

The Concept of the Soul in Al-Ghazali's Thought as a Basis for the Development of Modern Psychological Theory

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the concept of the soul in the thought of Al-Ghazali as a conceptual basis for the development of modern psychological theory. Using a library research approach with conceptual and philosophical-hermeneutic analysis, this study analyzes Al-Ghazali's works alongside contemporary literature in psychology, Islamic philosophy, Sufism, and Islamic psychology. The findings indicate that Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul represents an integrative and multidimensional psychological system comprising nafs, qalb, 'aql, and rūḥ. These four dimensions interact dynamically in shaping cognition, emotion, motivation, self-regulation, personality development, moral behavior, mental health, and spiritual orientation. The study demonstrates that nafs can be contextualized with personality and self-regulation, qalb with emotional and moral regulation, 'aql with cognitive processes and decision-making, and rūḥ with meaning, transcendence, and spiritual well-being. The proposed conceptual model expands modern psychology by integrating biological, psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions into a holistic framework. Although limited by its conceptual and literature-based nature, this study contributes to positioning Al-Ghazali's thought as a dialogue partner in contemporary psychological theory rather than merely as a historical intellectual legacy. Future research should empirically examine the relationships among these dimensions and their relevance to psychological well-being and mental health.

Keywords: Al-Ghazali, Soul, Modern Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

The development of modern psychology has produced various theories that explain human nature from diverse perspectives, ranging from biological, behaviorist, cognitive, and humanistic approaches to neuropsychology. These developments demonstrate that human behavior is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by interactions among biological, cognitive, emotional, social, and environmental factors. These approaches have made significant contributions to the advancement of scientific knowledge and psychological practice in the fields of education, mental health, organizations, and social life. Nevertheless, the development of modern psychology has generally been dominated by an empirical paradigm that positions human beings as objects that can be explained through observation, measurement, and experimentation (Hamidi et al., 2026; Rizkiyani & Selian, 2025). This orientation has produced various theories with strong methodological validity, but it tends to limit the understanding of human beings to aspects that can be empirically observed, while spiritual, moral, and metaphysical dimensions have not received proportional attention in the construction of psychological theories.

These limitations have become increasingly apparent as psychology confronts various contemporary issues, such as the crisis of meaning in life, moral degradation, the increasing prevalence of mental health disorders, and weakening psychological resilience amid increasingly complex social changes. Various studies indicate that psychological well-being is influenced not only by an individual's ability to regulate emotions or adapt to the environment, but also by the presence of value systems, life orientations, and spiritual beliefs that provide meaning to human experiences. The growing attention to positive psychology, transpersonal psychology, meaning-centered psychology, and studies of religiosity and spirituality indicates that contemporary psychology is beginning to move toward a more holistic approach. This development creates broader opportunities for dialogue between modern psychology and the intellectual heritage of Islam in constructing a more comprehensive concept of the human being.

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, one of the thinkers who devoted profound attention to the nature of human beings was Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (1058–1111 CE). Al-Ghazali developed the concept of the soul (al-nafs) as the core of human existence, which is dynamically related to the qalb (heart), 'aql (intellect), and rūḥ (spirit) (Amanda et al., 2025). According to Al-Ghazali, human behavior is not merely the result of biological interactions or the social environment, but is influenced by the quality of the soul, which determines how individuals think, feel, make decisions, and behave. The soul is viewed as the center of consciousness that integrates intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual functions, thereby shaping the human personality as a whole. This perspective demonstrates that an understanding of human beings cannot be separated from the transcendental dimension that serves as the foundation for character formation and the purpose of life.

The concept of the soul developed by Al-Ghazali has a multidimensional character that demonstrates a close relationship between psychological and spiritual aspects. In his works, particularly *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and *Mizān al-'Amal*, Al-Ghazali explains that the soul has the potential to develop toward perfection through the processes of tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul), mujāhadah (self-discipline), and character formation (Astuti et al., 2025). These processes occur through interactions

among the intellect, heart, desires, and divine values that shape human life orientation. Thus, mental health is not understood merely as the absence of psychological disorders, but as a harmonious condition characterized by balance among intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This perspective is relevant to developments in contemporary psychology, which increasingly places psychological well-being as a process of self-actualization involving meaning in life, self-control, healthy social relationships, and moral development.

Although Al-Ghazali's thought has been widely studied in the fields of Islamic philosophy, Sufism, education, and Islamic psychology, a review of the literature indicates that most studies remain descriptive and historical in nature. Many studies merely explain the concepts of *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ* as components of Al-Ghazali's thought without systematically connecting them to the development of modern psychological theories. Other studies tend to position Al-Ghazali's thought as an alternative to Western psychology rather than as a conceptual source that can engage critically in dialogue with contemporary psychological theories. Consequently, the epistemological contribution of Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul to the development of modern psychology has not yet been comprehensively articulated. This condition indicates a conceptual gap, namely the absence of a theoretical model explaining how Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul can be reactualized as a foundation for developing modern psychological theories.

On the other hand, developments in contemporary psychology demonstrate an increasingly strong need for a paradigm capable of explaining human beings multidimensionally. The biopsychosocial approach, positive psychology, humanistic psychology, existential psychology, and spiritual psychology all recognize that human well-being is determined not only by biological functions and cognitive processes, but also by meaning in life, moral integrity, interpersonal relationships, and value orientations. Nevertheless, these approaches do not yet possess a conceptual framework that explicitly integrates the spiritual dimension as a foundation of psychological development. In this context, Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul offers a perspective that not only explains the psychological mechanisms of human beings but also connects them with existential purpose, character formation, and closeness to God. Therefore, Al-Ghazali's thought has the potential to serve as one of the conceptual foundations for developing a more holistic and contextual theory of psychology.

Based on these conditions, this study proposes a reactualization of Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul as a foundation for the development of modern psychological theory through a synthesis of Al-Ghazali's thought and various perspectives in contemporary psychology. The novelty of this study lies in the development of a conceptual model that explains the integrative relationship between *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ* and key dimensions of modern psychology, such as cognition, emotion, motivation, self-regulation, personality, mental health, and psychological well-being. Unlike previous studies that have been more historically or normatively oriented, this study positions Al-Ghazali's thought as an epistemological source capable of enriching the construction of contemporary psychological theory through a dialogical and integrative approach.

Based on this background, this study aims to reconstruct the concept of the soul in Al-Ghazali's thought as a foundation for the development of modern psychological

theory through a conceptual analysis of literature on psychology, Islamic philosophy, Sufism, and Islamic psychology. The findings are expected to provide a theoretical contribution in the form of a conceptual model that expands the foundations of modern psychology by integrating biological, psychological, social, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Furthermore, this study is expected to serve as a reference for the development of research in Islamic psychology, character education, counseling, psychotherapy, and various psychological practices oriented toward the holistic development of human beings.

METHOD

This study employs a library research approach with a conceptual analysis design combined with philosophical-hermeneutic analysis. This approach was chosen because the study aims to reconstruct the concept of the soul in Al-Ghazali's thought and reactualize it as a conceptual foundation for the development of modern psychological theory. Therefore, the study is not directed toward testing relationships among variables through an empirical approach, but rather toward examining, interpreting, and synthesizing various concepts found in classical Islamic literature and contemporary psychological theories. Through this approach, the study seeks to establish an epistemological dialogue between Al-Ghazali's intellectual heritage and the development of modern psychology, thereby producing a conceptual model with scientific relevance to contemporary psychological scholarship.

The research data consist of primary and secondary sources (Hafizah et al., 2025; Sulung & Muspawi, 2024). Primary sources include Al-Ghazali's works addressing human nature and the soul, particularly *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, *Mizān al-'Amal*, *Ma'ārij al-Quds*, *Al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, and *Kīmīyā' al-Sa'ādah*, as well as the Qur'an and Hadith as normative foundations for understanding the concepts of *nafs*, *qalb*, *aql*, and *rūḥ*. Primary sources also include books on modern psychology, personality psychology, developmental psychology, positive psychology, humanistic psychology, and mental health psychology, which serve as the basis for conducting comparative analyses of Al-Ghazali's thought. Secondary sources consist of reputable scholarly articles, dissertations, theses, conference proceedings, and reference books examining Al-Ghazali's thought, Islamic psychology, Islamic philosophy, and the development of contemporary psychological theories.

Data collection was conducted through documentary research and systematic literature searches across various academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Dimensions, and nationally accredited journals. The searches employed keywords such as Al-Ghazali, Islamic psychology, concept of soul, *nafs*, *qalb*, *rūḥ*, self-regulation, personality theory, psychological well-being, spiritual psychology, and theory of mind, in both Indonesian and English. The literature was selected based on its relevance to the research focus, academic quality, contribution to the development of psychological theory, and representation of diverse perspectives in modern psychology and Islamic thought. In addition to considering recent publications, this study also prioritizes classical works that have had a significant influence on the development of Al-Ghazali's thought and Islamic psychology.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, thematic synthesis, and philosophical-comparative analysis. Content analysis was used to identify key

concepts concerning the soul, heart, intellect, spirit, personality development, and mechanisms of behavior formation in Al-Ghazali's thought. Subsequently, thematic analysis was conducted to categorize these concepts into psychological themes related to modern psychological theories, such as cognition, emotion, motivation, self-regulation, personality, mental health, and psychological well-being. Philosophical-comparative analysis was employed to examine the similarities, differences, and possibilities for integration between Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul and various contemporary psychological theories, thereby producing a conceptual synthesis capable of explaining the relevance of Al-Ghazali's thought to the development of modern psychological theory.

The analysis was conducted through five main stages. First, the conceptual structure of the soul in Al-Ghazali's thought was identified, including the relationships among *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ*, along with their respective functions in shaping human behavior. Second, modern psychological theories related to personality, cognitive functions, emotional regulation, motivation, human development, and mental health were analyzed. Third, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify points of convergence and epistemological differences between the two perspectives. Fourth, a conceptual synthesis was developed by integrating the analytical findings into a theoretical framework explaining the relationship between Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul and dimensions of modern psychology. Fifth, a conceptual model was reconstructed by formulating Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul as a foundation for the development of modern psychological theory, positioning biological, psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions as an interconnected whole. To ensure the credibility of the findings, literature-source triangulation was conducted by comparing various sources from the fields of psychology, Islamic philosophy, Sufism, and Al-Ghazali studies. Furthermore, each source was critically analyzed based on its historical context, argumentative consistency, epistemological strength, and relevance to the research objectives. The entire synthesis process was carried out reflectively and systematically to ensure that the resulting conceptual model possessed theoretical coherence and academic validity, while contributing to the development of a more holistic modern psychology through the integration of intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The synthesis of various sources of literature shows that the concept of the soul (*al-nafs*) in Al-Ghazali's thought constitutes an integrative and multidimensional psychological system. Unlike most modern psychological theories, which tend to examine psychological functions separately, Al-Ghazali views human beings as an integrated whole composed of the interaction of *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ*. These four dimensions do not function independently but form an interconnected psychological mechanism that influences the processes of thinking, feeling, decision-making, behavioral regulation, and the achievement of self-perfection (*insān kāmil*). The analysis demonstrates that this concept not only explains the structure of human personality but also provides an account of psychological development, self-regulation, character formation, and mental health from an Islamic perspective.

The synthesis of the literature indicates that *nafs* in Al-Ghazali's thought is not merely a biological drive or instinct, as understood in some modern psychological theories, but rather the center of personality dynamics, possessing the potential to develop in either positive or negative directions. Al-Ghazali distinguishes three levels of *nafs* development: *nafs al-ammārah* (the soul that incites toward evil), *nafs al-lawwāmah* (the self-reproaching soul that engages in self-evaluation), and *nafs al-muṭma'innah* (the tranquil soul) (Almasduki & Toriquddin, 2026; Suriyanti et al., 2026). These three levels demonstrate that psychological development is an internal transformation process that occurs through self-control, moral habituation, and spiritual strengthening. This finding reveals a correspondence with contemporary concepts of personality development, self-regulation, and moral development, although Al-Ghazali places orientation toward God as the ultimate goal of such development.

The analysis of the concept of *qalb* shows that the heart is the center of moral and spiritual consciousness that determines the quality of human behavior. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, *qalb* is not understood as a biological organ but as a center of decision-making that connects the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (Basith et al., 2024; Yeli, 2026). A purified heart strengthens an individual's ability to regulate emotions, distinguish between truth and falsehood, and establish harmonious relationships with God and other human beings. Conversely, a heart dominated by negative traits disrupts psychological balance and encourages maladaptive behavior. This finding indicates that the concept of *qalb* has significant parallels with contemporary psychological studies of emotional regulation, emotional intelligence, moral cognition, and psychological well-being, while providing a deeper spiritual dimension as the foundation of behavior formation.

The synthesis of the literature also demonstrates that *'aql* in Al-Ghazali's thought serves a function that extends beyond logical thinking (Ardini et al., 2025). The intellect plays a role in understanding reality, controlling desires, evaluating actions, and guiding individuals toward decisions that are consistent with moral and religious values. Thus, the function of the intellect is not merely cognitive but also normative. This perspective demonstrates that human reasoning is always connected to moral responsibility. These findings are related to the concepts of executive function, decision-making, and self-control in modern psychology, but Al-Ghazali expands these functions through an ethical and spiritual orientation.

Meanwhile, the concept of *rūḥ* is understood as a transcendental dimension that serves as the source of life and the foundation of human existential orientation. The synthesis of various sources indicates that *rūḥ* is the aspect that gives meaning to all human psychological activities. From Al-Ghazali's perspective, the quality of an individual's relationship with God influences inner tranquility, resilience in facing life's pressures, and the ability to maintain psychological balance. Therefore, *rūḥ* functions as a source of intrinsic motivation that directs human beings toward self-perfection (Pratama & Ghozi, 2025). This finding demonstrates that the concept of *rūḥ* is relevant to the development of spiritual psychology and meaning-centered psychology, which emphasize the importance of meaning in life and transcendental values in promoting mental health.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the relationship between *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ* forms a dynamic psychological system. Changes in one dimension

influence the others, meaning that psychological development is understood as a process involving the integration of all these aspects. Accordingly, mental health according to Al-Ghazali is not measured solely by an individual's ability to adapt to the environment but also by the balance among intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual functions. This perspective demonstrates that Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul has a holistic character that can complement various modern psychological theories, which still tend to separate the biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

Based on this synthesis, the study produces a conceptual model of Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul as a foundation for the development of modern psychological theory. This model demonstrates that the psychological structure of human beings is constructed through functional relationships among four major components that interact with one another in shaping behavior, personality, and psychological well-being. A summary of this model is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Al-Ghazali's Conceptual Model of the Soul as a Basis for the Development of Modern Psychological Theory

Component	Concept in Al-Ghazali's Thought	Correspondence in Modern Psychology	Contribution to Theory Development
Nafs	The center of personality dynamics that develops through <i>ammārah</i> , <i>lawwāmah</i> , and <i>muṭma'innah</i>	Personality, motivation, self-regulation, moral development	Explains personality transformation as a psychological and spiritual process
Qalb	The center of moral and spiritual consciousness and decision-making	Emotional regulation, emotional intelligence, moral cognition	Expands the concept of emotional regulation by incorporating spiritual and ethical dimensions
'Aql	An instrument of thinking, reflection, and behavioral control	Cognitive functions, executive function, decision-making	Integrates cognitive abilities with moral responsibility
Rūḥ	The source of life, meaning, and transcendental orientation	Spiritual psychology, meaning in life, psychological well-being	Provides an existential dimension to theories of mental health
Integration of the Soul	The interaction of <i>nafs</i> , <i>qalb</i> , <i>'aql</i> , and <i>rūḥ</i> forms a balanced human being	Biopsychosocial-spiritual approach	Offers a holistic psychological model based on the integration of biological, psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that each component of the soul in Al-Ghazali's thought has psychological functions that can be contextualized with various concepts in modern psychology. Nafs serves as the center of personality dynamics and self-regulation, qalb functions as the center of emotional and moral consciousness, 'aql directs cognitive processes and decision-making, while rūḥ provides an orientation

toward meaning and purpose in life. The interaction of these four components forms a psychological system that not only explains human behavior but also the processes of character formation, mental health, and development toward holistic well-being. This model demonstrates that modern psychological theory can be enriched through the integration of Al-Ghazali's fundamental concepts without undermining the scientific character of contemporary psychology.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the concept of the soul in Al-Ghazali's thought has strong relevance as a foundation for the development of modern psychological theory. The synthesis conducted produces a conceptual framework that broadens the understanding of human beings through the integration of biological, psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Thus, Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul holds not only historical value within the Islamic intellectual tradition but also has the potential to serve as a theoretical foundation for the development of psychology that is more holistic, contextual, and oriented toward the comprehensive development of human beings.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study demonstrate that the concept of the soul in Al-Ghazali's thought offers a more holistic psychological paradigm than most modern psychological theories, which have developed primarily through empirical and positivist approaches. The synthesis of the literature shows that Al-Ghazali does not view human beings as entities consisting solely of biological or psychological dimensions, but rather as a dynamic unity of *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ*. These four components interact with one another in shaping thought processes, decision-making, emotional regulation, moral development, and human spiritual orientation. This perspective broadens the scope of modern psychology, which has largely explained behavior in terms of biological mechanisms, cognitive processes, and social environmental influences, but has not yet fully integrated the transcendental dimension as part of personality structure. Thus, Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul can be understood as an integrative psychological model that places the balance among intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions at the foundation of human development (Anggraini & Bakti, 2026; Uddin & Khan, 2024).

The findings demonstrate that the concept of *nafs* developed by Al-Ghazali corresponds with the development of contemporary personality theories, although it is grounded in a different epistemological framework. In modern psychology, personality is understood as a relatively stable pattern of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors influenced by biological and environmental factors (Ashton, 2022; Cervone & Pervin, 2022). In contrast, Al-Ghazali views *nafs* as a dynamic dimension capable of transformation through education, moral training, and the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). The classification of *nafs* into the levels of *ammārah*, *lawwāmah*, and *muṭma'innah* demonstrates that personality development is a journey toward psychological and spiritual maturity. This perspective enriches modern personality theory by introducing a dimension of moral development and transcendental orientation that has not traditionally been a primary focus of personality psychology.

Another significant finding of this study concerns the position of *qalb* as the center of psychological regulation. Unlike neuropsychological approaches that explain behavioral control through brain and nervous system functions, Al-Ghazali

places qalb at the center of consciousness, integrating cognitive, emotional, moral, and spiritual functions. From this perspective, the quality of the heart determines an individual's ability to regulate emotions, control desires, develop empathy, and make moral decisions. This finding is closely related to the concept of emotional intelligence developed by Andres (2025), particularly regarding self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Nevertheless, Al-Ghazali expands this concept by positioning closeness to Allah as the primary foundation for emotional and behavioral regulation. Therefore, emotional regulation is understood not merely as a psychological skill but also as a manifestation of an individual's spiritual quality.

The findings also demonstrate that the concept of 'aql in Al-Ghazali's thought has strong relevance to the development of cognitive psychology. In modern psychology, cognitive functions encompass processes of thinking, attention, memory, problem-solving, and decision-making (Aboody et al., 2025; Mangal & Mangal, 2024). Al-Ghazali acknowledges all these functions but adds an ethical dimension to the use of reason. According to him, reason does not merely function to generate knowledge but also guides human beings in distinguishing between truth and falsehood and in controlling impulses originating from the nafs. Thus, the ability to think cannot be separated from moral responsibility. This perspective demonstrates that cognitive processes are not value-neutral but are influenced by an individual's moral and spiritual qualities. This concept contributes to the development of cognitive psychological theory by positioning values as an inherent component of thinking and decision-making processes.

The dimension of rūḥ represents the conceptual contribution that most clearly distinguishes Al-Ghazali's thought from most modern psychological theories. The synthesis of the literature indicates that rūḥ is understood as the source of life, existential consciousness, and human transcendental orientation. In contemporary psychology, attention to the spiritual dimension has begun to develop through transpersonal psychology, existential psychology, and studies of meaning in life and spiritual well-being (Phan et al., 2026). Nevertheless, these approaches generally regard spirituality as one aspect of psychological well-being. In contrast, Al-Ghazali places rūḥ as the foundation that directs all human psychological activities. This means that the quality of an individual's relationship with God influences how that person interprets life experiences, faces suffering, develops resilience, and achieves happiness. This perspective expands the concept of psychological well-being by connecting it to the divine dimension as the ultimate goal of human development.

The synthesis of these four components reveals that Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul has a systemic and integrative character. Human behavior is understood as the result of continuous interaction among nafs, qalb, 'aql, and rūḥ, rather than as the consequence of the dominance of any single component. This model shares similarities with the biopsychosocial-spiritual model that has developed in modern health psychology and medicine, which explains that an individual's psychological condition is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors. However, Al-Ghazali provides a more systematic epistemological framework because all these interactions are directed toward the process of self-purification (tazkiyah) and the attainment of true happiness (al-sa'ādah). Thus, Al-Ghazali's model not only explains the mechanisms of behavior but also provides a normative direction concerning the purpose of human psychological development.

From a mental health perspective, the findings demonstrate that Al-Ghazali views psychological disorders not merely as biological dysfunctions or emotional imbalances but also as consequences of disrupted equilibrium among *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ*. This perspective provides a broader understanding than medical models that tend to focus primarily on clinical symptoms. According to Al-Ghazali, mental health is achieved when individuals are able to control their desires, exercise reason proportionately, maintain the purity of the heart, and strengthen their spiritual relationship with Allah. This view is relevant to the development of positive psychology, which emphasizes that mental health involves not only the absence of disorders but also the development of meaning in life, healthy interpersonal relationships, virtues, and self-actualization (Cilar Budler, 2025). The difference is that Al-Ghazali places closeness to God at the core of the entire process.

Based on the synthesis conducted, this study produces a conceptual novelty in the form of a model for the reactualization of Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul as a foundation for the development of modern psychological theory. The model demonstrates that the *nafs* dimension functions as the center of personality dynamics, *qalb* as the center of moral and emotional regulation, *'aql* as the mechanism of cognition and rational reflection, and *rūḥ* as the source of spiritual orientation and meaning in life. The integration of these four dimensions produces a psychological framework capable of explaining the relationship among biological functions, psychological processes, moral development, and spirituality within a unified system. Thus, this study not only reinterprets Al-Ghazali's thought in a modern context but also offers a conceptual foundation for developing psychology that is more holistic, multidisciplinary, and oriented toward comprehensive human development.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its effort to establish a dialogue between the intellectual heritage of classical Islamic psychology and contemporary psychological theories. To date, Al-Ghazali's thought has been studied predominantly in the contexts of Sufism or Islamic philosophy, while its relevance to the development of modern psychological theory remains relatively limited. The findings demonstrate that Al-Ghazali's psychological concepts are compatible with various branches of modern psychology, including personality psychology, cognitive psychology, positive psychology, developmental psychology, and mental health psychology. Therefore, Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul can be positioned not merely as part of the Islamic intellectual heritage but also as a conceptual source for developing a more inclusive and multidimensional psychological paradigm.

Practically, the resulting model has implications for the development of character education, counseling services, psychotherapy, and mental health promotion in Muslim communities. An approach that integrates psychological and spiritual dimensions enables interventions to focus not only on reducing psychological symptoms but also on character formation, strengthening meaning in life, and improving the quality of individuals' relationships with God and their social environment. Thus, Al-Ghazali's concept of the soul offers a relevant alternative paradigm for addressing the increasingly complex challenges of contemporary psychology while enriching the development of psychological science through the integration of intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the concept of the soul in Al-Ghazali's thought is not merely a classical intellectual heritage but also constitutes an epistemological framework that remains relevant for reconstructing modern psychological theory. The synthesis shows that the relationship among *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ* forms a system that conceptualizes human beings as entities who not only think and behave but also possess moral and spiritual dimensions that determine the direction of their development. Thus, this study emphasizes that the understanding of human beings becomes more comprehensive when psychology is not oriented solely toward empirical explanations but also accommodates the dimensions of meaning, values, and purpose in life. The limitation of this study lies in its use of a library research approach, which produces a conceptual model without empirical verification. In addition, the study's focus on Al-Ghazali's thought does not allow for a broader exploration of the intellectual dynamics of other Islamic psychology scholars or a more in-depth dialogue with developments in neuroscience and contemporary psychology.

The main contribution of this study is to offer a new perspective in which Al-Ghazali's thought can be positioned as a dialogue partner in the development of modern psychology, rather than merely as an object of historical study in Islamic intellectual thought. The resulting conceptual model opens opportunities for the emergence of a more integrative psychological paradigm, namely one that combines scientific validity with ethical and spiritual orientations, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of human complexity. Therefore, future research should focus on developing empirical models that examine the relationships among the dimensions of *nafs*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *rūḥ* and various psychological constructs, such as self-regulation, resilience, psychological well-being, and mental health. Interdisciplinary studies connecting Al-Ghazali's thought with cognitive psychology, positive psychology, neuroscience, and cross-cultural psychology are also needed so that the concept of the soul proposed in this study not only enriches the field of Islamic psychology but also contributes to the development of a more holistic global psychology oriented toward human well-being.

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