

The Concept of Code of Ethics for Educators According to Imam Al-Ghazali: A Study of Classical Islamic Literature

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Abstract: Educators are role models for their students. In the teaching and learning process, educators not only have the responsibility to transfer knowledge to their students, but also must uphold ethics and morality in educating. Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 AD - 505 H/1111 AD), a great scholar who lived centuries ago, has formulated various ethical principles for educators so that the knowledge taught remains blessed and noble. His works are widespread and have become the primary reference in understanding ethical values for educators. This qualitative research used a library research design to review various journals and classical books by Imam Al Ghazali. The researcher analyzed relevant literature without having to conduct field research. According to Imam Al Ghazali, this research aims to describe the concept of the code of ethics for educators. The results revealed several main principles that must be possessed by an educator, such as having compassion for students, having praiseworthy traits, being a good example, and being firm in educating.

Keywords: Educator Ethics, Imam Al Ghazali

Abstrak: Pendidik merupakan role model bagi peserta didiknya. Dalam proses belajar mengajar, pendidik bukan hanya memiliki tanggung jawab untuk mentransfer ilmu pengetahuan kepada peserta didiknya, namun juga harus menjunjung tinggi etika dan moralitas dalam mendidik. Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 M – 505 H/1111M), seorang ulama besar yang hidup berabad-abad lalu, telah merumuskan berbagai prinsip etika bagi seorang pendidik agar ilmu yang diajarkan tetap memiliki keberkahan dan kemuliaan. Karya-karya beliau tersebar luas dan menjadi rujukan utama dalam memahami nilai-nilai etika bagi pendidik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi literatur, mengkaji berbagai jurnal serta kitab klasik karya Imam Al Ghazali. Pendekatan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan menganalisis data tanpa harus melakukan penelitian lapangan. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan konsep etika pendidik menurut Imam Al Ghazali yang tersebar dalam berbagai karyanya. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan beberapa prinsip utama yang harus dimiliki oleh seorang pendidik, di antaranya adalah memiliki kasih sayang terhadap peserta didik, wajib memiliki sifat-sifat terpuji, menjadi teladan yang baik, bersikap tegas dalam mendidik.

Kata Kunci: Etika Pendidik, Imam Al Ghazali.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics becomes an essential foundation in education to develop students' character. Thus, educators' success in developing students' integrity, intelligence, and good ethics refers to the educator and ethics as the key foundation in teaching.¹ However, the definition of morals is broader than ethics. In general, ethics is a science that explains a person's behavior, both commendable and bad behavior, and explains something done by fellow humans by uniting all their goals.² Experts such as Imam Al Qurthubi and Ibn Miskawayh define ethics as a condition in the soul³ that motivates a person to act based on politeness principles.⁴ Local experts in Indonesia, K.H. Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari and Buya Hamka, also expressed that educators do not only focus on students' intellectual⁵ development but also educate students to achieve the essence of civilized humans and humanize them.⁶

The Minister of Education and Culture Regulation number 25 of 2024 highlights teachers' duties as professional educators to develop students' personality and intelligence. Educators also play a role in guiding, directing, and assessing the development of students from early childhood to secondary level.⁷ Besides, the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation number 16 of 2007 concerning pedagogy emphasizes that each subject teacher must master various skills and abilities included in 37 main competencies, which are then summarized into 10 core competencies. One of them is understanding students from several aspects, such as physical, ethical, religious, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual.⁸

¹ Devi Ayu Lestari, Wanda Kholisah, and M. Rifqi Januar Supriyanto, "Pentingnya Etika Dan Moral Dalam Pendidikan," *Khatulistiwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Sosial Humaniora* 4, no. 3 (2024): 43–49, https://doi.org/10.55606/khatulistiwa.v4i3.3878. p. 43

² Ahmad Amin, Etika (Ilmu Akhlak) (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975). p. 15

³ Akilah Mahmud, "Akhlak Islam Menurut Ibnu Miskawaih," *Aqidah-Ta* 6, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/Jurnal Aqidah-Ta Vol. VI No. 1 Thn. 2020. p. 87.

⁴ Al-Qurthubi, *Tafsir AL-Qurthubi* (Qahirah: Dar Asy-Sya'bi, 1913).

⁵ Mohamad Kholil, "Kode Etik Guru Dalam Pemikiran, KH Hasyim Asy'ari.," *Risalah:* Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam 1, no. 1 (2015): 31–42. p. 34.

⁶ Fitri Maulan et al., "Akhlak Dalam Perspektif Buya Hamka" 6, no. 2 (2021): 47–59.p. 53.

⁷ Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional, "Peraturan Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional Tentang Pemenuhan Beban Kerja Guru, Kepala Sekolah, Dan Pengawas Sekolah (Permendiknas Nomor 25 Tahun 2024)" (Jakarta, 2024). p. 2.

⁸ Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional, "Peraturan Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional Tentang Standar Kualifikasi Akademik Dan Kompetensi Guru (Permendiknas Nomor 16 Tahun 2007)" (Jakarta, 2007). p. 5-23.

Currently, many teachers pay less attention to the code of ethics for educators. Consequently, they do not make themselves role models for their students. A study by Tri Indriyanti, Khairil Ikhsan Siregar, and Zulkifli Lubis revealed a lack of closeness between educators and students, resulting in discrimination by educators. It also highlights the irony that schools should be a safe place, but are the opposite of what is expected.⁹ Some trusted news platforms, such as Kompasiana, Detikjateng, and Kumparan, reported cases of violations of the code of ethics for educators, such as sexual abuse, violence, and illegal levies.

Considering the problem of the code of ethics for educators, classical Islamic figures can be a reference in understanding the concept of the code of ethics for educators. Imam Al-Ghazali (450 H/1058 M – 505 H/1111M) frequently discusses this issue in his works such as *Ihya' Ulumuddin, Bidayatul Hidayah, Ayyuhal Walad*, and others. These works focus on the issue of ethics for educators and students. This study describes Imam Ghazali's concept of thinking on the code of ethics for educators and its relevance to modern education.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Some previous studies have examined the code of ethics for educators. In 2021, Lasmi conducted a survey entitled "Ethics of Students and Teachers According to Imam Al Ghazali in the Book of Ihya 'Ulumuddin". Then, Ega Nurhasanah et al also conducted a study in 2022 entitled "Ethics of Teacher and Student Communication". Another study conducted in 2015 by Tri Indriyanti et al entitled "Ethics of Teacher and Student Interaction According to Imam Al Ghazali's Perspective".

The previous studies above focus more on the interaction and communication between educators and students. This study will link Imam Al Ghazali's thoughts and respond to a current phenomenon related to the code of ethics for educators.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative method with a library design covering reading, recording, and processing relevant research materials.¹⁰ The primary

⁹ Tri Indriyanti, Khairil Ikhsan Siregar, and Zulkifli Lubis, "Etika Interaksi Guru Dan Murid Menurut Perspektif Imam Al Ghazali," *Jurnal Online Studi Al-Qur'an* 11, no. 2 (2017): 129–44, https://doi.org/10.21009/jsq.011.2.03. p. 130.

¹⁰ Abdul Rajab, Saifullah Idris, and Masbur, "Etika Guru Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidik: Studi Komparatif Az-Zarnuji Dan Hasyim Asyari" 2, no. 2 (2023): 213–38. p. 217

data sources were the works of Imam Al-Ghazali, such as *Ihya' Ulumuddin, Bidayatul Hidayah, Ayyuhal Walad,* and his other works that discuss the ethics and manners of an educator. Besides, this study also referred to various relevant journals and literature to deepen the analysis of the concept of code of ethics for educators according to Imam Al-Ghazali.

The researcher designed an ideal framework, identified gaps in existing knowledge, and explored a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the subject being studied. This process was carried out without having to conduct field research directly, but instead focuses on theoretical analysis and supporting literature studies.¹¹ The researcher analyzed and synthesized various relevant works to deepen their insight and understanding of the research topic.¹² In addition, this process also helped build a strong foundation as a reference for future research to have a more complete theoretical basis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Biography of Imam Ghazali

Imam Al Ghazali, whose birth name is Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad al Ghazali, was born in Tus City, Khurasan, Iran in 450 H/1058 M.¹³ Imam Ghazali has many classic works that lead to religious spirituality in the field of Sufism. Most of his works, including *Ihya 'Ulumuddin,* are famous and widely studied in Indonesia. Imam Ghazali died in 505 H, leaving behind popular knowledge and books.¹⁴

Code of Ethics for Educators According to Imam Al Ghazali

Definition of Educators

Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 M - 505 H/1111M) is a great Sufism scholar who has produced many valuable books on morality and spirituality. One of the most famous works is *Ihya 'Ulumuddin*, whose first volume comprehensively discusses science. Many of his books, such as *Bidayatul Hidayah*, *Adab Fid Diin*, *Ayyuhal Walad*, and *Minhajul Muta'allim*, discuss the code of ethics for educators. They emphasize the importance of ethics, morals, and

¹¹ M. Waruwu, "Pendekatan Penelitian Pendidikan: Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Method)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 7, no. 1 (2023). p. 2887.

¹² A. Muri. Yusuf, Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif & Gabungan, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Kencana, 2017). p. 43.

¹³ Wanto Wanto, "Pendidikan Akhlak Dalam Perspektif Kitab Bidayatul Hidayah," *Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 1 (2024): 22–30, https://doi.org/10.61231/jie.v2i1.259. p. 24.

¹⁴ Muhammad Nasir, *Bidayatul Hidayah Imam Al Ghazali Terjemah Dan Penjelasannya*, 2021. p. xii.

the responsibility of educators towards students, not only focusing on intellectual aspects and building students' character and morals.

In his *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, Imam Al Ghazali strongly argues about the definition of educators. He defines educators as those with extensive knowledge who practice and teach it to others. People who have these characteristics are considered to have a noble position.¹⁵ This is a sign that they are deemed to have a high degree in the eyes of Allah and are blessed.

Imam Al Ghazali mentioned four noble conditions in life, one of which is when a person can transfer their knowledge to others.¹⁶ It can be said that the role of educators is not only to transfer knowledge, but also to be role models in building students' character and morals. Thus, educators must have good ethics to carry out their duties responsibly and develop students regarding goodness in the world and the hereafter.

In the book Ihya' Ulumuddin, Imam Al Ghazali linked educators to the sun that shines for themselves and illuminates their surrounding environment.¹⁷ This means that educators not only have the responsibility to master knowledge for themselves comprehensively, but also must transfer knowledge to others. The knowledge possessed by an educator must be able to illuminate their students' hearts and minds and guide them to understand knowledge more broadly. In addition, Imam Al Ghazali also gives an analogy that educators are like fragrant musk, whose fragrance is not only felt by themselves, but also spreads to those around them. This shows that Imam Al Ghazali emphasizes educators as role models. Thus, they participate in transferring knowledge and provide examples for their students through good ethics, polite speech, and a loving attitude.

Based on the analogy above, educators have a significant role in building their students' character, intelligence, and spirituality. Thus, educators always continue to develop their quality, knowledge, and ethics to become role models for others.

The Concept of Code of Ethics for Educators

Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 M - 505 H/1111M) stated that an educator's attitude, actions, and character are more important than knowledge. This is because the educator's ethics are an example for their students, both

¹⁵ Subakri, "Peran Guru Pandangan Al-Ghazali," *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru* 1, no. 2 (2020). p. 64.

¹⁶ Al-Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, "Ihyā' `Ulūm Al-Dīn," 1 (Beirut: Daarul Kutub Ilmiyah, 2011). p. 205.

¹⁷ Al-Ghazali. p. 205.

directly and indirectly, students will imitate what their teacher does. Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 M – 505 H/111M) advises educators to be able to behave and act according to what has been taught to their students.¹⁸ In the discussion of code of ethics for educators in *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 M – 505 H/1111M) explained that ethics is a condition that is deeply rooted in a person and is the primary source of all behavior carried out naturally without requiring a long thought process. Good ethics is when a soul can produce good actions by reason and Islamic law.

On the other hand, if the condition results in non-commendable or deviant actions, it is categorized as bad ethics.¹⁹ Most of Imam Al Ghazali's works discuss the concept of ethics, particularly ethical values in education. *Ihya* 'Ulumuddin comprehensively defines the behavior of educators as appropriate for transferring knowledge to their students.

In some of his works, Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 M - 505 H/1111M) explains important points of ethics for educators, namely:

1. Showing concern and affection for students

For students, educators are second parents in the school environment. The educators' affection for their students can provide a comfortable feeling in the school environment.²⁰ Thus, teachers must have affection for their students.²¹ In the book *Ibya' Ulumuddin*, Imam Al Ghazali stated that "educators must show a good attitude, full of sympathy, and even empathy towards their students and treat them with full attention and affection like their own children"²² Furthermore, he also warned students to look for educators who have a caring and caring nature.²³

2. Being a role model for students

Good ethics are one of the main foundations that educators must possess because they are role models their students will always imitate. In the book Ihya' Ulumuddin, Imam Al Ghazali explains that one of the main tasks of educators is to emulate the morals of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Educators

¹⁸ Zainuddin, "Seluk Beluk Pendidikan Dari Al Ghazali" (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1991). p. 55-56.

¹⁹ Abu Farhad, *Menyingkap Rahasia Keajaiban-Keajaiban Ilmu Gaib Laduni Imam Al-Ghazali* (Surabaya: PT Amelia, n.d.). p. 57.

²⁰ Abd. Hamid, "Konsep Guru Menurut Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali (Imam Al-Ghazali)," *AKTUALITA Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 12, no. 1 (2022): 12–26.

²¹ Al-Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, "Adab Fiddin (Adab Dalam Agama)" (Gema Insani, 1991). p. 3

²² Al-Ghazali, "Ihyā" `Ulūm Al-Dīn." p. 206.

²³ Al-Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, "Ayyuhal Walad," 2018, p. 40

must have the characteristics of honesty, responsibility, and good behavior. Therefore, the knowledge taught is not only conveyed in theory but also implemented in the daily lives of their students.²⁴

Educators have to first apply their knowledge before transferring it to their students.²⁵ Therefore, educators participate as facilitators in conveying theory and become role models for their students daily.

3. Sincerity in educating students

Educators must carry out their duties sincerely for their students' future. Sincere devotion is the key to guiding and educating students. Imam Al Ghazali emphasized that in teaching knowledge to their students, educators should continuously improve their intentions, namely getting closer to Allah SWT. He added that educators must be sincere in conveying knowledge without expecting rewards, material or respect from others.²⁶ This sincerity will make their helpful knowledge full of blessings.

4. Being wise in all aspects

As role models for their students, educators must be wise.²⁷ In the book Bidayatul Hidayah, Imam Al Ghazali stated, "Educators have to be wise to students who don't ask questions well and act smart."²⁸ This indicates a cautious attitude of educators to be wise in all aspects, by not comparing one student with another. Educators also should not be embarrassed to say they don't know something they don't know.²⁹ Imam Ghazali revealed that admitting ignorance about a problem is one of the codes of ethics for educators.³⁰

5. Possessing commendable qualities

Commendable qualities are one of the ethics that each educator needs to possess. Students will feel comfortable in a positive and supportive educational environment. Honesty is one of the most essential ethics in life, both in teaching and interacting with students.³¹ Educators must also control their emotions to avoid prejudice and bias so they can be good role models. This can reduce the

²⁴ Al-Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, "Minhajul Muta'allim," 2010. p. 65.

²⁵ Al-Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, "Bidayatul Hidayah" (Jombang: Maktabah Madinah, 2019). p. 94.

²⁶ Al-Ghazali, "Ihyā' `Ulūm Al-Dīn." "Ihyā' `Ulūm Al-Dīn." p. 207

²⁷ Al-Ghazali, "Bidayatul Hidayah." p. 93

²⁸ Nasir, Bidayatul Hidayah Imam Al Ghazali Terjemah Dan Penjelasannya. hal. 228

²⁹ Al-Ghazali, "Bidayatul Hidayah." p. 93

³⁰ Al-Ghazali, "Adab Fiddin (Adab Dalam Agama)." p. 4.

³¹ Al-Ghazali, "Minhajul Muta'allim." p. 65.

possibility of their students imitating negative behavior.³² On the other hand, arrogance is also a trait that must be avoided, especially regarding knowledge.³³

Educators should not feel that their knowledge is superior and should not be prohibited from underestimating others.³⁴ They must have an open attitude and appreciate the various branches of knowledge because each has its benefits.

6. Always being patient in teaching.

Patience is one of the fundamental ethics that educators must possess in teaching. Each student has a different character, background, and ability to understand and absorb knowledge. Thus, educators must be patient in guiding their students to understand the material well without feeling burdened or pressured. In the Book of Bidayatul Hidayah, Imam Al Ghazali explained that educators must be patient in accepting various questions from their students.³⁵

7. Being firm towards their students

Educators must have a firm attitude towards students, especially when students practice bad behavior. This firm attitude is not to be harsh on students, but rather as a form of concern and responsibility in directing and guiding them towards a more positive and beneficial path.

In the book of Ihya 'Ulumuddin, Imam Al Ghazali emphasized the importance of educators in preventing their students from having bad traits and behaviors.³⁶ This means that educators must be able to provide guidance and warning wisely without lowering their students' self-esteem. Besides, educators also need to understand that the primary purpose of firmness is to form students' ethics and morals, not just to punish.

Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Concept to Contemporary Education

The current education looks very similar to the thoughts of old education experts, primarily the phenomenon of viral educators, with the emergence of sexual abuse cases³⁷, discrimination,³⁸ and other violations of the

³² Al-Ghazali. p. 65.

³³ Al-Ghazali, "Bidayatul Hidayah." p. 93.

³⁴ Al-Ghazali, "Ihyā" `Ulūm Al-Dīn." p. 211.

³⁵ Al-Ghazali, "Bidayatul Hidayah." p. 93

³⁶ Al-Ghazali, "Ihyā' `Ulūm Al-Dīn." p. 210

³⁷ Putri Agustin et al., "TINJAUAN YURIDIS TERHADAP TINDAK PIDANA

PENCABULAN ANAK YANG DILAKUKAN GURU NGAJI DI WILAYAH

TANGGAMUS" (STUDI KASUS BERKAS PERKARA

BP/45/VIII/RES.1.24./2023/RESKRIM)" 6, no. 2 (2024): 485–95.

code of ethics for educators. A previous study by Nur Salami and Anton Widyanto concluded that the Western education expert, Paulo Freire, expressed views on the ethics of educators, such as having a sense of compassion, having responsibility in directing students, providing freedom to share opinions, and being a facilitator in the students' development.³⁹ As explained previously, some of Paulo Freire's views are similar to those of Imam Al Ghazali.

If educators observe Imam Al-Ghazali's points, coherent interaction between educators and students will be more dominant to create comfortable learning conditions for students.

CONCLUSION

Imam Al Ghazali (450 H/1058 AD – 505 H/1111M) is a great scholar who emphasized the spiritual aspect of life. He provides many in-depth thoughts regarding how the Prophet Muhammad SAW's people can continue to develop in the future. One of his main concerns is the role of educators, who are responsible for conveying knowledge and being role models in ethics and morals for their students. Educators play an essential role in developing students' character. In Ihva' Ulumuddin and Bidavatul Hidavah, Imam Al Ghazali explains that educators must have and implement ethics in educating. Educators must have compassion for students and become role models by imitating the morals of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Imam Al Ghazali also emphasizes the importance of sincerity in teaching. Educators must have sincere intentions in educating without expecting rewards, but rather as a form of worship to Allah SWT. A wise attitude is also needed in dealing with various situations in the teaching and learning process. Educators must have commendable educational qualities, such as being humble, honest, and fair to all their students. Educators also need to be patient, considering that each student has a different understanding of knowledge. Firmness must also be applied in educating, especially in guiding students to avoid violating moral and religious values. The concept of the code of ethics for educators by Imam Al Ghazali is relevant to contemporary education, considering various violations of the code of ethics committed by educators today.

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³⁸ Karmila et al., "Diskriminasi Pendidikan Di Indonesia," Jurnal Pendidikan PKN

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