

## The Concept of Islamic Education Based on the Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali

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### ABSTRACT

Education in Indonesia, while not entirely based on Islamic principles, is still deeply influenced by the values of Islamic teachings. Challenges arise when the education system produces educated individuals who lack moral and ethical qualities. This study aims to analyze Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on Islamic education and its implications in the context of modern education. The method used in this research is library research, which reviews various sources related to Al-Ghazali's ideas. The findings reveal that Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of education that not only focuses on worldly aspects but also on character and moral development. Additionally, this study finds that a holistic approach to education, encompassing spirituality and morality, is essential for creating balanced and responsible individuals. Thus, education understood from Al-Ghazali's perspective can offer solutions to address moral issues in contemporary education, fostering a generation that is not only knowledgeable but also possesses good character. This research contributes to enriching the understanding of Islamic educational values and their relevance in creating a more ethical and civil society.

**Keywords:** *Islamic Education, Imam Al-Ghazali, Morality, Character, Modern Education*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of learning, skills, and norms that are passed down from one generation to the next through teaching, with the aim of developing individual potential and forming character to face various life challenges. In Islam, education is not only aimed at achieving success in the world but also preparing for the afterlife, so it is important to produce Muslims who are knowledgeable and have noble morals. According to Al-Ghazali, education is the process of humanizing humans through the delivery of responsible knowledge, which allows individuals to draw closer to Allah. He emphasized that knowledge is a medium for achieving eternal happiness, where good deeds cannot be done without

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adequate knowledge. Overall, the educational process is an interaction between educators and students that aims to transmit the experience of society, not just individual experience.<sup>1</sup>

Indonesia is not a country that fully adopts an Islamic government system, and its legal bases are not entirely derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. However, the values of Islamic teachings are deeply rooted in people's lives, considering that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim. Therefore, the values of Islamic education influence the goals and systems of education in this country. According to Djumransjah and Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, referring to the opinion of Imam Al-Ghazali, the goals of education in Islam are first, to achieve human perfection, which ends with closeness to Allah; and second, to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter.<sup>2</sup>

The goals of Islamic education are in line with the goals of national education, which aim to form humans as a whole, both physically and spiritually, as well as intellectually and morally. Though these goals are complex, students are expected to learn intellectually and morally important life lessons. Therefore, the role of teachers is very vital; they not only act as transferors of knowledge but also as role models for students, which should be reflected in students' daily behavior in society.

Imam Al-Ghazali, who is known as a scholar with a comprehensive understanding of education, emphasized that education should be based on religious values and professionalism. He argued that students should not obey teachers if they contradict Allah's commandments, while teachers are expected to be professional and avoid behavior that is prohibited by Allah because they are role models for them. By understanding and implementing educational values from Al-Ghazali's perspective, existing education can be more meaningful and not only oriented towards material aspects but also towards the afterlife.<sup>3</sup>

Several previous studies, especially related to the concept of education according to Imam Al-Ghazali, have been widely conducted, such as research by Azhari and Mustapa,<sup>4</sup> Mainuddin et al.,<sup>5</sup> Asy'arie et al.,<sup>6</sup> Bahri,<sup>7</sup> Niamah,<sup>8</sup> dan Rasiani et al.<sup>9</sup> However, these studies tend to focus on the practical aspects and implementation of education. In contrast, this study will explore in depth the perspective of Islamic education according to Al-Ghazali, which combines spiritual and moral aspects with formal education. With a greater focus on character development and ethics, this study is expected to provide new contributions to

<sup>1</sup> Fatma Azahra, "Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Al-Ghazali," *Indonesian Research Journal on Education* 3, no. 1 (August 22, 2022): 772–85, <https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v3i1.331>.

<sup>2</sup> Ary Antony Putra, "Konsep Pendidikan Agama Islam Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah* 1, no. 1 (August 24, 2017): hlm, 42, [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-thariqah.2016.vol1\(1\).617](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-thariqah.2016.vol1(1).617).

<sup>3</sup> Azahra, "Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Al-Ghazali."

<sup>4</sup> Devi Syukri Azhari and Mustapa Mustapa, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Menurut Imam Al-Ghazali," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 4, no. 2 (November 13, 2021): 271–78, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v4i2.2865>.

<sup>5</sup> Mainuddin Mainuddin, Tobroni Tobroni, and Moh Nurhakim, "Pemikiran Pendidikan Karakter Al-Ghazali, Lawrence Kolberg Dan Thomas Lickona," *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 6, no. 2 (August 16, 2023): 283–90, <https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v6i2.563>.

<sup>6</sup> Bima Fandi Asy'arie, Rachmad Arif Ma'ruf, and Anharul Ulum, "Analisis Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Pendidikan Akhlak Perspektif Al-Ghazali," *Al-Qalam: Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Pendidikan* 15, no. 2 (December 9, 2023): 155–66, <https://doi.org/10.47435/al-qalam.v15i2.2279>.

<sup>7</sup> Syamsul Bahri, "Pendidikan Akhlak Anak Dalam Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali," *At-Tadzki: Islamic Education Journal* 1, no. 1 (2022): 23–41, <https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzki.v1i1.6>.

<sup>8</sup> Khoirotul Niamah, "Paradigma Pendidikan Islam Perspektif Al-Ghazali," *HEUTAGOGLA: Journal of Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (May 1, 2021): 55–65, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2021.11-05>.

<sup>9</sup> Ardina Rasiani, Darma Sari Lubis, and Herlini Puspika Sari, "Relevansi Pemikiran Filsafat Pendidikan Al-Ghazali Dalam Konteks Pendidikan Modern," *QOSIM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial & Humaniora* 2, no. 2 (November 29, 2024): 150–58, <https://doi.org/10.61104/jq.v2i2.443>.

understanding the role of Islamic education in shaping the personality of students in Indonesia and creating a generation that is not only knowledgeable but also has positive morals.

This study also aims to provide insight into the importance of integrating moral values into the education curriculum in Indonesia to avoid educational products that produce educated individuals but lack ethics. By focusing on Al-Ghazali's educational approach, it is hoped that a deeper understanding will be produced about how education can play a role in achieving a more ethical and civilized society.

## METHOD

This research is in the form of library research, and the object of the research is focused on Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on the concept of Islamic education. Talking about the concept of Islamic education, the components that will be discussed in this study include a description of Islamic education, the role and purpose of Islamic education, educators and students, Islamic education curriculum, Islamic education methods, and the implications and relevance of Al-Ghazali's thoughts on modern education. Thus, a clear picture or concept of Islamic education will be obtained that can be implemented up to the contemporary era or the present era.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Goals of Islamic Education

According to Al Ghazali, Islamic education is education that wants to make humans into complete human beings who will later achieve a joyful life in this world and the afterlife by being devoted to Allah through the knowledge they have gained through the educational process. Al-Ghazali emphasized that the task of education is to lead to the realization of religious and moral goals; *fadhilah* (virtue) and devotion to Allah are the most important goals in education. Al Ghazali believed education should create a complete person in this world and the next. According to Imam Al Ghazali, humans can achieve perfection if they are willing to try to seek knowledge and then practice virtue through the knowledge they learn. This *Fadhilah* can then bring him closer to Allah and ultimately make him happy in life in this world and in the afterlife.<sup>10</sup>

According to Al Ghazali, the main goal of Islamic education is devotion to Allah the Khaliq, and the most perfect human being in his view is a human being who always draws closer to Allah. To achieve the goals of any educational system, the following two basic factors are absolutely necessary: First, the aspects of knowledge that must be provided to students, or in other words, the curriculum that must be achieved by students. Second, the method that has been used to convey knowledge or curriculum materials to students so that they really pay attention to the curriculum and can absorb its benefits. With this, students will reach the educational and teaching goals they are looking for.<sup>11</sup> From the results of the study of Al Ghazali's thoughts, it can be clearly seen that the ultimate goals to be achieved through educational activities are two: First, the achievement of human perfection that culminates in approaching Allah. Secondly, achieving human perfection leads to happiness both in this world and the hereafter. Therefore, he aspires to teach humans so that they reach the targets that are the ultimate goals and intentions of education. These goals appear to have

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<sup>10</sup> Azahra, "Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Al-Ghazali."

<sup>11</sup> Irwansyah, M. Sidik, and Muhd Ridwan, "Ilmu Pendidikan Menurut Imam Al-Ghazali," *JURNAL TALIMUNA* 1, no. 1 (December 27, 2022): 27–36.

religious and moral nuances, without ignoring worldly problems.<sup>12</sup> Based on the description above, we can see that Al Ghazali really emphasizes the goal of his education on the formation of a person's religion and morals, where *fadhilah* (virtue) and *taqarrub* to Allah are the most important goals in education to make a person a perfect human being who will later make him live happily in this world and in the hereafter.

### Science and Knowledge

Etymologically, science comes from Arabic, namely *'ilm*, which means "to know." There is a dimension of *'ilm*, namely "to know," which is more intense and deeper than "to know." In English, these two meanings are also contained in the word knowledge. The translation of the verb to know means "to know" and "to know" depending on the context. The term science" is a word that is often interpreted with various meanings or contains more than one meaning.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, science is knowledge about a particular object that is arranged systematically, objectively, rationally, and empirically as a result of research using certain methods. According to Imam Al-Ghazali in his book *Ihya Ulumuddin*, namely, *muamalah* science and *mukasyafah* science. *Muamalah* science is the science of the state of the heart that teaches noble values and prohibits actions that violate personal morality and sharia social ethics. *Muamalah* science is the pinnacle of all science because it is related to the heart, soul, and purification of the soul.<sup>14</sup>

### Classification of Science According to Al-Ghazali

The study of al-Ghazali's classification of science is based on two main sources, namely The book of knowledge from *Ihya* and *Al-risalat al-Laduniyah*. In these works al-Ghazali mentions four different classification systems:<sup>15</sup>

#### 1. Division of Sciences into Theoretical and Practical Parts

In *Maqashid* al-Ghazali, he divides philosophy, or the science of wisdom, into theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part makes the states of being known as they are. The practical part concerns human actions, aiming to find human activities that are conducive to human well-being in this life and the next.

#### 2. Division of Knowledge into Presented Knowledge (*Hudhuri*) and Achieved Knowledge (*Hushuli*)

This division is based on fundamental differences regarding the ways of knowing. Presented *huduri* knowledge is direct, immediate, suprarational, intuitive, and contemplative. Presented knowledge is superior to achieved understanding because it is free from error and doubt. This category of knowledge also provides the highest certainty regarding spiritual truths. Al-Ghazali calls this knowledge by several names. Among them are *ilm laduni* (knowledge from the high) and *ilm al-mukasyafah* (knowledge of divine mysteries). *Ladunni* knowledge is knowledge that is achieved without an intermediary between a person's soul and Allah. It is like light from a magical lamp that falls into a clear and clean heart. *Mukasyafah* knowledge is inner knowledge that seeks to reveal or understand hidden meanings. The knowledge achieved or acquired knowledge is indirect, rational, logical, and discursive. Sensory knowledge is indeed direct and immediate but

<sup>12</sup> Hidayati and Nur Aisyah, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Menurut Al-Ghazali (Sebuah Analisis Terhadap Kurikulum PAI)," *HIKMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (June 18, 2021): 76–90, <https://doi.org/10.55403/hikmah.v10i1.261>.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Fadhilulloh Mubarak, "Ilmu Dalam Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali," *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 8, no. 1 (August 25, 2020): hlm, 29, <https://doi.org/10.21274/kontem.2020.8.1.22-38>.

<sup>14</sup> Yuri Indri Yani, Hakmi Wahyudi, and Mhd Rafi'i Ma'arif Tarigan, "Pembagian Ilmu Menurut Al-Ghazali (Tela'ah Buku *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din*)," *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 19, no. 2 (March 5, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v19i2.11338>.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Bahrudin Yusuf, "Konsep Ilmu Menurut Pemikiran Al-Ghazali," *Berkala Ilmiah Pendidikan* 4, no. 3 (November 30, 2024): 677–87, <https://doi.org/10.51214/bip.v4i3.1213>.

only applies to the physical world. The category of knowledge division is therefore based on the difference between immediate knowledge and indirect knowledge regarding the spiritual world or things that can be known (intelligible).<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Division into Religious Sciences (*Al-Ulum Al-Sya'riah*) and Intellectual (*Al-Ulum Al-Aqliyah*)

In *The Book of Knowledge*, al-Ghazali defines religious sciences as sciences obtained from the prophets and not present in them through reason, such as arithmetic, or through experiments, such as medicine, or by hearing, such as language. On the other hand, al-Ghazali defines intellectual sciences as the various sciences that are achieved or obtained solely through human intellect. According to al-Ghazali, the difference between religious knowledge and intellectual knowledge is a logical consequence of the conception of the *mutakallimun* about the relationship between revelation and reason. Revelation and reason are understood as sources of knowledge that are mutually exclusive with each other. Al-Ghazali maintains the opinion that religious and intellectual sciences complement each other and never conflict with each other. However, the limitations of reason to know and the superiority of revelation over reason were determined by al-Ghazali. The source of religious knowledge is revelation, and the source of intellectual knowledge is the intellect.<sup>17</sup>

### 4. Division of Knowledge into *Fard Ain* Sciences (Obligatory on All Individuals) and *Fard Kifayah* (Obligatory on the Ummah)

The term *fard ain* refers to the religious obligations that bind every Muslim. In the *fard ain* level of knowledge, Imam Ghazali believes that religious knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim. The *fard ain* knowledge referred to is religious knowledge related to the obligations of a Muslim, such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and so on. Meanwhile, *fard kifayah* refers to things that are obligatory and imposed on groups of Muslims, where if one of them has done that thing, then the obligations of the others for that matter are extinguished. This *fardhu kifayah* science is related to worldly affairs and human professions. According to Al-Ghazali, every science that cannot be denied, such as medicine, is a certainty (*daruri*). And also like the science of arithmetic because it is needed in socializing, dividing wills, and inheritances. In this case, Al-Ghazali classifies *fardhu kifayah* science as a science that is very much needed related to the welfare of the world, such as medicine, mathematics, engineering, agriculture, shipping, politics, and sewing. In addition to understanding the concept of science and knowledge and the division of science, there is *fardhu 'ain* and *fardhu kifayah* science; we also need, and it is very important to be ethical or moral in seeking knowledge that comes from Allah SWT. Which ethics are very important for our lives, especially ethics in the process of obtaining useful knowledge? Ethics are the practice of knowledge and a means of achieving useful knowledge. With ethics, you will become a fair person who continues to learn to improve yourself to perfect your morals in any case. Many Islamic figures have concerns about the ethics of learning and teaching, including Imam al-Ghazali, who is a scholar who understands the influence of education on humans.<sup>18</sup>

## Educational Methods According to Al-Ghazali

<sup>16</sup> Awwalul Fadlilah and Izza Safitri, "Implementasi Konsep Ilmu dalam Kitab Ihya' 'Ulumiddin di Madrasah Mu'allimin Mu'allimat Sunan Drajat Paciran Lamongan," *RABBAYANI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Peradaban Islami* 2, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 40–48.

<sup>17</sup> Rasiani, Lubis, and Sari, "Relevansi Pemikiran Filsafat Pendidikan Al-Ghazali Dalam Konteks Pendidikan Modern."

<sup>18</sup> Abdul Mufid, "Maqasid Al-Qur'an Perspektif Muhammad al-Ghazali," *Ishlah: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin, Adab Dan Dakwah* 2, no. 1 (April 8, 2020): 65–93, <https://doi.org/10.32939/ishlah.v2i1.4>.

### 1. Special Methodology of Religious Education

The special methodology of religion, according to Al-Ghazali, is, in principle, starting with memorization and understanding, then continuing with belief and justification, and after that continuing with belief and justification, and after that the enforcement of the arguments and statements that uphold the arguments and statements that support the strength of faith. The basic curriculum used in religious education is the Qur'an. The process begins with reading, memorizing, understanding, and studying its meaning.<sup>19</sup>

### 2. Method of Moral Education

Al-Ghazali defines morality as follows: "Morality is an attitude rooted in the soul from which various actions are born easily and simply, without the need for thought and consideration. If that attitude is born of good and commendable actions, both in terms of reason and sharia, then it is called good morality. And if what is born of it is a despicable action, then the attitude is called bad morality.

Regarding the method of forming moral humans, Al-Ghazali equates teachers with a doctor treating his patients according to the disease they suffer from. He cannot treat multiple diseases with one medicine because it will kill many patients. Likewise, a teacher will not succeed in dealing with moral problems and the implementation of children's education in general by using only one method. Teachers must choose an educational method that is appropriate to the age and nature of the child. The ability to grasp and reject, depending on the personality situation, is crucial.<sup>20</sup>

### Actualization of Al-Ghazali's Thought in the Modern Era

Education is essentially an effort to humanize humans, meaning "with education, humans are expected to be able to find themselves from where they come from, what they are here for, and where they will go after this life so that they become human, both in thinking, behaving, and acting. The success and failure of an educational process in general can be assessed from its output, namely people as products of education. If education produces people who can be responsible for humanitarian tasks and divine tasks, acting more usefully both for themselves and others, and vice versa, people who are unable to carry out their life's tasks, the education has failed.<sup>21</sup>

Another characteristic of the failure of an educational process is that people who are products of education tend to look for work rather than work, let alone create jobs. In the context of developing countries, including our country, this gives rise to a new problem, namely the growth of educated unemployment, because there is no balance between the provision of jobs and job seekers. Factors for the failure of education in the modern era include (a) differences in emphasis between the definition of "education," which emphasizes aspects of morality and character, and the definition of "teaching," which emphasizes brain consumption. The current education process tends to focus on the second term. The shift from education to teaching also promotes the development of cognitive and psychomotor aspects. Conversely, the success of education in the form of behavior encompasses all three aspects integrally. (b) The new concept now focuses more on pursuing material. (c) The main goal of students in learning is to obtain a diploma and then apply for a job. (d) The education

<sup>19</sup> Nur Iftitahul Husniyah and Nur Hakim Nur Salim, "Konsep Ideal Pendidikan Islam Prespektif Imam Al Ghazali," *Studia Religia: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (December 8, 2023): 296–305, <https://doi.org/10.30651/sr.v7i2.20588>.

<sup>20</sup> Jonas Kolb, "Muslim Diversity, Religious Formation and Islamic Religious Education. Everyday Practical Insights into Muslim Parents' Concepts of Religious Education in Austria," *British Journal of Religious Education* 45, no. 2 (April 3, 2023): 172–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2021.1911787>.

<sup>21</sup> Rasiani, Lubis, and Sari, "Relevansi Pemikiran Filsafat Pendidikan Al-Ghazali Dalam Konteks Pendidikan Modern."

curriculum is not yet focused and integrated. (e) Lack of affection between teachers and students in educational interactions. (f) Religious education only revolves around the science of *kalam* and *fiqh* in a narrow sense. This means that there is less emphasis on *tafaqqah fiddin* (application of religion).

### **The Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Thoughts on Education**

The core of the world's current problems is the problem of education, and the hardest task is to solve this problem. This can be understood from one perspective: the purpose of human creation is to become a caliph *fil Ardli*. However, the emergence of pragmatic philosophy inspired by John Dewey has changed the orientation of education. Pragmatic philosophy ignores the concepts of truth and replaces them with usefulness, and the influence destroys the concept of the greatness and glory of humans themselves. There is an imbalance in the relationship between humans and God and nature.<sup>22</sup>

This replacement necessitates a change in the current education system, encompassing the basis, objectives, materials, qualifications, evaluation systems, education, and other aspects, all the way up to the graduates who are produced. The teaching and learning process there is not connected with religious lessons; teaching and learning is considered a human matter alone, does not discuss life after death, and is oriented towards maximum welfare by exploiting natural resources.

Indeed, the secular system in the West has been able to answer challenges that are intended to meet human needs in the material field, preceded by the development of knowledge to achieve excellence in science and technology. However, this progress has also resulted in a personal crisis and the erosion of human values. Therefore, it is not impossible that the system will eliminate humans from the earth. There is no other way to overcome the challenges of the world of education like that except to return to and implement human nature in its entirety, namely the Islamic education system. In the education system, there needs to be an effort to improve the system integrally, and the new system must not be a copy of the secular Western system. Against the challenges currently facing the world of education, it turns out that al-Ghazali's educational concept is able to answer these challenges.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to Al-Ghazali, good education is a way to get closer to Allah and gain happiness in this world and the hereafter. Al-Ghazali combines happiness in this world and happiness in the hereafter. According to him, the understanding and purpose of Islamic education is education that seeks and aims at the process of forming a perfect human being. In making a curriculum, Al Ghazali has two tendencies, namely a tendency towards religion and a pragmatic tendency. The aspects of Islamic education material according to Al Ghazali's thinking include education of faith, morals, reason, and social and physical. According to him, a good teacher, in addition to being intelligent and perfect in his mind, must also have commendable qualities. The qualities that a student must have are humility, purifying themselves from all evil, being obedient, and being consistent. Meanwhile, the evaluation of education is all forms of activities related to their respective duties and responsibilities in the education process. The concept of Islamic education in Al Ghazali's thinking is in line with the goals of education in Indonesia today. Where national education aims to educate the nation and develop the whole Indonesian people, namely people who believe and are devoted to God Almighty and have noble character, have knowledge and

<sup>22</sup> Fazillah Fazillah, "Analisis Model Pembelajaran Imam Al-Ghazali Dalam Kitab Ihya Ulumuddin," *Al-Madaris Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Keislaman* 5, no. 1 (April 30, 2024): 82–94, <https://doi.org/10.47887/amd.v5i1.176>.

skills, physical and spiritual health, a steady and independent personality, and a sense of responsibility. From the description above, we conclude that the main goal of Islamic education is to get closer to Allah so that it brings us to the perfection of life and brings happiness in the world and the hereafter. From some of Al-Ghazali's thoughts related to the concept of ideal Islamic education, what we need to pay special attention to is the aspect of implementation, namely in this case the curriculum, where Al-Ghazali emphasizes religious knowledge, in other words, emphasizes more on the aspect of religiosity. It is exemplified in this description that an ideal educator is an educator who has good and noble morals so that he can be a role model for students or learners; on the other hand, Imam Al-Ghazali also emphasizes the concept of an ideal learner who can glorify a teacher.

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