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Prophetic Education In Al-Ghazali Thought: A Critique Of Philosophy And Its Implications For The Integration Of Knowledge

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the concept of prophetic education in Al-Ghazali's thought, his critique of rationalistic philosophy, and its implications for the integration of knowledge in contemporary Islamic education. The background of this research departs from the problem of the dichotomy of science in modern education that separates religious science and general science, thus causing epistemological fragmentation, moral crisis, and weakening of the spiritual dimension of education. This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research, through the study of Al-Ghazali's main works such as Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, Tahāfut al-Falāsifah, and al-Munqidh min al-Ḍ alāl, as well as various relevant secondary literature. The analysis is carried out with a philosophical and historical approach to examine the epistemological construction of Al-Ghazali's education. The results of the study show that Al-Ghazali's prophetic education is built on three main foundations, namely revelation, intellect, and tazkiyat al-nafs, which leads to the formation of kamil people, the strengthening of morals, and the achievement of sa'ādah in the world-hereafter. Al-Ghazali's critique of philosophy includes epistemological, ontological, and axiological dimensions, especially against rationalism that detaches itself from revelation. The criticism is not a rejection of reason, but an attempt to straighten the foundations of science so that it remains within the framework of monotheism. The main implication for contemporary Islamic education is the importance of holistic integration of knowledge, namely the unification of

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revelation, science, ethics, and spirituality in curriculum development, pesantren and PTKI education models, and character formation based on prophetic values. Thus, Al-Ghazali's thinking is relevant as an integrative paradigm to answer the challenge of secularization of modern education.

Keywords: Prophetic Education; Al-Ghazali; Philosophical Criticism; Integration of Knowledge; Contemporary Islamic Education.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic education faces increasingly complex challenges along with the development of modernity, the globalization of science, and the acceleration of technological transformation. One of the fundamental issues that continues to be a discourse is the existence of a dichotomy of knowledge, namely the separation between religious science and general science which has implications for the fragmentation of educational epistemology. In modern educational practice, the spiritual and moral dimensions are often marginalized by the dominance of rational-instrumental approaches that emphasize more cognitive and pragmatic aspects. As a result, educational success tends to be measured through academic achievement and technical competence, while character building, spirituality, and ethical awareness receive less attention in proportion. This condition shows that there is an urgent need to reconstruct the paradigm of Islamic education that is able to integrate knowledge, faith, and morals holistically (Sef & Bakar, 2024).

In this context, Al-Ghazali's thought has a very significant relevance. As one of the great figures in the Islamic intellectual tradition, Al-Ghazali offers an educational paradigm that is not only oriented towards the transmission of knowledge, but also on the formation of prophetic human beings that integrate intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions. Education in its perspective is rooted in three main foundations, namely revelation, reason, and tazkiyah al-nafs. Revelation is the highest normative source, reason functions as a rational instrument in understanding reality, while tazkiyah acts as a process of purification of the soul that ensures that science produces moral transformation. Thus, education is not only aimed at educating the intellect, but also forming kamil people who are close to Allah and have noble character (Mujrimin, 2025).

One of the central aspects of Al-Ghazali's thought was his criticism of philosophy, especially as stated in Tahafut al-Falasifah. Such criticism is often understood simplistic as a total rejection

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of reason and rationality. In fact, epistemologically, Al-Ghazali's criticism aims to straighten out the foundations of science so that it is not separated from the authority of revelation. He does not reject the function of reason, but places it proportionately as an instrument that must go hand in hand with divine values. The criticism is mainly directed at the speculative metaphysical tendencies of philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi which, according to Al-Ghazali, are in some respects contrary to Islamic theological principles. Thus, criticism of philosophy is more appropriately understood as an epistemological critique of rationalism that is autonomous and detached from revelation (Husin et al., 2025).

On the other hand, the development of contemporary Islamic education shows an increasingly urgent need for a paradigm of knowledge integration. Islamic educational institutions, both Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and Islamic religious universities, are currently trying to overcome the dichotomy of knowledge through an integrative-interconnective approach. In this context, Al-Ghazali's thought offers a strong epistemological foundation for building a holistic integration of science, that is, the union of revelation, ratio, and ethics in a single complete educational framework. This approach is not only relevant on a theoretical level, but also has practical implications for curriculum development, learning methods, and character formation of students (Choiriyah et al., 2026).

Although various studies have discussed the philosophy of Al-Ghazali education and its relevance to modern Islamic education, there is still room for study that needs to be deepened, especially related to the concept of prophetic education as a synthesis between epistemological criticism of philosophy and the integration of science in contemporary education. Some research focuses more on moral and spiritual aspects, while the dimension of philosophical criticism as the basis for the integration of science has not been comprehensively studied. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the concept of prophetic education in Al-Ghazali's thought, examine his criticism of philosophy, and explain its implications for the development of the integration of knowledge in contemporary Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. This approach was chosen because the focus of the study lies in the study of Al-Ghazali's thought on prophetic education, criticism of philosophy, and its implications for the integration of knowledge in Islamic education. Literature research is used to examine relevant written sources, both in the form of primary and secondary works, so as to allow researchers to conduct an in-depth analysis of the

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epistemological construction of Al-Ghazali's thought. In this context, the research does not rely on field observations, but on the study of texts as the main object of analysis.

Methodologically, this study uses a philosophical and historical approach. A philosophical approach is used to examine the structure of Al-Ghazali's thought, especially as it relates to the relationship between revelation, reason, and tazkiyah al-nafs as the foundation of prophetic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prophetic Education in Al-Ghazali Thought

Prophetic education in Al-Ghazali's thought is an educational model oriented to prophetic values *(al-qiyam al-nabawiyyah),* which is education that not only functions as a process of knowledge transfer, but also as a means of forming human beings who have divine awareness, intellectual maturity, and moral glory. In this perspective, education should emulate the mission of the prophets, especially the Prophet Muhammad *(peace be upon him),* which is to guide people to the truth, purify the soul, and form noble morals. For Al-Ghazali, education is a way to get closer to Allah (*taqarrub ilā Allāh*) and achieve true happiness in this world and the hereafter (Firdasari & Bakar, 2025).

This prophetic orientation is evident in Al-Ghazali's view that knowledge is not the final goal, but an instrument to form a spiritually and socially pious human being. Education must not stop at the rational dimension alone, as the speculative philosophical tendencies it criticizes, but must be directed at the transformation of the soul and behavior. In Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the most important knowledge is the knowledge that is able to lead people to the knowledge of God (ma'rifatullāh) and encourage the birth of righteous deeds. Thus, prophetic education is an education that integrates the epistemological, ethical, and spiritual dimensions in its entirety (Oktavia et al., 2024).

Furthermore, prophetic education is built on the integration of knowledge, faith, and morals. Science is understood as an instrument of enlightenment of reason, faith as the foundation of belief and life orientation, while morality is a manifestation of the praxis of The integration of these three elements shows that knowledge is inseparable from theological conviction and moral responsibility. An ideal student according to Al-Ghazali is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has a clean heart, righteous intentions, and behavior that reflects divine values. This is what distinguishes Islamic education from education that merely emphasizes formal academic achievements (Iqbal & Noor, 2025).

Within this framework, the ultimate goal of prophetic education is the formation of people who are close to God and socially beneficial. Closeness to Allah is manifested through the strengthening of monotheism, worship, and purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), while social benefits are reflected in social morals such as honesty, justice, compassion, and responsibility

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towards society. In other words, education according to Al-Ghazali does not only produce individuals who are personally pious, but also an agent of social change that brings benefits to the ummah. This aspect is what makes prophetic education relevant as an integrative paradigm in the development of contemporary Islamic education.

Prophetic education in Al-Ghazali's thought is built on three main elements, namely transcendence *(monotheism),* humanization *(morality and manners),* and liberation *(liberation from ignorance and lust)* (al-Ghazali, 2021). These three elements form an educational paradigm that not only emphasizes the mastery of knowledge, but also the formation of spirituality and morality of human beings as a whole.

Transcendence *(tauhid).* The dimension of transcendence places monotheism at the center of the entire educational process. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, knowledge must lead humans to ma'rifatullah and existential awareness that all learning activities are part of worship. Education is not just a means of obtaining social status, but a path to closeness to Allah and the salvation of the hereafter. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, he affirms that the most important knowledge is the knowledge that guides man to Allah and the hereafter (al-Ghazali, 2021).

Thus, transcendence in prophetic education entrusts a monotheistic orientation that unites reason, heart, and charity. Science does not stand neutral, but must be rooted in divine consciousness. The relevance of this concept in contemporary Islamic education can be seen in the criticism of the secularization of knowledge and the separation between knowledge and spirituality.

Humanization *(Morals and Manners).* The second element is humanization, which is education that aims to humanize humans through the formation of morals and manners. For Al-Ghazali, the essence of education is not only intellectual intelligence, but moral perfection (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*). Science that does not give birth to morals will lose its meaning and can even become a source of social damage. In Ayyuhā al-Walad, Al-Ghazali explicitly states: "Knowledge without charity is madness, and charity without knowledge is error." (Zain & Manik, 2023).

This statement shows that education must produce ethical behavior, manners towards teachers, respect for others, and social responsibility. Humanization in prophetic education means forming human beings who are knowledgeable and have noble character.

Liberation *(Liberation from Ignorance and Lust).* The third element is liberation, which is the liberation of man from intellectual ignorance and the domination of lust. According to Al-Ghazali, education should liberate the soul from despicable traits such as pride, orgasm, anger, and excessive love of the world (K. Siregar, 2020).

In Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, especially the discussion of *riyāḍat al-nafs*, Al-Ghazali explains that the educational process must go through the stages of purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), which is to cleanse the heart from reprehensible nature and adorn it with praiseworthy qualities (al-Ghazali, 2021).

Liberation in this context means not only liberation from ignorance, but also spiritual

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emancipation from the domination of the ego and lust. Education is an instrument of self-transformation towards intellectually independent and spiritually mature people.

Once the elements of prophetic education are explained through the dimensions of transcendence, humanization, and liberation, the ultimate goal in Al-Ghazali's thought is directed to the formation of a spiritually, intellectually, and morally whole human being. Within this framework, education is not only oriented to the mastery of knowledge, but also to the transformation of the soul towards the perfection of humanity and true happiness. These goals can be formulated in three main aspects: tazkiyat al-nafs, the formation of kamil people, and sa'ādah of the hereafter (al-Ghazali, 2021).

The first goal of education according to Al-Ghazali is *tazkiyat al-nafs* or purification of the soul. Education should be a means of purifying the heart from reprehensible traits such as riya', hasad, takabbur, love of the world, and excessive lust. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, especially Kitāb *Riyāḍat al-Nafs,* Al-Ghazali explains that true education is the process of spiritual formation through the stages of takhallī, taḥallī, and tajallī, i.e. emptying oneself from bad natures, adorning oneself with praiseworthy morals, and then achieving spiritual closeness with Allah (Wulandari et al., 2021).

Thus, education does not stop at academic achievement, but must produce changes in the inner and moral qualities of students.This concept is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary education that faces ethical and spiritual crises.

The second goal is the formation of kamil people, namely a perfect human being who is balanced between intellect, spirit, and charity. In Al-Ghazali's view, the ideal human being is not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually mature and morally noble (Apriliani & Arifin, 2025).

A kamil person is a person who has succeeded in integrating knowledge with morals, faith with charity, and the awareness of monotheism with social responsibility. This concept departs from Al-Ghazali's view of the essence of human beings as a combination of body and spirit, with the spirit as the main element that determines the quality of humanity.

Through education, humans are directed to achieve their perfection as caliphs on earth as well as servants of Allah. Therefore, the formation of kamil people is the central goal of prophetic education. The ultimate goal of education according to Al-Ghazali is *sa'ādah* in the hereafter, which is total happiness in this world and the hereafter. In this perspective, education must prepare human beings to live meaningfully in the world while gaining eschatological salvation.

Al-Ghazali affirmed that true knowledge is the knowledge that leads man to eternal happiness, not just temporary material success. Therefore, education must produce human beings who are able to live a life of the world with ethics, wisdom, and responsibility, while remaining oriented towards the salvation of the hereafter (al-Ghazali, 2021).

This concept *of sa'ādah* shows that prophetic education has a holistic orientation: worldly and ukhrawi, individual and social, intellectual and spiritual. Thus, prophetic education in Al-

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Ghazali's thought is an educational paradigm based on prophetic values through the integration of knowledge, faith, and morals. Education not only functions as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a process of forming human beings who are close to God, have noble character, and are beneficial to society. This paradigm is built on three main elements, namely transcendence, humanization, and liberation, which leads to the goal of education in the form of tazkiyat al-nafs, the formation of kamil people, and the achievement of sa'ādah in the hereafter. Thus, according to Al-Ghazali, prophetic education emphasizes the importance of integration between the intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions as the basis for the formation of the perfect human being.

Criticism of Rationalistic Philosophy Constructed by Al-Ghazali

1. Critique Epistemologis

   Al-Ghazali towards philosophy departs from the fundamental question of the source, validity, and limits of human knowledge. Al-Ghazali did not reject reason absolutely, but he criticized the tendency of philosophers to place reason as the supreme authority in obtaining truth, especially in matters of metaphysics and divinity. According to him, reason has the ability to understand empirical and logical reality, but it still has limitations when it enters transcendent regions that are beyond the reach of sensory experience and rational demonstration. In *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl,* he explains that the search for truth must involve reason, revelation, and spiritual intuition (*kashf*) as complementary sources of knowledge (S. Siregar et al., 2025).

   Limitations of Reason. According to Al-Ghazali, reason is an important instrument in the thought process, but it is not absolute. He rejects the claims of Peripatetic philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi that ratio is the highest source of certainty in all fields of science. In his view, reason is only capable of reaching certain aspects of reality, especially those that are rational and empirical, while metaphysical issues such as the nature of God, the creation of nature, and the afterlife require the guidance of revelation.

   In *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, Al-Ghazali points out that the conclusions of philosophers in the field of metaphysics are often built on premises that have no demonstrative certainty. This criticism is not directed at logic or mathematics, but at metaphysical claims that are forced into absolute truth (Al-Ghazali, 2023).

   Criticism of Greek Metaphysics. Al-Ghazali's epistemological criticism is also directed at the Greek metaphysical heritage, particularly the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic tradition adopted by Muslim philosophers. He considers that many Greek metaphysical concepts are built on rational speculation that lacks the legitimacy of revelation (Ummah et al., 2025).

   In *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, Al-Ghazali specifically criticizes three main metaphysical doctrines, namely: *qidam al-'ālam* (the eternity of nature), the view that Allah knows only

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the universal, the rejection of physical resurrection (Al-Ghazali, 2023). According to him, these three doctrines are contrary to the principles of Islamic theology and cannot be rationally proven with the level of certainty claimed by philosophers. This criticism is mainly directed at the influence of the metaphysics of Aristotle and Plotinus translated into the Islamic tradition.

Rejection of Philosophy Contrary to Revelation. The pinnacle of Al-Ghazali's epistemological criticism lies in his rejection of any form of philosophy that is contrary to revelation. For him, revelation is the highest source of knowledge in metaphysical and theological matters. Reason still has an important function, but it must be within the framework of revelation (Mujahidin, 2024).

In this regard, Al-Ghazali does not reject philosophy as a whole. He accepted logic, mathematics, and other rational sciences as long as they did not conflict with religious principles. What he rejects is the claim that philosophy can stand independent of revelation in determining absolute truth. This is the basis for the synthesis between reason and revelation in Al-Ghazali's epistemology.

2. Ontological Criticism

In addition to epistemological criticism, Al-Ghazali also proposed an ontological critique of philosophy, especially of the metaphysics of the phalassibahs influenced by the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic traditions. This criticism focuses on the question of the nature of the existence of nature *(al-'ālam),* especially on whether nature is *qadīm* (azali) or *ḥādith* (new/created). In Al-Ghazali's view, the fundamental error of philosophers lies in the ontological assumption that nature has an eternal existence with God. This view is considered contrary to the principles of monotheism and the doctrine of creation in Islam.

Rejection of the Qadīm Concept of Nature. One of Al-Ghazali's main criticisms is directed at the doctrine *of qadīm al-'ālam*, which is the view that nature is eternal and has no temporal beginning. This doctrine was widely embraced by Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi who adopted the idea of emanation from Greek metaphysics.

In Tahāfut al-Falāsifah, Al-Ghazali expressly rejects this view. According to him, if nature is considered eternal with God, then it will reduce the oneness and absoluteness of God as the only thing that is solemn. Only Allah has the nature of qadīm, while the rest of Him is *muḥdath* (created). This rejection is not only theological, but also ontological, because it concerns the essential difference between *the Wājib al-Wujūd* (the Undoubted Being) and the beings whose existence is possible (*mumkin al-wujūd*) (Amin, 2020).

For Al-Ghazali, the concept of natural permanence implies the existence of something equivalent to God in terms of the existence of azali, and this is contrary to the principle of monotheism. Therefore, he asserts that nature has a beginning and cannot be equated with the existence of God.

Affirmation of the Concept of Creation by God. As an antithesis to the doctrine of the

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eternity of nature, Al-Ghazali affirms the concept of creation by God (*khalq al-'ālam*). In his view, nature was created by the will and power of God freely, not as an inevitable consequence of God's essence as the philosophers' concept of emanation (Rahman & Latif, 2024).

Al-Ghazali rejects the idea that nature emanates automatically from God. According to him, creation is an act of divine will (*irādah ilāhiyyah*) that shows God's absolute freedom in determining when and how nature was created. Thus, the existence of nature is completely dependent on God as the Creator.

In *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl,* he asserts that belief in God's creation of nature is a theological foundation that cannot be replaced by rational speculation alone. This concept also reinforces the ontological principle that God is the source of the existence of all of reality, while nature has only a contingent existence (Ula, 2022).

Thus, Al-Ghazali's ontological critique serves to reaffirm God's supremacy as the only reality that is rational and independent, while nature is a creation that depends entirely on Him.

3. Axiological Criticism

In addition to epistemological and ontological criticism, Al-Ghazali also proposes an axiological criticism of philosophy, namely criticism related to the value, purpose, and impact of science on human life. In this perspective, Al-Ghazali considers that science should not be understood as value-neutral knowledge, but must have an ethical and spiritual orientation. Knowledge that is detached from faith and manners has the potential to give birth to intellectual arrogance, moral deviance, and even social damage. Therefore, he emphasized that the value of knowledge must be measured by the extent to which the knowledge leads humans to goodness, closeness to Allah, and the benefit of the ummah.

Knowledge without Manners and Faith Produces Damage. For Al-Ghazali, knowledge that is not accompanied by manners and faith will only be a dangerous tool (Irfani et al., 2025). In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, he affirms that the purpose of science is to improve the soul and lead man to righteous deeds. When knowledge is only used for worldly interests, power, or intellectual pride, then it loses its essential value.

He emphatically stated that people who have knowledge but do not practice their knowledge are actually in a worse condition, because their knowledge does not guide behavior. In this context, knowledge without manners can give birth to an attitude of takabbur, selfishness, and the misuse of knowledge for destructive purposes. This criticism is particularly relevant to philosophical traditions that overemphasize rational sophistication but ignore the moral and spiritual dimensions (al-Ghazali, 2021).

In *Ayyuhā al-Walad*, Al-Ghazali even wrote: "Knowledge without charity is madness, and charity without knowledge is error." This statement shows that the value of science must always be tied to ethics, charity, and moral development (Zain & Manik, 2023).

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Philosophy Must Be Subject to the Value of Revelation. The next axiological criticism is the affirmation that philosophy must be subject to the value of revelation. Al-Ghazali did not reject philosophy totally, but placed it within the framework of religious values. For him, ratios have an instrumental function for understanding reality, but the determination of right-wrong and good-bad values must still be sourced from revelation (Mujahidin, 2024).

In *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, his criticism is directed at the tendency of philosophers to make reason the supreme authority, even in matters related to divinity and the hereafter. According to Al-Ghazali, philosophy that is not subject to revelation will easily fall into misleading speculation and lose its moral orientation (Al-Ghazali, 2023).

Therefore, he offers a synthesis between reason and revelation: reason is used to understand, reason, and explain, while revelation becomes the highest normative source that determines the orientation of science and the value of life. This approach is also the basis for the integration of knowledge in Islamic education, where all disciplines must be directed to ethical-spiritual goals that come from monotheism.

Implications for the Integration of Knowledge in Contemporary Islamic Education

1. Integration of Revelation and Reason

   One of the most fundamental implications of Al-Ghazali's critique of philosophy was the birth of the paradigm of integration of revelation and reason in the building of Islamic science. In Al-Ghazali's thought, religious science and rational science cannot be understood dichotomically, because they are an integral part of an epistemological unity rooted in monotheism. Al-Ghazali's criticism of philosophers, especially in Tahāfut al-Falāsifah, is not a rejection of the function of reason, but a criticism of the use of reason that escapes from the guidance of revelation in metaphysical and divine matters.

   Al-Ghazali views that revelation is the main source of truth, while reason functions as an instrument for understanding, interpreting, and developing knowledge. In this framework, reason has a very important position as an epistemological tool, but it cannot stand as the supreme authority. Reason is only capable of reaching the empirical and logical realms, while absolute truth about God, prophethood, and the afterlife can only be obtained through revelation. Therefore, the relationship between revelation and reason is both hierarchical and complementary (Rosidi et al., 2025).

   This view shows that Al-Ghazali rejects the dichotomy between religious science (*al-'ulūm al-shar'iyyah*) and rational science (*al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah*). According to him, all knowledge essentially comes from Allah SWT. Religious science provides a normative, moral, and spiritual foundation, while rational science functions as a means of understanding natural and social reality. Thus, the science of jurisprudence, tafsir, hadith, and creed is not in a position opposite to mathematics, logic, medicine, or astronomy, but instead supports

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each other in forming a whole human being (Nurhayati et al., 2026).

Al-Ghazali confirms this connection through a very famous analogy in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*: "The intellect is like a vision, while the sharia *(revelation)* is like the sun." The analogy shows that the mind without revelation will lose direction, just as the eye cannot see without light. Conversely, unreasoned revelation will not be understood deeply and contextually. In other words, reason is an instrument that allows humans to grasp the meaning of revelation, while revelation provides an orientation of values and goals for human intellectual activity (Poya & Rizapoor, 2023).

The implications of this thinking are very important for the integration of knowledge in contemporary Islamic education. Education should not separate religious science from general science, because such separation has the potential to give birth to epistemological dualism. Science and technology need to be developed within the framework of the values of revelation so as not to lose the ethical and humanitarian dimension. On the other hand, religious science must also be supported with a rational and methodological approach to remain relevant to social changes and the development of the times (Sef & Bakar, 2024).

Thus, Al-Ghazali's thought provides a strong philosophical basis for the concept of the integration of knowledge**,** which is the harmonious blend of transcendental and rational dimensions. This paradigm became the foundation for prophetic education that not only developed intellectual intelligence, but also shaped the spiritual depth and moral maturity of students.

2. Integration of Knowledge and Morals

In the perspective of Al-Ghazali's prophetic education, knowledge should not stop at the conceptual and cognitive level alone, but must produce moral transformation in students. Knowledge that only enriches the intellect without forming character and behavior is seen as not achieving the essential purpose of education. For Al-Ghazali, true knowledge is the knowledge that changes the soul, refines morals, and directs people to righteous deeds.

Al-Ghazali places morality at the core of the educational process. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn,* he affirms that the main purpose of learning is not merely to know, but to be—that is, to become a pious, civilized, and socially responsible person. Thus, knowledge must give birth to changes in the affective and practical dimensions, not stop at the mastery of theory. Education that only emphasizes aspects of memorization, material mastery, and academic achievement will have the potential to produce humans who are intellectually intelligent but poor in moral values (Ningtias et al., 2024).

In this context, education should not stop at the cognitive realm. The cognitive aspect is only the initial door to character formation. Knowledge must be translated into concrete attitudes and actions such as honesty, trust, responsibility, empathy, and manners towards others. Therefore, Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of teacher example as a moral

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model in the learning process. Teachers are not only imparters of knowledge, but spiritual guides and moral shapers of students (Yahya et al., 2025).

In the context of modern education, this idea is particularly relevant as a critique of an education system that is too value-oriented, exam-oriented, and academic achievement. Prophetic education requires the integration of science and morals so that science becomes a means of forming people with character and civility.

3. Integration of Science and Spirituality

In addition to the integration of science and morals, Al-Ghazali also emphasized the importance of the integration of science and spirituality. In his view, knowledge is not just a tool to understand empirical reality, but is a path to ma'rifat, which is a deep knowledge of Allah SWT. Knowledge must be a means of getting closer to God, not just a worldly instrument to obtain social status, power, or material gain.

For Al-Ghazali, knowledge that does not lead a person to ma'rifat and the improvement of spiritual quality is a science that loses its highest purpose. Within the framework of Sufism that he developed, the learning process should be oriented towards *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) and *taqarrub ilā Allāh* (self-approach to Allah). Thus, all disciplines, both religious and rational, must lead to the strengthening of spirituality and divine consciousness (Hasib & Khasanah, 2025).

This concept gives birth to the strengthening of monotheistic awareness in all disciplines. Science, technology, social sciences, and humanities should not be separated from the values of monotheism. Each branch of knowledge is seen as a means of reading *āyāt kauniyyah* (signs of Allah's greatness in the universe). Thus, the sciences of physics, biology, mathematics, and social sciences become a medium to strengthen the awareness that all reality originates from the will of God and moves in His laws (Jalaldeen & Al-Hidabi, 2025).

In the context of contemporary Islamic education, this integration of knowledge and spirituality is essential to prevent the secularization of knowledge. Education must form students who are not only intelligent and moral, but also have spiritual depth, monotheistic awareness, and a transcendental life orientation. Thus, knowledge becomes a means of building a whole human being: intellectual, moral, and spiritual.

Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education

Contemporary Islamic education is at the crossroads between the demands of modernity, the development of science and technology, and the need to maintain Islamic identity. In this context, the relevance of Islamic educational thought seems very important to answer the epistemological, curricular, and moral challenges facing educational institutions today.

1. Criticism of Curriculum Secularization

One of the main problems in contemporary Islamic education is the secularization of

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the curriculum, which is the separation between religious and general sciences. This dichotomy gives birth to educational dualism: on the one hand religious education is oriented towards ritual and moral aspects, while on the other hand general education focuses on science, technology, and pragmatic skills.

As a result, learners often experience fragmentation of intellectual consciousness. They were able to master modern science, but lost their ethical and spiritual orientation in their use. In contrast, religious education that is separate from social reality often becomes normative-textual and less responsive to the times.

This criticism of secularization has long been the concern of Islamic educational thinkers such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Amin Abdullah. Al-Attas emphasized that the crisis of modern education does not lie in the lack of information, but in the loss of manners in science. According to him, science without a foundation of divine values will produce moral disorientation (Khasanah et al., 2025).

As emphasized in the study of the integrative curriculum, the separation between religious science and modern science actually hinders the birth of a complete and balanced Muslim generation. Practically, this criticism is relevant to the education system that still separates religious subjects as an additional component, rather than as the philosophical foundation of the entire curriculum.

2. Integration of Science, Religion, and Ethics

The next relevance appears in the importance of integrating science, religion, and ethics in contemporary Islamic education. Islamic education is not enough to teach science as instrumental knowledge, but it must relate it to theological and ethical dimensions.

This integration means that modern sciences such as technology, biology, economics, and social sciences must be understood within the framework of Islamic values, so that the mastery of knowledge is inseparable from moral responsibility. This approach is in line with the integration-interconnection paradigm developed by M. Amin Abdullah, which rejects the dichotomy of science and emphasizes the dialogical relationship between revelation, reason, and social reality (Nisa & Ibrahim, 2025).

For example, science learning can be associated with kauniyah verses in the Qur'an, so that students understand that the study of the universe is part of strengthening faith. Recent research shows that a contextual approach to the integration of science and religion is able to improve students' understanding of the relationship between scientific theory and spiritual values (Yusuf, 2023).

Thus, this integration is not just a unification of subjects, but an epistemological reconstruction of Islamic education that unites reason, revelation, and ethics.

3. Islamic Boarding School and PTKI Education Model

The Islamic boarding school and PTKI (Islamic Religious Higher Education) education model has great relevance in answering the challenges of contemporary Islamic education.

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Pesantren has long been known as an educational institution that has relatively succeeded in combining knowledge, manners, and spirituality. The educational process does not only take place in the classroom, but also through the example of kiai, the scientific tradition of the yellow book, the habit of worship, and the formation of a socio-religious habitus. Therefore, pesantren are often seen as a more holistic model of Islamic education.

Recent journal studies show that contemporary Islamic boarding schools have begun to develop a sui generis curriculum, which is a typical curriculum that maintains classical scientific traditions while being responsive to modern needs (Khanifah et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, PTKI/PTKIN plays a strategic role in the development of the modern Islamic scientific paradigm. The transformation of IAIN into UIN is a tangible form of integration between Islamic science and general science. This shows that Islamic higher education seeks to build an academic model that is not only normative, but also scientific and multidisciplinary (Shunhaji, 2021).

4. Character-Based and Spirituality-Based Curriculum

Contemporary Islamic education is also very relevant to the development of a character-based and spirituality-based curriculum. In the midst of moral crises, increasing individualism, and the challenges of the digital age, education is not enough to just emphasize the academic aspect.

The curriculum should be geared towards the establishment:

a. Noble Morals
b. Moral integrity
c. Social awareness
d. Spiritual discipline
e. Humanitarian responsibility

In the context of Islam, character education is rooted in the concept of ta'dib, which is the process of forming civilized human beings. Therefore, spirituality is the core element that distinguishes Islamic education from the secular educational model. Recent research confirms that the integration of the PAI curriculum must be directed at a balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence in order to form a strong Islamic character (Ihsan & Maulana, 2026).

Thus, contemporary Islamic education must be able to produce people who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have a transcendental orientation and moral sensitivity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that Al-Ghazali's prophetic education is built on a solid epistemological foundation, namely revelation, reason, and tazkiyah al-nafhs. These three elements form an educational framework that emphasizes not only the intellectual aspect, but also the spiritual and moral dimensions. Revelation serves as the supreme source of

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truth that provides normative direction for science, while reason serves as a rational instrument for understanding reality and interpreting knowledge critically. Tazkiyah is a process of purification of the soul that ensures that knowledge does not stop at the cognitive realm, but gives birth to ethical transformation and spiritual maturity in students.

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's criticism of philosophy, especially of the tendency of rationalism to detach itself from the authority of revelation, is not in essence a rejection of reason, but an attempt to straighten the epistemology of science so that it remains within the corridor of divine values. The criticism aims to place reason in its proportional function as a tool for seeking truth that must synergize with revelation, not stand autonomously without limits. Thus, Al-Ghazali offers a scientific paradigm that rejects the dichotomy between rational science and religious science.

The main implication of this thinking is the importance of the holistic integration of knowledge in contemporary Islamic education. Science should not be separated between the aspects of religion, science, and ethics, but must be understood as a complementary unit. This paradigm is relevant to answer the challenges of modern education that are often trapped in the secularization of the curriculum and the fragmentation of knowledge. Through a holistic approach, Islamic education is expected to be able to produce people who are intellectually superior, spiritually mature, and have noble character, in accordance with the goals of prophetic education that balances the worldly and ukhrawi dimensions.

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