
THE CONCEPT OF THE PERFECT HUMAN (*AL-INSAN AL-KAMIL*) IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION ACCORDING TO AL-GHAZALI AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Human perfection is intrinsically linked to virtues (*al-fadhā'il*), namely wisdom (*al-hikmah*), courage (*al-syaja'ah*), temperance (*al-'iffah*), and justice (*al-'adalah*). Through these virtues, individuals attain true happiness, which al-Ghazali in *Ma'arīj al-Quds* describes as beholding God in the hereafter or attaining divine knowledge (*ma'rīfat al-Bāri*). This study has three main objectives: first, to explain the concept of the Perfect Human (*al-insan al-kamil*); second, to analyze al-Ghazali's perspective on this concept within Islamic education; and third, to examine its implementation at STIT Insan Kamil, Bogor City. The research employs qualitative methods in a descriptive, analytical, implementative, and evaluative approach, drawing on interviews with students, lecturers, and staff, supported by institutional data. For al-Ghazali, the Perfect Human is one who balances morality, intellect, and righteous deeds, achieving harmony in relationships with God, fellow human beings, and the universe. Education should therefore go beyond worldly ambitions and guide individuals toward closeness to God. At STIT Insan Kamil, this concept is applied, although Qur'an memorization targets remain less optimal and require continuous improvement.

Keywords: *al-insan al-kamil*; al-Ghazali's educational thought; Islamic virtues (*al-fadhā'il*); Islamic higher education; character formation

Abstrak

Kesempurnaan manusia erat kaitannya dengan kebajikan (*al-fadhā'il*), yaitu kebijaksanaan (*al-hikmah*), keberanian (*al-syaja'ah*), kesederhanaan (*al-'iffah*), dan keadilan (*al-'adalah*). Melalui kebajikan tersebut manusia mencapai kebahagiaan sejati, yang oleh al-Ghazali dalam *Ma'arīj al-Quds* digambarkan sebagai memandang Allah di akhirat atau mengenal-Nya (*ma'rīfat al-Bāri*). Penelitian ini memiliki tiga tujuan utama, yaitu menjelaskan konsep insan kamil (*al-Insan al-Kamil*), menganalisis pandangan al-Ghazali tentang konsep ini dalam pendidikan Islam, serta mengkaji implementasinya di STIT Insan Kamil Kota Bogor. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif, analitis, implementatif, dan evaluatif melalui wawancara dengan mahasiswa, dosen, dan tenaga kependidikan, serta ditunjang oleh telaah data kelembagaan. Bagi al-Ghazali, insan kamil adalah manusia yang mampu menjaga keseimbangan antara akhlak, intelektualitas, dan amal saleh sehingga tercapai keharmonisan hubungan dengan Allah, dengan sesama manusia, dan dengan alam semesta. Pendidikan karena itu tidak hanya berorientasi pada status duniawi atau kekayaan, tetapi bertujuan mendekatkan individu kepada Allah. Di STIT Insan Kamil, konsep ini diterapkan meskipun target hafalan al-Qur'an masih belum optimal dan terus ditingkatkan.

Kata kunci: *al-insan al-kamil*; pemikiran pendidikan al-Ghazali; kebajikan Islam (*al-fadhā'il*); pendidikan tinggi Islam; pembentukan karakter

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Introduction

The concept of the perfect human (*al-insan al-kamil*) is one of the fundamental ideals in Islamic intellectual treasures. The Qur'an emphasizes that humans were created in the best form (*ahsani taqwīm*) with noble potential to achieve moral and spiritual perfection, but also have the potential to fall into existential lowliness (Q.S. At-Tīn [95]: 4–6). According to al-Ghazali, human perfection can only be realized through education that organizes the mind, soul and deeds so that they are directed towards harmony. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, he emphasized that true knowledge is not merely theoretical knowledge, but knowledge that guides the heart to get closer to Allah and cleanses it from inner disease (al-Ghazali, n.d./2005). Meanwhile, in Ayyuhā al-Walad, he emphasized that knowledge without charity is just a useless burden that will not bring humans to the level of perfection (al-Ghazali, n.d./1994).

For al-Ghazali, education has both curative and formative functions. In *Mīzān al-'Amal*, he asserts that moral perfection is only achieved when reason, lust, and anger are in balance, controlled by sharia, and directed toward goodness (al-Ghazali, n.d./1964). Thus, Islamic education aims not merely to transfer knowledge but also to shape the perfect human being, a person with intellectual, spiritual, and moral integrity (Mohd Asri et al., 2025).

However, in the Indonesian context, this idealism faces serious challenges. The history of Islamic education demonstrates a dualism between the traditional system (*pesantren*, *surau*, *madrasah*) and the modern system introduced during the colonial period (Steenbrink, 1986; Dhofier, 2011). To date, Islamic education still faces common issues such as the dichotomy between religion and science, the weak relevance of graduates to the workforce, the problem of radicalism versus religious moderation, the digital access gap, and issues of gender equality and global competitiveness (Abdullah, 2003; Azra, 2019). The core issue is how the values of the perfect human idealized by the Qur'an and al-Ghazali can be effectively implemented in Islamic education, particularly at the university level.

Previous studies have touched on the concept of the perfect human being from the perspective of Islamic philosophy and Sufism (Azra, 1999; Noer, 1980). However, most of these studies remain at the conceptual-normative level, with few analyzing its practical relevance in the context of Indonesian Islamic higher education. This research gap is also evident in the limited studies on how al-Ghazali's concept of the perfect human being can be operationalized in the curriculum, learning methods, and student character development in contemporary Islamic higher education institutions.

Therefore, this study emphasizes the novelty of efforts to connect the idealism of the perfect human being in al-Ghazali's thought with its implementation in Islamic higher education, particularly at the Insan Kamil Islamic Institute (STIT) in Bogor City. This research is also supported by the theoretical framework of scientific integration and interconnection (Abdullah, 2003) and the paradigm of religious moderation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019), which are relevant for grounding the concept of the perfect human being in the context of Indonesian Islamic education.

The objectives of this research are as follows: 1) To explain the concept of the perfect human (*al-insan al-kamil*) in the tradition of Islamic intellectual thought; 2) To analyze al-Ghazali's views

on the concept of the perfect human in Islamic education; 3) To formulate the implementation of the concept of the perfect human in Islamic education according to al-Ghazali at the STIT Insan Kamil in Bogor City.

The implications of this research are expected to be significant, providing conceptual and practical contributions to the development of a more integrative, relevant, and moderate Islamic education in Indonesia. With this approach, Islamic higher education is expected to not only produce academically superior graduates but also develop individuals with the character of *insan kamil* (a perfect human) capable of responding to the challenges of the times while maintaining the authenticity of Islamic spirituality.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method. According to Mulyana, qualitative research is research that uses scientific methods to reveal a phenomenon by describing data and facts through words in a comprehensive manner towards the research subject. (Mulyana, 2008) Meanwhile, according to Moleong, he defines qualitative research as research that is intended to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject, for example the perpetrator, perception, motivation, action and others holistically and descriptively in the form of words and language in a specific natural context and by utilizing various scientific methods. (Moleong, 2013)

In the first part, this research will describe the life of al-Ghazali, especially his socio-cultural and intellectual background. Then continued with an analysis of the concept of a perfect human (*al-insan al-kamil*), including the construction of humans. In this human construction, the nature of humans and human existence will be discussed. After that, the relationship between the soul and the body will be discussed, including the analysis of human knowledge and actions. All of these are things that form the foundation of a perfect human being (*al-insan al-kamil*).

The next stage examines al-Ghazali's thoughts on Islamic education. In education there are components of education. According to the Research and Development and Training Agency of the Ministry of Religion, there are six components of education. The six components are: 1) objectives, 2) students, 3) educators, 4) content/material, 5) environmental situation and 6) educational tools. (Supiana, 2008).

This study will reveal, analyze and formulate these six components according to al-Ghazali, although the emphasis is on the first component, the purpose of education, namely to form a perfect human (*al-insan al-kamil*).

Furthermore, implementing the concept of a perfect human (*al-insan al-kamil*) according to Al-Ghazali in this education at the Ma'had Al-Ihya Insan Kamil educational institution in Bogor City. This implementation will be focused on the Insan Kamil Tarbiyah College (STIT) with considerations of effectiveness and efficiency. Is the concept of human formation in accordance with that conceptualized by Al-Ghazali, especially his concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil*?

The implementation of this concept was carried out through direct engagement with the institution by means of observations and interviews with the academic community of the Insan Kamil Islamic Education College (STIT). In conducting this research, the main references were

drawn from al-Ghazali's works, particularly *Ma'ārij al-Quds fi Madārij Ma'rifat al-Nafs* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Jundi, 1968), *Mi'rāj al-Sālikīn* (Cairo: Silsilat al-Saqāfat al-Islāmiyyat, 1964), *Mi'yār al-'Ilm*, ed. Sulaiman Dunia (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1960), *Minhāj al-'Arifīn fi Qushūr al-Awālī* by Al-Syaikh Muhammad Musthafā Abu al-A'lā (Cairo: Maktabat al-Jundi, 1970), *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1980), *Mukhtashar Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2005), along with other relevant sources as listed in the bibliography. Additional data were obtained through interviews with members of the STIT Insan Kamil academic community in Bogor City. The research was conducted over approximately nine months, from July 27, 2024, to April 29, 2025, encompassing surveys, observations, interviews, data processing, analysis, and the writing process.

Results and Discussion

In the Qur'an, there are various understandings of humans with the forms of words used. According to Quraish Shihab in his book *Wawasan Al-Quran*, there are three words used by the Qur'an to refer to humans, namely: a. Using words consisting of the letters *alif*, *nun*, and *sin*. For example, *insan*, *ins*, *nas* or *unas*. b. Using the word *basyar*. c. Using the words *Bani Adam*, and *Dzuriyat Adam* (Quraish Shihab: 2007). All forms of words that mean humans, Allah SWT has hinted at the perfection of humans as in Qs. Al-Tin/95: 4-6. Meaning: "Indeed, We created man in the best of forms. Then We return him to the lowest of the low (Hell), Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds; for them is a reward uninterrupted."

The term *The Perfect Man (al-insan al-kamil)* appeared in Islamic literature around the beginning of the 7th century AH/13th AD, based on the idea of Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638 AH/1240 AD), which he used to label the concept of the ideal human being who is the manifestation of Allah. However, if observed carefully, it appears that the substance of the concept of *insan kamil* had actually appeared in Islam before Ibn 'Arabi, only the existing concepts did not use the term *insan kamil*. (Yunasril Ali, 1997; Ebstein, 2022; Umar et al., 2025)

The concept of *al-Insan Kamil* comes from the Muslim view of a *wali*, which refers to the characteristics of a pious servant in the expression of the Qur'an (Ab Rashid et al., 2020; Sauri et al., 2022; Yusuf et al., 2024). The servant is known among Muslims as *Khidlir* (Sijapati, 2023). He knows the secret of something that is not known to many people. (Q.s., al-Kahfi/18: 65-82). The character of the pious servant was then attributed to a *tabiin* from Yemen who lived in the first century of Hijriah, Uways al-Qarni. Uways is said to be a *quthb* (pole) or *ghauts* (helper), namely a *wali* of the highest level, who has characteristics like *Khidlir*. In addition, there are also those who attribute this title of *wali* to *Shilah ibn Asyim*, a *tabiin* from Basrah, and *Habib al-'Ajami* (d. 120 H/737 AD) (Yunasril Ali, 1997).

At the beginning of the 3rd century AH, Abu Yazid al-Busthami (d. 261 AH/874 AD; other version: 264 AH/877 AD) appeared with the concept of *al-wali al-kamil* (perfect guardian). According to him, a perfect saint is a person who has achieved perfect understanding of Allah, he has been burned by the (fire) of Allah. Perfect *makrifat* will make the guardian mortal (perish) in the attributes of God. The guardian who disappears in the name of Allah, *al-Zhahir* (the Real), will be able to witness the miracle of Allah's *qudrah*; the guardian who disappears in His name, *al-*

Bathin (The Hidden One), will be able to witness the secrets of nature; the saint who disappears in His name, *al-Awwal* (The First), will be able to witness things in the past; and the saint who disappears in His name, *al-Akhir* (the final one), will be able to see the future. (Yunasril Ali: 1997)

The concept of the perfect human became more mature with the arrival of al-Hallaj (d. 309 H/913 AD), the bearer of the doctrine of al-hulul. In the doctrine of al-hulul, man (Adam) is seen as an appearance born of God's eternal love for His absolute and impossible nature (Hanani & Hamidi, 2019). Therefore, Adam was created by Allah in His image (shurah), which reflects all His attributes and attributes, so that "he is Him." Furthermore, al-Hallaj argued, Allah has two basic characteristics: the divine nature (lahut) and the human nature (nasut). Likewise, humans have two basic characteristics like those of God. In this way, human union with Allah can occur. This unity will occur if humans have cleansed their inner beings, so that human traits are immersed in the nature of God (Kars, 2018). Only then can Allah take his place (hulul) in him. Such a human being has achieved the dignity of perfection.

Still in his view, al-Hallaj put forward the emergence of this dual universe from Allah Almighty, through the theory of "nur Muhammad" (*al-haqiqat al-Muhammadiyah*). For him, the Prophet Muhammad saw, had two essences. Firstly, its essence is as nur (light) of azali which is qadim and is the source of all knowledge and wisdom. Second, Muhammad is a new essence, limited by time and space. In this second essence, Muhammad is positioned as the son of Abdullah and is a prophet and apostle.

Regarding the theory of "*Nur Muhammad*" in al-Hallaj's teachings it refers to the essence of Muhammad in the first form above. He is the lamp of the supernatural light. All prophetic light radiates from his light, his form precedes 'adam (nothingness), and his name precedes qalam (lawh mahfuzh's writing instrument), because he existed before other creatures existed. Likewise, all knowledge is but a drop from its ocean, all wisdom is but a sliver from its river, and all ages are but a moment from its time (Yunasril Ali, 1997; Anjum, 2025; Lange, 2021)

Regardless of whether the judgment is right or wrong, what is clear is that al-Hallaj did have a unique inner experience in seeing and determining human nature and character. This experience had a big influence on the subsequent development of Sufism.

The concept of the perfect human was put forward by al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d. 320 H/932 AD). Al-Tirmidhi labeled his ideal human being *khatm al-awliya*. *Khatm al-awliya*, is a human who has achieved perfect understanding of Allah. In this way, he also received light from Allah and even received divine *quwwah* (divine power). (Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi: tth) According to al-Tirmidhi, there are forty people from among the Muhammadan community who have the position of guardian, one of whom is called *khatm awliya*, just as the Prophet Muhammad was *khatm anbiya*.

Although not explicitly expressing the concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil*, al-Ghazali (1058 AD/450 H-1111 AD/505 H) in his various views directed towards human perfection. One of them is in the field of Sufism, as the end point in his life journey. Human perfection can be achieved when the soul can free itself from the veils that block the soul with Allah, and gain direct access to Him. Human perfection can be realized if someone has *ma'rifat al-Allah*, namely knowing the secrets of Allah and knowing Allah's regulations about everything that exists (Virani, 2019). In order for the veil (barrier) to Allah to be opened, then a person must leave four kinds. First, his love for wealth.

Second, leaving his position or position. Third, eliminating the nature of blind imitation and fanaticism of the school of thought. Fourth, leaving sinful acts. (Al-Ghazali, 2007)

In the 6th century AH (12 AD), Suhrawardi (d. 587 AH/1190 AD) suggested that perfect humans consist of three classifications. First, people who study analytical discussions, but do not study the issue of God; for example, the Peripatetics who followed Aristotle, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. Second, people who study the issue of God, but do not study the issue of analytical discussions. For example, Abu Yazid al-Busthami, Sahal al-Tustari, and al-Hallaj. Third, people who study analytical discussions and issues of God at the same time. This classification is the highest. He is the leader of the entire universe (caliph of Allah) or *al-hakim al-muta'allih*. The person who has reached this rank is al-Suhrawardi himself (Yunasril Ali, 2007).

Meanwhile, Ibn Sab'in (d. 667 H/1268 AD) named his concept of the perfect human being *al-muhaqqiq*. According to Ibn Sab'in, the perfect human being from an ontological perspective is the appearance of the Absolute Being in its entirety, because through it the Absolute Being reveals itself as Truth and Pure Goodness. Meanwhile, from a mystical perspective, *al-muhaqqiq* is a person who has attained the highest knowledge. What Ibn Sab'in calls *ilm al-tahqiq* is realizing *al-wahdah al-muthlaqah* (absolute unity), which views there as only one true being, namely the Absolute Being. Meanwhile, this dual form of nature is merely an illusion. According to him, humans will not attain such knowledge, except through the prophets. The prophets cannot attain such knowledge either, except through the intermediary of the warith. The warith is a person who receives divine knowledge. The warith is *al-muhaqqiq*. The way that must be taken to achieve such knowledge is by undertaking a spiritual journey, so as to reach the highest level, namely the attainment of *ilm al-tahqiq*, in the form of divine illumination (Yunasril Ali, 2007).

Furthermore, the term *al-Insan al-Kamil* was also used by the 8th century Hijri Sufi, Abdul Karim ibn Ibrahim al-Jili (767-826 H/1365-1422 M) to name his concept of the perfect human. Al-Jili in a dissertation written by Yunasril Ali, which was later published by Paramadina under the title "*Manusia Citra Ilahi*" apparently did not only continue his predecessor, Ibn Arabi. Al-Jili made contributions that had not been discussed by Ibn Arabi. In the 20th century, Murtadha Muthahhari (born in 1919 M) put forward the concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil* somewhat differently from the others, especially Ibn Arabi. Muthahhari reviewed *al-Insan al-Kamil* according to the view of the Qur'an, not according to the Sufi view. Similar to Ibn Arabi, Muthahhari saw *al-Insan al-Kamil* as a human being who developed Islamic values. He criticized various schools of thought, especially the Sufi school of thought that ignored the intellect (reason). According to Muthahhari, reason can help in spiritual enlightenment. *Insan kamil* according to him is a human being who can develop all good qualities in a balanced way. These qualities may be love, intellect, courage, honesty, or creativity. The human beings who are used as examples of *al-Insan al-Kamil* according to this Iranian cleric are the Prophet Muhammad, and Ali bin Abi Thalib. (Muthahhari, 2003) These two humans have been able to balance all the good potentials that exist within themselves.

According to Amsal Bakhtiar, a professor of Islamic Philosophy at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, *al-Insan al-Kamil* in addition to being seen from the perspective of Sufism, can also be understood from the perspective of Philosophy, Tawhid, and even Fiqh. According to him, an *al-Insan al-Kamil* in Philosophy is a philosopher who can already relate to the Active Intellect, namely the angel Gabriel. Meanwhile, in the view of Tawhid experts, *al-Insan al-Kamil* is a human being

who has perfectly implemented al-arkan al-iman. Meanwhile, the *fuqaha* (fiqh experts) regarding *al-Insan al-Kamil* are people who have perfected the al-arkan al-islam, starting from bersyahadatain (acknowledgment of Allah SWT, and the Prophet Muhammad saw), always performing obligatory and sunnah prayers, fasting obligatory and sunnah, paying zakat, and having completed the pilgrimage to bayt al-Allah (Proverbs Bakhtiar, 2007). *Al-Insan al-Kamil* thoughts were also explained by Muslim intellectuals, namely Ibn Arabi, Abdul Karim al-Jili, and also Indonesian scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin Sumatrani, Nuruddin al-Raniri, Abdul Ra'uf al-Sinkili, Muhammd Yusuf al-Makasari, Abdul Shamad al-Palimbani, Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari, Dawud, ibn Abdullah al-Fathani and Abdul Muhyi.

Regarding Al-Ghazali, he did not explicitly express the concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil*, but in his various views he directed it towards human perfection. One of them is in the field of Sufism, as the end point in his life journey. Human perfection can be achieved when the soul can free itself from the veils that block the soul from Allah, and gain direct access to Him. Human perfection can be realized if someone has ma'rifat al-Allah, namely knowing the secret of Allah SWT. (Al-Ghazali: 2007) This is a stage and peak in being moral to Him. The concept of morality in Al-Ghazali's thinking is closely related to the goal of achieving al-insan al-kamil (perfect human) (Attaran, 2015; M. Arif Susanto, 2024). In Al-Ghazali's framework, *al-Insan al-Kamil* is a human who has achieved spiritual and moral perfection through the path of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) and *tahalli bi akhlaq al-Allah* (adorned with the morality of Allah) (Ahmad & Wan Abdullah, 2023; Kukkonen, 2016). Morals in this case are not just external behavior, but a reflection of inner conditions and the result of spiritual training.

In *Ma'arifi al-Quds*, Al-Ghazali explains that the main goal of humans is to know Allah (*ma'rifat al-Allah*). The path to ma'rifat requires self-purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and adorning oneself with noble morals. "No servant reaches Allah except after knowing his soul. And he does not know his soul except by freeing it from animal traits and adorning it with rabbani morals." (Al-Ghazali, 1968) In this framework, morals are a transformative bridge from ordinary humans to *al-Insan al-Kamil*.

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali divided the moral journey into three stages, the first is *takhalli* (emptying): cleansing the soul from despicable morals such as arrogance, hasad, fun, and love of the world. Second, *tahalli* (decoration): adorning oneself with commendable morals such as patience, trust, asceticism, sincerity and gratitude. And third, *tajalli* (divine revelation): the state when the light of Allah appears in a pure heart. This stage is mentioned implicitly in various parts of the *Ihya'*, "Just as a mirror cannot reflect a face until it is cleaned of dust and rust, so too the heart will not be able to reflect the light of Allah except after it has been cleaned of blameworthy qualities." (Al-Ghazali, 1980)

In adorning with Allah's morals, Al-Ghazali in *al-Maqсад al-Asna fi Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna* states that the purpose of morals is to emulate the attributes of Allah: "Adorn yourself with Allah's morals according to your ability, such as rahmah, hilm, sabr, and 'adl." (Al-Ghazali, 1980) This process reflects *tahalli bi akhlaq al-Allah*, which is trying to make oneself a reflection of Divine attributes in a meaningful way, so that someone becomes *al-Insan al-Kamil*. Within the framework of Al-Ghazali's *al-Insan al-Kamil*, humans who have achieved moral perfection have the following characteristics: first, total submission to Allah and content with His destiny. Second, behaving

according to wisdom and justice in all aspects of life. Third, loving creatures, as Allah is Most Merciful. Fourth, asceticism and sincerity, detaching oneself from the world for the sake of the hereafter. And fifth, balance between reason, nafs and spirit. Al-Ghazali quoted the hadith: "*Takhallaqu bi akhlaq al-Allah*" (Behave with the morals of Allah) (Al-Ghazali, 1980).

This morality is the core of the education of *al-Insan al-Kamil*. Al-Ghazali's concept of morality cannot be separated from the spiritual mission and education of *al-Insan al-Kamil*. Education is not just transferring knowledge, but forming morality and cleansing the heart until someone is ready to absorb the Divine tajalli. "Knowledge without deeds is madness, and deeds without knowledge are futility. And the most important of knowledge is knowing God and forming morality like the morality of the prophets." (Al-Ghazali, 1980).

Indicators of Perfect Man in Education

In this issue, an attempt is made to reconstruct the indicators of human perfection in Islamic education based on Al-Ghazali's writing in his book "*Ma'arij al-Quds fi Madarij Ma'rifah al-Nafs*" in the chapter Ummahat al-Fadha'il. In this chapter, the main virtues are explained, namely: al-Hikmah, al-Syaja'ah, al-Iffah, and al-'Adalah. (Al-Ghazali, 1968)

Before explaining the concept of *Ummahat al-Fadha'il* written by Al-Ghazali in his book *Ma'arij al-Quds*, there are several notes. First, it turns out that the concept had already been written by Ibn Miskawih in his book *Tahdzib al-Akhlak*. Ibn Miskawih (d. 1030 AD) as is well known, was a Persian philosopher and historian. He was an important figure in the development of rational Islamic ethics rooted in Greek philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle. In his famous work, *Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, he developed four main virtues (*Ummahat al-Fadha'il*), namely *al-Hikmah*, *al-Syaja'ah*, *al-Iffah*, and *al-'Adalah*. Ibn Miskawih took this structure from Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle's division of virtue (aretê), which was also developed by the Stoic and Neoplatonist philosophers. (Ibn Miskawih, 1966) Second, Al-Ghazali in his famous work *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, indeed uses a similar structure (four main virtues), but with a Sufi orientation. He integrates the ethical framework of philosophy into the framework of Sufism and Islamic spirituality. In *Mizan al-'Amal*, Al-Ghazali explicitly acknowledges the use of Greek philosophical divisions but he adapts them to Islamic teachings and the Sufi approach (Al-Ghazali, 1970). The four main virtues in *Ihya'* use accentuation on: purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), spiritual journey (*suluk*), and control of lust as a path to ma'rifat. He views all of these virtues as part of developing the qalb (heart) on the journey to Allah SWT (M. Arif Susanto, 2024b).

Before explaining the concept of Al-Ghazali's *Ummahat al-Fadha'il*, it can be concluded that the concept of "*Ummahat al-Fadha'il*" terminologically and conceptually comes from Ibn Miskawih, who compiled this framework based on the heritage of Greek philosophy. However, it was Al-Ghazali who transformed and Islamized it within the framework of Sufism and tazkiyah, making the four main virtues an integral part of the path to spiritual perfection. So, Sufism adopted and adapted this concept through Al-Ghazali's works, but the roots of its systematic origins can be traced to Ibn Miskawih. Furthermore, the figure of Ummahat al-Fadhail according to Al-Ghazali in his book *Ma'arij al-Quds fi Madarij Ma'rifah al-Nafs* is presented as follows:

The figure of ‘*Ummahat al-Fadha`il*’ (The Mother of Virtue)

Al-Hikmah (wisdom)

Al-Ghazali defines wisdom as the greatness or goodness given by Allah SWT (Al-Ghazali, 1968; Bachmann et al., 2018). He quoted Qs. Al-Baqarah/2: 269, namely as follows:

"Allah bestows Al hikmah (deep understanding of the Koran and As Sunnah) to whom He wills. and whoever is granted wisdom, he has truly been granted many gifts. and only those with understanding can take lessons (from the word of Allah)." (Qs. Al-Baqarah/2: 269) Also refers to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, namely:

Meaning: "Wisdom is (the lost property of) the believer." (HR Tirmidhi).

Al-Ghazali, explained that al-Hikmah or wisdom is a virtue related to the power of thinking, which has been known before that the soul has two sides: First, the upper side: This wisdom is related to the total true sciences and the correct view of the highest existence. This is the first and eternal true knowledge, which never changes, such as knowledge about Allah Ta'ala, His attributes, His angels, His books, and His messengers. Also including Allah's arrangement of His creatures, arrangement of His kingdom, creation, repetition, and the state of the afterlife such as happiness and misery. Second, the lower side: This wisdom is related to the arrangement of the body and its management, and allowing the soul to function in its actions. This is called practical reason, with which a person organizes himself, his house, and the people of his country. (Al-Ghazali, 1968; Kirabaev et al., 2023)

Al-Syaja'ah

Al-Syaja'ah is the courage born from a balanced soul strength, which is able to face challenges without excessive fear, but also not recklessly (Bahmani et al., 2018). This courage comes from a heart filled with faith in Allah, so that a person is not afraid to face obstacles in carrying out the truth (Al-Ghazali, 1968).

Regarding *Al-Syaja'ah*, al-Ghazali quoted Qs. Al-Fath/48: 29, namely: "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and those who are with him are severe against the disbelievers, but compassionate among themselves" (Qs. Al-Fath/48: 29)

In the verse above it is clear that the Prophet Muhammad saw was very *syaja'ah* towards the disbelievers (non-Muslims), but very compassionate towards fellow Muslims (Sertkaya & Keskin, 2020). *Al-Syaja'ah* is also interpreted as the result of controlling the *nafs al-ammarah* by reason and faith, so that a person is able to act with courage without being controlled by lust. It is also interpreted as the balance of the soul as the core of good morals. Courage is the result of a balance between two extreme traits: first, *Jubn* (cowardice), which is excessive fear that makes a person avoid responsibility or the truth. Second, *Tahawwur* (recklessness), which is excessive courage to the point of going beyond the limits (Al-Ghazali, 1968; Rakhmat, 2023). Here, *al-syaja'ah* is the middle way between the two, namely courage that is controlled by reason and faith.

Al-Iffah

In *Ma'arij al-Quds al-Ghazali* wrote about 'iffah is "the superiority of the power of lust, namely its ability to submit easily and without difficulty to the power of reason, so that control and release of lust take place according to the direction of reason." (Al-Ghazali: 1968). Surrounding 'iffah are two evils, namely greed (*syarah*) and the death of lust (*khumud as-syahnah*).

Greed is the excess of lust in pursuing pleasures that are considered bad by reason and are prohibited by it. While the death of lust is the weakness of lust so that it is unable to be moved to obtain things demanded by reason. Both of these things are reprehensible, as 'iffah, which is a middle attitude, is commendable.

A human being must control his lust, because his tendency is to be excessive, especially towards desires related to the stomach, genitals, wealth, power, and praise. Excessiveness in this case is a deficiency, while perfection lies in the middle attitude (moderation)(Mohamed, 2018; Zargar, 2020).

Al-Adalah

As for *al-'adalah* (justice) is a state in which the three powers (reason, anger, and lust) are in order and harmony by following the proper rules in the relationship between the ruler and the subject. Justice is not part of virtue, but rather a summary of all virtues. Because, whenever there is a commendable order between the king, the army, and his people—with a wise and powerful king, a strong and obedient army, and a weak but easily controlled people—then it is said that justice is established in a country. Justice will not be achieved if only some parties have these qualities, while others do not (Al-Ghazali, 1968).

Similarly, justice in the kingdom of the human body is reflected in the harmony between the three powers, and justice in the morals of the soul will certainly be followed by justice in transactions and policies, which are branches of it. The meaning of justice is commendable order, both in morals, in transaction rights, and in the parts that support the sustainability of a country (Cugueró-Escofet & Rosanas, 2020; Jamal & Higham, 2021).

Extensive Knowledge and Healthy Body (*Basthatan fi al-'Ilmi wa al-Jism*)

Extensive knowledge and a healthy body refers to Qs. Al-Baqarah/2:247, which textually tells the story of Thalut, a king who was granted vast knowledge and a mighty physique, and who in his story defeated his enemy, Jalut. The figure of *al-insan al-kamil* as described in Qs. Al-Baqarah/2:247 is then interpreted through the concept of *basthatan fi al-'ilmi wa al-jism* (extensive knowledge and a healthy body), which can be formulated into three components: first, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions; second, physical health; and third, noble character.

First, Intellectual, Moral, Spiritual, and Social. The concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil* in Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts is a depiction of a perfect human being in the view of Islam (Hanani & Hamidi, 2019; Sauri et al., 2022; Umar et al., 2025). Al-Ghazali describes *al-Insan al-Kamil* as an individual who not only achieves perfection in his intellectual aspects, but also has high moral and spiritual perfection. In his works, Al-Ghazali emphasizes that *al-Insan al-Kamil* is an individual who achieves

harmony between reason (intellect), desire (desire), and character (character) (Siti Nurlatifah, 2021). Al-Ghazali's thoughts on *al-Insan al-Kamil* include several main characteristics. First, the individual has in-depth knowledge of religious teachings and spiritual truths. Second, they have good control over their desires and passions, so that they are able to maintain balance in their personal and social lives. Third, they demonstrate noble morals, such as honesty, simplicity, and justice, which are reflected in their every action and interaction with others (Mohamad Hudaeri, 2007).

The concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil* is not only an idealism, but also a practical guide in Islamic education. Al-Ghazali taught that education should not only include academic aspects, but also moral and spiritual aspects. By delving deeper into the concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil*, we can understand how Al-Ghazali suggested that Islamic education focus on the formation of high moral character and deep spirituality, so that individuals can develop their potential to the maximum in achieving meaningful life goals in the view of Islam (Ali Rahmat, 2016 Anwar et al., 2024).

The concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil* in Imam Al-Ghazali's thinking is the highest ideal in the Islamic view of human perfection. The term "*al-Insan al-Kamil*" literally means a perfect or complete human being. Al-Ghazali describes *al-Insan al-Kamil* as an individual who has reached the peak of perfection in his intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social aspects (Hasan S, 2017; Hanani & Hamidi, 2019)

Second, the body is healthy. In Al-Ghazali's view, a healthy body or body is an important component in the effort to achieve human perfection (*al-Insan al-Kamil*). In his various works, including *Ma'ārij al-Quds fī Madārij Ma'rifah al-Nafs* and *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Al-Ghazali emphasized the close relationship between physical, mental and spiritual health in shaping human perfection. The Concept of Body Health in Human Perfection. According to Al-Ghazali, humans consist of three main elements that are interrelated: *Jasad* (body): The physical aspect of humans which is a tool for carrying out actions. *Nafs* (soul): Psychological aspect involving emotions, desires and passions. *Ruh* (spiritual): The divine aspect that is at the core of human relationship with God. A healthy body is the foundation for the perfection of the soul and spirit, because without a healthy body, a person cannot carry out spiritual, moral and intellectual tasks optimally.

Third, Noble Morals. Noble Morals as part of a Perfect Man according to Al-Ghazali. In Al-Ghazali's view, noble morals are one of the important elements that determine human perfection (*al-Insan al-Kamil*). A perfect man is not only judged from his intelligence or physical strength, but from how he adorns himself with good morals as a reflection of a balanced soul and a spirit that is close to Allah. Noble morals are a real manifestation of human perfection in carrying out the purpose of his creation, namely to become a caliph on earth and draw closer to Allah. Noble Morals as a Reflection of the Perfection of the Soul. Al-Ghazali stated that humans have three main components: body, mind (thought), and spirit (spiritual). Noble morals are the result of the harmony of these three elements, where the mind guides the soul to control lust, while the spirit directs humans to achieve Allah's pleasure. With good morals, humans are able to subdue bad qualities such as arrogance, greed and anger, so that they become a reflection of God's noble qualities, such as compassion, justice, patience and humility. About (*tawadhu'*) humility, Al-Ghazali explained in *Ihya' Ulumuddin*. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most humble person despite his very noble position. Ibn Amir said: "I saw him throwing stones riding a gray camel

without hitting, without chasing, and without saying 'pull over, pull over' to people." (Al-Ghazali, 1980).

Implementation of the Perfect Man Concept at STIT Insan Kamil, Bogor City

The Insan Kamil Islamic Education College (STIT) located at Jl. Raden Ariasuralaga Batutapak, Pasirjaya sub-district, West Bogor district, Bogor city was established in 2005 AD. Initially, the Islamic Education study program was opened which was still affiliated with the Islamic College (STAI) in Sukabumi. Meanwhile, in 2018, they began to improve administratively by recruiting lecturers who met the qualifications of a master's degree (S2). At that time, there were around 6 lecturers teaching at STIT Insan Kamil who were immediately registered with Kopertais to obtain the National Lecturer Registration Number (NIDN), and in 2024 they would be able to graduate students as bachelors by issuing their own diplomas.

Regarding the origin of the naming of STIT Insan Kamil Bogor, it cannot be separated from the history of Majlis Al-Ihya Bogor which was founded on 1 Muharram 1398 H (11 December 1977) and all its activities were inaugurated on 20 Shafar 1398 H. (29 January 1978) by Mama Ajengan K.H. Raden Abdullah bin KH. Raden Muhammad Nuh bin KH. Raden Muhammad Idris (Mama ABN). Starting with the activities of Subuh Lecture, *Majlis Ta'lim*, General Lecture and Madrasah Diniyah. Furthermore, Majlis Al-Ihya Bogor was entrusted to his beloved student, Drs. KH. Muhammad Husni Thamrin Padmawijaya (Abi Taam) with a Special Diploma. The naming of STIT Insan Kamil is inseparable from the naming of the Insan Kamil Education Foundation, which then gave the names of the units below it, such as Kindergarten, Elementary School, Junior High School, Senior High School, to universities with the same name. The name "Insan Kamil" was chosen as a hope and ideal of the founders of the foundation, so that all pupils and students can make the figure of Insan Kamil, namely the Prophet Muhammad SAW, as the main role model, idol, and *uswatun hasanah* in all aspects of life.

The use of the name "Insan Kamil" in naming STIT Insan Kamil has a deep philosophy related to the vision, mission, and educational ideals that the foundation wants to realize. Here are some reasons why the name "Insan Kamil" was chosen compared to names such as "Ihya Ulumuddin" or "Al-Ihya":

The name "Insan Kamil" directly refers to the concept of a perfect human being in Islam, with the Prophet Muhammad SAW as the main role model. This naming provides a focus on the formation of students' personalities so that they can develop into perfect humans who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also superior in morals and spirituality. This concept is broader and more applicable in everyday life. The curriculum that encourages students to become Insan Kamil at STIT Insan Kamil is designed holistically to include spiritual, intellectual, and social development.

The form of implementation of the Perfect Human Concept is adjusted to the academic community, especially students at STIT Insan Kamil Bogor, in the form of student activity programs. This activity program is part of the curriculum. (Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 1 paragraph 19/Permendikbud No. 81A of 2013 concerning the Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum) In Islamic teachings, the existence of humans in this world, including at STIT Insan Kamil, will not be separated from three relationships, namely the

relationship with Allah SWT (*hablum min al-Allah*), relationships with fellow humans (*hablum min al-nas*), and relationships with the universe (*hablum min al-'alam*).

Relationship with Allah SWT (Hablum min al-Allah)

Diligent and Obedient in Worship

The activities of the students at the STIT Insan Kamil institution are very diverse. In addition to lectures, there is also a requirement to perform congregational prayers, religious studies, including fasting. For this fasting, in addition to the Ramadan fast, there is also the sunnah fasting of Monday and Thursday, as well as fasting in the middle of the qamariyah month (the 13th, 14th, and 15th of each hijri month). According to the confession of a fifth semester student, namely Ramdhani, these worship activities are usually carried out by students. In fact, they are always reminded by the lecturers, especially for these sunnah fasts.

For congregational prayers, because lectures start after Dzuhur, the obligation to pray in congregation is at Asr and Maghrib times. This congregational prayer is usually carried out in the mosque adjacent to the classroom, and this mosque is also usually used for religious studies. Meanwhile, the study was held after the afternoon lecture before Maghrib, around 17.00 WIB until Maghrib time. The books taught were *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin*, *Minhajul 'Abidin* by Al-Ghazali, *Nashaihul Ibad* by Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani, and *Tafsir Jalalain* by Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi and Jalaludin al-Mahally.

This activity was followed by students with great enthusiasm. Based on interviews with the head of STIT Insan Kamil, Dr. Rizal and student Ramdhani, the effects or influences of lectures, congregational prayers, religious studies, and sunnah fasting are very positive. Students can easily form a closeness to Allah SWT as the Creator.

Hafizh al-Qur'an

Tahfizh al-Qur'an, Hafizh al-Qur'an or Hifzh al-Qur'an have the same meaning, namely memorizing the Qur'an. The difference is in the form if tahfizh is *masdar*, hafizh is *isim fa'il*, while hifzh al-Qur'an becomes *mudhaf-mudhaf ilaih*. Memorizing the Qur'an is a flagship program of STIT Insan Kamil. The activity of memorizing the Qur'an in semesters 1-4 is included in the course with a weight of 2 credits. However, semester 5 and onwards are outside the credits, but the minimum achievement target remains, namely 5 juz as a requirement before graduation.

The implementation of the tahfizh of the Qur'an did experience obstacles, especially for students who were already working, because the majority of students were already working. Another obstacle in this tahfizh was devotion in the Islamic boarding school itself. When you want to teach, you have to prepare first, as well as other activities. Ideally, for this tahfizh, you have to focus, even have to sacrifice other activities, if you want to memorize the Qur'an smoothly. However, there are those who have succeeded in memorizing 30 juz, around 10-20% of the number of students who graduated. This tahfizh of the Qur'an greatly influences the attitudes and behavior of students, especially in the formation of the figure of Insan Kamil as the competence of this STIT student. A student who has memorized a lot of the Qur'an will be wiser, more polite and closer to Allah SWT.

Relationship with Fellow Human Beings (*Hablum min al-Nas*)

Respect for Educators (Lecturers) and Education Personnel (Non-Lecturers)

The relationship between students, lecturers, and education personnel at STIT Insan Kamil is characterized by harmony and a deep sense of *takzhim* (respect). Students' respect for lecturers in this institution emerges naturally, shaped not only by consistent practices and traditions but also by the influence of STIT Insan Kamil being under Ma'had Al-Ihya. The tradition of *ma'had* or Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia generally emphasizes respect for teachers, lecturers, *ustadz*, and *kyai*, a habit that has been passed down through generations and further reinforced by the teachings of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*. This is confirmed by interviews conducted with students and lecturers at STIT Insan Kamil.

When a student commits a violation, the supervising lecturer usually addresses the issue by offering personal guidance and advice. Such an approach is considered very wise by students, as the individual is not humiliated in public. This practice fosters greater respect and strengthens the bond between students and lecturers within the institution.

Respect/Respect for Fellow Students

The relationship between students at this institution, after being observed and based on interviews with lecturers and students, is quite harmonious. At STIT Insan Kamil, there is no bullying between seniors and juniors. There are several reasons why harmony is realized in this institution. First, because the practice of Islamic teachings is inherent and has become everyday behavior. Second, because there are not too many students so that monitoring by lecturers and education staff is more optimal. Harmonization among students in this institution will be more conducive in forming the figure of *al-Insan al-Kamil* (Perfect Man), because it is easier to form and direct towards competence in that direction.

Active in the Surrounding Community

Actively devoting oneself to the community is one part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. The academic community of STIT Insan Kamil also does the same thing. The form of this devotion is very diverse, such as STIT Insan Kamil Mengajar, Field Introduction Program (PPL), Real Work Lecture (KKN).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Qur'an portrays human beings as created in the best form with the potential for moral and spiritual perfection. Muslim scholars have expanded this vision, and although al-Ghazali does not explicitly use the term *al-Insan al-Kamil*, his thought consistently frames education as a holistic process of purifying the soul, harmonizing intellect and emotion, and integrating knowledge with righteous action. Education, in his view, is not limited to the transmission of information but is directed toward cultivating wisdom, moral integrity, and closeness to God.

The findings also reveal that STIT Insan Kamil Bogor embodies many aspects of this framework. Its programs integrate worship, Qur'an memorization, ethical training, and community service, producing tangible outcomes in shaping student character and spirituality.

However, challenges remain, particularly in sustaining Qur'an memorization targets and embedding ethical-spiritual formation systematically across the curriculum.

Theoretically, this research highlights the relevance of classical Islamic ideals for contemporary higher education by aligning al-Ghazali's vision with integrative and character-based approaches. Practically, it provides evidence that Islamic universities in Indonesia and beyond can operationalize the concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil* through curricula and institutional ethos that balance intellectual, moral, and spiritual development.

Future directions include strengthening structured *tahfizh* programs with adequate resources, enhancing the integration of ethics and social responsibility across disciplines, and conducting comparative and interdisciplinary studies on the application of al-Ghazali's framework in diverse contexts. Such efforts will enable Islamic higher education to preserve its spiritual authenticity while equipping graduates to respond with wisdom and integrity to the complexities of modern life.

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