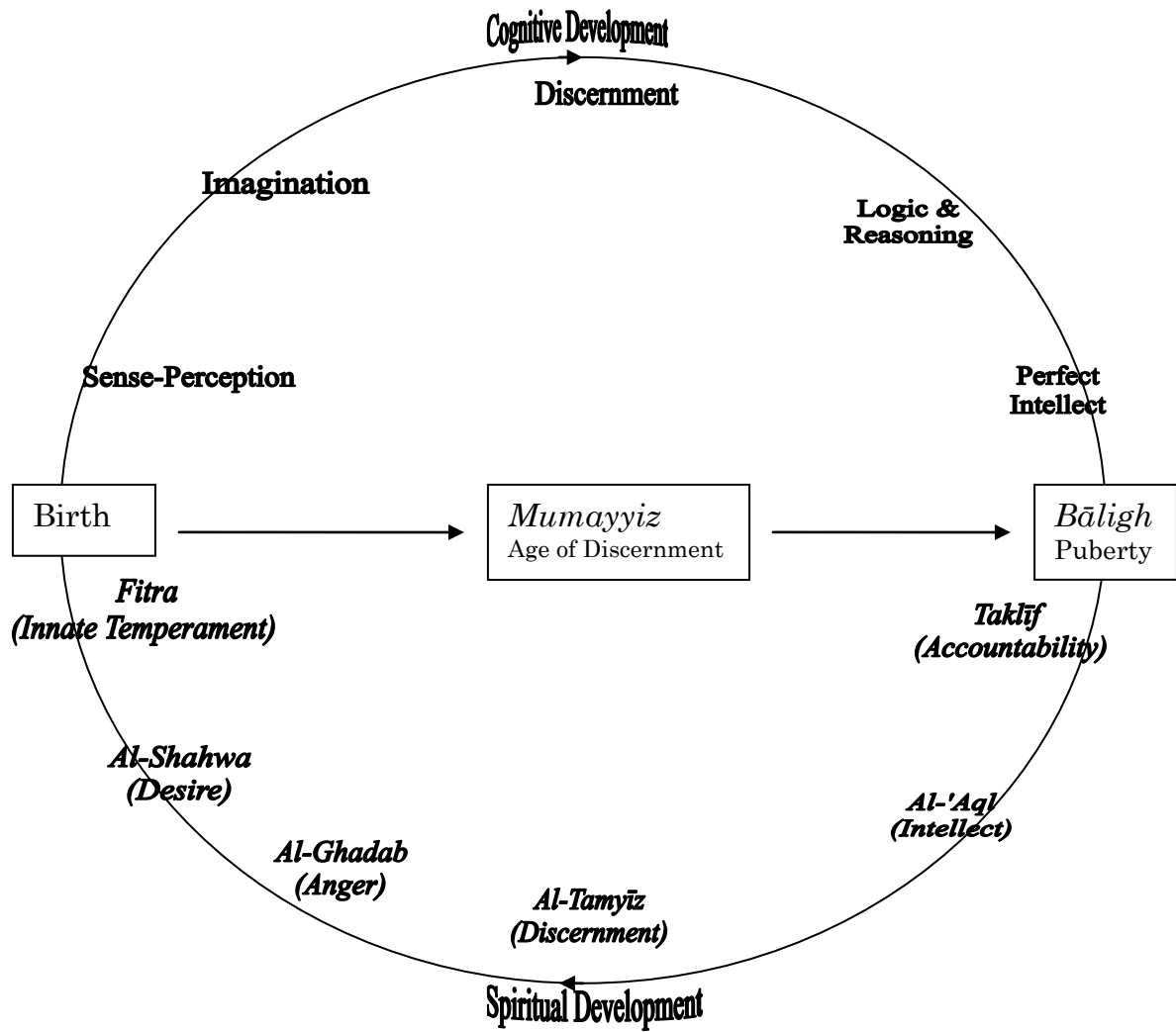


Figure 3. The Formation of Character based on Ibn Miskawayh and Al-Ghazali on Divine Natural Order (al-Nizām al-Tabī'iy)

Curriculum Content for Children's Character Development in Parent Education Programs: A Curriculum Design

In order to facilitate the above content of character education to be significantly meaningful for the contemporary needs, it has to be developed into a systematic curriculum design. The researcher will analyze and further attempts to design a curriculum content that specifically addresses the need for children's character development, based on the premise that parents are the first moral educators. It is based on Ibn Khaldun's theory of social influence that a man is influenced by numerous factors around him or her. The most immediate influence comes from family institution; secondly, schooling; and finally the social values. In fact, the 14th century Ibn Khaldun's view has been substantiated by modern research findings revealing that parental influences on adolescent personality development is deeper and more enduring than that of peers (Collins et al., 2004). Throughout child's developmental process, parents indirectly influence the child's attitudes, values, personality and motives, which in turn affect the child's interactions and affiliation with peers (Brown, 1990, 1993 in Collins et al., 2004). In this research therefore, we will be adopting the ethico-religious framework of Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ghazali in developing the curriculum content of children's character development. As far as the

curriculum design is concerned, the researcher opts for *Tyler Rationale* (1949) since it is the most established theory of curriculum development (Daud, 1993 in Siraj, 2001).

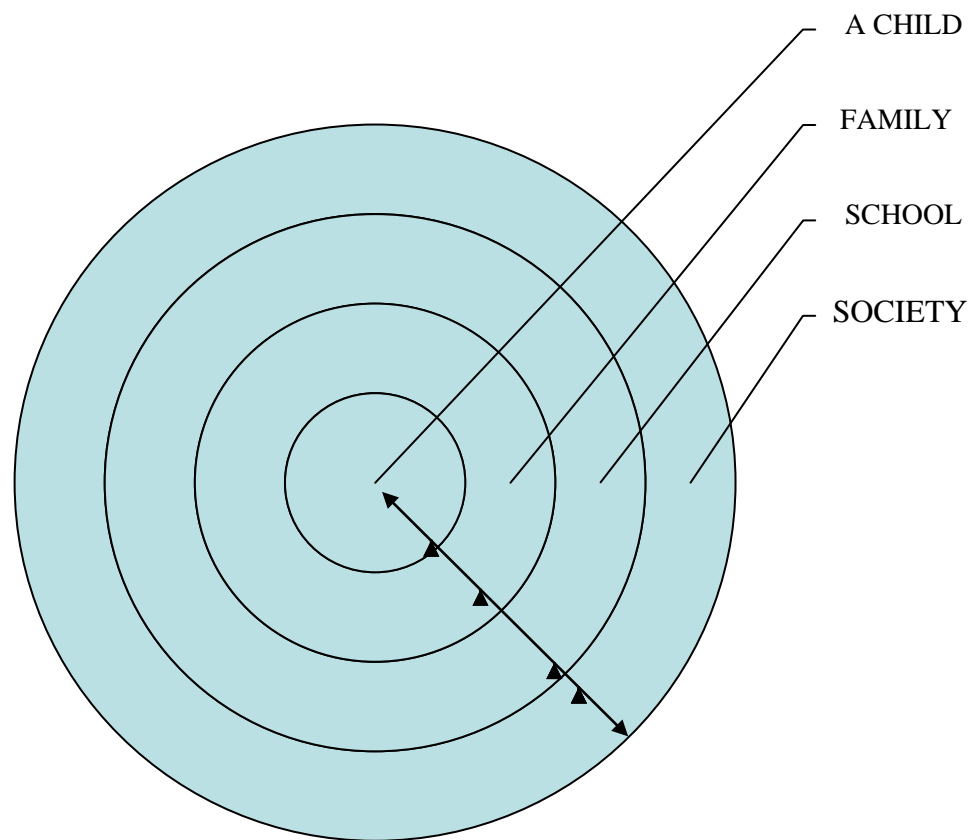


Figure 4. Social Influence Theory by Ibn Khaldun

As far as the curriculum is concerned, we opt to strengthen the first social foundation of education: family, through parents education program (parenting). The objective of this program is to equip parents with sufficient knowledge of character

education and development, so that they will finally produce generations of excellent character. The curriculum content will be based on Ibn Miskawayh and Ghazalian ethico-religious framework, which the researcher believes will be the best model for the Malay-Muslims in Malaysia. Why do we focus on the Malays instead of other races? As presented in the first chapter, currently the Malay youths are facing the most chronic social epidemic ever in the Malaysian history. Consequently, it requires a long-term and continuous solution with a clear focus: to address the crises of character among the Malay youths. Besides, it also needs a religious framework as a foundation for the curriculum content that will address the specific need for character development of the Malays. In this case, the researcher will propose an ethico-religious framework to be the foundation for Muslim Parents Education in Malaysia.

Figure 5 illustrates a circular relationship of the ethico-religious framework: Islamic worldview and character education and development. Ethico-religious foundation aims to produce good person with good character who will be in return, preparing the foundation for character development, beginning with his own family unit as a nucleus of the society. Family values will later on becomes a family tradition, which will set the foundation for social values, and tradition. In return, these social values will influence the development of individual's character, which will eventually influence the character of the family. In due course, the networking of these family units will establish a solid foundation for a strong nation. In the

Malaysian context, it is hoped that it will eventually establish a strong foundation for Malaysians to be a Nation of Character (MNOC).

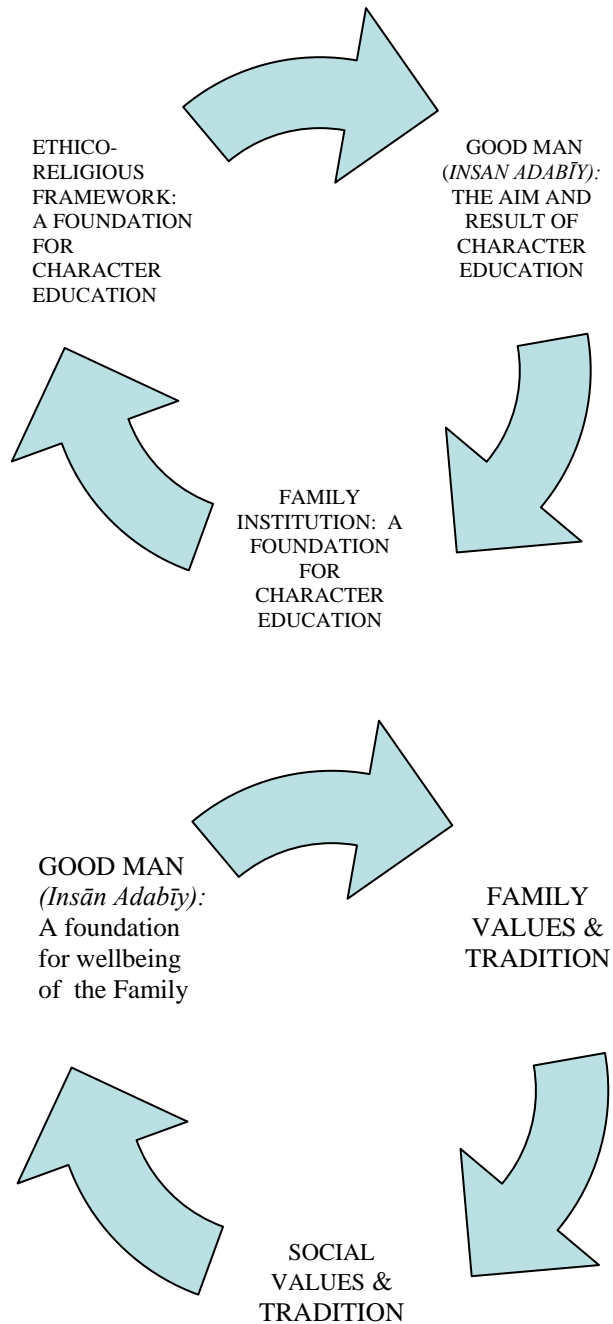


Figure 5: Circular Relationship of Ethico-Religious Worldview and Character Education : Good Man (Insān Adabīy) as Core of Family and Social Values

Tyler's Model of Curriculum Design

Tyler Rationale (1949) is regarded as the most dominant and well-established model of curriculum development (Siraj, 2001). It is a means-end curriculum model based on four fundamental questions which must be answered in developing any curriculum and plan of instruction (Tyler, 1949):

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

The first key question is an effort towards formulating the objectives of a curriculum. The second question leads towards the selection of content or learning experiences, while the third question deals with the organization of learning experiences. Finally, the fourth question deals with effective evaluation of a curriculum (Siraj, 2001; Narongraksakhet, 2002). In this case, the researcher will be focusing on the second fundamental element, i.e. the selection of educational experiences, i.e. the curriculum content in order to achieve the educational objectives.

Tyler emphasized on the formulation of educational objectives since they are the most critical criteria for guiding a particular curriculum design (Tyler, 1949). A

satisfactory formulation of educational objectives indicates both: the behavioral aspects and the content aspects of a curriculum. In Tyler's model of curriculum development, the formulation of objectives is based on the educational philosophy and the psychology of a learner. These educational objectives become the criteria by which materials are selected, content is outlined, instructional procedures are developed and tests and examinations are prepared (Tyler, 1949).

A Two-Dimensional Chart of Educational Objectives

In *Tyler Rationale*, a clearly formulated educational objectives has two dimensions: the behavioral aspect and the content aspect. The statement of objectives is formulated in a two-dimensional chart, including both aspects:

1. the kind of behavior to be developed in the students
2. the area of content or of life in which the behavior is to be applied (Tyler, 1949).

For instance, the objective of "Familiarity with Dependable Sources of Information on Questions Relating to Nutrition" includes both: an indication of the kind of behavior: familiarity with dependable sources, and the content: sources that deal with problems of nutrition (Tyler, 1949).

Based on the above guideline to formulate the educational objectives, the researcher will try to formulate the objectives of the Curriculum for Children's Character Development in Parent Education Programs based on the preliminary analysis of the two Arabic texts: *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* of Ibn Miskawayh and *Ihyā'*

'Ulūm al-Dīn of al-Ghazali. An illustration of the two-dimensional chart adapted from *Tyler Rationale* is presented herewith (see Appendix 1).

Previous Studies

Obviously, there is a dearth of literature in this field. According to Pugh et al. (1994 in Einzig, 1999) the development, promotion and awareness of parent education has been patchy, with no consistent approach, national strategy or long-term financial underpinning. A review of this field – its current trends, concepts and issues has been written by Einzig (1999). As a psychotherapist and a Research Development Director of the Parenting Education and Support Forum, Einzig propagates a promotional perspective that addresses the question of “how do we promote an effective parenting?” In this review, she describes the theoretical underpinnings of parent education: the Behavioral approach, the Cognitive, the Adlerian, the Psychodynamic, the Humanistic and the Attachment Theory. She further promotes an Integrative Model that integrates the Cognitive, Behavioral, Humanistic and Psycho-dynamic approaches currently practiced in UK. However, research in the field of parent education is led by US where it is more established and better funded (Einzig, 1999). Ruth Thomas and Orapan Footrakoon (1998) of the University of Minnesota wrote an overview of Curriculum Perspectives about Parent Education. They outlined Miller and Seller (1990), the most recent scheme that synthesizes other parenting theories into three perspectives: the Transmission Perspective, the Transaction Perspective, and the Transformation Perspective.

Transmission Perspective is rooted in behaviorism and traditional academic modes of educating. The goal is to transmit knowledge, attitudes, or skills from those

who 'possess knowledge' to the learners. The educator or curriculum developer is viewed as possessing the desired skills, knowledge and attitudes; and the learners are those who need the desired skills, knowledge and attitudes. The curriculum is organized into units or topics that are often sequential; learners must master one in order to go on to the next. Finally, the curriculum is evaluated in terms of the degree to which learners have absorbed or mastered the prescribed knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Some curricula that reflect this perspective are referred to as "scientific." Curricula in which a training orientation predominates reflect this perspective (Thomas & Footrakoon, 1998).

On the other hand, the transaction curriculum perspective is rooted in Dewey's educational philosophy and in developmental theory. It's goal is to promote learners' development and problem solving capacities. This theory assumes knowledge is constructed by each learner as he or she interacts with the environment; the unique experiences, understandings, needs, and motivations that each learner brings to their learning influences his or her view of what is appropriate and interesting to learn and what is actually learned. Learning is an inquiry process that learners and educator co-direct and co-participate in. Thus, the educator's role is to facilitate the learners' inquiry according to the learners' interests. The curriculum is organized according to broad themes or questions, which are suggested by curriculum developers or generated in learner-educator dialogue. It is further evaluated on the basis of learner's

growth and development (e.g., thinking processes, inquiry processes) (Thomas & Footrakoon, 1998).

Meanwhile, the Transformation Perspective is rooted in postmodern thought, ecological perspectives, and social reconstruction curricular perspectives. The goal is to cultivate intuition and insight, to counter injustice and human suffering through collective social action. Knowledge is assumed to be fluid (rather than static), interconnected, enriched by multiple perspectives, and a reflection of personal meanings. Therefore, curriculum development process must involve learners as central participants and directors of curricular decision making. Learners actively participate in understanding and choosing what they will learn instead of being recipients of someone else's decision. The curriculum is organized according to broad themes or questions generated by learners. Finally, the curriculum is evaluated in terms of direction and nature of change in learners' contexts that has resulted from social action. It is also evaluated in terms of the learners' abilities to identify problems and issues; and the abilities to organize and solve the problems (Thomas & Footrakoon, 1998). A Comparison of Transmission, Transaction and Transformation Curricula (Miller & Sellers, 1990 in Thomas & Footrakoon, 1998) is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2:

A Comparison of Transmission, Transaction and Transformation Curricula

Source: Miller & Sellers, 1990; Thomas and Footrakoon, 1998 (pp.2-3)

TRANSMISSION PERSPECTIVE	TRANSACTION PERSPECTIVE	TRANSFORMATION PERSPECTIVE
Whole person versus person as learner	Whole person <i>and</i> person as learner	Whole person versus person as learner
Educator control versus learner control	Educator control <i>and</i> learner control (shared control)	Educator control versus learner control (as much as possible)
Personal knowledge versus public knowledge	Personal knowledge (especially knowledge exploration and verification processes) <i>and</i> public knowledge	Personal knowledge <i>and</i> public knowledge (Personal knowledge as a filter through which public knowledge is viewed)
Knowledge as content versus knowledge as process	Knowledge as content versus knowledge as process	Knowledge as content versus knowledge as process
Learning is holistic versus learning is molecular	Learning is holistic versus learning is molecular (neither; emphasis is on process and frameworks)	Learning is holistic versus learning is molecular
Each learner unique versus each learner has shared characteristics	Each learner unique <i>and</i> learners have shared characteristics	Each learner unique <i>and</i> learners have shared characteristics
Learning is social versus learning is individual	Learning is social <i>and</i> learning is individual	Learning is social <i>and</i> learning is individual (sometimes these are integrated; sometimes both are present)
Learner as person versus learner as client	Learner as person versus learner as client	Learner as person versus learner as client
<p><i>Note.</i> Bolded end of each dilemma indicates the side of the dilemma the curriculum perspective emphasizes; both ends bolded indicates either an integration of the opposing orientations or a balance point on a continuum between them.</p>		

Thomas and Footrakoon (1998) further identified a number of Parent Education Models that Teach Particular Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes. The skills, knowledge and attitudes taught are meant to improve parenting or alleviation of problems parents experience in their parenting. A number of these parenting programs were developed by professionals whose background and experience is in therapy. Examples include by Thomas and Footrakoon (1998) were as follows:

- P.E.T. (Doherty & Ryder, 1980; Faber & Mazlich, 1980; Gordon, 1975, 1976; Hamner & Turner, 1990; Hetrick, 1979; Rinn & Markle, 1977; Schultz & Nystul, 1980; Therrien, 1979);
- S.T.E.P. (American Guidance Service, 1991; Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1976, 1989; Dinkmeyer, McKay, & McKay, 1987);
- Active Parenting (Boccella, 1988; Popkin, 1983, 1987, 1989; Sprague, 1990);
- Transactional Analysis (Bredehoft, 1986, 1990; Centers, Jump, Murray, & Sarra, 1990; Clarke, 1978; Clarke & Dawson, 1989; Rosen, 1978);
- Behavior Modification (Cagan, 1980; O'Dell, 1974; Patterson, 1986; Patterson, Chamberlain, & Reid, 1982; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989; Schaeffer & Briesmeister, 1989); and
- Parent-Child Relationship Enhancement (PCRE) (Coufal, 1982; Coufal & Brock, 1983, 1984; Ginsberg, 1977; Guerney, 1964, 1977; Guerney, Coufal, & Vogelsong, 1981; Guerney, Vogelsong, & Coufal, 1983).

Tillman (1998) called for a value-based approach of parenting for the 21st century. ‘Value-based Parenting’ approach was presented in an International Conference on Education for 21st Century organized by UNESCO in 1998. She propagated universal values to be a foundation for parent education programs due to the increasing challenges of parenting such as growing materialism and violence in films (Tillman, 1998).

In Malaysia, research in the field of Family and Parent Education is still in its infancy stage. In 1999, an International Conference on “Family Well-being: Learning from the Past for the Betterment of the Future” was organized by Asia Pacific Forum on Family (APFAM) in Kuala Lumpur. It epitomized the “smart-partnership” concept between the NGOs, the government and academic institutions in promoting the well-being of the family (Ariffin, 1999). In Jamilah Ariffin’s research (1999), she analysed the changing trend of Malaysian family through trend data and research findings. Data from the Malaysian Census and other studies show that the Malaysian society today comprises more of the nuclear family structure than the traditional extended family (Ariffin, 1999). Rozumah Baharudin et al. (2003) studied the co-relation of family structure and children’s behavior as well as their academic achievement. She further recommended the need of family support programs to maintain the stability and well-being of the family that will directly influence the well-being of the children. In a study about the changing family patterns in Malaysia, Rosnah Ismail (1999) highlighted the fact that extended family system in this country has been replaced by the nuclear family system due to industrialization and urbanization. It

results in the weakening family function indicating the root of our social crises. She supported Glick (1984 in Ismail, 1999) study's which revealed that a high percentage of adolescents in residential treatment homes are from families disrupted by separation or divorce, and had poor parent-adolescents relationship. Therefore, she urged the need for individual and family counseling, family development, parenting education, family communication, etc. for the well-being of the family. However, research and evaluations on parents education in Malaysia is still rare since it is still under its formative period.

Most researchers propose the need for a well-structured parent education and family support programs as a reaction against the crisis of morality, especially among the Malaysian youths. Saedah Siraj, in *Pendidikan Rumahtangga* (Family Education) (2001) and *Pendidikan Anak-anak* (Children Education) (2003) emphasized on the education of children's character (*akhlāq*) and the inculcation of values among family members. She further emphasized on the need to develop a systematic curriculum for family development in Malaysia (2005). Mohd. Sapawi Mohd. Isa (2003), in his study on 'Curriculum of Family Education in Malaysian Higher Institutions' established the fact that parent education curriculums in Malaysia are still too general and lack of their conceptual and theoretical applications. He further recommended the need to establish a curriculum which aims to develop good quality of future generation.