

Parenting Perspectives in Imam Ghazali's Teachings: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

Imam Al-Ghazali, one of the most renowned Islamic scholars and philosophers of the 11th century, provides a profound understanding of parenting through spiritual, ethical, and psychological dimensions. This review examines his perspectives on parenting as articulated in *Ihya Ulum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences). Al-Ghazali emphasizes the crucial role of parents in shaping the spiritual and moral development of their children, advocating for the cultivation of good manners and a strong foundation in religious and ethical education to nurture virtuous individuals. This study systematically reviews relevant literature using databases such as Sage Journals, Emerald, and Springer, selecting 12 research articles that meet the inclusion criteria. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on Islamic parenting approaches, reaffirming the enduring relevance of Al-Ghazali's insights in contemporary child-rearing practices.

Keywords: Parenting, Spiritual Development, Moral Development, Al-Ghazali, Islamic Education.

Introduction

Parenting is a challenging yet fundamental responsibility that plays a crucial role in shaping a child's overall development. A child's physical, psychological, and emotional growth is significantly influenced by the parenting style they experience. Positive parenting promotes confidence, resilience, and emotional well-being, while negative parenting can lead to confusion, low self-esteem, and emotional insecurity (Farzana Bibi et al., 2013).

Parents often focus on their children's well-being, but they may sometimes overlook the importance of individual differences in temperament, personality, and natural tendencies. Effective parenting goes beyond fulfilling a child's basic needs; it involves nurturing their emotional, intellectual, and social growth. The National Academy of Sciences highlights that responsible parenting includes ensuring a child's health and safety, promoting emotional stability, instilling social skills, and preparing them intellectually. Studies indicate that children raised in a warm and supportive environment are more likely to develop self-confidence and positive behavioral traits.

Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), one of the most distinguished Muslim scholars, made significant contributions to Islamic theology, philosophy, and spirituality. His insights on parenting remain relevant today, aligning with contemporary discussions on child development and education (Al-Ghazali, 2019). According to Al-Ghazali, parents are entrusted with the responsibility of guiding their children's moral and spiritual development. He believed that a child's pure heart, like a precious jewel, could be shaped by parental guidance. If nurtured with goodness, the child would grow into a righteous and virtuous individual, bringing rewards to parents and society (Bensaid, 2021).

Al-Ghazali also emphasized the importance of Quranic education for children. He proposed the inclusion of courageous and pious individuals' stories in children's lessons to serve as sources of inspiration. He also advocated for teaching children through the poetry of respected authors, thus enriching their intellectual and moral character. Al-Ghazali also suggested that parents need to foster an open and trusting relationship with their children so they feel comfortable in sharing their thoughts and actions and do not engage in secrecy or dishonesty. Additionally, he also stressed that parents should teach children the difference between right and wrong according to Islamic principles, instilling a sense of accountability and moral responsibility in them (Burfat et al., 2018).

In addition to moral and spiritual education, Al-Ghazali highlighted the necessity of physical well-being. Al-Ghazali encouraged physical activities like exercise and walking to promote healthy habits and prevent idleness (Choudhury, 2023). The teachings of Al-Ghazali on parenting provide valuable guidance for raising children in a manner that nurtures their moral, spiritual, and intellectual well-being. His holistic approach integrates

religious, ethical, and psychological aspects of child-rearing, offering a structured framework for effective parenting. By adhering to his principles, parents can cultivate disciplined, virtuous, and responsible individuals who contribute positively to society.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study has used PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) criteria. For summarizing the studies PRISMA flowchart has been used in this review. PRISMA was used to find previous research on Imam Ghazali views about parenting children. Databases such as ResearchGate, google scholar, elicite were used for finding the studies. Steps involved in the systematic review process were identification, screening, and inclusion. Identification stage involves finding keywords for searching. Then the list of keywords is reviewed and corrected. Studies from 2010 to 2024, were included in the study for review. The criteria has been mentioned in the table 2.

Table 1 presents the keyword search list, which was corrected.

Table 1: Keyword Search List

Terms	keyword That Was Used for Searching Process
Imam Ghazali golden rules for parenting	("Ghazali Parenting golden rules")
Parenting according to Al Ghazali	("Ghazali Parenting views")
Etiquettes of parenting in Ghazali's view	("Ghazali Parenting Etiquettes")

Table 2: Article-Finding Criteria

Criteria	Inclusive	Exclusive
Year duration	2010-2024	Before 2010
Language	English	Other than English
Country	All countries	No exclusion
Articles	All types	No exclusion

1. RESULTS

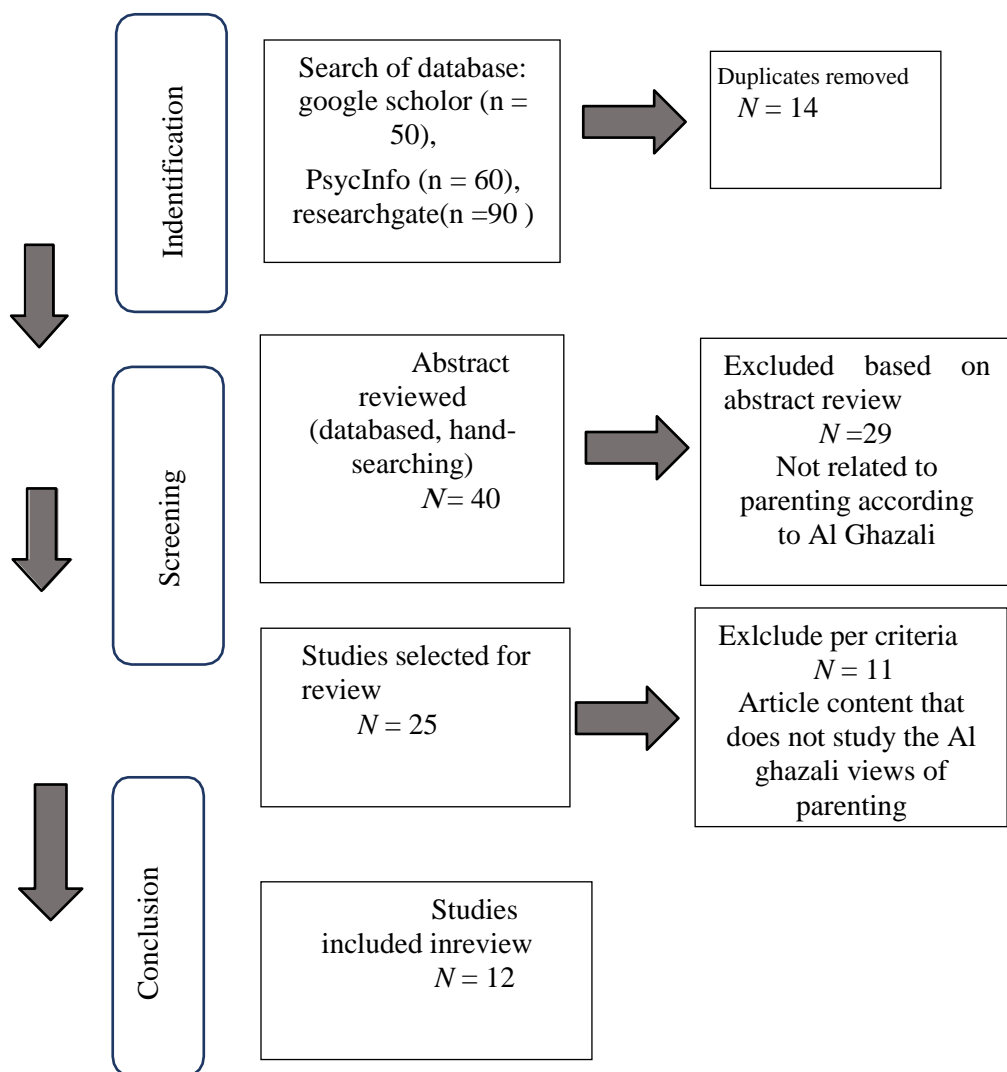


Figure 1.
Flowchart of article identification, filtering, and inclusion.

3.1 Synthesized Findings

Firstly two hundred research papers were obtained, from different sources, then duplicates removes were made on 14 papers, resulting in 186 papers. Of the 186 papers, review of abstracts was carried out on 40 papers were selected, from these the researcher read the paper thoroughly and finally the researcher selected 11 papers on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria, in this systematic literature review. The papers selected were fulfilling the objectives of the study.

Table 3. General Description

S.No	Authors	Title of the study	Findings
	Fayzullaeva	Respecting Parents in the Ethical Ideas of Al-Ghazali	<p>According to Al-Ghazali</p> <p>Children should be taught about self confidence and they should have such relation with their parents that they share everything with them.</p> <p>Parental respect and gratefulness should be taught to the children while upbringing them.</p> <p>Parents should be highly concerned about the kindness of their children and inculcate it through their parenting skills (Fayzullaeva, 2021).</p>
	Dwi Hastuti and Muhammad Miftah	Authoritarian Parenting in Early Young Children Life History Study Three Muslim Parents in Yogyakarta	Al ghazali argued that children should be taught the religious values but their worldly affairs should also not be

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			<p>neglected.</p> <p>Children should be guided the manners in gradual way.</p> <p>Al Ghazali suggested diferent methods and strategies for children such as, storytelling, discussion method, lecture method, and exemplery method (Hastuti & Miftah, 2023).</p>
	Amiah, Manap and Sidek Baba	AL-GHAZALI'S PARENTING SKILLS ATTRIBUTES MODEL	<p>Al Ghazali suggested the four strategies for nurturing the children. 1. knowledge and education, 2. relationship with Allah, 3. relationship with children and 4. relationship with others.</p> <p>For strengthening real attachment with childre, parents must have awareness about different usefull skills of parenting and childcare.</p> <p>Parents should also have knowledge about the needs and rights of children at different developmental level</p>

			(Manap, 2022).
	Tumiran	The Concept Of Early Childhood Education According To Al-Ghazali	<p>Al-Ghazali said that children are innately good, and it is parents who are responsible for their personality shaping.</p> <p>In his view the child is a mandate from God. He or she should be guided and protected from different things, as they are accountable to the God, one day for their deeds</p> <p>Educating them means that you have to introduce children to the creator. They should be taught to have a balance in their lives so that they are not confused about Dunya and Akhera (Tumiran, 2023)..</p>
	Adibah Sulaiman, Ezad Azraai Jamsari and Noorsafuan Che Noh	Islamic Environment in Child Development According to the Views of Imam al-Ghazali	<p>Imam ghazali stressed the idea of good environment in development of child.</p> <p>He argued that if a parent wants a useful child, they must struggle for good environment for their children.</p> <p>He further suggested that</p>

			<p>children imitate every behavior from the people around in their environment, so by cultivating good environment for them will instill good values within the children.</p> <p>He said that children are God's gifts to the parents and it is their responsibility to rear their children and shape the heart and the mind of the child as pure as God has created it (Sulaiman, Ezad & Noorsafuan, 2014).</p>
	<p>Sajid Ullah Sheikh. And Muhammad Abid Ali</p>	<p>Al-Ghazali's Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education</p>	<p>Al-Ghazali explained that parents, teachers and peers are important in upbringing the child in their moral development.</p> <p>Al-Ghazali suggested that language, cultural traditions, religious and moral beliefs should be concerns of the parents.</p> <p>He further argued that parents are responsible for both good and bad deeds of their children, so it is upto them that how they put efforts in rearing their children.</p> <p>Parents have to</p>

			<p>face consequences of their parenting they will be admired if their child develops a good character and held responsible if their child develops unacceptable and bad traits (Sheikh, & Ali, 2019).</p>
	<p>Prof. Dr. Fazli Rabbi</p>	<p>Educational philosophy Imam Al-Ghazali’s perspective</p>	<p>According to Al ghazali parents are responsible for ensuring the islamic environment in their children education.</p> <p>They should ensure that whether their children teachers are of Islamic mindset or not and should ensure their education environment according to islamic teachings.</p> <p>The main responsibility for children’s education falls on the parents</p> <p>And childhood is very important in character formation of children.</p> <p>It is crucial to consider the special characteristics of childhood in order to deal with the child in an effective and sound manner (Rabi, 2016).</p>
	<p>Fateh Muhammad , Burfat Ghulam,</p>	<p>Al Ghazali concept of sociology of education and parenting</p>	<p>Training a child to be a good human being is the utmost responsibility</p>

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	Muhammad Burfat and Abdul Ghafoor Baloch		<p>of the parents and children.</p> <p>Al-Ghazali wrote in his book that "A child is a trust in the hands of the parents. If he is reared properly in the traditions of goodness, he will grow to attain happiness in both worlds."</p> <p>He also advised that the child must be suckled by a virtuous woman because the milk with which a child is feeded, becomes a part of the system and it has influence on children personality (Burfat, Burfat, & Baloch, 2018).</p>
	Shaykh Dr Ridhwan and Ibn Saleem	Exposition of The Method of Bringing Up Children From Earliest Childhood	<p>Parents should have enough knowlge about the importance of parenting skills in upbringing of the children.</p> <p>The child is a trust in the hands of his parents, and his pure heart is an unblemished precious stone, free of any engraving or form.</p> <p>So the heart is moulded by the parents in any direction. If it is</p>

			moulded for good deeds, then the child would serve as reward in society for parents and teachers And on the other hand if it is moulded with evil deeds, then the child will turn out to be evil and destructive individual in the society (Ridhwan & Saleem, 2019).
	Benaouda Bensaid	An Overview of Muslim Spiritual Parenting	<p>Al-Ghazali noted that innately spiritual states is a necessary prerequisite for the flow of generated knowledge in children.</p> <p>Al-Ghazali advises the parents to consider their children peer group because they have much influence on their children.</p> <p>Friends having good and innovative thinking and good conduct, free from sinful habits and any addiction should be supported for their children betterment.</p> <p>Parents should be very careful in selecting the schools for their children according to Islamic</p>

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			<p>teachings, and the should also cultivates children's insight, appreciation of nature, leading them to ponder the origin, secrets, and beauty of creation and the universe (Bensaid, 2021).</p>
	Irfan Hasan	Golden Principles of Raising Children	<p>Al Ghazali stated that children hearts is like a nice, clean, and simple mirror.</p> <p>If parents wants to have successful children in every aspect, they should incilcate good manners from the very start in their children</p> <p>If good manners are inculcated in children, they will grow up with successful persons in the society and will have understanding of both Dunya and Akhera.</p> <p>On the other hand if bad habits are inculcated in a child then it will lead them to unhappy and destructive people of the society (Hasan, 2011) .</p>

	M Sh Fayzullaeva	Education of a Child in the Ethics of Al-Ghazali	<p>Al-Ghazali concluded that parents are the first mentors in the children life, they can both destroy and cultivate good deeds in them.</p> <p>Parents should set the goals about their children that</p> <p>It is upto them that whether they inculcate bad or good habits in their children.</p> <p>Parents are like a source of water, according to Al Ghazali, if their character is clean like water, the children will also imitate.</p> <p>He also stressed that early age is very important for personality development, so he advises parents to start raising their children from very early age.</p> <p>The child must be taught by his/her parents about respecting elders, first be and developing a sense of hard work.</p> <p>Being treated politely by parents, children also tend to</p>
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			be polite and kind in future (Fayzullaeva, 2021).
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Discussion

This systematic literature review aimed to explore the parenting views of Imam Al-Ghazali, a prominent Muslim thinker whose work has had a lasting impact on both Eastern and Western intellectual traditions. While Al-Ghazali’s contributions spanned across various fields, his parenting insights rooted in Islamic teachings, is particularly helpful for the moral and spiritual upbringing of children (Al-Ghazali, 2019).

Al-Ghazali emphasized that parents play a significant role in shaping their children's moral character by teaching them to distinguish between good and bad deeds. He stressed the importance of instilling values such as respect, gratitude, and kindness in children from an early age (Fayzullaeva, 2021). Al-Ghazali believed that the success of a child's upbringing depends largely on the guidance and support provided by the parents, who must serve as role models in all aspects of life. If parents are kind and virtuous, then their children are likely to emulate these qualities (Hastuti & Miftah, 2023).

Al-Ghazali's Model of Parenting Skills Attributes outlines four essential components that parents should employ in order to raise their children successfully. The primary element is the relationship with Allah , followed by the relationship with other children, the interaction with other people, and knowledge and education (Rabi, 2016). According to Al-Ghazali, the cornerstone of good parenting is a solid relationship with Allah. He asserted that parents should possess a basic understanding of Islamic principles, including tawhid (the oneness of God), taṣawwuf (Sufism), and shara’ (Islamic law). As for the second essential component that is relationship with other children, parents should foster healthy relationships among siblings and peers by encouraging qualities like empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect.

In addition, Al-Ghazali also highlighted the importance of teaching children how to interact respectfully with others in society. A child's education must include social manners, proper etiquette, and respect for elders (Sheikh & Ali, 2019). Moreover, Parents must ensure that their children receive a well-rounded education that includes both religious and worldly knowledge. A key component of this education is learning the distinction between what is halal (permissible) and what is haram (forbidden), as well as following the tenets of Islam, including prayer and fasting(Sulaiman, Ezad & Noorsafuan, 2014).

Al Ghazali emphasized that a child’s personality takes shape in early years and it is in that period that the foundation of his personality development throughout his life is laid.He advocated for a balanced approach

to parenting, warning against both excessive leniency and strictness. He cautioned parents to use punishment sparingly and avoid harsh or abusive language, as these can lead to stubbornness and other behavioral issues in children. Instead, he recommended that parents encourage physical play and social interaction, which contribute to both physical and mental well-being (Tumiran, 2023).

Implications for Modern Parenting:

Al-Ghazali's parenting model, deeply rooted in Islamic spirituality, offers timeless principles that remain relevant in contemporary contexts. However, applying these principles in today's diverse cultural settings may present challenges, such as balancing traditional values with modern societal expectations. Further research is needed to explore how Al-Ghazali's parenting strategies can be adapted to suit the needs of modern families while maintaining their spiritual integrity.

Conclusion and Future Research:

This review highlights the comprehensive strategies proposed by Imam Al-Ghazali for effective parenting. By integrating Islamic teachings with practical guidance, Al-Ghazali's model provides a holistic approach to child-rearing. Future research should focus on the practical application of these strategies in contemporary parenting practices, particularly in diverse cultural contexts. Additionally, exploring the impact of these parenting strategies on child development outcomes could provide valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners.



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