



# I J I S

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## **Integrating Al-Ghazali's Spirituality and Habermas's Communicative Rationality in the Formation of Holistic Education**

**Khodijah Amatulloh Sholihat<sup>1</sup>, Benny Prasetya<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Alfi Syahrin<sup>3</sup>**

*<sup>1,2,3</sup> Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author e-mail: \* [khodijahamatullohsholihat@gmail.com](mailto:khodijahamatullohsholihat@gmail.com)*

### **Abstract**

This study examines the integration of Al-Ghazali's spirituality and Jürgen Habermas's communicative rationality as a foundation for developing a holistic educational paradigm. The analysis examines how these two perspectives can serve as bases for human development through education, identifying their points of convergence, differences, and potential integration within an educational framework that balances spiritual and dialogical-rational dimensions. Using a literature review methodology, the study analyzes the primary works of Al-Ghazali and Habermas, along with relevant scholarly sources on education, spirituality, and rationality. The findings reveal that Al-Ghazali emphasizes spirituality, morality, and character formation as key value orientations in education, arguing that educational processes should prioritize not only cognitive development but also moral and spiritual growth. In contrast, Habermas's theory of communicative rationality emphasizes the importance of rational, critical, and distortion-free dialogue in fostering reflective and participatory individuals within social contexts. Integrating these perspectives offers a holistic educational model that harmonizes spiritual values with dialogical and rational pedagogical practices. Ultimately, this approach to education fosters individuals who are morally grounded, spiritually aware, and equipped with critical thinking, effective communication, and constructive participation skills for thriving in pluralistic, democratic societies.

**Keywords:** *Spirituality; Communicative Rationality; Al-Ghazali; Jürgen Habermas; Holistic Education.*

### **1. Introduction**

Social transformation in contemporary education has been accelerated by modernization, digitalization, and globalization, which significantly influence the ways individuals are shaped through educational systems. Emerging educational paradigms tend to emphasize utility, efficiency, and technical competence, thereby shifting the orientation of education from a holistic approach toward a technocratic and instrumental model. In this context, learners are often positioned as cognitive-instrumental entities,



while spiritual, ethical, and contemplative dimensions are increasingly marginalized (HABIBI et al., 2025; Kusmardiningsih, 2023). This shift creates an imbalance between educational objectives and the human need for holistic development (Firdasari & Bakar, 2025).

This condition contributes to the emergence of an increasingly evident moral crisis, particularly among younger generations living under the pressures of a fast-paced digital world. Education often fails to provide adequate space for inner reflection, causing spirituality to lose its role as a foundation of moral consciousness. Consequently, the educational process risks being reduced to the mere accumulation of knowledge rather than a meaningful process of self-transformation (Faizin et al., 2023; Pohontsch, 2019). On the other hand, rationality, which should support critical reflection, is often narrowed into instrumental rationality, thereby limiting dialogue, intersubjective recognition, and the development of learners' critical consciousness (King & DeCicco, 2009; Putra, 2024).

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, Al-Ghazali offers a conception of spirituality that places *tazkiyat al-nafs* at the core of the formation of moral human beings. According to Al-Ghazali, education functions not merely as a means of knowledge transmission but also as a process of spiritual purification and the cultivation of moral dispositions through a transcendental relationship with God (Faizin et al., 2023; Firdasari & Bakar, 2025; Kusmardiningsih, 2023). Meanwhile, Jürgen Habermas, through his theory of communicative rationality, emphasizes the importance of domination-free dialogue and discourse ethics as means of forming intersubjective consciousness. Within the educational context, this approach promotes the development of critical and autonomous subjects who are capable of participating responsibly in the public sphere (Pohontsch, 2019; Putra, 2024).

Although studies on Al-Ghazali and Habermas have developed significantly, most research still positions these two bodies of thought within separate scholarly domains. Research on Al-Ghazali generally focuses on Sufism, ethics, and Islamic epistemology, whereas studies on Habermas are largely directed toward issues of communication, democracy, and modern critical theory. The limited integrative efforts between these two perspectives create an academic gap, particularly in the development of educational models capable of simultaneously bridging spiritual and rational-dialogical dimensions (Hidayat & Kuswanto, 2024; Pham et al., 2019; ZUHRI & Arif, 2023).

Based on this gap, the present study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the theoretical constructions of Al-Ghazali's spirituality and Habermas's communicative rationality, and to formulate an integrative model of both within an educational framework. The originality of this research lies in its effort to synthesize the moral-spiritual orientation proposed by Al-Ghazali with the dialogical-critical framework developed by Habermas, thereby producing a holistic educational paradigm that is relevant to the moral and epistemological challenges of contemporary education. Practically, the findings of this study have the potential to serve as an alternative



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paradigmatic foundation for the development of curricula grounded in spiritual dialogical values (Faizin et al., 2023; Hanefar et al., 2015; Ummah et al., 2024).

Within the context of contemporary scholarship, this study contributes to a transdisciplinary approach that connects classical Islamic philosophy, modern critical theory, and educational studies. By placing the thought of Al-Ghazali in dialogue with that of Habermas, this research underscores the importance of understanding education as a process of holistic human formation through broad epistemic interaction. This approach not only enriches academic discourse but also offers a reflective and holistic educational paradigm that is relevant to global challenges and the pluralistic conditions of modern societies (Alfabanni, 2025; Hidayat & Kuswanto, 2024; Pham et al., 2019).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Theory of Spirituality in Al-Ghazali's Thought

Al-Ghazali's thought on spirituality is grounded in the epistemological and anthropological framework of Islam, which views human beings as an integrated unity of the physical and the spiritual. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, education is not merely the transmission of knowledge but a process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) aimed at aligning the inner orientation of the human being with divine values (Barni & Mahdany, 2017; Sheikh & Ali, 2019). This line of thought is constructed upon two fundamental principles: first, moral character (*akhlaq*) is the result of a gradual process of value internalization; and second, the soul possesses a hierarchy of functions that must be directed through moral training, *mujahadah*, and exemplary conduct. Within this framework, spirituality functions as an ethical foundation in education, seeking to shape character through the strengthening of inner awareness and transcendental morality (Barni & Mahdany, 2017; Sheikh & Ali, 2019).

### 2.2 Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Communicative Rationality

Communicative rationality, as proposed by Habermas, is a theory of social action that emphasizes the importance of dialogue, argumentation, and mutual understanding as the foundation of human action. From Habermas's perspective, education should function as a space in which learners and educators engage in communication free from domination, thereby creating conditions that support the development of critical consciousness and reflective capacities (Gunawan & Lestari, 2021; Suban, 2020). This process operates through the exchange of arguments that are honest, open, and rationally accountable. Therefore, education is not merely the reproduction of knowledge but should also serve as an arena for the formation of subjects who are capable of critical thinking, engaging in dialogue, and participating democratically in society (Gunawan & Lestari, 2021; Suban, 2020).



### 2.3 Theoretical Integration: Al-Ghazali's Spirituality and Habermas's Communicative Rationality in the Educational Context

The integration of Al-Ghazali's spirituality and Habermas's communicative rationality begins with the understanding that education is a multidimensional process that engages both inner life and social rationality. While Al-Ghazali's spirituality emphasizes a transcendental framework for character formation through ethical awareness and *tazkiyat al-nafs*, Habermas's communicative rationality highlights the importance of openness, participation, and rational argumentation (Barni & Mahdany, 2017; Gunawan & Lestari, 2021). Although emerging from different intellectual traditions, these two perspectives converge in their shared commitment to the formation of moral individuals capable of engaging responsibly within society.

The contextualization of this integration in modern education opens opportunities for the development of a new holistic paradigm that does not neglect spiritual depth while maintaining dialogical rationality. Within this approach, character formation depends not only on the internalization of values but also on reflective communicative processes that enable learners to understand these values critically and contextually. In this way, the synergy between Al-Ghazali's and Habermas's theories provides a philosophical foundation for a balanced, coherent, and comprehensive educational model that integrates spiritual, moral, and dialogical dimensions (Barni & Mahdany, 2017; Gunawan & Lestari, 2021).

### 2.4 Relevant Research Findings

#### 2.4.1 Studies on Al-Ghazali's Spirituality in Education

Research on Al-Ghazali's spirituality within the educational context has been extensively conducted and consistently highlights the role of *tazkiyat al-nafs* and character formation. Numerous studies indicate that Al-Ghazali's educational concept emphasizes moral dimensions, inner discipline, and spiritual integrity as the core of learners' transformative development (Abdurrohim et al., 2023; Mohammed et al., 2021). Al-Ghazali's value-based educational approach has been shown to be effective through processes of internalization, exemplary conduct, and the reinforcement of moral awareness (Abdurrohim et al., 2023). However, most of these studies tend to focus primarily on ethical and moral aspects, and thus have not yet developed dialogical or integrative models that take into account the dimensions of modern social rationality (Chanifudin & Abdullah, 2022).

#### 2.4.2 Research on Habermas's Communicative Rationality

On the other hand, research on Habermas's communicative rationality in education has developed rapidly within the contexts of critical pedagogy and democratic education. Several studies emphasize that Habermas's communicative model is capable of fostering



dialogical equality and enhancing learners' critical thinking skills, thereby positioning them as reflective and emancipatory subjects (Azme, 2024; Saili & Taat, 2023). However, these studies generally do not address spiritual or transcendental dimensions, as their analyses are predominantly focused on social, discursive, and secular ethical aspects (Badruzaman & Adiyono, 2023; Saili & Taat, 2023). This tendency indicates that Habermas's theory is often positioned primarily as a critique of modern social and educational structures, without sufficient attention to moral and spiritual depth as foundational elements in personal formation. (Azme, 2024; Badruzaman & Adiyono, 2023).

#### 2.4.3 Comparative Studies between Islamic and Western Thinkers

Several comparative studies have sought to bridge the thought of Al-Ghazali with that of Western thinkers such as Paulo Freire, as well as figures like Al-Attas and Habermas. These studies indicate that cross-traditional intellectual integration can make a positive contribution to the development of holistic pedagogy (Achmad, 2021; Khoiriyah et al., 2023). However, such research often falls short of formulating an explicit integrative model that systematically connects spiritual-transcendental dimensions with rational-dialogical dimensions ("Revitalizing Modern Pesantren Education: A Comparison of Wahid Hasyim and Yudian Wahyudi Perspective," 2019). Although these studies provide important theoretical insights, their findings have yet to offer a comprehensive integrative framework.

#### 2.4.4 Modern Challenges and Unaddressed Academic Spaces

In contemporary research, the importance of integrating ethical and rational approaches within the learning process has become a central concern. However, such studies often remain at a normative level and provide limited discussion on how the integration of classical spirituality theories and modern communicative action theories can be methodologically realized (Firman et al., 2024; Suwarsih et al., 2024). This condition indicates the existence of an academic space that has not yet been fully explored in the discourse on integrating Islamic education with critical social theory.

#### 2.4.5 Research Urgency

Overall, although numerous relevant studies have enriched the theoretical framework, none has directly integrated Al-Ghazali's concept of spirituality with Habermas's communicative rationality within an educational context. Previous research has more often examined these perspectives separately, either through the lens of spiritual pedagogy or dialogical pedagogy (Maghfiroh & Mas'ud, 2023; Umar, 2016). This study seeks to address this gap by offering an integrative analysis capable of generating



a balanced educational model that combines spiritual depth with emancipatory rationality.

### 3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach based on a literature review, with a conceptual–philosophical analysis of the thought of Al-Ghazali and Jürgen Habermas. This approach is selected because the object of inquiry consists of normative and reflective ideas such as spirituality and communicative rationality that cannot be empirically measured but require in-depth interpretation of meaning, argumentative structures, and their epistemological contexts. Within the framework of philosophy of education, this research integrates hermeneutic and comparative analyses to examine the historical, theological, and philosophical contexts of both thinkers' ideas, while also identifying points of convergence and divergence in formulating an integrative and holistic educational paradigm (Eryaman, 2006; Mukit, 2019; Rizal, 2025; Tihnike, 2025; Ullah, 2025).

The data sources of this study consist of qualitative textual data, comprising both primary and secondary sources. Primary data include the authentic works of Al-Ghazali, such as *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, *Ayyuha al-Walad*, and *Mizan al-'Amal*, which articulate fundamental ideas on spirituality, *tazkiyat al-nafs*, and moral formation. Meanwhile, the works of Jürgen Habermas such as *The Theory of Communicative Action*, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, and *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* are employed to examine the theoretical constructions of communicative rationality and discourse ethics. Secondary data are drawn from academic books, reputable journal articles, theses, dissertations, and relevant recent studies, which serve to broaden the interpretative context and strengthen the study's conceptual analysis. (Ghozali & Zamroni, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2022; Irawan et al., 2023; Supriyanto, 2022).

The data analysis techniques in this study are conducted through three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and categorizing key concepts from the thought of Al-Ghazali and Habermas such as spirituality, moral education, *tazkiyat al-nafs*, dialogue, and communicative action to ensure that the analysis remains focused on the research objectives. Subsequently, the data are presented in the form of a structured conceptual narrative to reveal interconceptual relationships, patterns of argumentation, and potential points of integration between the two perspectives. The final stage involves drawing conclusions that are continuously verified through literature triangulation and checks for argumentative consistency, in order to produce a theoretical synthesis that is valid and scientifically accountable in the development of a holistic educational paradigm (Bukhari et al., 2020; Dianita & Basuki, 2024; Ningtias et al., 2024; Syauqi & Bahri, 2024).



## 4. Result

### 4.1 Basic Concepts or Theoretical Framework

Al-Ghazali's conception of spirituality is grounded in an ontological foundation that views human beings as both rational and spiritual entities oriented toward a transcendent purpose. Within Al-Ghazali's paradigm, education is understood as a process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* that encompasses cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions through self-knowledge, the regulation of desires, and closeness to divine reality. Education thus functions not merely as the transfer of knowledge, but as a means of moral formation and inner transformation toward the ideal of a perfected personality (*insan kamil*) (Ghozali & Zamroni, 2022). This process emphasizes the internalization of Qur'anic and Prophetic values as the foundation of Islamic education, while simultaneously demanding curriculum designs capable of contextually integrating spiritual and moral dimensions within modern educational settings (Anwar et al., 2025; Arfan et al., 2024; Maolla et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, Jürgen Habermas develops the concept of communicative rationality as a critique of the instrumental rationality dominant in modernity. Communicative rationality emphasizes the importance of distortion-free dialogue, argumentative openness, and equality in communication as the foundation for the formation of mutual understanding. Within the educational context, this approach positions the classroom as a space of communicative praxis that enables learners to construct knowledge intersubjectively through rational and inclusive argumentation (Okshevsky, 2016; Siegel, 2018). Education is no longer characterized by a top-down model but becomes an interactive process that encourages critical participation, collective learning, and the formation of responsible citizens (Haacke, 2005; Rapanta et al., 2020). Thus, despite emerging from different epistemological trajectories, both Al-Ghazali and Habermas view education as a process of human formation through the internalization of values and rational communication.

### 4.2 Scientific Approach

#### 4.2.1 Primary Scientific Approach

The analysis of the thought of Al-Ghazali and Jürgen Habermas in this study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach based on a literature review, which allows for the exploration, comparison, and interpretation of both thinkers' ideas through a systematic examination of primary and secondary sources. Within this framework, interpretation is conducted through structured academic procedures, including the identification of key concepts, analysis of historical contexts, argumentative evaluation, and theoretical reconstruction of Al-Ghazali's works such as *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and *Tahafut al-Falasifa* as well as Habermas's works, particularly *The Theory of Communicative Action*, in order to



capture their epistemological intentions and relevance to contemporary education (Rahmawati & Supriyanto, 2023; Rizal, 2025). The descriptive approach enables the formulation of critical arguments regarding the contribution of the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* within Al-Ghazali's spiritual education and Habermas's communicative rationality, which emphasizes dialogue, equality, and inclusivity. Through this approach, both perspectives are understood as foundational elements of holistic education that integrates spiritual and rational dimensions (Adnan, 2025; Mujahid & Fani, 2025). By means of contextual analysis and argumentative evaluation, this study ensures a valid and credible scholarly inquiry and generates a comprehensive understanding that has the potential to serve as a reference for educators and policymakers in formulating curricula responsive to the spiritual and intellectual needs of contemporary generations (Ekanata et al., 2025; Pratama et al., 2025; Sudarman & Zarkasi, 2025).

#### 4.2.2 Comparative Analysis

This study applies a comparative approach as a scientific method to map the relationship between Al-Ghazali's spirituality and Jürgen Habermas's communicative rationality, not only to identify similarities and differences but also to assess their conceptual structures, epistemic foundations, and pedagogical implications. Methodologically, the comparative analysis is conducted through systematic steps that include thematic categorization, the identification of points of correspondence, the evaluation of logical coherence, and the identification of aspects that allow for integration such as aligning Al-Ghazali's ideas on *tazkiyat al-nafs* and moral educational ethics with Habermas's perspective emphasizing dialogical communication and equality in education.

This approach enables the construction of a theoretical bridge that strengthens the contributions of both thinkers in formulating a holistic educational framework that integrates spiritual and rational dimensions in a complementary manner. Accordingly, the results of the comparative analysis are expected to provide an objective and measurable scholarly account of the potential integration of both theories within a unified educational framework that is more responsive to the spiritual and intellectual needs of contemporary generations, while also contributing to the development of a comprehensive educational model oriented toward learners' character formation (Irawan et al., 2023; Menezes & Brzezinski, 2018; Mogofe & Athiemoolam, 2023; Neto, 2024).

#### 4.3 Research Validity

This study also adheres to the principle of source triangulation by comparing data from various primary and secondary sources to ensure that interpretations do not deviate from the original context of the thinkers' ideas. In this regard, authoritative works of Al-Ghazali such as *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and *al-Munqidz min al-Dhalal* are analyzed





alongside Habermas's works, including *The Theory of Communicative Action* and *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. The study further selects contemporary academic literature to ensure the relevance of the analysis and to strengthen the theoretical framework. This process ensures that the scientific approach adopted in the research goes beyond merely reading the thinkers' ideas, instead situating them within a broader and methodologically tested network of knowledge.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Moral Crisis and the Challenges of Modern Education

Within the contemporary social context, the educational sphere faces complex challenges such as moral crisis, identity fragmentation, digital technological penetration, and social polarization, indicating that human formation cannot be reduced to the mere transmission of knowledge or the strengthening of cognitive capacities. In line with Al-Ghazali's thought, the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* emphasizes the importance of spiritual purification as a response to the condition of modern individuals who have lost ethical orientation and self-control. Education, in this view, is understood as a means of restoring spiritual awareness and inner harmony amid the weakening of moral exemplarity in society (Al-Awamreh, 2016; Bayhaqi & Masnawati, 2024; Ma'muroh et al., 2024). The relevance of Al-Ghazali's thought becomes increasingly evident when linked to the rise of destructive behaviors among younger generations rooted in permissive and consumptive cultures. In this context, character education grounded in moral and spiritual values is positioned as a strategic effort to cultivate self-awareness, self-discipline, and social responsibility. In the digital era, Al-Ghazali's principles such as self-monitoring, moral formation, and educator exemplarity offer an educational framework capable of producing individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also morally and spiritually resilient. At the same time, this framework serves as a fundamental critique of contemporary educational orientations that often neglect ethical dimensions (Adnan, 2025; Andrabi, 2025; Fandir, 2024; Karima, 2025; Karlina et al., 2024; Mohammad et al., 2023). Therefore, the integration of *tazkiyat al-nafs* values into the curriculum constitutes a crucial foundation for shaping a generation that is academically competitive while remaining socially and spiritually responsible.

### 5.2 Challenges of Communication and Rationality in the Digital Era

In the modern world, a communication crisis marked by the erosion of dialogical spaces due to the dominance of digital media and monological forms of communication has contributed to the proliferation of hoaxes, hate speech, and opinion polarization that is not grounded in sound reasoning. In this context, Jürgen Habermas offers the theory of communicative rationality as a framework for understanding and responding to these challenges by emphasizing the importance of distortion-free communicative action as a



prerequisite for the emergence of a democratic, inclusive, and just society (Angelis, 2021; Kim, 2011). Habermas's ideas underscore the urgency of fostering dialogical public and educational spaces in which learners are not merely passive recipients of information, but are trained to test arguments, develop critical literacy, and participate on an equal footing in rational discourse (Habermas, 2006; Peters, 1994). The principles of communicative rationality are also relevant to curriculum design that promotes critical, argumentative, and problem-solving skills as educational strategies for addressing disinformation and hate speech, while simultaneously cultivating learners' character and empathy (Gunaratne, 2006; Mirjalali et al., 2023). Therefore, educational policies need to integrate communication ethics and social sensitivity so that students not only acquire technical competencies but also develop humanistic values and empathic communication skills. In this way, education plays a strategic role in strengthening social cohesion and minimizing conflict within increasingly fragmented societies (Duque & Sáinz, 2018; Flynn, 2004; Møen, 2018; Smyth, 2018).

### 5.3 Integration of Spirituality and Communication within Social Culture

In increasingly complex socio-cultural developments, education often operates in a partial manner, where some models emphasize morality without providing space for critical dialogue, while others adopt critical approaches that lack a solid ethical foundation. To bridge these limitations, the integration of Al-Ghazali's and Jürgen Habermas's thought offers a strategic and relevant pedagogical contribution. Al-Ghazali positions spirituality and morality as the primary value orientations of education, asserting that character formation and ethical consciousness must develop alongside cognitive growth. This view is articulated in *Bidāyatul Hidāyah*, which emphasizes the centrality of moral education in shaping individuals with noble character (Jadidah, 2024; Rahayu et al., 2023; Rahma et al., 2021; Rahman, 2025; Rohmah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, through the theory of communicative rationality, Habermas underscores the importance of distortion-free communicative action and discursive spaces that enable the equal exchange of arguments as prerequisites for a democratic and inclusive society. In educational contexts, this perspective is translated into dialogical curricula that promote discussion, argumentative testing, and critical thinking (Flynn, 2004; Habermas, 2006; Kim, 2011; Mirjalali et al., 2023). The integration of these two perspectives enables education to cultivate moral character while simultaneously strengthening students' communicative capacities and critical reasoning skills. Consequently, this integrated approach becomes essential for forming a generation that is not only academically competent but also grounded in strong ethical values and capable of participating in constructive dialogue within pluralistic and complex societies (Aisyah et al., 2025; Jadidah, 2024; Ramli & Wijayanti, 2013; Rohmah et al., 2021; Smyth, 2018).

### 5.4 Relevance of Holistic Education in Global Issues



In addressing global challenges such as humanitarian crises, intolerance, radicalism, and ecological degradation, the integration of Al-Ghazali's and Jürgen Habermas's thought becomes increasingly relevant as a framework for holistic education. Al-Ghazali's spirituality emphasizes ethical awareness and human responsibility as caliphs on earth, demanding moral integrity, concern for others, and a commitment to environmental sustainability through the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, which entails the purification of the soul and the strengthening of moral character (Anwar et al., 2025; Faizin et al., 2023; Irawan et al., 2023; Kusmardiningsih, 2023; Zamhariroh et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Habermas's theory of communicative rationality highlights the importance of deliberative capacity and fair communication as prerequisites for the formation of democratic and inclusive societies. This is particularly significant in addressing social polarization and conflicts through rational and respectful dialogue, which in educational contexts necessitates the development of argumentation skills and cross-perspective understanding (Golding, 2013; Hufon et al., 2025). The integration of these two perspectives allows education to shape individuals who are not only devout and morally upright but also socially intelligent, morally reflective, and actively engaged in the public sphere through constructive ethical dialogue (Rizal, 2025; Setyo, 2024; Zamhariroh et al., 2024). Consequently, the convergence of spiritual depth and dialogical rationality in education serves as a strategic asset for cultivating a generation capable of navigating global complexities with moral responsibility and contributing to the development of tolerant, civilized, and sustainable societies (Hufon et al., 2025; Setyo, 2024).

### 5.5 Synthesis and Novel Findings

Deductively, understanding ethical and spiritual approaches demonstrates that classical theories of moral leadership continue to hold strong relevance in the context of modern education, particularly through the principles of exemplarity, justice, and empathy that serve as the conceptual foundation for student behavior development. Ethically grounded values derived from spirituality function not merely as norms but also as frameworks for decision-making when confronting complex school situations. Consequently, classical theories act as an interpretive lens for addressing contemporary issues such as bullying, identity crises, and moral degradation (Arlis & Yuherlis, 2022). This synthesis further reveals that the integration of emotional, relational, and reflective aspects in school leadership enhances students' psychological safety, which is a prerequisite for fostering positive behavior. The effectiveness of guidance and discipline is therefore not solely determined by procedural enforcement, but by the quality of human relationships, processes of meaning-making, and value internalization (Currier et al., 2023). Moreover, combining theoretical insights from classical thinkers with empirical data leads to the finding that ethics- and spirituality-based guidance strategies can serve as a model of transformative leadership in Islamic education. Such a model cultivates an inclusive, empathetic, and value-driven school culture, demonstrating that the reinterpretation of classical theories in a modern context is not only relevant but also

generates a comprehensive approach integrating morality, psychology, and school management holistically in shaping student behavior (Zailani, n.d.).

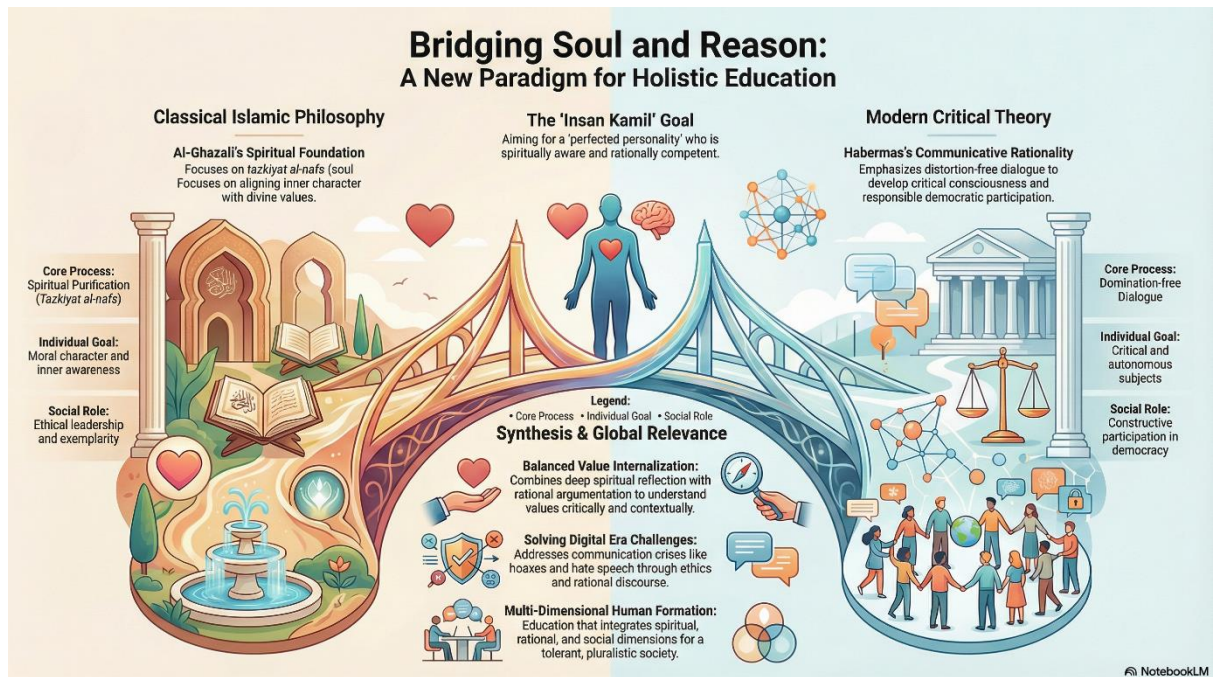


Figure 1. Research Findings

## 6. Conclusion

This study affirms that the integration of Al-Ghazali's spirituality and Jürgen Habermas's communicative rationality constitutes an effective conceptual framework for formulating holistic education. The findings indicate that Al-Ghazali's spirituality, through the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, provides an ethical foundation and inner transformation as the core of human formation, while Habermas's communicative rationality complements this dimension with a dialogical-rational approach emphasizing distortion-free communication, equality, and critical reflection. The synthesis of these two perspectives demonstrates that education cannot be reduced solely to cognitive achievements or normative morality; rather, it must be understood as a process of holistic human formation that integrates spiritual, rational, and social dimensions in a unified manner.

From a scholarly perspective, this research enriches the field of educational philosophy by presenting a cross-traditional synthesis between classical Islamic thought and modern critical



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theory. Theoretically, it offers a conceptual model of holistic education that bridges the dichotomies of spirituality and rationality, as well as morality and critical dialogue. Practically, the findings have important implications for curriculum development and pedagogical practice, particularly in creating educational environments that not only cultivate students' character and moral awareness but also develop their communication skills, dialogical participation, and social responsibility in pluralistic societies.

Based on these findings, future research is recommended to operationalize this integrative model through empirical studies, including field research and the development of spiritually-dialogical curriculum designs. Further studies should also explore the implementation of this framework across various educational contexts, including primary, secondary, and higher education, as well as within multicultural communities. In this way, the integration of spirituality and rationality moves beyond the conceptual level, offering a testable, developable, and implementable paradigm of transformative education that is relevant to the global challenges of the present era.

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