

Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Developing Students' Religiosity from Imam Al-Ghazali's Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' religiosity from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective. This study is important because Islamic Religious Education in many educational institutions still emphasizes cognitive achievement more than the internalization of religious values and character formation. This research employed a qualitative method with a library research design. Primary data were obtained from Imam Al-Ghazali's works and scholarly literature discussing his educational thought, while secondary data were collected from books, journal articles, and previous studies related to Islamic Religious Education and students' religiosity. Data were analyzed using content analysis through data reduction, data display, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education should integrate *ta'lim* (knowledge transmission), *ta'dib* (moral education), and *tazkiyat al-nafs* (spiritual purification). Teachers are expected to serve as educators and moral role models who cultivate students' religiosity through exemplary conduct, religious habituation, and character development. These findings imply that Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought remains relevant as a conceptual foundation for strengthening Islamic Religious Education in contemporary educational institutions.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education; Students' Religiosity; Imam Al-Ghazali*

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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays an important role in developing learners who possess faith, piety, noble character, and the ability to practice Islamic values in their daily lives. Therefore, IRE should not merely focus on the transmission of religious knowledge but should also encourage the internalization of Islamic values through the educational process. The success of IRE is reflected not only in students' cognitive achievement but also in the development of their religious attitudes, moral character, and daily behavior. Students' religiosity is one of the important indicators of successful Islamic Religious Education because it reflects the implementation of Islamic teachings in everyday life [1]

The rapid development of science, technology, and globalization has created new challenges for Islamic education. The widespread availability of information has not always been accompanied by improvements in students' moral and spiritual development. Many students still experience a decline in religious awareness, discipline in worship, and social responsibility despite participating in Islamic Religious Education at school. This condition indicates that religious learning is still largely oriented toward cognitive achievement rather than the internalization of Islamic values [2]. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education requires learning strategies that integrate knowledge, attitudes, and religious practice through exemplary teaching, religious habituation, and the establishment of a supportive religious culture within schools.

Several previous studies have discussed the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' religiosity. Zaida (2022) found that religiosity has a significant relationship with students' motivation to learn Islamic Religious Education Irodadi (2022) explained that the internalization of Islamic values through classroom learning and school culture contributes to the development of students' religious attitudes and behavior [1]. Safiqo and Ghofur (2025) emphasized that Islamic Religious Education teachers play an important role as moral role models in strengthening students' religious character [2]. Azis and Masrukin (2019) also found that a religious school culture contributes significantly to character development through the consistent implementation of religious activities [3]. Thrasne (2024) concluded that Islamic Religious Education strengthens students' religious character while fostering empathy and social responsibility [4].

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, Imam Al-Ghazali viewed education as a process of developing individuals intellectually, morally, and spiritually. He argued that the primary purpose of education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge but the formation of individuals with noble character and devotion to Allah SWT. According to Imam Al-Ghazali, education should integrate *'ilm* (knowledge), *'amal* (righteous action), and *tazkiyat al-nafs* (spiritual purification) to achieve balanced personal development [5]. He also emphasized that teachers should function not only as instructors but also as educators who become moral role models for their students [6]. These educational principles remain relevant to contemporary Islamic education because they position religiosity as the ultimate goal of the educational process [7].

Previous studies have mainly discussed the implementation of Islamic Religious Education, religious school culture, or Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought separately. Most studies focus on instructional strategies, character education, or the philosophy of Islamic education without specifically examining the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' religiosity through Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective. This study fills that gap by integrating the implementation of Islamic Religious Education with Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought as the main analytical framework for developing students' religiosity.

Based on this background, the main problem addressed in this study is how Islamic Religious Education should be implemented to develop students' religiosity according to

Imam Al-Ghazali's educational perspective. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' religiosity from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective and to examine its relevance to contemporary Islamic education.

Literature Review

2.1. Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a learning process aimed at instilling Islamic values so that students are able to understand, internalize, and practice them in their daily lives. IRE is not merely oriented toward the achievement of cognitive competencies but also emphasizes the development of religious attitudes, noble character, and an Islamic personality through a continuous learning process[8]. Therefore, the effectiveness of IRE is measured not only by students' cognitive achievement but also by positive changes in their attitudes and behavior [9].

The implementation of IRE requires learning strategies that integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Teachers play a crucial role in creating meaningful learning experiences by not only delivering instructional materials but also internalizing Islamic values through exemplary conduct, habituation, moral advice, and the development of a religious culture within the school environment. Previous studies indicate that learning strategies emphasizing the internalization of religious values are more effective in improving students' religious behavior than approaches focusing solely on the delivery of instructional content [10].

In addition to instructional strategies, the school environment also contributes significantly to the successful implementation of Islamic Religious Education. A religious school culture established through congregational prayers, regular Qur'anic recitation, collective prayers, and various religious activities can strengthen students' religious character. Teachers serve as role models in creating a conducive learning environment where students gain practical experience in applying Islamic values in their daily lives [3].

2.2. Students' Religiosity

Religiosity is the manifestation of an individual's religious beliefs, understanding, and practice as reflected in attitudes and behavior. In the context of Islamic education, religiosity is not limited to obedience in performing acts of worship but also encompasses the development of noble character, honesty, responsibility, social awareness, and the ability to implement Islamic values in everyday life [11].

The development of students' religiosity is achieved through a continuous process of value internalization. Islamic Religious Education serves as one of the primary instruments in this process by providing opportunities for students to understand, appreciate, and practice Islamic teachings. Zaida (2022) found that religiosity is positively associated with students' motivation to learn Islamic Religious Education. Irodatti (2022) further explained that the successful internalization of religious values is reflected in the development of students' religious knowledge, attitudes, and behavior through both classroom learning and school culture.

Various studies also indicate that students' religiosity is influenced by several factors, including teachers' exemplary conduct, the school environment, religious habituation, and family support. Therefore, the development of religiosity cannot rely solely on classroom instruction but requires continuous guidance and reinforcement to ensure that Islamic values become an integral part of students' character [12].

2.3. The Implementation of Islamic Religious Education from Imam Al-Ghazali's Perspective

Imam Al-Ghazali viewed education as a process of perfecting human beings through the development of noble character, the purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-naafs), and the acquisition of knowledge that is reflected in righteous actions. According to Imam Al-

Ghazali, the ultimate objective of education is to bring individuals closer to Allah SWT. Therefore, knowledge should provide benefits not only in worldly life but also in the Hereafter [5].

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, teachers occupy a highly significant position because they function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as educators, mentors, and moral role models for their students. Teachers are expected to demonstrate sincerity, patience, compassion, and exemplary conduct in their daily lives. Likewise, students should observe proper etiquette in seeking knowledge by respecting their teachers, purifying their hearts from undesirable traits, and consistently applying the knowledge they acquire in their daily lives [13].

When applied to the implementation of Islamic Religious Education, Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought remains highly relevant to the needs of contemporary Islamic education. IRE should not merely emphasize students' mastery of religious knowledge but should also foster their religiosity through teachers' exemplary conduct, religious habituation, character development, and the continuous process of spiritual purification. Consequently, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective places the development of students' religious character as the primary objective of education, enabling them to integrate knowledge, faith, and righteous deeds in their daily lives [14].

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. This method was selected because the research focuses on examining the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in fostering students' religiosity from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective through the analysis of relevant scholarly literature rather than empirical field data [15]. In library research, academic documents serve as the primary research instrument, enabling researchers to explore concepts, theories, and previous findings systematically. The research utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained from scholarly works discussing the implementation of Islamic Religious Education, students' religiosity, and Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought, particularly *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and *Ayyuha al-Walad* as the principal references. Secondary data consisted of books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and other academic publications relevant to the research topic [16].

Data were collected using documentation techniques through the processes of identifying, selecting, classifying, and reviewing literature relevant to the research objectives. The selected references were determined based on their academic credibility, relevance to the research focus, and contribution to understanding the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' religiosity from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective [15]. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis involved data reduction, data organization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing to identify the fundamental concepts of Islamic Religious Education, synthesize findings from previous studies, and explain their relevance to Imam Al-Ghazali's educational perspective. Through this analytical process, the study provides an objective explanation of the research problem and formulates a conceptual understanding of how Islamic Religious Education can contribute to fostering students' religiosity in contemporary educational contexts [17].

Results

4.1. The Implementation of Islamic religious education in fostering student's religiosity

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) extends beyond the conventional transmission of religious knowledge in classroom settings. Rather than functioning solely as an instructional process, IRE represents

a holistic educational endeavor aimed at cultivating students' religious character, moral integrity, and spiritual awareness. This finding indicates that the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education should not be evaluated exclusively through students' cognitive achievement but also through the extent to which Islamic values are internalized and reflected in their daily attitudes and behavior. Previous studies consistently support this perspective, emphasizing that meaningful IRE contributes significantly to the formation of students' religious identity both within and beyond the school environment [18].

The findings further reveal that the successful implementation of Islamic Religious Education is closely associated with teachers' ability to function as moral educators rather than merely subject instructors. In educational practice, students are more likely to imitate the attitudes, discipline, and ethical conduct demonstrated by their teachers than to rely solely on formal classroom instruction. Consequently, teachers' consistency in practicing Islamic values becomes a fundamental element in fostering students' religiosity. This interpretation reinforces the findings of Nur Khosiah (2022), who identified teachers' exemplary conduct as the most influential factor in strengthening students' religious character. These findings imply that the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education depends not only on pedagogical competence but also on teachers' personal integrity and commitment to embodying the values they teach [10].

Another significant finding concerns the role of religious habituation in strengthening students' religiosity. The implementation of regular religious activities, including congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, supplication before and after classroom instruction, and other religious programs, provides students with continuous opportunities to experience Islamic teachings in practice. Such activities transform religious values from theoretical concepts into habitual behavior that gradually becomes embedded in students' daily lives. This finding is consistent with Thrasne (2024), who argued that continuous religious habituation strengthens students' religious awareness and encourages the consistent practice of Islamic values. Therefore, the internalization of religious values should be understood as a continuous educational process rather than a learning outcome achieved through classroom instruction alone [4].

The school environment also emerged as a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education. Schools that consistently cultivate a religious culture create an educational atmosphere that encourages students to practice Islamic values collectively in both academic and social activities. Such an environment reinforces the internalization process by providing continuous exposure to religious practices and positive social interactions. This finding supports the study conducted by Efendi and Fitriani (2023), which concluded that a supportive religious school culture significantly contributes to the development of students' religious character through the consistent reinforcement of Islamic values. Consequently, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education requires institutional support that extends beyond classroom learning and involves the collective commitment of the entire school community [12].

Overall, the findings suggest that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education should be understood as an integrated educational system in which teachers, students, religious habituation, and the school environment function as interconnected components. The absence of one of these components may reduce the effectiveness of the internalization of Islamic values and weaken the development of students' religiosity. Therefore, fostering students' religiosity requires a comprehensive educational approach that integrates knowledge acquisition, moral formation, spiritual development, and continuous religious practice. This holistic perspective confirms that Islamic Religious Education serves not merely as a means of transmitting religious knowledge but as a transformative process that shapes students into individuals who embody Islamic values in their personal and social lives.

Table 1. Mapping of Imam Al-Ghazali's Educational Concepts in Islamic Religious Education

No.	Imam Al-Ghazali's Educational Concepts	Implementation in Islamic Religious Education	Impact on Students' Religiosity
1	Teacher as <i>Murabbi</i> and Role Model	Teachers serve as role models through exemplary worship practices and moral conduct in their daily lives.	Students emulate religious behavior and develop noble character.
2	<i>Tazkiyat al-Nafs</i> (Purification of the Soul)	Character development and the reinforcement of spiritual values are integrated into the learning process.	Students develop moral awareness, self-discipline, and self-control.
3	<i>Riyadhah</i> (Habituation)	Regular religious practices such as congregational prayer and Qur'anic recitation are consistently implemented.	Students develop sustainable religious habits.
4	Integration of Knowledge and Practice	Learning emphasizes not only theoretical understanding but also the practical application of Islamic values.	Students are able to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives.
5	Objectives of Islamic Education	Education aims to develop faithful individuals with noble character.	Students' religiosity develops comprehensively in cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions.

The conceptual mapping presented in Table 1 demonstrates that Imam Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy remains highly relevant to the implementation of contemporary Islamic Religious Education. Rather than emphasizing the acquisition of religious knowledge alone, Al-Ghazali advocates an educational process that integrates intellectual development, spiritual purification, and moral cultivation. This perspective suggests that meaningful Islamic education should encourage students not only to understand Islamic teachings but also to embody them in their daily lives.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that teachers occupy a central position within this educational framework as *murabbi* who nurture students through exemplary conduct, continuous guidance, and the cultivation of virtuous habits. Consequently, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education inspired by Imam Al-Ghazali's philosophy extends beyond improving students' academic competence and seeks to develop individuals whose knowledge is consistently reflected in righteous actions and moral responsibility. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Musyaffa' and Haris (2022), who emphasized

that Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought continues to provide a relevant conceptual foundation for strengthening character education and fostering students' religiosity within contemporary Islamic educational institutions[7].

4.2. Analysis of the Implementation of Islamic Religious Education from Imam Al-Ghazali's Perspective

The findings of this study indicate that Imam Al-Ghazali views education as a comprehensive process of human development that emphasizes the purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-nafs) and the cultivation of noble character as the ultimate path toward attaining closeness to Allah SWT. From this perspective, the success of education cannot be measured solely by students' mastery of knowledge but should also be assessed through their ability to internalize and practice Islamic values in their daily lives. This finding reinforces the view that the primary objective of Islamic Religious Education extends beyond cognitive achievement to encompass the development of students' moral and spiritual character. A similar perspective was reported by Julianto and Shobahiya (2026), who emphasized that the gradual and continuous internalization of religious values is a fundamental factor in fostering students' religiosity, particularly when supported by a conducive educational environment [19].

The analysis further demonstrates that the internalization of Islamic values cannot be separated from the pivotal role of teachers as the primary agents of education. According to Imam Al-Ghazali, teachers are regarded as *murabbi*, educators whose responsibilities extend beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the moral and spiritual guidance of students through exemplary conduct. This perspective suggests that teachers are expected to embody the values they teach, enabling students to learn through observation as well as instruction. Abd. Hamid (2022) similarly argued that teachers, from Al-Ghazali's perspective, bear a profound moral responsibility for shaping students' character and personality [6]. This interpretation is further supported by the findings of Safiqo and Ghofur (2025), who concluded that teachers' exemplary behavior exerts a significant influence on the formation of students' religious character because learners naturally imitate the attitudes and behaviors they consistently observe in their daily interactions[2].

Another important finding concerns the role of religious habituation (*riyadhah*) in developing students' religiosity. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasized that virtues are cultivated through the continuous practice of good habits, which gradually become an integral part of an individual's character. This concept remains highly relevant to the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in contemporary schools, where routine religious activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, collective supplication, and character-building programs are consistently integrated into the educational process. Such activities provide students with repeated opportunities to practice Islamic values, thereby strengthening their internalization beyond theoretical understanding. This finding is consistent with Basri et al. (2023), who reported that continuous religious habituation effectively reinforces the internalization of Islamic values among students [20]. Likewise, Azis and Masrukin (2019) highlighted that a supportive religious school culture serves as an essential factor in sustaining students' religious behavior through continuous reinforcement and collective practice [3].

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that the development of students' religiosity through Islamic Religious Education is the result of a dynamic interaction among teachers' exemplary conduct, consistent religious habituation, and a supportive school environment. These interconnected elements reflect Imam Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy, which views education as a continuous process of internalizing religious values aimed at cultivating noble character and strengthening one's relationship with Allah SWT. Therefore, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education inspired by Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective

should be understood as a holistic educational framework that integrates intellectual development, moral formation, and spiritual cultivation in order to nurture students with comprehensive religiosity.

4.3. Implication of Imam Al-Ghazali's Educational Thought for Islamic Religious Education

The findings of this study demonstrate that Imam Al-Ghazali's educational thought provides significant implications for the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in contemporary educational settings. Rather than limiting the purpose of education to the acquisition of religious knowledge, Al-Ghazali emphasizes character formation, the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and the cultivation of habitual behaviors that reflect Islamic values in everyday life. This finding suggests that the success of IRE should not be evaluated solely through students' academic achievement but also through observable changes in their attitudes, moral character, and religious behavior. Such a perspective remains highly relevant to modern education, where IRE is expected to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions in a balanced manner [14].

The analysis further indicates that teachers occupy a central position within Imam Al-Ghazali's educational framework as *murabbi*, whose responsibilities extend beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the moral and spiritual development of students through exemplary conduct. This perspective implies that pedagogical competence alone is insufficient without personal integrity and ethical commitment. Teachers are therefore expected to become authentic role models whose words, attitudes, and behavior consistently reflect Islamic values. This interpretation is supported by Abd. Hamid (2022), who emphasized that teachers' exemplary conduct plays a decisive role in the internalization of religious values, as students naturally learn through observation, imitation, and continuous habituation [6].

Another important implication concerns the role of the school environment in reinforcing the implementation of Islamic Religious Education. The findings suggest that a supportive religious culture within schools provides students with continuous opportunities to practice Islamic teachings through activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, collective supplication, and character-building programs. These practices enable students to translate religious knowledge into everyday behavior, thereby strengthening the internalization of Islamic values. This finding is consistent with Azis and Masrukin (2019), who concluded that consistent religious habituation within the school environment significantly contributes to the development of students' religious character [3].

Overall, the findings confirm that Imam Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy continues to offer a relevant conceptual foundation for the development of Islamic Religious Education in the contemporary era. The integration of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, teachers' exemplary conduct, *riyadhah* (religious habituation), and the unity of knowledge and practice provides a comprehensive educational framework for fostering students' religiosity. This conceptual contribution not only strengthens the theoretical foundation of Islamic Religious Education but also offers practical insights for educators and educational institutions in designing learning environments that promote students' holistic religious development [21]. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Yahya and Syahriyah (2024) who emphasized that Al-Ghazali's educational thought remains highly relevant to contemporary efforts to

develop Islamic Religious Education that integrates intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions [22].

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a fundamental role in fostering students' religiosity by integrating cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of learning. The findings demonstrate that students' religiosity is not developed solely through the acquisition of religious knowledge but through a continuous process of internalizing Islamic values supported by teachers' exemplary conduct, consistent religious habituation, and a conducive religious school environment. From Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective, these findings affirm that education should emphasize *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), *riyadhah* (religious habituation), and the role of teachers as *murabbi* in guiding students toward moral excellence and spiritual closeness to Allah SWT. Therefore, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education should adopt a holistic and integrative approach that combines knowledge, moral development, and religious practice to cultivate students' comprehensive religiosity.

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications for the development of Islamic Religious Education. Theoretically, they reinforce the continuing relevance of Imam Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy as a conceptual framework for character and religious education in contemporary Islamic schools. Practically, they suggest that educators and educational institutions should strengthen the integration of religious values into daily learning activities through exemplary teaching, religious habituation, and the creation of a supportive school culture. Future studies are recommended to examine the implementation of Al-Ghazali's educational principles in various educational contexts using empirical approaches, thereby providing broader evidence of their effectiveness in fostering students' religiosity.

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