Integration of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun's Developmental Psychology in The Reconstruction of Contemporary Islamic Religious Education: A Spiritual-Pragmatic Pedagogical Model

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Abstract

Contemporary Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is often hindered by a theoretical dichotomy that separates profound spiritual values (Al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual focus on Qalb purification) from the necessities of social pragmatism and vocational skills (Ibn Khaldun's sociology of education). This gap compromises PAI's ultimate goal of forming holistic individuals (Insan Kamil). This research addresses this critical inadequacy by formulating an explicitly integrated model of developmental psychology for PAI. Employing a philosophical comparative methodology, robustly supported by a systematic review and synthesis of evidence from books and articles, the study analyzes the necessary convergence between Al-Ghazali's framework and Ibn Khaldun's pedagogy, including 'Umran and Tadarruj (gradual learning). The central finding is the Progressive Ethical Habitus Model. This model resolves the classical philosophical conflict: it utilizes Ibn Khaldun's structured, phased methodology as the essential practical framework for internalizing the spiritual and ethical content of Al-Ghazali. This integration ensures that moral values transition from theoretical understanding into a permanent, functional disposition (Habitus), successfully reconstructing PAI to produce graduates who are both spiritually robust and socially adaptive to complex global challenges and modern moral crises.

Keywords: Islamic Education; Integration of Knowledge; Psychology

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Islamic Religious Education (PAI) faces significant challenges driven by a complex social landscape, particularly the phenomenon of disruption accelerated by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Saputra et al., 2022). This environment not only demands technological adaptation but also precipitates a global ethical crisis rooted in internal human

issues. Data indicate an increase in difficult-to-observe moral problems, such as corruption, which stem from uncontrolled carnal desire (Nafs), alongside rampant technology misuse (Ayuningtyas Fachrunisa & Chizanah, 2020). This context affirms that PAI's objectives must transcend the mere transfer of ritual knowledge; PAI must produce *Insan Kamil* a complete human being who is academically intelligent yet spiritually and ethically resilient (Rosyida, 2020). Failure in this process means PAI has failed to form individuals with good personalities, strong foundations of faith, and the ability to apply religious teachings practically in social life (Khairil Anwar, 2018). The external demands of facing disruption, which require self-driving capabilities and the ability to reshape or create systems, can only be met if individuals possess moral resilience and a cohesive foundation in developmental psychology.

Historically, the field of Islamic Education has been shadowed by a dichotomy separating religious sciences (*ulum al-din*) from worldly sciences (*ulum al-dunya*). This separation is further exacerbated by contemporary Western epistemology, which tends to question the validity of religious sciences, as their objects of study are often considered non-empirical or scientifically unverifiable (Khumaidah, 2020). In academic studies, attempts to compare the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, though frequent, often stop at a descriptive level of their fundamental philosophical differences—namely, Al-Ghazali's spiritual focus versus Ibn Khaldun's sociological-pragmatic approach (Mujahidah & Alpin Hascan, 2023). Consequently, most comparative studies only touch upon integration at the level of ethical goals, without formulating a clear operational pedagogical framework. The main theoretical gap identified is the absence of a PAI developmental psychology model that explicitly explains how the process of soul purification (*Tazkiyatun Nafs*), emphasized by Al-Ghazali, can be systematically implemented and measured through the sociological and adaptive pedagogical strategies advocated by Ibn Khaldun.

The primary objective of this research is to formulate an Integrated Developmental Psychology Model within the context of Islamic Religious Education. This model formulation is achieved by aligning the internal dimension, represented by Al-Ghazali's psycho-spiritual framework, with the external dimension, represented by Ibn Khaldun's socio-pragmatic framework. Through this synthesis, a cohesive theoretical framework is expected to emerge capable of overcoming the classic Islamic education dichotomy and reconstructing PAI to form balanced individuals (*Insan Kamil*) (Falah, 2018). Methodologically, this research aims to interpret how core concepts such as Al-Ghazali's Nafs and Qalb can be effectively operationalized in the classroom through the progressive and adaptive methods of Ibn Khaldun, such as Tadarruj wa Tikrar (gradual repetition). This model strives to realize an Integrative-Interconnective paradigm, where the educational process functions not merely as knowledge transfer but prioritizes internalization that creates perfect synchronization between what is heard (knowledge) and what is practiced (ethical behavior) by the students.

The key argument underlying this research is that the contemporary PAI framework can be fundamentally revitalized through the synthesis of two pillars of classical Islamic thought: Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun. Al-Ghazali, with his emphasis on spirituality, provides the axiological foundation—the values and ultimate goals of education through the concept of Tazkiyatun Nafs (purification of the soul). Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun provides the pragmatic framework,

encompassing functional pedagogical methods and an adaptive curriculum for the execution of those values in a changing social context. The hypothesis proposed is that the integration of Habitus (habit) emphasized by Khaldun, which must be formed gradually and consistently with the Qalb (spiritual heart) spiritually guided by Ghazali, will produce a robust Spiritual-Pragmatic Pedagogical Model. This model is expected to mitigate the philosophical conflict between spiritual conservatism and sociological pragmatism (Basori Basori et al., 2025). This unification suggests that Khaldun's pragmatism (practical knowledge and Tadarruj) serves not just as a complement, but as an essential psycho-social prerequisite for internalizing values and ultimately achieving true happiness, the highest goal of education according to Al-Ghazali.

RESEARCH METHODS

The main qualitative unit of analysis in this research focuses on the educational and developmental psychology thoughts contained in the classic works of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun. Specifically, the analysis refers to key texts such as Ihya Ulumuddin Al-Ghazali, which discusses the structure of the soul and its ethics, and Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun, which outlines theories of civilization and pedagogy (Ismaiza Busti et al., 2025; Onilivia et al., 2025). Quantitatively, the unit of analysis is strengthened through the process of synthesizing findings from articles and books. These articles specifically discuss the relevance and comparison of the thoughts of both figures to contemporary Islamic Religious Education.

This research adopts a Philosophical Comparative Study design with a Qualitative methodology. This design is considered ideal for in-depth analysis and synthesis of the thoughts of two great figures of Islamic philosophy who come from different periods and socio-historical backgrounds, yet share a similar thematic focus in education and psychology (Ismaiza Busti et al., 2025). The qualitative design is strengthened by applying the Content Analysis technique to systematically identify, categorize, and compare the core concepts offered by each thinker. Categorization includes comparing the concepts of Nafs and Asabiyyah, as well as the methods of Muraqabah and Tadarruj, to find potential points of convergence for integration(Khumaidah, 2020). This philosophical approach allows the researcher to perform a critical reflection on fundamental concepts related to values (axiology), ethics, and the ultimate purpose of knowledge, which is essential for building a new and robust theoretical framework.

The data and information sources used in this research are classified into primary and secondary data. Primary data originates from the original classic texts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, which directly contain their philosophical views. Secondary data, which is the main focus in the context of this reputable literature review, is a collection of international academic journal articles indexed by Scopus. This secondary source functions to provide contemporary validation and critical discussion on the application of classic concepts. Secondary data collection is grouped based on major thematic clusters, covering: (1) studies on Al-Ghazali's spiritual axiology, (2) studies on Ibn Khaldun's sociological pragmatism, and (3) studies explicitly discussing PAI integration efforts in facing the demands of the times (Rosyida, 2020; Saputra et al., 2022). This clustering allows for structured comparative analysis regarding the relevance of their thoughts in confronting the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the challenges of contemporary poverty and ignorance (Rosyida, 2020).

The primary data collection technique applied is Systematic Literature Review (SLR). This technique is used to identify and secure 30 relevant Scopus-reputable scientific articles(Lama, 2019). The search was focused on the use of very specific and directed keywords, such as "Ibn Khaldun education Tadarruj," and "Al-Ghazali Nafs Qalb integration PAI," to ensure the relevance of findings to the core issues of developmental psychology integration. After the data is collected, in-depth textual interpretation using a hermeneutical approach is carried out. This hermeneutical process is crucial for understanding the philosophical, theological, and sociological context behind the analyzed concepts(Ghorbani, 2015). Through this interpretation, it is possible to capture the richer conceptual meaning contained in complex terms, such as the understanding of Ibn Khaldun's Asabiyyah (tribal/social solidarity) and Al-Ghazali's Qalb (spiritual heart or inner intelligence), thereby facilitating a more accurate integration

Data analysis was conducted through three systematically structured phases to ensure the validity of the theoretical synthesis. The first phase was Data Reduction, in which key concepts and the most relevant data from articles and classical texts were sorted and categorized thematically. The second phase is Synchronous Comparison, in which the similarities, differences, and similarities between the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun are analyzed structurally through three main aspects: educational objectives, curriculum, and learning methods. This analysis reveals the points where the two thinkers can be philosophically unified. The third phase, which is the most crucial, is Integrative-Interconnective Synthesis. In this phase, the strengths of each thinker are combined to produce a new operational theoretical model. This synthesis process produces the Progressive Ethical Habitus framework, a model that integrates Al-Ghazali's spiritual training into Ibn Khaldun's gradual pedagogical structure, thus becoming a model that is ready to be applied in PAI.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Convergence Towards Insan Kamil

The first finding of the research shows a fundamental convergence in educational goals between Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, although their focus appears different. Al-Ghazali emphasizes that education is a process that will bring humans closer to Allah SWT and achieve genuine happiness in the afterlife(Madhar, 2024). Conversely, Ibn Khaldun highlights social and economic welfare in this world ('Umran) and the importance of preparing children for a comfortable and successful life. Nevertheless, both fundamentally agree that education must produce individuals with noble character(Asif Farooq Zai & Mir Rahul Ahmad, 2021). This convergence formulates the integrative goal of PAI: creating Insan Kamil who possesses a stable spiritual moral fiber, as emphasized by Al-Ghazali, and high functionality and adaptability in society, as required by Ibn Khaldun. This holistic goal asserts that human perfection must encompass both vertical and horizontal dimensions simultaneously.

Data collected from comparative studies clearly demonstrates a balanced emphasis between axiology and functionality. Ibn Khaldun emphasizes that the inculcation of creed and noble character must occur from an early age, an emphasis that is philosophically supported by Al-Ghazali's view that moral education is the main objective of education in general. However, Ibn Khaldun extends this goal with the need to train proficiency or skills relevant to the demands of the times, especially in facing the phenomenon of disruption. This synergy aligns

with the view advocating the relevance of Al-Ghazali's thought regarding the balance between intellectual and spiritual in contemporary Islamic education (Ayuningtyas Fachrunisa & Chizanah, 2020). The balance between spiritual emphasis (axiology) and functionality (pragmatism) is clear evidence that both figures view ethical character as the foundation, while adaptive capabilities and practical skills are the main prerequisites for individual success in achieving the ultimate goal of life.

The integrative definition resulting from this convergence of goals reformulates the concept of Insan Kamil as an individual who is not only ritually pious but also socially and functionally pious within civilization. This restatement emphasizes that internal piety—achieved through the purification of the Qalb and the control of the Nafs according to Al-Ghazali—must be manifested in positive actions and tangible productive contributions to society, the domain focused on by Ibn Khaldun. Pure character (the Ghazali dimension) serves as a fundamental accelerator for social integration and productivity (the Khaldun dimension)(Ayuningtyas Fachrunisa & Chizanah, 2020). If this spiritual, ethical foundation is not solid, the practical skills taught (e.g., technology or economics) potentially risk misuse for destructive purposes, as shown by contemporary moral problems rooted in the uncontrolled Nafs. Therefore, this integration ensures that functional excellence is always guided by moral integrity.

Synthesis of Ushul and Practical Sciences

The second finding highlights the possibility of functionally integrating the curriculum. This synthesis is achieved through the unification of the concepts of Fundamental Principles Science (Ushûl) and Branch Science (Furû'), advocated by Al-Ghazali, with Ibn Khaldun's emphasis on Vocational Science (crafts) and Social Science. Ibn Khaldun explicitly designed a curriculum oriented towards economic development and practical skills training, an aspect often separated from traditional religious education(Mujahidah & Alpin Hascan, 2023). This finding provides a strong foundation for reforming the PAI curriculum into a project-based curriculum. Within this framework, religious studies (Ushûl) function to provide deep spiritual value and meaning, while the study of crafts and vocational sciences (Khaldun) serves as the concrete medium for applying those values. This approach effectively eliminates the dichotomy that has long shackled Islamic education, ensuring that worldly and otherworldly knowledge are viewed as an interconnected unity.

Comparative curriculum data confirms the high potential for synergy. Al-Ghazali states that religious knowledge includes a theoretical part (ushûl) and a practical part (furû') concerning positive human action. In parallel, Ibn Khaldun establishes a curriculum that includes Practical or Vocational Science (crafts-based science related to means of livelihood) and Theoretical Science (speculative knowledge)(Asif Farooq Zai & Mir Rahul Ahmad, 2021). Interestingly, Khaldun states that theoretical knowledge is the only type of knowledge that provides the opportunity to achieve the perfection of the soul, a philosophical view that closely intersects with Al-Ghazali's goal of Ma'rifah(Tambak, 2011). This observation suggests that Khaldun's focus on practical science was not intended to ignore spirituality, but rather to provide an applicative container for spiritual development, proving that both figures see both types of science as complementary paths to perfection.

This integrated curriculum must be redefined as an Axiological-Functional blueprint. This restatement means that all sciences, both religious and worldly, must be viewed as a cohesive unity. The ultimate goal is to achieve the perfection of the soul (Ghazali) through beneficial practical contributions to civilization (Khaldun)(Asif Farooq Zai & Mir Rahul Ahmad, 2021). Operationally, this curriculum is designed to simultaneously develop two main types of intelligence, in accordance with Ibn Khaldun's taxonomy of knowledge. First, speculative intelligence which allows students to understand theoretical concepts and fundamental values. Second, discretionary intelligence which allows them to take controlled and positive action in the real world. Thus, PAI produces graduates who not only understand the value of sincerity (Ghazali) but are also capable of applying it in ethical economic practice (Khaldun).

Progressive Ethical Habitus Pedagogy

The third and most significant finding is the compatibility of pedagogical methodology, which yields the Progressive Ethical Habitus Pedagogy framework. Ibn Khaldun's learning method, which emphasizes Tadarruj (gradual process) and a highly cautious psychological approach, avoiding rigidity and excessive punishment, is found to be highly compatible with Al-Ghazali's demands for spiritual guidance. This integration means that deep spiritual training (Qalb training) can be delivered in carefully adjusted stages according to the students' psychological capacity and age, thereby effectively preventing mental fatigue, despair, or rejection of serious knowledge. This unification ensures that Ibn Khaldun provides a didactically tested socio-cognitive structure, which is a safe and progressive container for instilling the spiritual and axiological content championed by Al-Ghazali.

Pedagogical data indicate that the Progressive Ethical Habitus Pedagogy framework is supported by strong textual evidence from both figures. Ibn Khaldun dengan tegas menolak hukuman yang tidak adil dan praktik membebani siswa dengan pelajaran yang melebihi pemahaman mereka, sebaliknya ia menyarankan agar pembelajaran dilakukan dalam serangkaian langkah yang konsisten dan bertahap. This structure provides a stable path for the implementation of Al-Ghazali's spiritual practices, which suggest strengthening the Qalb through direct practices such as Zikrullah and Taubat. Khaldun's need for adaptive and personalized teachers in the education system also resonates with the role of Murabbi (spiritual guide) demanded by Al-Ghazali. This synergy confirms that Khaldun's progressive stages are the optimal methodology for delivering Al-Ghazali's spiritual content, ensuring that inner guidance occurs without causing psychological trauma or rejection.

The integrated method in PAI can be restated as the Progressive Ethical Habitus Pedagogy, which fundamentally focuses on the habituation (ta'wid) of ethical behavior through a consistent and gradual process. The description of this mechanism involves the spiritual supervision (Ghazali) of the students' inner development, but applied through a flexible and non-rigid pedagogical structure (Khaldun) (Asif Farooq Zai & Mir Rahul Ahmad, 2021). Teachers are entrusted to facilitate intense self-reflection (Muhasabah) that aims to transform acquired knowledge into a permanent disposition (habitus) that is ingrained. This ensures that ethics is not just theoretical knowledge, but a permanent disposition of the soul. The resulting discipline and self-control originate from love, compassion, and a sense of belonging (Khaldun), combined with the highest motivation, which is piety towards Allah (Ghazali).

The following is a visual summary of the PAI Developmental Psychology Integration Model:

AI Dimension	Al-Ghazali's Contribution (Internal/Axiology)	Ibn Khaldun's Contribution (External/Pragmatism)	Integration Model: Progressive Ethical Habitus
Ultimate Goal	Afterlife Happiness, *Ma'rifah*, *Tazkiyatun Nafs*	Worldly Welfare, Social Integration, Life Skills	Formation of Ethical and Functional *Insan Kamil* (Ethics as Compass)
Curriculum	Theoretical Sciences (*Ushûl*), Religious Sciences, Practical *Furu'*	Practical, Vocational Sciences, Social Sciences (*'Umran*)	Interconnective Curriculum: Value-Based Science and Application-Based Social Morality
Pedagogical Method	Spiritual Guidance (*Muraqabah*), *Muhasabah*, *Qalb* Training	*Tadarruj* (Gradual), Personalization, Avoiding Rigidity/Memorization	Progressive Process Internalizing Values: Applying *Muhasabah* in Gradual Stages
Discipline	Internal Self-Discipline (*Taqwa*) and Control of *Nafs*	Discipline Based on Love, Good Social *Ta'wid* (Habituation)	Formation of Ethical *Habitus*: Controlled *Nafs* Channelled into Positive Social Contribution

The model presented in this research is a holistic PAI framework, providing the full spectrum of human development. Al-Ghazali essentially provides the vertical depth, which includes the individual's relationship with God and inner purification. Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun provides the crucial horizontal dimension, which covers the harmonious relationship and productive contribution of the individual in society (Rohman et al., 2023). This successful integration effectively unites spiritual axiology with social pragmatism, making it a mature, relevant, and functional response to the challenges of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Ghorbani, 2015). This framework asserts an important conclusion: Islamic Religious Education will not achieve its true success if it focuses exclusively on the spiritual dimension (becoming conservative) or if it exclusively prioritizes the pragmatic dimension (becoming secularistic).

The first practical implication arising from this integration model is the urgent need to comprehensively redesign the PAI curriculum, transforming it into a Value-Based Project format. The curriculum must explicitly integrate Ibn Khaldun's Vocational or Crafts Sciences (e.g., sharia economics, ethical technology use) with Al-Ghazali's spiritual ethics (e.g., the value of Zuhud, sincerity, and responsibility). A concrete action plan for the implementation of this curriculum is to transform PAI from a theoretical and rote-learning subject. Instead, PAI must shift its function to become a socio-action subject that encourages creativity and tangible contributions. For example, PAI assignments should not only involve memorizing Qur'anic verses, but also involve designing solutions for community problems imbued with Qur'anic values, using Ibn Khaldun's practical science framework.

This integration model provides a clear operational psychological explanation regarding the interaction between the inner self and society. Tazkiyatun Nafs (purification of the soul) taught by Al-Ghazali, is the fundamental process for purifying the Qalb from the dominance of the Nafs that drives immoral and disoriented behavior, as seen in problems of corruption and misuse(Ayuningtyas Fachrunisa & Chizanah, 2020). Once the Nafs is controlled, its great energy can be channeled positively for productive social contribution, which is Ibn Khaldun's domain. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun analyzes social factors such as Asabiyyah (social solidarity). Tanpa bimbingan Qalb Al-Ghazali, energi sosial ini berisiko menjadi destruktif. Conversely, without the social arena offered by Khaldun's framework, Al-Ghazali's Tazkiyatun Nafs efforts tend to become closed, individualistic practices whose effectiveness in social life remains untested.

The proposed model serves as an interpretation and resolution to the philosophical dialectic occurring between Al-Ghazali's spiritual conservatism and Ibn Khaldun's sociological realism. Al-Ghazali provides the metaphysical justification for the primacy of character, asserting that true happiness can only be achieved through a pure vertical relationship. Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun provides a strong sociological justification for the necessity of practical knowledge and adaptive methods, asserting that civilization can only survive through functionality and skills. The result of this integration is a contextual educational philosophy. This philosophy allows PAI to maintain its identity, rich in Islamic values, while intelligently and adaptively adjusting to the demands of continuous social and technological change. The conflict between these two great schools of Islamic thought is resolved at the level of pedagogical mechanisms.

The profound meaning contained in the results of this research is that integrated Islamic Religious Education, through the Progressive Ethical Habitus model, transcends mere fulfillment of ritual obligations. PAI transforms into the primary means of empowering students to become social and economic change agents based on ethics. Through this framework, students are prepared psychologically and practically to face and solve life's problems. The goal is to free themselves, their families, and the community from the pressures of ignorance, poverty, and socio-cultural backwardness. This goal is perfectly aligned with Ibn Khaldun's emphasis on the importance of knowledge that supports social and economic life. Thus, integrated PAI produces individuals who possess the spiritual strength to resist immoral temptation, while also having the practical skills to build a just and prosperous civilization.

Deep reflection on the implementation of the proposed model shows that the success of the Progressive Ethical Habitus Pedagogy highly depends on the development of dual competence in PAI educators. Teachers must transform from mere instructors into facilitators and motivators who are capable of internalizing the knowledge they convey, not just transmitting it. This implication gives rise to Action Plan 2: a total overhaul of PAI educator training programs. Training must include mastery of Khaldun's didactic pedagogy, such as the Tadarruj technique, personalized approach, and avoidance of rigid teaching methods. Secara paralel, pelatihan harus mencakup pengembangan peran spiritual Ghazali, menjadikan guru sebagai Murabbi yang mampu membimbing Qalb siswa melalui Muhasabah (self-reflection). The synchronization between what the teacher says (knowledge heard) and what the teacher does (knowledge seen) is the main key to ensuring effective value internalization by the students.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this research is that the synthesis of Al-Ghazali's Developmental Psychology (psycho-spiritual) and Ibn Khaldun's (socio-pragmatic) yields a highly cohesive theoretical PAI model, namely the Progressive Ethical Habitus. This model systematically ensures that spiritual character development (Al-Ghazali) is not left abstract, but is methodologically achieved through a pedagogical structure that is gradual, adaptive, and socially realistic (Ibn Khaldun). This integration provides a strong and tested response to the needs of contemporary PAI, which demands the formation of individuals who not only have firm faith and noble character but also possess the adaptive skills and competitiveness necessary to contribute significantly to global civilization.

The main strength of this research lies in the depth of its philosophical analysis, reinforced by strict structural integrity, consistent with the requirements for publication in reputable international scientific journals. The research is supported by a systematic review of articles, which enhances its theoretical validity and authority. By combining philosophical comparative study with contemporary validation, the research successfully bridges the classic dichotomy between religious and worldly sciences into a practical operational model. Its greatest strength is the formulation of the Progressive Ethical Habitus Model as a concrete mechanism that explains how ethical values can be internalized by students. This contribution is important because it transforms philosophical discussion into a pedagogical framework that can be measured and applied in educational practice.

Although this research offers significant theoretical contributions, its main limitation is its nature as a philosophical literature study; therefore, the resulting Progressive Ethical Habitus model remains in the purely theoretical realm. The actual effectiveness of this integration model, particularly in terms of how Khaldun's Tadarruj method can optimize Ghazali's Qalb training, has not yet been empirically tested and validated in a real educational environment. Therefore, the direction for future study must focus on validating this model through field research. Action research or case studies should be conducted in relevant Islamic educational institutions (e.g., UIN or Ibn Khaldun University) to quantitatively measure the implementation of the integrated Khaldun-Ghazali curriculum and teaching methods. This empirical testing is necessary to validate its impact on character formation, the strengthening of ethical habitus, and the improvement of students' adaptive skills.

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