

# Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought and its relevance to contemporary Islamic education literature review on Scopus indexed articles

Viva Fadma Onilivia<sup>1\*</sup>, Noptario<sup>1</sup>, Maragustam<sup>1</sup>, Nadya Syafira Putri<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Kuwait University, Kuwait

\*vivafadmaonilivia189@gmail.com

## Abstract

*Al-Ghazali is a famous Islamic philosopher scholar, nicknamed Imam Al-Ghazali because of his views and deep knowledge of various religious sciences is as a blasphemy of Islam. According to Imam Al Ghazali, Islamic education is a process that will make humans as brilliant beings so that they will get happiness while living in the world and in the hereafter by staying closer to the creator, namely Allah Almighty through the knowledge that has been obtained through the process of education. Education today is relevant and in line with the concept of Imam Al-Gahzali regarding education which can be known from various components of education, both from educational objectives, curriculum, methods used in the educational process, educators and students themselves. This article traces research on the thought of Imam Al-Ghazali in the journal indexed by Scopus. The reason for choosing the reference limit is only in Scopus indexed journals so that the data obtained can be more reliable because it is published in reputable international journals. The urgency of this discussion is for science in the treasures of Islamic education, namely the relevance between contemporary Islamic education today according to Imam Al-Ghazali and educational thinking.*

**Keywords:** *Imam Al-Ghazali; Educational thought; Islamic education*

## Abstrak

Al-Ghazali adalah seorang ulama filsuf Islam yang terkenal, dijuluki Imam Al-Ghazali karena pandangan dan pengetahuannya yang mendalam tentang berbagai ilmu agama adalah sebagai seorang mujtahid. Menurut Imam Al Ghazali, pendidikan Islam adalah sebuah proses yang akan menjadikan manusia sebagai makhluk yang cemerlang sehingga akan mendapatkan kebahagiaan selama hidup di dunia dan di akhirat dengan cara mendekatkan diri kepada sang pencipta, yaitu Allah SWT melalui ilmu yang telah didapatkan melalui proses pendidikan. Pendidikan saat ini relevan dan sejalan dengan konsep Imam Al-Gahzali mengenai pendidikan yang dapat diketahui dari berbagai komponen pendidikan, baik dari tujuan pendidikan, kurikulum, metode yang digunakan dalam proses pendidikan, pendidik dan peserta didik itu sendiri. Artikel ini menelusuri penelitian mengenai pemikiran Imam Al-Ghazali dalam jurnal yang terindeks

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Scopus. Alasan pemilihan batasan referensi hanya pada jurnal terindeks Scopus agar data yang diperoleh dapat lebih terpercaya karena dipublikasikan pada jurnal internasional bereputasi. Urgensi dari pembahasan ini adalah untuk keilmuan dalam khazanah pendidikan Islam, yaitu relevansi antara pendidikan Islam kontemporer saat ini menurut Imam Al-Ghazali dengan pemikiran pendidikan.

**Kata kunci:** Imam Al-Ghazali; Pemikiran pendidikan; Pendidikan Islam

## Introduction

Education and Islam are very closely related. The relationship is in the form of organic and functional properties where educators are used to achieve Islamic goals and Islam as a basis for developing education (Supriyono, Ishaq, & Dayati, 2024). Islamic education is the process of preparing humans through teaching, coaching, guidance, and training to perceive and realize the true meaning of Islamic teachings in their happy lives outwardly and mentally, both in the world and the Hereafter (Subaidi et al., 2023). Islamic education is a very important science so that there are many books that focus on their respective fields such as *fiqh*, *tawhid*, *balaghoh*, *tarikh*, *tafsir*, *hadith* and so on (Muthohar, Ghofur, Jamil, & Sulthon, 2023). Likewise, there are scholars in Islamic history who are diligent in it, such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun, Imam Nawawi, and Imam Al-Ghazali (Ahmad & Abdullah, 2023a).

Imam Al-Ghazali is a well-known Islamic philosopher scholar or popular not only among Muslims but also among non-Muslims (Ibrahim et al., 2016). His spirit and greatness of Al-Ghazali have given a deep charm and impression on Muslims in terms of thought, ethics, and breadth of scientific coverage that Al-Ghazali mastered both in the fields of philosophy, creed, *fiqh*, science, Sufism, politics, and so on (Sulaiman, Jamsari, & Noh, 2014). Al-Ghazali's thoughts in the world of education, especially Islamic education, raised enthusiasm and became a source of inspiration, thus encouraging various groups to study his thoughts. From his thoughts then correlated with Islamic education that is currently developing.

Previous research related to this research is research conducted by Marwal Abdul Basit in 2022, which reveals the thoughts of Imam Al Ghazali regarding contemporary education, where the issues raised between this research and research conducted by Marwal are the same as exploring the thoughts of Imam Al Ghazali, but this research has a difference with Marwal's research and other research because it uses Scopus indexed article literature, which is a novelty of this research (Basit, 2022).

Based on the description described above, a research question can be formulated in this discussion, namely how does Al-Ghazali think about education? Then what is Al-Ghazali's educational thinking and its relevance to contemporary Islamic education? The novelty of this study is to take reference sources from Scopus indexed journals, so that the data obtained is more reliable because it is published in reputable international journals. The purpose of this study is to widely disseminate the thoughts of Imam Al-Ghazali related to Contemporary Islamic education so that it can be a source of reference for schools with Islamic backgrounds.

## **Research Method**

This research uses qualitative research methods, while the type of research used in this research is library research. This research was conducted by reading, studying, and researching library materials, namely related sources that discuss Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on education and its relevance to contemporary Islamic education in Scopus indexed articles. The articles needed are then collected by the author and studied, then the author quotes theories and opinions that have to do with the research problem. The data collection technique used in this research is by means of documentation, namely selecting data related to the research title.

Data is collected through searching scientific articles in the Scopus database using keywords such as "Imam Al-Ghazali," "educational thought," and "contemporary Islamic education," respectively. Relevant articles will be selected based on their abstracts and keywords that match the research topic. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this research will use source triangulation, by comparing and confirming information from the selected articles. In addition, this research will also consider the quality of the articles based on journal reputation and content relevance.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **A. Biography of Imam Al-Ghazali**

Imam Al-Ghazali's real name was Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali or more fully named Abu Hamid ibn Muhammad Al-Tusi Al-Shafi'i Al-Ghazali, who was born in 450 AH or 1058 AD coastal city of Thus, located in present-day northeastern Iran, and adjacent to the city of Mashhad, the capital of the Khurasan region (Hassan, 2011).

Imam Al Ghazali and his family are a strong family and are diligent in practicing religious teachings. His father's job was as a weaver of sheep fur cloth.

Although his father was a man who was not wealthy, he was a man who did not like to lie and was kind, his father also liked to associate with scholars and Sufis and took wisdom and obeyed them. Imam Al-Ghazali's father died when he was about six years old. After his father's death, he lived with his younger brother named Ahmad who was taken care of by his father's friend who was entrusted with a little property to support them both (Alshorman & Albasal, 2021).

Imam Al-Ghazali is an Islamic scholar and in general a humanitarian thinker. He is a resourceful, intelligent and brilliant person and has many advantages and roles in various aspects. All syar'i sciences are mastered by Imam Ghazali such as philosophy, *mantiq*, *fiqh*, *ushul fiqh*, Sufism and so on. Except for knowledge that is considered to be included in science that is not mastered such as the science of hadith. The nickname of Imam Al-Ghazali because of his views and deep knowledge of understanding various religious sciences is *hujjatul Islam* (Suhaimi, 2019).

The name Ghazali comes from the word Ghazalah which is the name of the village where Imam Al-Ghazali was born. After growing up, Ghazali received his first education in the city of Thus. When Ghazali was 15 years old, Ghazali went to Jurjan to deepen his studies in *fiqh* to Abu Nasr al-Isma'ili. When he was 20 years old, Ghazali went to Naisyapur to study *fiqh* and *kalam* with Al-Juwaini. It was at this time that Ghazali made his first work, an overview of the science of principles which in Arabic is called *Al-Manhul Min Ilm Al-Ashul* (R. R. Shah, 2016).

Al-Ghazali became an educator and teacher in the Nizhamiyah madrasa after being appointed assistant to Al-Juwaini who died in 478H/1085 AD. Al-Juwaini was a figure who taught Ghazali philosophical education covering natural philosophy and logic even though Al-Juwaini was not a philosopher. In addition to studying in the study of *kalam* and philosophy, the sciences in the field of Sufism also haunted Ghazali's mind during his stay there, then he studied with al-Farmadzi about theory and put it into practice.

After the departure of his teacher, Imam Al-Juwaini, Ghazali left Naisyapur for Muaskar, a minister of Nizamu Al-Mulk. After five years Ghazali migrated to Baghdad. In Baghdad he taught against the Bathinids. Then Ghazali learned the traditions and teachings of the *ta'limiyah* which stated that they were the only people who had the teaching and only they were entitled to receive the privilege of knowledge (Rohim & Al-Kindely, 2013).

Al-Ghazali left Baghdad in Dhulkaidah 488 AH / November 1095 AD and wanted to perform the Hajj to Mecca. Ghazali then lived an ascetic or *zuhud* life

for 11 years and then returned early in the morning to Baghdad and returned to teach at the Nizhamiyah madrasa at the request of his son. Then in 503 H / 1110 AD Ghazali founded a madrasa in his native place Thus and enjoyed his age by teaching, studying, and spiritual pouring until he died at the age of 55 years on Sunday 14 Jumadil II 505 H / 1111 AD (Ahmad & Abdullah, 2023b).

Imam Al-Ghazali's works are quite numerous because he is a prolific figure in writing. The number covers various scientific fields, such as:

1. Morals and Sufism, among others: *Ihya Ulumuddin*, *Mizan al-Amal*, *Kimiya al-Saadah*, *Misykat al-Anwar*, *Ayyuha al-Walad*, *Al-Adab Fi al-Din*, *Ar-Risalah al-Walad*, *Kitab al-A'rabin At-Tibru al-Masbuk Fi al-Ushul*, *Al-Mustashfa Fi Aushul*.
2. Philosophy, among others: *Tahafut al-Falsafah*, *Maqasidu al-Falsafah Al-Ma'rif al-Aqliyah*, *Mahkum al-Nadhar*, *Mizan al-Amal*, *Mi'yarul al-Ilmu*.
3. Religious, among others: *Ihya Ulumuddin*, *Minhaj al-Abidin*, *Al-Munqidz min al-Dalalah*.
4. Politics and government, among others: *Al-Mustazkhir (Fadallu al-Bathiniyah Wafaddail al-Mustazkiriyyah)*, *Sirru al-Alamin*, *Faatuna al-Ulum*, *Al-Iqtisad Fi al-I'tiqad*, *At-Tibru al-Masbuk Fi al-Nashihati al-Mulk*, *Sulukum al-Sulthanan*, *At-Tibru al-Masbuk Fi al-Nashihah al-Mulk* (Sari, 2023).

Among these works the most famous or most famous are:

1. Reviving religious science (*Ihya Ulumuddin*)

This book is the most famous or famous work of Imam Al-Ghazali. This book is a Sufism book that focuses on Islam, in order to always maintain the human heart. This book is the main book that discusses morals. This book was also written for quite a long time, namely in a few years when Al-Ghazali often migrated to Jerusalem, Hijaz, Sham, making it the largest book known not only by Muslims but also outside Islam as in Europe. This book is the largest, written over several years in the vicinity between the Levant, Jerusalem and the Hijaz, not only famous in the Islamic world, but in Europe and outside Islam.

2. The Book of Deliverance from Heresy (*Al-Munqidh min Ad-Dhalalah*)

In this book talks about the process of his life of thought, the process of his education, and the emergence of doubts in himself and in the beliefs of Al-Ghazali.

3. The Book of Apostasy of the Philosophers (*Tahaffufu Al-Falsafah*)

This book was written when Imam Al-Ghazali felt a stir in his mind while in Baghdad and this book deals with his sharp criticisms of philosophers one by one.

#### 4. The Book of Philosophers' Goals (*Maqosid Al-Falsafah*)

This book became the first work written at the age of 25 years, in this book discusses the challenges of the main problems in philosophy which are divided into three, namely divinity, logic, and physics.

### **B. Education According to Imam Al-Ghazali**

Education according to the thoughts of Imam Al Ghazali can be seen by understanding from various sides in the field of education, namely in the form of educational roles, educational objectives, curriculum, methods, educators, and students. In accordance with its function, education becomes a determinant that colors the life of a nation. Education according to Al-Ghazali's thought is more empirical, because he is very focused on education that affects students. Education and science are forms of human investment in the long term that will lead humans to the future. The intellect and knowledge possessed by man are the difference between man and animal (Tarmizi, 2020).

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, the importance of education because a lot of knowledge is a form of investment for humans or the same as storing wealth.

And circumstances can give to others until he becomes a generous man. And this is the best situation, so that with science can be stored like storing material possessions (Mahadi, Kamarzaman, Kamaruzaman, & Jalil, 2023).

Islamic education according to Al-Ghazali is a process that seeks to develop more brilliant humans both in carrying out life in the world and preparing for the afterlife. A perfect life can be achieved by humans with the effort to always seek knowledge and practice through the process of education. Al-Ghazali argues that science becomes a medium for *taqorrub* or self-approach to the creator where man will not be able to reach his God without knowledge (Kirabaev & Chistyakova, 2023).

#### **1. Educational objectives according to Imam Al Ghazali**

Imam Al Ghazali's views on Islamic education contained in his books such as in *Ihya Ulumuddin* gave great enlightenment to other Islamic scholars. Al Ghazali's thoughts on education are a real legacy that is quite important to be pursued, in the intellectual sphere in the field of Islamic education. This shows none other than that his existence as proof of the truth of Islamic education and Islam itself (H. Shah, 2023).

Education according to Imam Ghazali aims to approach oneself to Allah the Exalted, not for other purposes and purposes such as worldly material alone. If education is only aimed at and directed towards something that does not draw near to God, it can lead to malice, hatred and hostility (Malik, 2023).



The purpose of education according to Al Ghazali includes three aspects, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor, cognitive includes the guidance of reason which includes intelligence, intelligence and thinking patterns. The affective point includes guarding the heart with spiritual and emotional development. Psychomotor in the form of guidance with the process of physical development, namely body health and skill development. Imam Ghazali also put the purpose of education in two ways, namely to be able to arrive at the perfection of human life and become a deceiver to the creator, namely Allah Almighty (Sholihin, 2023).

Al Ghazali argues that the purpose of education is influenced by the paradigm of human life and even the nation and state because according to the Qur'anic verse Az-Azariyat 56 in which Allah says I did not create *jinn*s and humans but that they should worship me. Al-Ghazali's philosophy and view of human life will always be oriented towards Islamic religious teachings that originate from the revelation of God, human reason, and self-approach through Sufism, namely human perfection in life in the world and hereafter (Soleh, 2022).

## **2. Curriculum According to Imam Al Ghazali**

The curriculum according to Al Ghazali can be known from his point of view about the science that is divided into two periods or periods. The first is to refer to philosophers who group types of science, for example in the book *maqosid al-falahshifah*. The second period, when Al-Ghazali conducted research then made the soul into its substance and nature into its state which reflected the maturity of Ghazali's thinking pattern described in his book *Ihya Ulumuddin* (Belhaj, 2022).

Imam Al-Ghazali's view of the curriculum is known by the suitability and accuracy of choosing the field of educational studies, science is grouped into several groups, which are distinguished by different characteristics and then make assessments by adjusting to their importance and consequences for students. Thus, educators must use an approach that matches their competence and can also adjust a good attitude in the learning process (Karakaya, 2022).

## **3. Teaching methods according to Imam Al Ghazali**

The method of teaching or education is one of the most important aspects of education. Methods are useful for intermediaries in transferring knowledge from educators to learners. With educational or teaching methods, there is a process of possessing knowledge and insight for students so that they are able to receive knowledge delivery from educators (Özkan, 2022).

Al-Ghazali emphasized on methods that should lead to example and by familiarizing the good things of *Riyadhoh Al nafs* Al Ghazali which explains that

learners should always be taught to the good in a good way as well. Thus goodness will always grow and lead to a happy early life and hereafter. What is meant by *Riyadhoh* is by educating ethics with good habituation. Then with *at-tajribah* i.e. can take *ibrah* or experience when making friends with good people (Ahida, 2022).

#### **4. Educators and Learners according to Imam Al Ghazali**

##### **a. Educators**

Educators according to Al-Ghazali are second parents to all students. This is because the education taught by educators is expected to save students from hellfire. While parents are more about saving from the heat of the world fire. As an educator, Al-Ghazali himself considers that educators are important and main figures in education. In the book *Ihya Ulumuddin* Al-Ghazali states that:

The rights of a teacher are greater than the rights of parents. The Parents became the cause of the child's birth and being able to live in this mortal world while the teacher became the reason for the child to have eternal life. If there is no teacher then what the child gets from his parents can lead to continuous destruction. The Guru is the one who gives the eternal use of the afterlife. That is a teacher who teaches the afterlife or worldly science, but with the purpose of the afterlife, not the world (Md Sham, Yaqin, & Wachidah, 2021).

Al-Ghazali mentioned several duties and obligations that must be performed by an educator, namely having 8 special traits and duties:

1. Educators must have compassion, with this trait, there will be a sense of peace in students towards their desert. This helps students in mastering knowledge
2. Educator does not demand remuneration for his hard work in teaching or expect excessive pay from his work. Because teaching is mandatory for everyone who is knowledgeable.
3. Educators are tasked with being honest and correct extension officers in front of their students and are obliged to advise their students with good and correct knowledge and knowledge.
4. Educators do not use violence and ridicule in fostering the mentality and behavior of their students. Teachers should use sympathetic and compassionate means.
5. Considering educators as role models, then kindness and tolerance must be possessed. Such as respecting the knowledge of others who are not specialists, should not demonize, and devalue.
6. Educators must maintain the principle of safeguarding differences between individuals, which requires the holding of differences between each student based on the ability of reason or other abilities. The teacher limits himself in teaching to the limit of the student's comprehension ability, and therefore he



does not need to give something that is unattainable by the student's reason, because it can cause antipathy, or damage his reason.

7. The educator studies the psychology of the learner, so that he knows how he should treat. Al-Ghazali recommends that educators or teachers only give clear and uncomplicated knowledge, because if teachers give complicated knowledge to students who are less intelligent, it will reduce student enthusiasm.
  8. Educators want to practice their knowledge so that what exists is a unity between speech and action. Teachers should not do actions that their students should not do because it will reduce their authority (Vasalou, 2021).
- b. Learners

According to article 1 paragraph 4 of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, students are members of society who try to develop themselves through the educational process at certain levels and types of education. Thus students in Islamic education are members of society who try to develop themselves through the educational process into humans who have knowledge, piety and noble morals so that they are able to carry out their functions as devotees, worship Allah, and as caliphs (Habiburrahim, Trisnawati, Yuniarti, Zainuddin, & Muluk, 2021).

According to Imam Al-Ghazali learners have ten obligations, namely:

1. Prioritize self-purification from despicable morals and vices, because science is a form of worship of the heart, spiritual prayer, and an inner approach to God.
2. Prioritize self-purification from despicable morals and vices, because science is a form of worship of the heart, spiritual prayer, and an inner approach to God.
3. Do not puff out their chests towards the pious (scholars, including teachers), but are willing to obey in all matters and are willing to listen to his advice
4. For beginner students when studying should avoid studying as a kind of thought and character, because it can confuse the mind.
5. Not neglect any discipline that is commendable, other than being willing to learn what the orientation of the discipline is.
6. In exploring a discipline, students do not do it all at once, but need to be gradual, and prioritize the most important.
7. Do not move to the next stage of knowledge until they have completely mastered the previous stage of science, because the knowledge must be linearly continuous.

8. Should know the factors that cause him to gain noble knowledge, glory can be seen from two sides, namely the virtue of results and the reliability of the basis of his argument.
9. The purpose of studying is to cleanse the mind and decorate it with virtues and draw closer to God. Not aiming to seek position, wealth, and popularity.
10. Must know the relationship between the sciences he studies and the orientation that is aimed at (Malik, 2021).

### **C. The relevance of Al-Ghazali's faith education thought to contemporary Islamic education**

Current education or national education in Indonesia serves to improve the quality of life of the nation, and leads to the goal of developing the ability of students to become obedient servants to their creators, have good ethics, have commendable morals, be physically and spiritually healthy, skilled, independent, and responsible. Education in Indonesia is currently relevant to education in the perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali, where the focus of education is to develop logic and reason, moral, spiritual based on the divine norms of students (Guseynov, 2020).

The curriculum applied at this time in Indonesia is the independent curriculum. The implementation of the independent curriculum currently focuses on learning that is more active, independent, and characterful, purposeful, comfortable, independent. Educators are authorized to choose teaching devices or media that suit students and are useful for increasing their interest in learning. Thus, the current curriculum is relevant to the concept of Al-Ghazali's curriculum which holds that the determination and selection of study or learning materials in accordance with educational objectives is part of the curriculum itself. Likewise, the current educational method is quite relevant according to Imam Al-Ghazali, namely through habituation and example of educators and then also by adjusting to the learning process that takes place (Novianto, Arikunto, & Husna, 2020).

Educators today are relevant to educators according to Al-Ghazali, where educators have full responsibility for their students. Educators are not only tasked with conveying their knowledge but also responsible for the moral development and commendable morals of each student. Educators must also really develop their potential so that they can become competent and professional educators. Likewise with the tasks and roles of students that are currently relevant, where students must be able to understand and understand a learning, namely by practicing it for themselves while maintaining supervision

from educators, so that the roles, tasks, and functions of educators and students can be carried out properly and complement each other (Heck, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Islamic education according to Al-Ghazali is an effort to develop brilliant humans both in their lives both in the world and in the hereafter. A beautiful and perfect life can be achieved by humans with the effort to always seek knowledge and practice through the process of education. Imam Al-Ghazali is of the view that science is a medium to get closer to Allah where humans will not be able to reach their God without knowledge. Education in Indonesia is currently relevant to education in the perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali, where the focus of education is to develop logic and reason, moral, spiritual based on the divine norms of students. Education today is also in line with the concept of Imam Al-Ghazali regarding education which can be known from various components of education, both from educational objectives, curriculum, methods used in the educational process, educators and students themselves.

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