



Islamic Education in the Formation of Students' Character: An Analysis of Imam Al-Ghazali's Thought

Emha Dzia'ul Haq¹, Sri Adiningsih², Elia Mu'shoda³

¹Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN) Majene, Indonesia

²Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN) Majene, Indonesia

³UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

e-mail: emhadziaulhaq@stainmajene.ac.id¹, sriadiningsih@stainmajene.ac.id²,
elia77@gmail.com³

Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the development of students' character and morality through a critical examination of Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on the philosophy of education and their relevance to contemporary educational issues. The study employs a qualitative approach with a critical literature review design focusing on Imam Al-Ghazali's major works and recent research findings (2020 - 2025) related to character education. This study utilizes a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. Data collection was conducted through literature review. The data obtained were analyzed using content analysis techniques to interpret the meaning and substance of Imam Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy. The research findings indicate that Imam Al-Ghazali's educational concept emphasizes a balance between the mastery of knowledge and the cultivation of noble character. The core of the discussion is that the purpose of education is not only focused on attaining worldly happiness but also happiness in the hereafter. Furthermore, this article examines the moral and ethical values emphasized by Imam Al-Ghazali in the character-building process. The implications of this research provide a conceptual contribution to the development of education, particularly Islamic education in Indonesia, which is oriented toward character, moral, and holistic development.

Keywords:

islamic education, moral education, character development



This is an open access article under [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.

* Corresponding author :
Email Address
emhadziaulhaq@stainmajene.ac.id
Received : May 2, 2026;
Revised : May 13, 2026;
Accepted : May 14, 2026;
Published : May 30, 2026.

INTRODUCTION

In an ideal context, Indonesia's national education system also affirms the importance of character and moral development among students. This is reflected in the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes the values of faith, piety, noble character, cooperation, and critical thinking as the primary goals of education (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). Normatively, teachers are positioned as central actors in transmitting values, while schools are expected to serve as social spaces conducive to moral internalization through exemplary behavior, habituation, and critical reflection (Zalikhu et al., 2023). However, this normative framework has not yet been fully realized in daily educational practice, particularly amidst rapid and complex social changes.

Empirically, various recent reports indicate a tension between the ideal goals of character education and the practical realities of education in the field. A national study on the post-pandemic educational climate reveals an increase in cases of intolerance, bullying, verbal abuse, and the erosion of digital ethics among students (Wulandari & Fauzi, 2021). This phenomenon is reinforced by a report from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI, 2024), which notes that schools which should serve as safe spaces for moral development often become arenas for the reproduction of power dynamics, symbolic violence, and educational practices lacking ethical reflection (Putri, 2025). This situation indicates that character education has not yet fully functioned as a process of interpreting values, but is often reduced to normative slogans or ceremonial activities.

According to Parma et al. (2023), education is not merely aimed at developing students' cognitive skills, but rather at shaping well-rounded individuals of character and moral integrity who are capable of living ethically within a complex social order. In the tradition of Islamic educational philosophy, this objective is understood as the process of *tahdzīb al-nafs* (purification of the soul) and the cultivation of noble character as the primary foundation of human knowledge and civilization. Imam Al-Ghazali explicitly positions education as an instrument of moral transformation oriented toward a balance between the intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions of students (Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*). This perspective aligns with the direction of contemporary global education policy, which emphasizes character education and social-emotional learning as the core of 21st-century learning (Madhar, 2024).

This problematic situation becomes even more complex when considered in the context of post COVID-19 social changes and the penetration of digital technology into students' lives. Teachers, as key educational actors, face a dilemma between administrative demands, pressure to meet academic standards, and the moral responsibility to nurture students' character (Haq, 2023).

On the other hand, students live in a social ecosystem saturated with pragmatic values, instant competition, and exposure to popular culture that often conflicts with the moral values taught in school or at home (Hidayati, 2022). This tension between taught values and lived reality creates moral dissonance that undermines the internalization of character.

It is at this point that Al-Ghazali's thought becomes relevant for critical and contextual analysis. Imam Al-Ghazali did not view moral education as an indoctrinative process, but rather as a process of habituation accompanied by reflective awareness and the exemplary conduct of the educator (Fuadhah, 2024). He emphasized the role of the teacher as a murabbi responsible for the formation of the soul, not merely as a transmitter of knowledge (Al-Ghazali, Ayyuha al-Walad). However, recent studies on character education in Indonesia tend to separate modern policy discourse from the classical Islamic educational philosophy tradition, resulting in Al-Ghazali's thought often being positioned in a normative-theological framework rather than as a critical analytical framework for addressing contemporary educational challenges (Hasan, 2024; Haq, 2024).

Consequently, there is a substantive research gap in character education studies, namely the scarcity of research that integrates Imam Al-Ghazali's philosophical thought with a critical analysis of the current social realities of education. Some studies focus on the technical implementation of character education programs, while others examine Al-Ghazali textually without relating him to the dynamics of actors, power relations, and the social context of contemporary education. This gap results in the loss of the potential of Al-Ghazali's thought as a critical lens for understanding the moral crisis of students within a rapidly changing social context. Based on this background, this study is designed to answer the following research questions: How are the concepts of character and moral development of students addressed in Imam Al-Ghazali's philosophy of education, and what is the relevance and significance of these concepts in addressing students' moral issues within the context of contemporary education?

The objective of this study is to construct a philosophical-conceptual interpretation of character and moral formation in students based on the thought of Imam Al-Ghazali, and to critically interpret it within the context of current educational challenges. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the body of Islamic educational philosophy through a contextual, critical qualitative approach. Practically, this study can serve as a reflective reference for educators and policymakers in designing character education that is not merely normative but rooted in a deep understanding of humanity, morality, and social reality.

The scientific urgency of this research lies in the pressing need to reconstruct the paradigm of character education amidst the current moral crisis and social disruption. Examining Imam Al-

Ghazali's thought critically and contextually is not merely an attempt to romanticize tradition, but a scientific endeavor to discover an ethical-philosophical framework that is relevant and transformative for 21st-century education.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. Library research refers to a method of collecting and analyzing data derived from books, scholarly journals, classical manuscripts, and other relevant academic documents related to the research topic through systematic reading, identification, and critical review (Darmalaksana, 2020). This study specifically adopts a descriptive-analytical and philosophical approach to examine Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on Islamic education, particularly concerning character formation and moral cultivation among students.

The qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of meanings, values, contexts, and educational concepts embedded in Al-Ghazali's thought holistically rather than through quantitative measurement. The research emphasizes the interpretation of ideas, conceptual exploration, and contextual analysis of Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy and its relevance to contemporary Islamic education practices in Indonesia.

The data sources in this study were divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consisted of Al-Ghazali's major works related to education, ethics, and character formation, such as *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and *Ayyuba al-Walad*. Meanwhile, secondary sources included scholarly books, accredited journal articles, previous research findings, and academic publications discussing Islamic education, character education, and analyses of Al-Ghazali's educational thought. The selection of sources was based on their academic credibility, relevance to the research focus, and contribution to understanding the concept of character education in Islamic thought.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation and literature review by identifying, classifying, and reviewing relevant texts related to the research problem. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical content analysis techniques. The analysis process involved several stages: data reduction, categorization of themes, interpretation of Al-Ghazali's educational concepts, comparison with contemporary character education discourse, and drawing conclusions systematically. Through this process, the researcher interpreted the essential values and educational principles proposed by Al-Ghazali in the formation of students' character.

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the data, this study applied source triangulation by comparing various classical and contemporary references discussing Al-Ghazali's educational

thought. In addition, the researcher conducted cross-reference verification among sources and employed critical interpretation to maintain consistency and academic rigor in the analysis. These strategies were intended to strengthen the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

A. Brief Biography of Imam Al-Ghazali

Imam Al-Ghazali's full name was Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali. He was born in Ghazal, a small town located in Tus, in the region of Khorasan, in the year 450 AH/1059 CE, and passed away in the year 505 AH/1111 CE. His father was a wool spinner who spun and sold the yarn himself in that town. Imam Al-Ghazali had two siblings. When his father was about to die, he instructed his friend to ensure that his two daughters were raised and received a complete education. His friend immediately carried out this request; the two children were educated and sent to school. After their father's inheritance was exhausted, they were advised to continue seeking knowledge to the best of their ability.

Throughout his life, from childhood to adulthood, he studied under several teachers, including Ahmad bin Muhammad Ar-Radzikani in Tus, Abi Nashr al-Isma'ili in Jurjani and al-Juwaini, and Imam al-Haramain. Imam Al-Ghazali was a brilliant individual capable of grasping even concepts that defied clear reasoning, leading al-Juwaini to describe him as possessing knowledge as vast as a "deep, overwhelming ocean."

In the year 465 AH, Radzakani advised the two Al-Ghazali brothers to leave their village to seek knowledge, as well as to earn a living. So the two brothers went to the city of Jurjan, and this marked the beginning of Al-Ghazali's scholarly journey. While his older brother, Ahmad Al-Ghazali, settled in Jurjan and grew to become a sufi-zahid (ascetic), Imam Al-Ghazali continued his journey to study the various disciplines of knowledge that were flourishing at the time. During one of his travels, Imam Al-Ghazali once encountered a band of robbers. In 484, at the age of 34, Imam Al-Ghazali was summoned by Nizhamul Mulk to become the head of the Nizhamul Madrasah in Baghdad, and was appointed as Shaykh al-Islam to lead the Masyaikh (a team of professors) at the madrasah, which encompassed all levels from elementary to university.

While in Baghdad, many renowned scholars from various lands came to him, both to discuss and to debate, until he was ultimately recognized as an unrivaled authority on knowledge.

His distinction lay in his mastery of various disciplines, ranging from Arabic linguistics, fiqh and usul al-fiqh, to kalam and tasawwuf. He also mastered various schools of thought, both from the Sunni and Shia traditions. After four years of teaching his students at the Nizamiyyah Madrasah and engaging in scholarly debates with various religious figures, Imam Al-Ghazali sensed a void within himself, the exact nature of which he could not pinpoint (Delviany et al., 2024).

B. Imam Al-Ghazali's Concept of Education

Al-Ghazali was a Sufi who placed great emphasis on education, as he recognized that education plays a crucial role in shaping the way of life of a society and the thinking of individuals. According to him, education should be based on good intentions (niyyah) to achieve moral and spiritual goodness, not merely academic knowledge. Ethics and morality are the primary focus, and education is expected to foster good character and behavior (Canu et al., 2025). Al-Ghazali regarded knowledge of God as the ultimate goal, emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach that encompasses physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects. Practical skills are also considered important, and education is viewed as a process of self-transformation, not merely the transfer of knowledge. Al-Ghazali's thought has provided a foundation for the development of Islamic education, with an emphasis on moral, spiritual, and holistic values.

Meanwhile, H. M. Arifin, a professor in the field of education, stated that from a philosophical perspective, Al-Ghazali was an adherent of idealism who consistently grounded his views in religion. In the context of education, however, Al-Ghazali leaned more toward empiricism. This was due to his strong emphasis on the influence of education on students. According to him, a child's development is highly dependent on the role of parents and their education (Annur et al., 2023).

Generally, the Islamic education system possesses a religious character and an ethical framework that encompasses its goals and objectives. Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy can be described as religious-ethical, influenced by his understanding of Sufism. For Al-Ghazali, true education is considered a means to draw closer to Allah, to guide humanity toward happiness in this world and the hereafter, and to serve as a vehicle for spreading virtue. From Al-Ghazali's perspective, the world of education must prioritize respect for knowledge, which he regards as a companion in solitude, a friend in silence, a guide to the faith, and a source of resilience in times of scarcity and hardship. Consequently, respect for knowledge entails respect for teachers.

Al-Ghazali also emphasized the importance of paying attention to critical factors in the field of education. He argued that knowledge must be accorded the highest respect,

acknowledging that reverence for knowledge is an absolute necessity. Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's thoughts on life and life values, the development of a curriculum aligned with the scope of knowledge, and his deep passion for knowledge are also key elements in his educational discourse. Imam Al-Ghazali offers crucial advice regarding children's education, specifically the importance of prioritizing education from the very beginning of their lives. For him, how a child is raised in childhood will influence their character in adulthood (Aljaber et al., 2025). Al-Ghazali's concept of education can be understood through his thoughts on various aspects related to educational goals, curriculum, teacher ethics, student ethics, and teaching methods.

C. The Goals of Education According to Al-Ghazali

Imam Al-Ghazali's philosophy encompasses three aspects: the cognitive aspect, which involves the cultivation of reason, such as intelligence, wisdom, and critical thinking; the affective aspect, which involves the cultivation of the heart, such as the development of emotions, the soul, and spirituality; The psychomotor aspect, which involves physical development, such as physical health and skills (Afandi & Fuadi, 2025).

As for the ultimate goals of education: first, the attainment of human perfection that leads to drawing closer to Allah; second, human perfection that leads to happiness in this world and the hereafter. These goals appear to have religious and moral undertones, yet they do not neglect worldly matters.

D. Code of Ethics for Educators and Students

According to Al-Ghazali, the heart which is the essence of humanity is central to education. According to him, the substance of a human being does not lie in the physical elements but in the heart, and he views humanity as theocentric; thus, his educational concept is more focused on the cultivation of noble character whether through guidance, direction, improvement, or the purification of the heart to draw closer to Allah (Elmontadzery et al., 2024). Therefore, educators must uphold the ethics and professional code of conduct, namely:

- a. Loving the students
- b. Seeking the pleasure of Allah and drawing closer to Him
- c. Not neglecting the duty of advising students
- d. Preventing students from falling into reprehensible moral conduct
- e. Not looking down on fellow educators
- f. Delivering material appropriate to students' level of understanding
- g. Presenting material clearly and concretely
- h. Putting knowledge into practice in accordance with one's understanding and actions

The code of ethics for students according to Imam Al-Ghazali covers three main aspects, namely:

- a. Ethics regarding knowledge
- b. Ethics regarding teachers
- c. Social ethics

E. Educational and Learning Methods

Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the learning process must prioritize the method of setting a good example, the method of memorization, and the cultivation of positive habits. As explained in *Riyadlat Al-Nafs* by Al-Ghazali, if children are accustomed to positive things and taught in a good manner, they will grow up to be good people and attain happiness in this world and the hereafter (Fandra et al., 2025).

F. The Nature and Role of Educators

According to Al-Ghazali, a teacher entrusted with the task of teaching must not only be intelligent and possess sound reasoning but also have good character and physical strength. With sound reasoning, they can possess a deep understanding of various fields of knowledge; with good character, they can serve as an example and role model for students; and with physical strength, teachers can carry out the tasks of teaching, educating, and guiding their students (Fatchulloh, 2024).

In addition to the general qualities of an educator, there are also specific qualities and duties, including:

1. Compassion and empathy.
A teacher must treat students like a parent treats their child; in fact, he argues that a teacher's rights over a student are greater than a father's rights over his child.
2. Sincerity and selflessness, without expecting payment from students.
Al-Ghazali argues that a teacher is not entitled to demand a fee for teaching services and should not expect any reward from their students.
3. Honesty and trustworthiness.
4. Gentleness in giving advice; not being harsh when educating students.
5. Broad-minded; a teacher should not criticize subjects outside their area of expertise in front of students, nor should teachers criticize one another.
6. Guiding students toward subjects aligned with their interests, talents, and abilities.
7. Respecting the opinions and abilities of others.

8. Understanding and valuing the diverse potential of students.
9. Teach thoroughly and be generous with knowledge.
10. Be idealistic.

DISCUSSION

A. The Relevance of Imam Al-Ghazali's Educational Philosophy to Contemporary Character Education.

The findings reveal that Imam Al-Ghazali constructed an educational philosophy rooted in the integration of intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. His educational orientation was not merely directed toward the transmission of knowledge but toward the transformation of human personality through ethical cultivation and spiritual purification. This demonstrates that Al-Ghazali's educational thought transcends the conventional dichotomy between cognitive achievement and moral formation that frequently characterizes contemporary educational systems.

A critical examination of the findings indicates that Al-Ghazali's philosophy emerged from his dissatisfaction with formalistic intellectualism, particularly educational practices that emphasized rational mastery while neglecting inner morality. This can be seen from the biographical findings showing that despite his extraordinary scholarly achievement and recognition at the Nizamiyyah Madrasah in Baghdad, Al-Ghazali experienced a spiritual crisis and intellectual emptiness. Such a condition reflects his critique of knowledge detached from ethical and spiritual consciousness. Therefore, his educational philosophy should not merely be interpreted as a pedagogical concept but as an epistemological criticism of education that prioritizes intellectual superiority without moral orientation.

This argument becomes highly relevant in contemporary education, where academic success is often measured quantitatively through grades, certifications, and technical competencies, while ethical integrity receives limited attention. The findings suggest that Al-Ghazali viewed this imbalance as dangerous because knowledge without moral guidance has the potential to produce individuals who are intellectually capable yet spiritually empty and socially irresponsible. In this context, Al-Ghazali's philosophy offers a counter-discourse to modern educational paradigms dominated by materialism, utilitarianism, and excessive competition.

Furthermore, the findings concerning Al-Ghazali's emphasis on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions reveal that his educational framework was fundamentally holistic. However, unlike contemporary holistic education models that are often anthropocentric, Al-

Ghazali's approach remains theocentric because all dimensions of human development are ultimately directed toward closeness to Allah. This distinction is analytically significant because it demonstrates that for Al-Ghazali, human perfection cannot be reduced to psychological balance or social functionality alone, but must include transcendental consciousness. Thus, education functions not merely as social preparation but as spiritual transformation.

Another important analytical point emerging from the findings is that Al-Ghazali positioned morality not as a complementary component of education but as its ontological foundation. Knowledge acquires meaning only when it contributes to ethical refinement and spiritual awareness. Consequently, the relevance of Al-Ghazali's philosophy in the contemporary era lies not only in its moral teachings but also in its ability to reconstruct the philosophical purpose of education itself. His thought challenges modern educational systems to reconsider whether education should merely produce skilled labor or cultivate morally responsible human beings.

B. Moral and Ethical Values in the Character-Building Process

The findings demonstrate that moral and ethical values occupy a central position in Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy. However, the significance of this finding extends beyond the simple assertion that education should teach morality. Al-Ghazali conceptualized morality as an internalized disposition rooted in the purification of the heart, meaning that character formation involves existential transformation rather than behavioral conformity alone. This indicates that his concept of character education is deeply psychological and spiritual.

The findings concerning theocentric human nature and the centrality of the heart reveal that Al-Ghazali viewed moral degradation as originating primarily from inner corruption rather than external ignorance. Therefore, education must address the internal dimensions of the human being, including intention (*niyyah*), self-control, sincerity, and spiritual discipline. This perspective differs fundamentally from many contemporary character education models that focus predominantly on external behavioral regulation and social compliance. Al-Ghazali's approach suggests that authentic morality emerges from inner awareness rather than institutional coercion.

Moreover, the findings regarding educational methods such as habituation, exemplary conduct, and memorization indicate that Al-Ghazali understood character formation as a gradual and repetitive process. This reflects a sophisticated pedagogical insight that ethical behavior cannot be established through cognitive instruction alone. Moral values become meaningful only when embodied in repeated actions and reinforced through lived experience. In this regard, Al-

Ghazali anticipated modern theories of social learning and moral development, which emphasize imitation, environmental influence, and habitual practice in shaping character.

The findings concerning teacher ethics also reveal a deeper educational philosophy centered on moral authority. Al-Ghazali's insistence that teachers must embody sincerity, compassion, honesty, and humility indicates that education is fundamentally relational rather than merely instructional. The teacher functions not only as a transmitter of information but as a living moral text whose behavior shapes students' ethical consciousness. Analytically, this demonstrates that Al-Ghazali rejected the separation between knowledge and morality in educational practice. A teacher lacking ethical integrity, regardless of intellectual competence, cannot effectively fulfill the educational mission.

This insight is particularly relevant in contemporary educational contexts characterized by increasing commercialization and bureaucratization. The transformation of education into a market-oriented institution has, in many cases, weakened the ethical and spiritual dimensions of teaching. Al-Ghazali's philosophy implicitly critiques such conditions by emphasizing sincerity and moral responsibility over material orientation. Therefore, his educational ethics provide not only moral guidance but also a critical framework for evaluating the ideological direction of contemporary education.

Another important aspect emerging from the findings is Al-Ghazali's emphasis on early childhood education. His argument that childhood experiences shape adult character reflects a profound understanding of moral psychology. Character, in his view, is neither innate nor accidental but socially and educationally constructed through continuous interaction with parents, teachers, and the surrounding environment. This reinforces the idea that moral crises within society are inseparable from failures in educational and familial institutions. Consequently, character education should not be limited to formal instruction but must involve the creation of ethical environments capable of nurturing moral consciousness from an early age.

C. The Goal of Education: Balancing Worldly and Hereafter Happiness

The findings indicate that Al-Ghazali formulated educational goals within a dual framework: worldly welfare and eternal happiness in the hereafter. However, this dual orientation should not be interpreted merely as a balance between religious and secular interests. Rather, it reflects an integrated worldview in which worldly life acquires meaning only when connected to spiritual and moral purposes. In Al-Ghazali's philosophy, worldly success is not rejected, but it must remain subordinate to ethical and transcendental values.

Analytically, this finding demonstrates that Al-Ghazali rejected purely materialistic conceptions of education. Modern educational systems frequently position economic productivity, employability, and competitiveness as primary indicators of success. Such an orientation tends to reduce education into an instrument of market needs. In contrast, Al-Ghazali viewed education as a process of human refinement aimed at cultivating moral responsibility and spiritual awareness. This distinction is crucial because it reveals the ideological tension between utilitarian educational paradigms and value-oriented Islamic educational philosophy.

The findings also reveal that Al-Ghazali acknowledged the importance of practical skills and intellectual competence. However, these competencies were not considered ultimate ends in themselves. Their value depended on how they contributed to ethical living and devotion to Allah. This perspective reflects a hierarchy of educational objectives in which spiritual and moral goals regulate intellectual and practical pursuits. Consequently, Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy avoids both extreme asceticism and excessive materialism by integrating worldly engagement with transcendental consciousness.

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's conception of happiness challenges dominant modern assumptions concerning human fulfillment. Contemporary society often equates happiness with economic achievement, social status, and personal satisfaction. Al-Ghazali, however, defined true happiness as the attainment of spiritual tranquility through moral purification and closeness to Allah. Education, therefore, becomes a transformative process intended to cultivate inner balance rather than merely external success. This insight is increasingly relevant in modern societies experiencing psychological crises, anxiety, and moral disorientation despite technological and economic advancement.

From a broader analytical perspective, the findings suggest that Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy offers a critique of secular modernity itself. His insistence on integrating morality, spirituality, and knowledge challenges the fragmentation of human identity produced by modern educational systems. By positioning ethical consciousness at the center of education, Al-Ghazali provides a philosophical alternative capable of restoring the humanistic and spiritual dimensions increasingly marginalized within contemporary educational discourse.

D. Implications for the Development of Islamic Education in Indonesia.

The findings of this study have significant implications for the reconstruction of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in responding to contemporary moral and social challenges. The persistence of corruption, intolerance, violence, and ethical decline among younger

generations indicates that educational success measured solely through academic achievement has failed to produce morally responsible citizens. In this context, Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy offers not merely normative ideals but a foundational framework for rethinking the direction of Islamic education.

The findings suggest that current educational problems are not simply technical or curricular issues but reflect a deeper philosophical crisis concerning the purpose of education itself. Many educational institutions prioritize measurable academic outcomes while neglecting ethical and spiritual formation. Al-Ghazali's philosophy critiques this reductionist orientation by emphasizing that the essence of education lies in character formation and purification of the soul. Consequently, educational reform in Indonesia should not focus exclusively on curriculum modernization or technological advancement but must also address the moral and spiritual foundations of education.

The findings regarding teacher ethics are particularly important for the Indonesian context. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on sincerity, compassion, and moral integrity suggests that educational quality cannot be separated from the ethical quality of educators themselves. This implies that teacher professionalism should not be understood merely in technical or administrative terms but also in moral and spiritual dimensions. Educational institutions must therefore cultivate educators who are not only academically competent but also capable of becoming ethical role models within society.

Additionally, the findings concerning habituation and exemplary conduct indicate that character education requires cultural transformation within educational institutions. Moral values cannot be effectively internalized through formal instruction alone if institutional environments fail to embody ethical principles. This suggests that Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia should develop educational cultures grounded in discipline, honesty, mutual respect, spiritual practice, and social responsibility. In this regard, character education becomes a lived institutional experience rather than a symbolic curricular component.

Finally, the study demonstrates that Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy remains intellectually relevant because it addresses fundamental human concerns that transcend historical periods, namely the relationship between knowledge, morality, spirituality, and human purpose. His thought offers a critical and holistic framework capable of responding to the limitations of contemporary educational paradigms dominated by materialistic and technocratic orientations. Therefore, the reconstruction of Islamic education in Indonesia may significantly benefit from

re-engaging with Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy as a source of ethical and spiritual renewal in contemporary educational practice.

CONCLUSION

Al-Ghazali viewed education as a vital process for shaping morally and spiritually complete human beings, aimed at drawing closer to God and fostering happiness in this world and the hereafter. According to Al-Ghazali, education is not merely the transfer of academic knowledge but also holistic knowledge. The ethics and morals of education are strongly emphasized; teachers are seen as role models possessing noble character, wisdom, and compassion toward their students. Children's education must begin at an early age through the cultivation of good habits and positive values.

Significantly, this study provides a conceptual contribution to the development of Islamic education in Indonesia that is oriented toward character building, social harmony, and religious moderation. Further research is recommended to empirically examine the implementation of Al-Ghazali ideas in various Islamic educational institutions and to compare them with character education models in other Islamic boarding schools within a broader context.

REFERENCES

- Ardyan, E., Boari, Y., Akhmad, A., Yuliyani, L., Hildawati, H., & ... (2023). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dan Kuantitatif: Pendekatan Metode Kualitatif dan Kuantitatif di Berbagai Bidang. books.google.com.
- Afandi, I., & Fuadi, M. H. (2025). Integration of Environmental Theology in an Integrative Science Curriculum to Build Ecological Literacy among Muslim Students. *Khazanah: Journal of Islamic Education and Science*, 1(2), 17-31. <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1620-4196>
- Aini, F., & Ramadhan, Z. H. (2024). Peran guru dalam mengembangkan nilai etika dan moral peserta didik sekolah dasar. *ELSE (Elementary School Education Journal): Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.30651/else.v8i2.23220>
- AL JABER, Z. K., HILALLUDIN, H., & KHAER, S. M. (2025). Transformasi pendidikan Islam: Peran madrasah, pesantren, dan universitas dalam menjawab tantangan zaman. *ABDUSSALAM: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Islam*, 1(2), 161-171. <https://journal.iai-daraswaja-rohil.ac.id/index.php/abdussalam/article/view/143>

- Annur, P. A., Susanti, E., & Gera, I. G. (2023). Urgensi Pendidikan Moral Sekolah Dasar dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius di Era Digital menurut Henry Alexis Rudolf Tilaar. *Jurnal Edukasi*, 1(3), 271-287. <https://doi.org/10.60132/edu.v1i3.182>
- Canu, U., Haq, E. D. U., & Ubaidillah, M. A. (2025). Reconstructing the Paradigm of Islamic Education: Harmonizing Theocentrism and Anthropocentrism. *Cendekiawan: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Keislaman*, 4(4), 856-869. <https://doi.org/10.61253/cendekiawan.v4i4.437>
- Darmalaksana, W. (2020). Metode penelitian kualitatif studi pustaka dan studi lapangan. *Pre-Print Digital Library UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung*.
- Delviany, V., Dewi, E., Hulawa, D. E., & Alwizar, A. (2024). Pendidikan Akhlak Dalam Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali. *Counselia: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Pendidikan Islam*, 5(2), 357-370. <https://doi.org/10.31943/counselia.v5i2.139>
- Elmontadzery, A. Y. F., Basori, A. R., & Mujadid, M. (2024). Internalisasi nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam dalam peningkatan karakter religius di MA NU Putra Buntet Pesantren Cirebon. *TSAQAFATUNA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1), 67-81. <https://doi.org/10.54213/tsaqafatuna.v6i1.413>
- Fatchulloh, M. (2024). Strategi Pengembangan kurikulum berbasis karakter di pendidikan dasar: Tantangan dan solusi. *Journal of Knowledge and Collaboration*, 1(3), 108-115. <https://doi.org/10.59613/zz52ah19>
- Fandra, A., Rambe, H., & Gusmaneli, G. (2025). Peran pendidikan Islam dalam pembentukan karakter dan moral siswa: Konsep pendidikan Islam dalam membangun akhlak mulia. *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 2(11). <https://ojs.daarulhuda.or.id/index.php/Socius/article/view/1922>
- Fuadhah, N. L. (2024). Membentuk karakter peserta didik dalam prespektif filsafat pendidikan islam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Nusantara*, 3(2), 127-139. <https://doi.org/10.55080/jpn.v3i2.90>
- Hasan, S. (2024). Integrasi pendidikan karakter dalam manajemen pendidikan Islam untuk menghadapi krisis moral generasi Z. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 4(5), 4949-4958. <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i5.15592>
- Haq, E. D. (2023). Limits of the Obligation to Seek Knowledge and Teach It and Stages in Islamic Education (Gender Studies Perspective). *Journal of Contemporary Gender and Child Studies*, 2(2), 107–110. <https://doi.org/10.61253/jcgcs.v2i2.194>
- Haq, E. D. U. (2024). Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 65 of 2013 concerning Elementary and Secondary Education Process Standards. *Journal of*

- Contemporary Gender and Child Studies*, 3(1), 178-188.
<https://doi.org/10.61253/jcgcs.v3i1.279>
- Haq, E. D. U., & Adiningsih, S. (2026). INTEGRASI PROFIL PELAJAR PANCASILA DALAM PEMBELAJARAN IPAS PADA KURIKULUM MERDEKA DI MIN 1 MAJENE. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 8(1), 57-63.
<https://doi.org/10.24252/jipmi.v8i1.65355>
- Hidayah, N., Ridwan, A., & Azis, A. (2024). Tantangan dan solusi dalam implementasi manajemen pendidikan Islam di era modern. *Jurnal Al-Fatih*, 7(2), 209-228.
<https://doi.org/10.61082/alfatih.v7i2.359>
- Hidayati, A. (2025). Pendidikan Akhlak sebagai Inti Konsep Pendidikan Islam dalam Pemikiran Al-Ghazali: Penelitian. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan*, 4(1), 2606-2616. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v4i1.1764>
- Herawati, A., Sinta, P. D., Marati, S. N., & Sari, H. P. (2025). Peran pendidikan Islam dalam membangun karakter generasi muda di tengah arus globalisasi. *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 3(2), 370-380. <https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v3i2.987>
- Judrah, M., Arjum, A., Haeruddin, H., & Mustabsyirah, M. (2024). Peran guru pendidikan agama Islam dalam membangun karakter peserta didik upaya penguatan moral. *Journal of Instructional and Development Researches*, 4(1), 25-37.
<https://doi.org/10.53621/jider.v4i1.282>
- Kurniawati, I., Silvyia, W., & Sari, H. P. (2023). Pemikiran Al-Ghazali tentang filsafat pendidikan Islam dan pembentukan karakter: Relevansinya untuk masyarakat. *Tawshiyah: Jurnal Sosial Keagamaan Dan Pendidikan Islam*, 18(2), 57-72.
<https://doi.org/10.32923/taw.v18i2.4014>
- Kuantitatif, P. P. (2023). Metode penelitian kuantitatif kualitatif dan R&D. *Alfabeta, Bandung*.
- Madhar, M. (2024). Pemikiran pendidikan Imam Al-Ghazali dan relevansinya dalam sistem pendidikan Islam kontemporer. *TARQIYATUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 3(2), 115-126. <https://doi.org/10.36769/tarqiyatuna.v3i2.813>
- Parma, P., Singgih, A., & Amin, A. (2023). Inovasi dalam kurikulum pendidikan Islam untuk meningkatkan karakter dan etika siswa. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(6), 7208-7219. <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/article/view/7295>
- Putri, S. A. F., & Wiranata, I. H. (2025). Peran Strategis Pendidikan Karakter dalam Pembentukan Moral Pelajar. *Prosiding Konseling Kearifan Nusantara (KKN)*, 4, 563-576.
<https://doi.org/10.29407/y7508042>

- Rumra, M. J. R., Rusmiaty, R., Usman, S., & Ondeng, S. (2025). Madrasah Dalam Pusaran Tantangan Zaman: Upaya Strategis Memperkuat Institusi Pendidikan Islam. *Al-Iryyad: Journal of Education Science*, 4(2), 447-459. <https://doi.org/10.58917/aijes.v4i2.266>
- Wulandari, A., & Fauzi, A. (2021). Urgensi pendidikan moral dan karakter dalam membentuk kepribadian peserta didik. *Edupedia: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Dan Pedagogi Islam*, 6(1), 75-85. <https://doi.org/10.35316/edupedia.v6i1.1393>
- Zalukhu, B., Napitu, U., Zalukhu, Y., & Hulu, N. S. (2023). Pengaruh proyek penguatan profil pelajar pancasila terhadap pembentukan karakter dan moral peserta didik di sekolah menengah pertama. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(6), 2102-2115. <https://doi.org/10.35316/edupedia.v6i1.1393>