THE CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE IN ISLAM A STUDY OF AL GHAZALI'S THOUGHT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MODERN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Knowledge is a fundamental concept in Islam that not only serves as a means of acquiring knowledge, but also as an instrument of moral and spiritual formation of human beings. However, modern Islamic education still faces the problem of the dichotomy of science between religious science and general science which has an impact on the weakening of the integration of values in the educational process. This article aims to examine the concept of science in Islam according to Al-Ghazali's thought and analyze its relevance to the development of modern Islamic education. This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. Data were obtained from scientific journal articles relevant to the theme of Al-Ghazali's thought, Islamic epistemology, and modern Islamic education, then analyzed through content analysis techniques and descriptive-analytical approaches. The results of the study show that Al-Ghazali views science as a means to get closer to Allah SWT and form noble morals, by emphasizing the integration between revelation and reason. The classification of knowledge into fardhu 'ain and fardhu kifayah shows that there is a balance between individual spiritual needs and social welfare. Al-Ghazali's thinking is considered relevant to answer the challenges of modern Islamic education, especially in overcoming the dichotomy of science and the crisis of value orientation. The integration of knowledge, faith, and morals is an important foundation in formulating a holistic Islamic education paradigm in the modern era.*

Keywords: *Knowledge in Islam, Al-Ghazali Thought, Islamic Epistemology, Science in Islamic Education, Modern Islamic Education.*

Introduction

Knowledge is a fundamental concept in Islamic teachings that is not only seen as a collection of facts or skills, but also as a strategic foundation in the formation of human civilization. The Islamic perspective on science ('ilm) is holistic, where the search is considered a religious obligation, a form of worship to Allah SWT, and at the same time an important instrument for the development of a spiritually and intellectually advanced person and society. In the Islamic scientific tradition, science is inseparable from moral and spiritual values, but is positioned as a vehicle to understand reality, develop human potential, and direct life towards

prosperity and a noble civilization. This concept is reflected in the Islamic epistemological view which sees knowledge as a process rooted in revelation and reason and as the foundation for the intellectual and cultural development of mankind. the development of various disciplines such as jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, medicine, and natural sciences that are rooted in a holistic Islamic worldview (Halimatus Syakdiyah et al., 2024).

The role of science in the formation of civilization is also reflected in the contribution of Muslims to various classical disciplines that later influenced the global scientific tradition, including mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine and pharmacy which became the foundation of modern sciences. This contribution reinforces the statement that science in Islam is not only interpreted as sufistic or religious knowledge, but also as a source of empowerment of the ummah and the main driver for the progress of human civilization in historical and contemporary contexts (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Raudhatul Ulum Ogan Ilir et al., 2025).

The normative foundation of the importance of knowledge in Islam is not only derived from historical reality, but also has a strong theological basis in the Qur'an and hadith. Knowledge is positioned as a means to know Allah SWT and understand the signs of His power in the universe. Therefore, scientific activities in Islam are always associated with the moral and spiritual responsibility of human beings as caliphs on earth (Zainuddin, 2022).

In the historical context, classical Islamic civilization shows that the integration between religious science and rational science has given birth to an advanced and sustainable scientific tradition. Muslim scholars do not view science as a value-free entity, but as an instrument to realize the benefit of the ummah and social justice (Nasution, 2019). This view emphasizes that the separation of knowledge from spiritual values is a new phenomenon that is not in line with the spirit of Islamic science.

In the context of modern Islamic education, a fundamental problem arises in the form of a dichotomy of science between religious science and general science (Damayanti, R., & Kendari, 2025). Religious education is often narrowed to ritual and dogmatic aspects, while general science is seen as value neutral and independent of the spiritual dimension. This condition has an impact on the birth of students who experience personality splits, namely intellectually intelligent but poor in moral and spiritual orientation.

This condition shows that there is an orientation crisis in Islamic education that is not only pedagogical, but also philosophical. Islamic education risks losing its spirit and its main purpose as a means of forming kamil people if knowledge is no longer directed to divine and human values. Therefore, efforts are needed to reconstruct the scientific paradigm that is rooted in the treasures of classical Islamic thought.

The crisis of modern Islamic educational orientation is also inseparable from global social changes marked by the rapid development of science and technology. Globalization encourages the birth of a culture of competition, efficiency, and productivity that often ignores ethical and spiritual dimensions. In this situation, Islamic education faces the challenge of remaining academically relevant without losing its identity of Islamic values (Rahman, 2020).

A number of studies show that the weak integration of values in Islamic education has an impact on the low moral sensitivity of students to social and humanitarian problems. The knowledge gained in the classroom is not always internalized in daily attitudes and behaviors, so education loses its transformative power (Ma’arif, 2021). This phenomenon further emphasizes the urgency of reinforcing the concept of science that is oriented towards the formation of morals, as affirmed in Al-Ghazali's thought.

One of the classical Islamic thinkers who made a great contribution to the discussion of the concept of science was Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (Yani, A., Kurniawan, D., & Lestari, 2023). Al-Ghazali is known as a scholar who succeeded in synthesizing the dimensions of sharia,

philosophy, and Sufism in one complete frame of thought. His thoughts on science are not only theoretical, but also normative and practical, especially in the context of education and moral formation.

Al-Ghazali emphasized that knowledge must be directed to the right goal, which is to get closer to Allah SWT and form noble morals. Science that does not produce moral change is seen as worthless, even potentially misleading. Based on this background, this article aims to examine the concept of knowledge in Islam according to Al-Ghazali's thought and analyze its relevance to modern Islamic education. This study is important because until now there is still a tendency in Islamic education that places knowledge as a purely pragmatic instrument, without being accompanied by the strengthening of ethical and spiritual values. Therefore, Al-Ghazali's thoughts are considered relevant to be used as a conceptual reference in reformulating the orientation of Islamic education based on the integration of knowledge, faith, and charity.

Literature Review

The study of the concept of knowledge in Islam has become a major concern of contemporary Muslim thinkers. In the Islamic perspective, science is understood as an instrument of seeking truth that comes from the integration between revelation and ratio, so that it does not stand neutral or independent of values. Science is always directed to normative goals, namely the formation of morals, the strengthening of the spiritual dimension, and the regulation of just social life. Therefore, science in Islam has a strategic function not only in the development of human intellect, but also in the formation of a civilized and moral character and social order (Anshori, A., & Rahmawati, 2023).

A number of studies emphasize that Islamic epistemology rejects the separation between religious science and rational science. Revelation and reason are seen as two complementary sources of knowledge in understanding reality. Therefore, the empirical sciences in Islam do not stand autonomously, but must be directed to support the strengthening of human faith and morals (Asyibli et al., 2025).

Al-Ghazali's thoughts on science are one of the important studies in the discourse of Islamic education. Al-Ghazali views knowledge as a light that can illuminate the heart and lead people to the true truth. He emphasized that the main purpose of knowledge is to get closer to Allah SWT and form noble morals. This emphasis on moral and spiritual dimensions makes Al-Ghazali's thought relevant throughout the ages (Husni et al., 2025).

One of Al-Ghazali's main contributions in the field of science is the classification of knowledge into fardhu 'ain and fardhu kifayah. The science of fardhu 'ain is related to individual obligations related to faith and worship, while the science of fardhu kifayah is related to the social needs and benefits of the ummah. This classification shows that Al-Ghazali does not reject rational and empirical science, but places it within the framework of a clear Islamic goal (Husni, L., & Hasib, 2025).

In the context of modern Islamic education, various studies show that there is a problem of a dichotomy of knowledge that is still strong. Islamic education is often stuck in the separation between religious and general subjects, so that the educational process runs in a fragmented manner. This condition has an impact on the weak integration of spiritual values in the mastery of science and technology (Humairah, S., Fauzi, A., & Prasetyo, 2024).

A number of studies have emphasized that the problem of the dichotomy of knowledge in Islamic education not only has implications for curriculum design and structure, but also has a significant effect on the mindset of students. The strict separation between religious science and general science tends to form a fragmented perspective on reality, so that students have difficulty in associating the academic knowledge they learn with moral, social, and spiritual values in daily

life. This condition ultimately weakens the process of internalizing the values and goals of holistic Islamic education (Fauzan, 2022).

Within the framework of this problematic, Al-Ghazali's thought offers an epistemological alternative that emphasizes the integration between science and values. Al-Ghazali views science not as just a tool for the development of ratios, but as a divine mandate that contains moral and spiritual responsibilities. Therefore, scientific activities must be directed at the formation of morals, strengthening faith, and social benefits. The mastery of science, in this view, is oriented not only to intellectual achievement, but also to the transformation of personality and the improvement of human ethical consciousness in social life (Hidayatullah, 2021).

Several studies emphasize the importance of reconstructing the Islamic education paradigm in order to be able to respond to the challenges of globalization and modernization without losing Islamic identity. The integration of spiritual, ethical, and social values in the Islamic education curriculum is seen as an urgent need to form a generation of educated and moral Muslims (Erihadiana, M., Suryana, A., & Nugraha, 2024).

Based on the analysis of previous studies, it can be concluded that studies that specifically relate the concept of Al-Ghazali science to the problems of modern Islamic education are still relatively limited. Therefore, this article has a strategic position in filling the research gap by examining Al-Ghazali's thoughts on science and its relevance to the development of modern Islamic education that is integrative and valuable (Rachmawati, N., Sulaiman, I., & Karim, 2025).

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on efforts to understand in depth the concept of science in Islam according to Al-Ghazali's thought and its relevance to modern Islamic education through the analysis and interpretation of texts, ideas, and conceptual discourse. Literature research is considered appropriate because research data is sourced from scientific works, both in the form of journal articles and academic writings, which discuss the thoughts and concepts of Islamic science theoretically and philosophically, thus allowing researchers to conduct critical studies without involving the collection of empirical data in the field (Rijal Fadli, 2021).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are in the form of articles in national and international scientific journals that discuss Al-Ghazali's thoughts on science, the concept of science in Islam, and modern Islamic education. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are in the form of supporting articles that are relevant to the topic of the study. All data sources are limited to journal publications so that the data used are academic, up-to-date, and verifiable.

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies, namely by identifying, inventorying, and reviewing journal articles that are relevant to the focus of the research. The source search process is carried out through academic databases such as Google Scholar using keywords related to the concept of knowledge in Islam, Al-Ghazali, and modern Islamic education. The selected articles are then selected based on the relevance of the topic and scientific contributions.

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques with a thematic approach. Data is analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Each major idea related to the concepts of science and education is categorized into specific themes for ease of interpretation. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of

sources, namely by comparing findings from various journals to obtain a comprehensive and objective understanding.

The descriptive-analytical approach in this study is used to systematically describe Al-Ghazali's ideas about the concept of science, as well as to analyze their relevance to the context of modern Islamic education. This approach allows researchers to not only present the views of the figures, but also relate them to the actual problems of Islamic education (Hidayat, 2018).

With this method, the research is expected to be able to provide a complete and in-depth understanding of the concept of science in Islam and its contribution to the development of an integrative and value-oriented Islamic education paradigm. Therefore, the methods used are not only technical, but also philosophical and reflective (Asyibli, M., 2025).

Result and Discussion

The results of the study show that the concept of science in Al-Ghazali's thought has a very strong orientation on the formation of morals and purification of the soul. Al-Ghazali views knowledge as a means of getting closer to Allah SWT, so that the value of a knowledge is not measured solely by its practical use, but from the extent to which it is able to give birth to pious deeds and moral changes in individuals. This view emphasizes that science in Islam is not value-neutral, but is always bound by ethical and spiritual goals.

In addition, the results of the study show that the classification of knowledge into fardhu 'ain and fardhu kifayah is an important contribution of Al-Ghazali in building a framework for scientific integration. The science of fardhu 'ain is understood as a science that must be studied by every Muslim individual because it is directly related to faith and worship, while the science of fardhu kifayah is related to the social needs and benefits of the ummah. This classification shows that Al-Ghazali does not reject rational and empirical science, as long as it is directed to the right purpose and brings benefits to society.

In the context of modern Islamic education, the findings of this study show that Al-Ghazali's thought is relevant to answer the problem of scientific dichotomy that is still ongoing today. The education system that separates religious science and general science has the potential to give birth to inequality in the formation of students' personalities. By referring to Al-Ghazali's thought, Islamic education can develop a learning paradigm that integrates cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects in a balanced manner.

Further discussion shows that the relevance of Al-Ghazali's thought is not only normative, but also applicative. The integration of knowledge, faith, and charity can be realized through the development of an Islamic education curriculum that emphasizes the values of ethics, spirituality, and social responsibility in each subject. Thus, modern Islamic education has not lost its transcendental orientation in the midst of the demands of modernization and globalization.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the conceptual studies that have been carried out, it can be concluded that science from an Islamic perspective cannot be separated from the dimensions of values, goals, and moral responsibilities. Knowledge is not just a means to acquire empirical knowledge, but an instrument to understand the truth and form a person of faith and morality. This view confirms that in Islam, science is always directed to transcendental goals and the overall benefit of humans.

Al-Ghazali's thought made an important contribution in formulating an integrative concept of science between revelation and reason. Al-Ghazali rejects the view that separates religious science and rational science, because both are equally necessary in living human life. Reason

functions to understand empirical and social reality, while revelation is the main guideline in determining the direction and purpose of using the knowledge.

The classification of knowledge into fardhu 'ain and fardhu kifayah put forward by Al-Ghazali shows that there is a balance between individual needs and social needs. The science of fardhu 'ain functions to form the foundation of individual faith and morality, while the science of fardhu kifayah plays a role in maintaining the sustainability of social life and civilization. This concept emphasizes that the mastery of science and technology in Islam has worship value if it is directed for the benefit of the ummah.

Thus, Al-Ghazali's thinking on the concept of science provides a strong conceptual foundation for the development of integrative and valuable modern Islamic education. Islamic education is expected to be able to produce a generation of Muslims who excel in mastering science, have high spiritual awareness, and are socially responsible. This conclusion confirms that the integration of knowledge, faith, and morals is the main key in building a relevant and sustainable Islamic education in the modern era.

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