

INTEGRATION OF AL-GHAZALI'S HUMAN CONCEPT INTO THE ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM AT UNIVERSITIES: CULTIVATING COMPREHENSIVE PERSONALITIES

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ABSTRAK

Dalam dunia modern yang serba cepat dan sering kali materialistik saat ini, pendidikan karakter yang holistik sangat penting. Wawasan mendalam Al-Ghazali tentang sifat manusia menawarkan kerangka kerja yang komprehensif untuk pengembangan spiritual dan moral, yang dapat diadaptasi ke dalam pengaturan pendidikan tinggi. Studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana konsep manusia Al-Ghazali diintegrasikan ke dalam kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di universitas, dengan tujuan untuk mengembangkan mahasiswa yang memiliki kepribadian yang utuh. Dilakukan di sebuah universitas terkemuka di Indonesia, penelitian kualitatif ini melibatkan lima dosen dan lima mahasiswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen. Analisis menggunakan perangkat lunak NVivo 12 memfasilitasi identifikasi tema kunci dan memungkinkan kesimpulan rinci mengenai efektivitas integrasi kurikulum. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa penerapan prinsip-prinsip Al-Ghazali tidak hanya meningkatkan kurikulum tetapi juga secara signifikan meningkatkan integritas moral dan kedalaman karakter mahasiswa. Studi ini memberikan wawasan baru dan praktis untuk evolusi kurikulum PAI agar lebih mencakup dimensi spiritual dan etis.

Kata Kunci: Al-Ghazali, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Pendidikan Karakter, Kurikulum, Pendidikan Tinggi

ABSTRACT

In today's rapid and often materialistic modern world, holistic character education is crucial. Al-Ghazali's profound insights into human nature offer a comprehensive framework for spiritual and moral development, adaptable to higher education settings. This study investigates how Al-Ghazali's human concept is integrated into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum at universities, aiming to develop students with well-rounded personalities. Conducted at a premier Indonesian university, this qualitative research involved five lecturers and five students. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analyses. Analysis using NVivo 12 software facilitated the identification of key themes and enabled detailed conclusions regarding the curriculum integration's effectiveness. The results demonstrate that incorporating Al-Ghazali's principles not only enhances the curriculum but also markedly improves students' moral integrity and depth of character. This study contributes new and actionable insights into evolving PAI curricula to more fully encompass spiritual and ethical dimensions.

Keywords: Al-Ghazali, Islamic Religious Education, Character Education, Curriculum, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Materialism and spiritual emptiness are interconnected phenomena widely discussed across various scholarly fields. The pervasive impact of materialism, fueled by technological advancements and urban lifestyles, is linked to negative emotions such as alienation, loneliness, and stress, which may culminate in spiritual emptiness (Güzel & Sarııldız, 2019). Frequently, this void is attributed to deficiencies in spiritual, institutional, and material cultures (X. Li, 2022). Within the framework of modernity, the dual focus on material and spiritual progress is prominent, with spiritual advancement considered crucial in differentiating Muslim modernity from the perceived spiritual void of Western modernity (Leichtman, 2009). Furthermore, materialism's influence on child education raises concerns regarding the prioritization of wealth acquisition over ethical and spiritual values, potentially leading to a state of spiritual meaninglessness (Mulang & Putra, 2023). The significance of spiritual well-being has been underscored in numerous health studies, which emphasize its role in enhancing mental health outcomes, life quality, and resilience (Dalmida et al., 2014; RahimZahedi et al., 2021; S. et al., 2009). Spiritual well-being, reflecting continuous engagement with one's spiritual health and maturity, incorporates both religious and existential dimensions (Kasapoğlu, 2020).

The phenomenon of spiritual emptiness among university students has emerged as a focal point in academic research. Research indicates that students frequently encounter spiritual and religious pressures, which contribute to their emotional and spiritual distress (Hayes & Johnson, 2003). Observations of gender differences in spiritual development during college years suggest that personal and educational factors significantly influence shifts in spirituality (Bryant, 2007). Studies examining the effects of college experiences on students' religious and spiritual conflicts have demonstrated that challenges and encounters with diverse worldviews can precipitate such struggles (Bryant, 2011). Additionally, interpersonal communication and shifts in emotional cognition have been linked to feelings of discomfort and emotional void among students (K. Li, 2022). The importance of spirituality in the context of counseling and student development has been highlighted, underscoring the necessity for specialized interventions that address the spiritual needs of students (Soet & Martin, 2007). Furthermore, research exploring the relationship between spirituality, health, and life satisfaction among undergraduate students has revealed a pronounced interest in spiritual matters within this demographic (Anand et al., 2015).

The integration of Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity into the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum at universities is essential for fostering character and personal integrity, enabling students to address contemporary challenges effectively (Nurohman, 2020). Al-Ghazali's contributions offer profound insights into spiritual psychology and ethics, elucidating human potential, constraints, and the journey towards moral and spiritual excellence (Gunawan & Lestari, 2021). His focus on the heart as the core of humanity corresponds with the imperative to develop well-rounded individuals with integrity within higher education settings. Al-Ghazali's conceptualization of justice, wisdom, simplicity, and courage markedly impacts leadership effectiveness and team dynamics, underscoring the practical applicability of his teachings in modern contexts (Budur et al., 2021). Moreover, his mystical-theoretical approach to learning and his views on the interplay between the human heart and body pave the way for a nuanced understanding of knowledge embodiment and character development (Hardaker & Sabki, 2015). His perspective on education as a transformative process that humanizes individuals and draws them closer to God aligns with the contemporary demand for holistic education that cultivates well-rounded individuals (Suban, 2020). Al-Ghazali's soul therapy model addresses a range of psychological and spiritual challenges, presenting a comprehensive approach to well-being that is frequently overlooked in contemporary scientific research (Omar et al., 2019). His insights into moral education and character development are particularly pertinent to the objectives, resources, methods, and curricula of Islamic education in the millennial age. The practical implications of Al-Ghazali's understanding of the psychological attributes of individuals within organizational contexts highlight the broad applicability of his principles across various settings (Shamsudheen & Rosly, 2018). Additionally, his discourse on moral values and educational objectives underscores the importance of integrating character and spiritual education into modern educational practices (Sasmita, 2022; Sheikh & Ali, 2019). The incorporation of Al-Ghazali's concepts into the PAI curriculum in higher education is highly promising for nurturing individuals with integrity and character, overcoming modern challenges, and fostering comprehensive development.

Al-Ghazali posits that the essence of humanity extends beyond the physical, encompassing significant spiritual and psychological dimensions. His conceptual framework elucidates the internal dynamics of humans through the concepts of *nafs* (soul), *qalb* (heart), and *ruh* (spirit). Historically, various scholars have adapted and enriched Al-Ghazali's ideas, demonstrating their flexibility and depth. This adaptability allows his concepts to be applied broadly across different conditions and eras, including in contemporary education (Rothman

& Coyle, 2020). Al-Ghazali's depiction of the heart as a transcendental spiritual subtlety, which he identifies as the core of humanity, complements the notion that human nature surpasses mere physical existence (Hardaker & Sabki, 2015). Additionally, the developmental theory of al-'aql, al-qalb, and al-nafs within Islamic psychotherapy underscores the multidimensional nature of human essence, accentuating its spiritual and psychological components (Zulkipli et al., 2022). This perspective aligns with Al-Ghazali's holistic view of humanity, which integrates both physical and non-physical dimensions (Ramli et al., 2021). In educational discourse, Al-Ghazali's theories are revered as quintessential references, demonstrating the enduring relevance and flexibility of his philosophical constructs in educational philosophy (Hanafi & Rizqi, 2022). Furthermore, his emphasis on the inseparability of knowledge concerning the soul and human components, along with hisbah, reinforces the comprehensive nature of his framework (Poad & Ibrahim, 2019). Al-Ghazali's conceptualization of the human soul, which embodies four aspects indicative of spiritual identity, corresponds with a more expansive interpretation of human essence that transcends the physical realm (Ping et al., 2018). Moreover, Al-Ghazali's insights on attaining human perfection through the mastery of virtues echo the persistent relevance of his educational philosophy, even in the context of globalization (Mariyo, 2023). His extensive framework for understanding human nature, which includes physical, nafs, qalb, 'aql, and ruh, has been thoroughly discussed and analyzed by scholars, further emphasizing the perpetual significance and adaptability of his concepts (Abas & Yusof, 2020).

Although Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity is thoroughly discussed in the fields of philosophy and theology, its application within higher education curricula, particularly in Islamic Education (PAI), is still underdeveloped. Current research predominantly focuses on theoretical or philosophical analysis, lacking practical application in learning and character development. Furthermore, contemporary educational trends, which prioritize measurable achievements, often neglect the deeper and more significant aspects of character formation. There is a critical need for studies that examine how Al-Ghazali's principles can be effectively integrated into curricula designed to cultivate well-rounded individuals. This research is novel in its exploration of how Al-Ghazali's concepts can be implemented within the PAI curriculum to foster more holistic and integrity-driven student characters. Utilizing a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates theories from psychology, ethics, and education, this study aims to bridge the existing gap by providing empirical evidence and a detailed analysis of the effects of integrating Al-Ghazali's concepts on students' character and spiritual

development. This innovation is anticipated to significantly contribute to educational literature and practices in higher education, as well as support a more comprehensive and value-oriented curriculum renewal.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative design to investigate the integration of Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity into the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum at universities. The qualitative approach was selected for its distinctive capability to deeply capture perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of subjects, an achievement not possible through quantitative methods. This design enables researchers to examine a broader context and discern nuances in subjects' experiences, which are essential for comprehending complex phenomena such as the incorporation of spiritual and ethical values in education. In this research, data collection involved a range of methods designed to provide a thorough understanding of the processes and effects of integrating Al-Ghazali's concepts into the existing curriculum (Creswell, 2014).

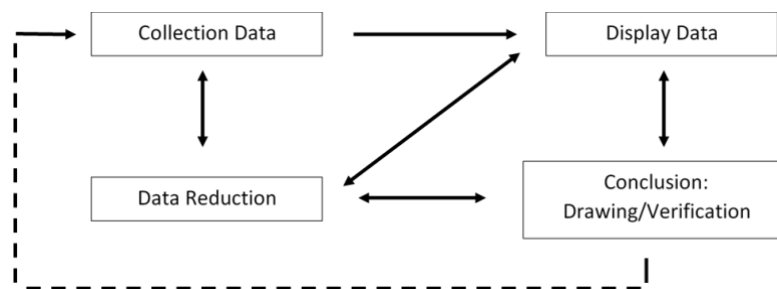
This study was conducted at a prominent university in Indonesia renowned for its academic excellence and dedication to character education rooted in Islamic values. The research participants included five lecturers and five students actively engaged in courses pertinent to the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum, which incorporates Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity. The lecturers selected were those who taught these relevant courses and had integrated elements of Al-Ghazali's philosophy into their teaching. The students were chosen based on their involvement in these courses and their willingness to discuss their experiences and perceptions of the content. This selection strategy was designed to gather diverse and representative insights from the academic community (Markula et al., 2023; Toft et al., 2021).

Table 1. List of Respondents Participating in the Research

No	Partici- pant ID	Cate- gory	Gender	Age
1	L1	Lecturer	Male	64
2	L2	Lecturer	Male	55
3	L3	Lecturer	Male	33
4	L4	Lecturer	Female	31
5	L5	Lecturer	Male	43
6	S1	Student	Female	19
7	S2	Student	Male	19
8	S3	Student	Female	20
9	S4	Student	Male	19

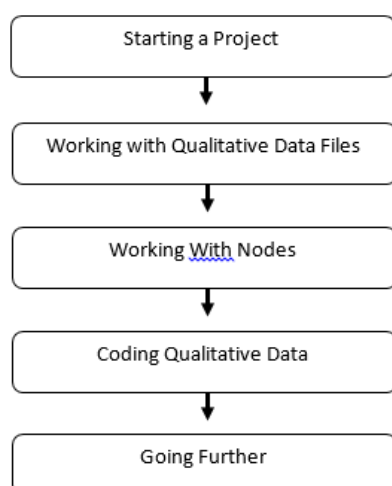
10	S5	Student	Female	19
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This study complied with all relevant ethical norms for research. Informed consent was secured from all participants prior to the commencement of data collection, ensuring that all information would remain confidential and be utilized solely for research purposes. Data collection encompassed three primary methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations took place within classroom environments to examine the teaching dynamics and interactions between lecturers and students. In-depth interviews were conducted to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences related to the curriculum. Document analysis was performed on syllabi, course materials, and pertinent academic records to elucidate the overall framework and content of the curriculum (Edwards-Jones, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994).



Figures 1. Miles and Huberman framework Data Analysis Diagram (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After completing data collection, the data analysis process commenced using NVivo 12 software. NVivo enabled effective management and systematic thematic analysis of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents. The initial step in the analysis involved data codification, wherein data were organized into themes based on content similarities. This step was followed by axial coding, which involved examining the relationships among themes to develop a more nuanced understanding of the integration and reception of Al-Ghazali's concepts within higher education. The results of this analysis are anticipated to provide detailed conclusions regarding the effectiveness and impact of incorporating Al-Ghazali's concepts into student character development (AlYahmady & Al Abri, 2013; Elliott, 2022; Peng & Chen, 2023; Welsh, 2002; Wiltshier, 2011).



Figures 2. Analysis Workflow Using NVivo Software (AlYahmady & Al Abri, 2013)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The integration of Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity into the Islamic Education curriculum at universities aims to cultivate well-rounded personalities, blending deep spiritual insights with practical wisdom. The curriculum could begin with a foundational course focusing on Al-Ghazali's life, his works, and his philosophical and theological insights, emphasizing his deep understanding of the human soul and his pursuit of divine closeness. To elucidate the research findings, a Word Frequency table from NVIVO 12, derived from in-depth interview transcripts with five informants, is presented. The Word Frequency feature in NVIVO 12 software enables the analysis of the occurrence of specific words within a document or a collection of documents. This tool provides data on the frequency of particular words, aiding researchers in identifying patterns or themes in the text under analysis. By utilizing NVIVO 12 Word Frequency, researchers can quickly pinpoint key terms that recur in the text and leverage this information to enhance their understanding of the studied material.

Table 2. Word Frequency Query in NVivo 12 displaying the list of the top 10 words that appear most frequently in the data.

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
Education	9	102	4.10
Ghazali	7	93	3.74
Concepts	8	89	3.58

Islamic	7	81	3.25
Religious	9	71	2.85
Curriculum	10	57	2.29
Students	8	56	2.25
Integration	11	52	2.09
Spiritual	9	43	1.73
Concept	7	32	1.29

The table presented above lists the 10 most frequently occurring keywords from the in-depth interview transcripts with 10 informants, detailing the number of occurrences and their respective percentage weights. This information enables researchers to discern general patterns and the primary focus of the interviews. Additionally, researchers utilize the Word Frequency results from NVIVO 12 to generate a word cloud. This word cloud, a feature of NVIVO 12, provides a visual representation of word frequencies within a text, with more frequently occurring words displayed in larger fonts compared to less frequent ones. By employing the word cloud, researchers can swiftly pinpoint the most prominent keywords in the in-depth interview data.

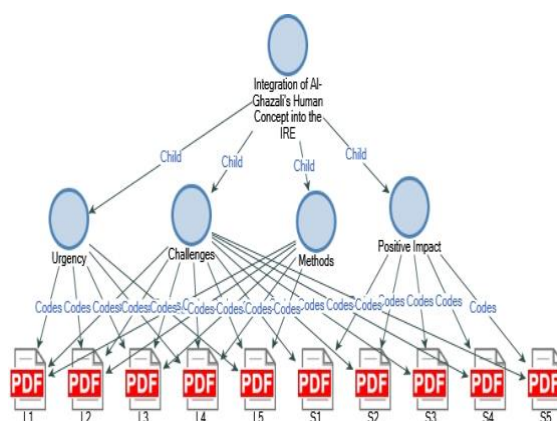


Figures 3. Word cloud display in NVivo 12 from interview findings with 10 research participants

Based on the word frequency table from in-depth interviews with five lecturers and five students regarding the integration of Al-Ghazali's Human Concept into the Islamic Education Curriculum at the university, several analytical findings have been identified: Firstly, the term 'education' is most frequently mentioned, appearing 102 times, reflecting a significant emphasis on the educational aspects in the context of integrating Al-Ghazali's concepts. This prominence underscores the importance of education, accounting for the highest analytical weight at 4.10% and highlighting it as a primary focus within the curriculum discussions.

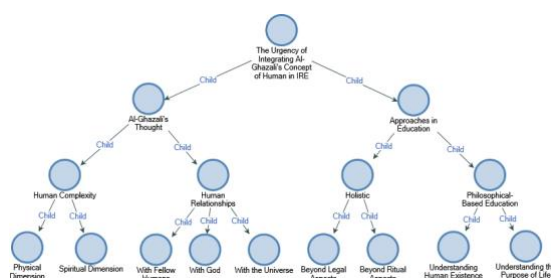
Secondly, 'ghazali', as a pivotal element of the study, appears 93 times, signifying Al-Ghazali's substantial influence on the curriculum and ongoing discussions. The close percentage weight of 3.74% confirms the relevance of Al-Ghazali within the Islamic educational framework at universities. Thirdly, the terms 'concepts' and 'islamic', with 89 and 81 mentions respectively, indicate that Islamic concepts, potentially linked to Al-Ghazali's teachings, are critical to the discourse. This suggests the inclusion of Al-Ghazali's educational methodologies and their application in contemporary Islamic educational practices. Fourthly, the frequent occurrence of 'religious', 'curriculum', and 'students' highlights three fundamental discussion components: religious dimensions, curriculum structure, and student engagement and experiences, with their percentage weights underscoring their significance in integrating Al-Ghazali's human concepts. Fifthly, 'integration' and 'spiritual', with 52 and 43 mentions respectively, reflect substantial attention to the integration process and spiritual aspects, indicating a focus on Al-Ghazali's perspectives on spiritual development within the curriculum. Lastly, 'concept', despite having the lowest frequency and percentage weight (32 mentions, 1.29%), remains relevant but suggests that discussions may lean more towards practical application and pedagogy rather than theoretical exploration of the concept itself. The analysis concludes that there is a distinct inclination among respondents to prioritize a holistic educational approach, weaving Al-Ghazali's values and spiritual insights into the university's Islamic religious education to foster well-rounded personalities. This reflects an endeavor to integrate traditional values with modern educational demands, emphasizing personal growth that encompasses both intellectual and spiritual dimensions.

Integrating Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity into the Islamic Education curriculum at universities is an essential initiative for cultivating well-rounded student personalities, merging deep spiritual insights with practical wisdom applications. This approach, emphasizing a profound comprehension of the human soul and pursuit of divine proximity, lays a robust philosophical groundwork for enhancing religious education. Nonetheless, obstacles such as educators' limited grasp of Al-Ghazali's ideas and resistance from some students necessitate targeted strategies, including faculty training and the formulation of an inclusive curriculum. Employing learning methods that incorporate discussion, reflection, and practical application is anticipated to surmount these challenges, enabling students to more effectively assimilate these concepts. Consequently, students not only achieve a deeper understanding of spiritual principles but also foster enhanced empathy and social responsibility, thereby positively impacting their personal growth and contributing to the wider community.



Figures 4. Project Map in NVivo 12 displaying research findings and participants.

A. The urgency of integrating the concept of human according to Al-Ghazali in IRE

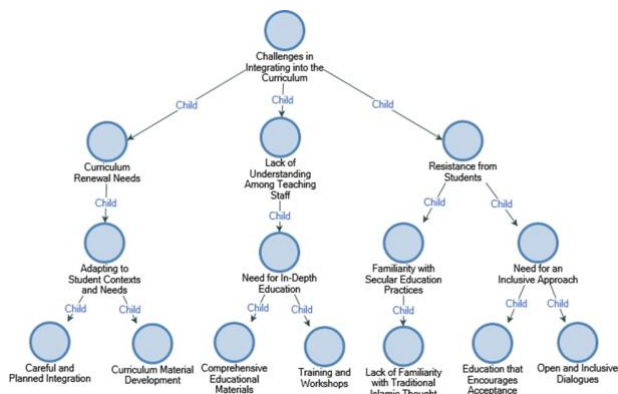


Figures 5. Project Map in NVivo 12 displaying the concept map the urgency of integrating Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity in IRE

Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity is profoundly relevant to Islamic religious education at universities (Fahrudin & Anwar, 2022; Poya & Rizapoor, 2023). As a distinguished Islamic philosopher and scholar, Al-Ghazali presents a deep insight into human nature. He asserts that humans are not just physical entities but also embody an inseparable spiritual dimension. This perspective lays a strong philosophical foundation for Islamic religious education, emphasizing the critical importance of understanding human existence's depths. By recognizing both the physical and spiritual dimensions, Islamic religious education can guide students in grasping the essence of human existence and the purpose of life from an Islamic viewpoint. Education rooted in Al-Ghazali's human concept encourages a holistic educational approach that extends beyond mere ritualistic or legalistic aspects to include a deeper understanding of human connections with God, fellow humans, and the universe. Consequently, Al-Ghazali's interpretation of human nature not only establishes a theoretical

base but also provides a comprehensive framework for Islamic religious education, aiding students in gaining a profound understanding of themselves, society, and the broader cosmos.

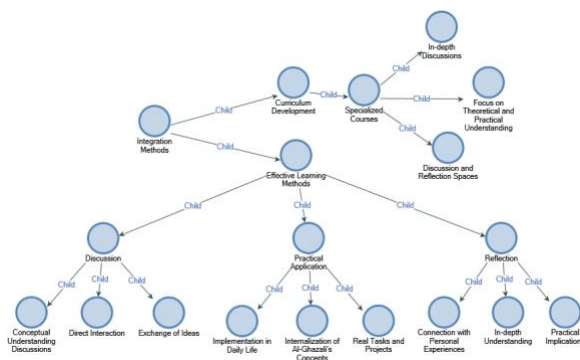
B. Challenges of Integration in the Curriculum



Figures 6. Project Map in NVivo 12 displaying the concept map challenges of integration in the curriculum

Integrating Al-Ghazali's concepts into the Islamic religious education curriculum at universities presents notable challenges (Kamaliah, 2022). A primary obstacle is the limited understanding or familiarity with Al-Ghazali's philosophies among the faculty. Many educators may lack an in-depth grasp of Al-Ghazali's teachings, which can hinder the curriculum integration process. Furthermore, resistance from some students also poses a challenge. Those accustomed to more secular educational frameworks or unfamiliar with traditional Islamic ideologies might struggle to comprehend and embrace Al-Ghazali's methodologies. To address these issues, it is essential to enhance faculty familiarity with Al-Ghazali's ideas through targeted training and workshops. Additionally, adopting an inclusive and pedagogically sound approach in teaching can help students feel more open to exploring and understanding these concepts. Integrating Al-Ghazali's teachings also necessitates a careful and strategic revision of the curriculum, taking into account the students' needs and the objectives of Islamic education. With appropriate efforts and an inclusive strategy, these challenges can be surmounted, facilitating the effective and successful incorporation of Al-Ghazali's concepts into Islamic religious education at the university level.

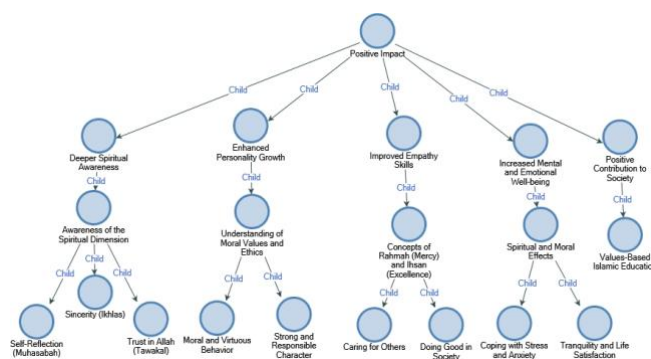
C. Methods of Integration in the Curriculum



Figures 7. Project Map in NVivo 12 displaying the concept map methods of integration in the curriculum

The integration of Al-Ghazali's concepts into the Islamic religious education curriculum at universities necessitates a deliberate and structured approach (Arifin, 2018; Barni & Mahdany, 2017; Sasmita, 2022). To facilitate this, several pedagogical methods can be employed to enhance students' comprehension and internalization of Al-Ghazali's teachings. Firstly, discussion-based learning methods prove effective in introducing Al-Ghazali's concepts, allowing students to actively engage with the material, exchange ideas, and explore their understanding collectively. Secondly, reflection serves as an essential technique for assimilating Al-Ghazali's concepts, enabling students to connect the learned ideas with their personal experiences. This reflective practice deepens their grasp of the concepts and helps them contemplate their practical implications in daily life. Thirdly, the real-world application of Al-Ghazali's teachings is crucial. Instruction should extend beyond theoretical knowledge to include strategies for applying these concepts practically. For instance, students could undertake tasks or projects that challenge them to implement Al-Ghazali's values and principles in actual scenarios. Moreover, the creation of specialized courses focused intensively on Al-Ghazali's philosophy is recommended. These courses would offer extensive opportunities for in-depth discussions and profound reflections on his ideas. Through such methods—encompassing discussions, reflections, and practical applications—and the establishment of dedicated courses, it is anticipated that students will more effectively grasp and embody Al-Ghazali's teachings. This approach will contribute significantly to creating a conducive learning environment for integrating these philosophical concepts into the university's Islamic religious education curriculum.

D. Positive Impact on Students



Figures 8. Project Map in NVivo 12 displaying the concept map: Positive Impact on Students.

Integrating Al-Ghazali's concepts into the Islamic religious education curriculum can significantly enhance students' awareness of spiritual dimensions in their lives (Faqihuddin & Romadhon, 2023; Gunawan & Lestari, 2021). This integration fosters improved personal growth, heightened responsibility, and enhanced empathy. The incorporation of Al-Ghazali's principles offers considerable positive impacts on students. Key benefits include: Firstly, students gain a heightened awareness of spiritual dimensions, enriching their understanding of concepts such as sincerity (ikhlas), reliance on God (tawakal), and self-reflection (muhasabah). This deepened understanding can strengthen their relationship with God and clarify their spiritual purposes in life. Secondly, Al-Ghazali's teachings contribute to more profound personality development. By engaging with his moral values, ethics, and virtues, students can develop into strong, responsible, and ethical individuals. Thirdly, Al-Ghazali's concepts aid in cultivating better empathy skills among students. Learning about compassion (rahmah) and benevolence (ihsan) emphasizes the importance of empathy and making positive societal contributions. Fourthly, a deeper grasp of spiritual dimensions and moral values can equip students to better manage stress, anxiety, and mental pressures, leading to a more peaceful and contented life due to a solid spiritual foundation. Fifthly, students versed in Al-Ghazali's teachings can become agents of positive change in society. They are more likely to participate in charitable activities, assist others, and advocate for social justice based on the Islamic values they have internalized. Overall, the integration of Al-Ghazali's concepts into the Islamic religious education curriculum provides extensive and beneficial impacts on students' spiritual growth and personal development. This approach fosters a holistic and value-oriented educational environment, enabling students to become not only better individuals but also more impactful members of society.

CONCLUSION

Integrating Al-Ghazali's concept of humanity into the Islamic religious education curriculum at universities lays a solid foundation for the comprehensive development of students' personalities. Despite the challenges inherent in this integration process, the long-term benefits to both students and society are profound. With an appropriate educational approach and a dedication to deepening the understanding of Al-Ghazali's philosophy, Islamic religious education can more effectively mold a generation that is ethical, responsible, and empathetic. This transformation benefits not only individuals but also significantly improves society by fostering a more harmonious and civilized environment. Consequently, ongoing efforts to incorporate Al-Ghazali's concepts into the Islamic religious education curriculum at universities should be actively supported and encouraged by all stakeholders in the field of Islamic educational development.

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