Synthesis of Al-Ghazali and Ibnu Khaldun's Educational Thought: Epistemological Studies and Their Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education Paradigms

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Abstract
Classical Islamic educational thought has made a significant contribution to the epistemological foundation of education that integrates knowledge, morality, and social reality. This article aims to examine and synthesize the educational thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun from an epistemological perspective and to analyze their relevance to the development of a contemporary Islamic education paradigm. This study employs a qualitative approach through library research, using classical works of both scholars and relevant supporting literature as primary sources. The findings reveal that Al-Ghazali emphasizes an educational epistemology based on the integration of rational and spiritual knowledge with a strong orientation toward moral formation and spiritual purification. In contrast, Ibn Khaldun highlights rational-empirical, contextual, and sociological dimensions in the educational process. The synthesis of their thoughts produces a holistic epistemological framework for Islamic education that balances transcendental, rational, and social dimensions. This framework is considered relevant in addressing contemporary challenges of Islamic education, including the dichotomy of knowledge, moral crises, and the demands of globalization. Therefore, the educational ideas of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun remain strategic references for formulating an integrative, humanistic, and contextual paradigm of Islamic education.
Keywords: Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Educational Epistemology, Islamic Education, Contemporary Paradigm.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education essentially serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a process of developing the complete human personality, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. In this context, Islamic education is required to integrate transcendental values with the ever-evolving realities of human life. The challenges of globalization, modernization, and value disruption require Islamic education to continually engage in epistemological reflection to avoid losing its direction and identity (Raihani, 2020).

One of the fundamental problems facing contemporary Islamic education is the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge. This separation has resulted in a partial education system that is less able to produce individuals with a balance between intellectual intelligence, spiritual depth, and social sensitivity. This situation demands a reconstruction of the Islamic education paradigm based on an integrative and holistic epistemology (Huda & Kartanegara, 2021).

In efforts to reconstruct this paradigm, the thoughts of classical Islamic figures are a crucial source of reference. Classical Islamic educational thought is not only historically relevant but also holds philosophical and methodological values that can be contextualized to the needs of the times. Among the figures who made significant contributions to the field of Islamic education are Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun (Nasr, 2022).

Al-Ghazali is known as a thinker who emphasized the integration of knowledge, morality, and spirituality in education. For him, knowledge should be oriented toward purifying the soul and developing noble morals, not solely toward intellectual achievement. Al-Ghazali's educational epistemology is rooted in the harmony of revelation, reason, and inner experience, thus viewing education as a process of self-transformation toward human perfection (Azra, 2020).

Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun offered a more rational, empirical, and contextual perspective on education. He viewed education as a social process inextricably linked to the cultural, economic, and civilizational conditions of a society. Ibn Khaldun's thinking emphasized the importance of learning stages, methods appropriate to student development, and the close relationship between science and social reality (Al-Attas & Wan Daud, 2021).

The differences in emphasis between Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's thinking demonstrate the richness of Islamic intellectual resources in formulating educational concepts. Al-Ghazali emphasized the spiritual and moral dimensions, while Ibn Khaldun emphasized the rational and social aspects. However, these two schools of thought are not contradictory, but rather complementary in building a comprehensive framework for Islamic education.

The synthesis of the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun is crucial in the context of contemporary Islamic education, which faces various complex challenges. The moral crisis,

weakening spirituality, and demands for global competence require Islamic education to not only adapt to change but also remain rooted in authentic Islamic values.

An epistemological study of the thoughts of these two figures provides a crucial foundation for understanding how knowledge is acquired, developed, and taught from an Islamic educational perspective. Epistemology concerns not only the sources and validity of knowledge but also the goals and orientation of education itself. Therefore, epistemological studies are key to formulating an Islamic educational paradigm that is relevant to the needs of the times.

Although numerous studies have examined the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun separately, studies specifically synthesizing their educational thinking from an epistemological perspective are still relatively limited. Yet, this synthetic approach holds great potential for enriching Islamic education discourse and offering conceptual solutions to contemporary educational problems.

Based on this description, this article aims to examine the educational thought of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, synthesizing them within an epistemological framework, and analyzing their relevance for the development of a contemporary Islamic educational paradigm. It is hoped that this study will provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of integrative, humanistic, and contextual Islamic education in line with the challenges of the modern era.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research, as the object of study is the ideas and thoughts of figures in the field of Islamic education. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the concepts, meanings, and epistemological constructions of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's educational thought, as well as to examine their relevance in the context of contemporary Islamic education.

Data sources in this research are divided into two types, namely primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources include Al-Ghazali's main works related to education and epistemology, such as Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, Ayyuha al-Walad, and Al-Risala al-Ladunniyyah, as well as the works of Ibn Khaldun, especially Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah, which contains ideas about education, science, and social dynamics. Meanwhile, secondary sources include books, journal articles and other scientific works that discuss the thoughts of the two figures and issues of contemporary Islamic education.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation, namely by inventorying, critically reading, and noting sections of texts relevant to the research focus. This process was carried out systematically to obtain data related to epistemological concepts, educational goals, learning methods, and views on the relationship between knowledge, morality, and social reality in the thought of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun.

Data analysis was conducted using content

analysis with a descriptive-analytical and comparative-synthetic approach. The first stage was an in-depth description of each figure's educational thinking based on their epistemological framework. The second stage was a comparative analysis to identify similarities, differences, and common ground between the thinking of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun. The third stage was a conceptual synthesis by integrating the main elements of both schools of thought into a coherent epistemological framework of Islamic education.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation, comparing various references and interpretations from experts on the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun. Furthermore, the researchers checked the consistency of the arguments within the historical context and theoretical framework of Islamic education. This method is expected to provide a comprehensive and relevant understanding for the development of contemporary Islamic education paradigms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Epistemological Basis of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's Educational Thought in Viewing the Nature of Knowledge, the Goals of Education, and the Learning Process from the Perspective of Islamic Education

Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's educational thinking stems from a shared concern with the nature of knowledge and the role of education in shaping human beings, but they have different epistemological emphases. For Al-Ghazali, knowledge cannot be separated from spiritual and moral dimensions, as the primary goal of education is to bring humans closer to God and to cultivate noble morals. Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun views knowledge as the result of rational human interaction with social and natural realities, so education must be adapted to the context and needs of society.

Al-Ghazali's epistemological foundation rests on the integration of revelation, reason, and intuition (dzauq). He rejected the sharp dichotomy between religious and rational knowledge, as long as the latter leads humans to goodness and knowledge of God. From this perspective, the validity of knowledge is measured not only by its rational-logical aspects, but also by its impact on the purification of the soul and the formation of the character of students (Azra, 2020).

According to Al-Ghazali, the goals of education are transcendental and ethical. Education is aimed at developing individuals who are both knowledgeable and moral, so that knowledge becomes a means of devotion, not a tool of domination or intellectual arrogance. The learning process must consider students' spiritual readiness, ethical conduct in seeking knowledge, and the exemplary behavior of teachers as moral figures who play a crucial role in internalizing educational values (Raihani, 2021).

Unlike Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun's educational epistemology emphasized the role of reason and empirical experience. He viewed knowledge as a product of human intellectual

activity that develops along with the advancement of civilization. Therefore, education must take into account social realities, the psychological state of students, and stages of intellectual development to ensure effective learning and avoid excessive cognitive burden (Wan Daud, 2021).

According to Ibn Khaldun, the goals of education are functional and social. Education is aimed at preparing people to live and play an active role in society. Knowledge is not only theoretically valuable but must also have practical uses in supporting the sustainability of civilization. Thus, education is understood as an instrument for developing knowledgeable, skilled, and adaptable individuals to social dynamics.

In terms of the learning process, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the importance of gradual methods (tadarruj), repetition, and adapting material to students' abilities. He criticized teaching methods that were too demanding and coercive, as they could hinder intellectual development. This view demonstrates that Ibn Khaldun's educational epistemology is not only theoretical but also pedagogical and applicable in educational practice (Huda & Kartanegara, 2022).

Despite their differing emphases, both Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun viewed education as a holistic human development process. Al-Ghazali emphasized the spiritual and moral dimensions, while Ibn Khaldun emphasized the rational and social dimensions. Both agreed that knowledge must bring benefits and must not be separated from ethical values.

Thus, the epistemological foundations of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's educational thought demonstrate two complementary orientations. Al-Ghazali provides a spiritual and moral foundation for Islamic education, while Ibn Khaldun offers a rational and contextual framework. Understanding both forms a crucial basis for formulating a concept of Islamic education that balances transcendental, rational, and social orientations.

Similarities, Differences, and Meeting Points of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's Educational Thoughts When Viewed from the Aspect of Islamic Educational Epistemology

The fundamental similarity between Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun lies in their view that education has a broader purpose than simply acquiring knowledge. Both rejected the mechanistic view of education, which positions humans solely as objects of learning. Education is understood as a process of developing the whole person, involving intellectual, moral, and social aspects in an integrated manner (Sahin, 2020).

Furthermore, both figures agree that knowledge must benefit individuals and society. Al-Ghazali emphasized spiritual and moral well-being, while Ibn Khaldun emphasized social and civilizational well-being. Despite their differing orientations, both rejected knowledge that was destructive or lacking ethical value. This demonstrates that the ethical dimension is a crucial point of intersection in their educational epistemologies.

The main difference lies in the source and

validity of knowledge. Al-Ghazali placed revelation and spiritual intuition as sources of knowledge that held a high status alongside reason. In contrast, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the role of reason and empirical experience in acquiring and developing knowledge. This difference reflects Al-Ghazali's Sufi-philosophical tendencies and Ibn Khaldun's rational-sociological tendencies (Hashim & Langgulung, 2021).

Another difference is evident in the orientation of educational goals. Al-Ghazali viewed the ultimate goal of education as achieving moral perfection and human closeness to God. Education is directed toward the formation of morals and the purification of the soul as the core of successful learning. In contrast, Ibn Khaldun viewed education as a means of preparing humans to live productive lives and contribute to building civilization, thus making the goals of education more pragmatic and social.

In terms of learning methods, Al-Ghazali emphasized teacher role models, habituation, and the development of good manners as part of the educational process. Ibn Khaldun, on the other hand, emphasized gradual methods, repetition, and the appropriateness of material to the students' abilities. These two approaches demonstrate that educational methods are not a single concept but must be tailored to the goals and conditions of the students (Lubis, 2022).

The crucial point of intersection between these two schools of thought lies in the view that education should proceed in stages and take into account the readiness of students, both intellectually and morally. Al-Ghazali emphasized spiritual readiness, while Ibn Khaldun emphasized intellectual and social readiness. Synthesized, both offer an educational approach that balances spiritual development with intellectual development.

Thus, a comparison of the educational thought of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun demonstrates the dialectic between the spiritual and rational dimensions in Islamic educational epistemology. Their differences are not antagonistic, but rather complementary in building a comprehensive Islamic educational paradigm. Synthesizing these similarities and differences provides an important foundation for developing an Islamic education that is integrative, contextual, and relevant to the challenges of the modern era.

The Relevance and Implications of the Synthesis of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's Educational Thoughts for the Development of Contemporary Islamic Educational Paradigms

The relevance of the synthesis of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's educational thought for contemporary Islamic education lies in its ability to address the multidimensional crisis facing the world of education today. Islamic education faces not only the challenges of scientific and technological developments but also a moral crisis, disorientation of values, and a weak integration between the spiritual and rational dimensions. In this context, the synthesis of the thoughts of these two figures offers a solid epistemological foundation for building a balanced paradigm of Islamic education.

The contemporary Islamic educational paradigm requires an epistemological framework capable of harmoniously integrating revelation, reason, and social reality. Al-Ghazali's thought makes a significant contribution in affirming the transcendental and ethical dimensions of education, while Ibn Khaldun offers a rational and contextual approach relevant to the dynamics of modern society. This integration of the two allows Islamic education to avoid being trapped in ahistorical spiritualism or secular rationalism (Sa'ada, 2020).

In the context of the Islamic education curriculum, a synthesis of the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun can be realized through the development of an integrative curriculum. The curriculum focuses not only on mastering religious or academic material but also on character building, critical thinking skills, and social awareness in students. This approach aligns with the needs of 21st-century education, which demands a balance between intellectual competence and moral integrity (Mulyadi, 2021).

The implications of this synthesis of the two figures' thoughts are also evident in the role of educators. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, teachers serve as moral role models and spiritual guides, while in Ibn Khaldun's perspective, teachers serve as intellectual facilitators who understand the psychological and social conditions of their students. In contemporary Islamic education, these two roles need to be synergized so that teachers can guide students

holistically, both academically and personally (Ismail & Hasan, 2022).

In terms of learning methods, the relevance of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's thinking is evident in the importance of a humanistic and gradual pedagogical approach. Education should not be repressive or solely focused on cognitive achievement, but should instead address the mental, spiritual, and intellectual readiness of students. This approach is relevant to critiques of modern educational practices, which often overemphasize cognitive aspects.

Furthermore, the synthesis of the thoughts of these two figures provides a foundation for Islamic education to respond to the challenges of globalization without losing its identity. Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of maintaining values and morals, while Ibn Khaldun emphasized adaptation to social change. Both provide a conceptual framework for Islamic education to be selective, critical, and creative in the face of global influences (Rahman, 2023).

In the realm of educational policy, this epistemological synthesis can serve as a basis for formulating Islamic education policies that are not dichotomous. Islamic education should be directed toward producing graduates who possess spiritual piety, intellectual prowess, and social responsibility. Thus, Islamic education functions not only as a religious institution but also as an agent of civilizational development.

Thus, the relevance of the synthesis of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's educational thought for the contemporary Islamic educational paradigm lies in its ability to offer an integrative,

humanistic, and contextual approach to education. This synthesis is not only theoretical but also has practical implications for curriculum development, learning methods, the role of educators, and Islamic education policy. Therefore, the thoughts of these two figures remain relevant and strategic in addressing the challenges of Islamic education in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and discussion outlined above, it can be concluded that the educational thinking of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun has made a significant contribution to establishing the epistemological foundation of Islamic education. Both offer different yet complementary perspectives on understanding the nature of knowledge, the goals of education, and the learning process. Al-Ghazali emphasizes the transcendental, spiritual, and moral dimensions as the core of education, while Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the rational, empirical, and social dimensions as the basis for the development of knowledge and education.

Al-Ghazali's epistemological foundation rests on the integration of revelation, reason, and spiritual intuition, thus viewing education as a means of purifying the soul and cultivating noble morals. Education aims not only to produce intellectually intelligent individuals, but also individuals with moral awareness and a closeness to God. Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun's educational epistemology places reason and empirical experience as the primary means of acquiring knowledge, while remaining grounded in Islamic values. Education is understood as a social process closely linked to the dynamics of society and the development of civilization.

The synthesis of the thoughts of these two figures demonstrates that ideal Islamic education cannot rely solely on one particular dimension. Excessive emphasis on the spiritual without regard for social realities has the potential to produce an ahistorical and less adaptive education. Conversely, an emphasis on the rational and empirical without a foundation in transcendental values risks leading to the secularization of education. Therefore, the synthesis of the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun offers a holistic epistemological framework by integrating the transcendental, rational, and social dimensions in a balanced manner.

In the context of contemporary Islamic education, the synthesis of the thoughts of these two figures holds significant relevance. Islamic education today faces the challenges of globalization, a moral crisis, and the demands of 21st-century competencies, which require the integration of scientific knowledge, character development, and social sensitivity. Al-Ghazali's thought provides a solid ethical and spiritual foundation, while Ibn Khaldun's provides a rational and contextual framework that allows Islamic education to remain relevant to current developments.

Thus, the educational thought of Al-

Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun holds not only historical value but also theoretical and practical significance for the development of contemporary Islamic educational paradigms. Their epistemological synthesis can serve as a strategic reference in formulating educational policies, curriculum development, and integrative and humanistic learning practices. Further applied and empirical studies are needed to implement this synthetic framework in the broader context of Islamic education, so that Islamic education can contribute significantly to building a civilized and just civilization.

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