

A Comparative Analysis of Pedagogical Values Based on *Fath al-Rabbānī* and *al-Ghunyah* by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

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Abstract

Attention to classical studies of Islamic teachings has gradually declined, despite the valuable insights offered by classical Islamic literature. Renowned scholars such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā, and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī have made significant contributions to the development of Islamic knowledge, particularly in the field of Islamic education. This study aims to compare the pedagogical values contained in two classical works of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, namely *Fath al-Rabbānī* and *al-Ghunyah*. Employing a library research approach, the study utilizes comparative content analysis to examine and compare the educational concepts presented in both texts. The data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, interpretation of educational values, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that *Fath al-Rabbānī* emphasizes the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) through a spiritual-reflective educational approach, whereas *al-Ghunyah* focuses on strengthening faith, adherence to religious teachings, and the implementation of a normative-systemic educational framework. Despite these differences, both works consistently advocate the integration of knowledge, practice, and morality as the foundation of Islamic education. This study concludes that the integration of pedagogical values derived from these two classical texts offers a holistic model of Islamic education capable of fostering individuals with strong religious and ethical character. Furthermore, this model remains relevant in addressing the opportunities and challenges of contemporary education.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian education is currently at a crossroads. It is unable to guide students to become religious individuals, nor socially moral. There is a dichotomy in education. This educational ailment is called “Pedagogical schizophrenia” or incomplete education. This is none other than the impact of

modernization. Problems in the field of education are emerging, especially in relation to ethics (*adab*). Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, as the proponent of Islamization, termed this as “The Loss of Adab.” Moreover, modernization also brings negative impacts on the spiritual realm of students. Many modern humans experience spiritual emptiness and a crisis of the meaning of life. Religion, which can help guide us, is increasingly neglected in schools, government, friendships, and social environments. Therefore, many people feel lonely and alienated from others and from Allah. We can see this in juvenile delinquency, the rising number of cases of depression, anxiety disorders, or other mental health issues (Rahman, 2023).

Ideally, education today should not only be about the transfer of knowledge but also the transfer of ideology or spirituality to shape students into strong, religious, and moral individuals (Umam & Hasan, 2025). Although technology provides positive values by making it easier to search for information quickly, it also brings negative impacts on students, such as moral degradation, dishonesty, or a lack of discipline. This shows that schools are still not fully able to shape students to grow into individuals who are broad-minded and respectful (Azizah et al., 2024). Therefore, holistic education needs to be implemented to develop individuals who are Religious-Theistic.

Holistic education aims to align and integrate all aspects within a person (The Whole Person)—namely, intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual aspects (Miller, 2007). In this approach, education is not merely a transfer of knowledge but a comprehensive process of shaping learners that combines knowledge, values, and life skills. Furthermore, this concept of holistic education is more recently often referred to as Religious-Theistic, meaning it is capable of combining spiritual piety and social piety.

Religious-Theistic in educational discourse refers to an approach that integrates religious values (religious) with belief in God (theistic) as the basis for understanding knowledge and the educational process (Winchester, 2025). Religious-theistic views God as the center (theocentric) in education, where the entire learning process is expected to shape a complete human being who is aware of the vertical relationship with God and the horizontal relationship with fellow humans. For example, a religious person is someone who truly follows the commands of religion and avoids its prohibitions, such as prayer, fasting, and other righteous deeds toward others. Meanwhile, theistic is placing all the foundations of life on God as the source of everything without doubt.

Recent research, among others, offers the integration of spirituality in education and shows significant impacts on personal development, character building, and mental health. Spiritual intelligence shows effects on the improvement of the quality of religious education (Awaludin, 2024). Meanwhile, Haryanto (2024) concludes that there is an influence of student character on spirituality-

based education in the modern era. (Islamic psychology studies, 2024) show a correlation between psychological happiness and spirituality.

In another study, (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025) emphasize the integration of psychology and Islamic education as an effort for a holistic approach. (Harahap, N. M. 2025) agree that Islamic education plays a role in “character building and emotional stability.” There is also research that concludes the importance of intellectual and spiritual balance in education (Gunawan and Wantini, 2024). Finally, in order to shape the morals of the younger generation, the importance of spiritual values is necessary (Rahmat et al. as well as the 2024 comparative study on spirituality).

However, these studies do not specifically examine classical texts such as *Fath al-Rabbānī* and *al-Ghunyah* comparatively. Therefore, through a comparison of these two texts, it is hoped that this study will be able to uncover holistic pedagogical values with an in-depth analysis of the *turāth* (classical intellectual heritage) of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. The results of the comparison of these two texts are also expected to be able to provide answers to current educational problems, namely, education that offers a comprehensive approach based on the integration of the soul, morals, and Sharī‘ah in a monotheistic way.

METHODS

Methodologically, the researcher seeks to combine content analysis with comparative-critical analysis. The content analysis is useful for identifying concepts, categories, and structures of thought found in *Fath al-Rabbānī* and *al-Ghunyah*, the masterpieces of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. Meanwhile, comparative-critical analysis systematically compares the two books to find points of convergence, difference, and intersection, as well as the possibility of epistemological synthesis between them (Sugiyono, 2023).

The depth of strengthened analysis, this study also uses a hermeneutic-philosophical approach, particularly in reading both texts of these books as historical products rich in meaning. In this context, the text is not understood merely literally but is interpreted to consider the social, intellectual, and historical contexts underlying it. This approach allows the researcher to explore the dimension of the "deep meaning" (deep structure) of each idea, not just its conceptual surface (Creswell, 2014).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir was born in the city of Jīlān, in the Ṭabaristān area, a historically ancient region in what is now known as Iran. From there, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī was born, coinciding with the first night of Ramaḍān 470 AH. He later breathed his last in the city where he acquired much of his knowledge, namely Baghdad, precisely on 10 Muḥarram 571 AH at the age of 91 years (Yan Nurcahya, 2025).

Al-Dhahabī (1985) noted that Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī received many titles: “Al-Shaykh, Al-‘Ālim, Al-Zāhid, Al-‘Ārif, Al-Qudwah, Shaykh al-Islām, ‘Ilm al-Awliyā’, Muḥyī al-Dīn, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir bin Abū Ṣāliḥ ‘Abdullāh bin Jankī Dawsat al-Jīlī al-Ḥanbalī, Shaykh of Baghdad.” These titles prove al-Jīlānī’s scholarship and fame in his time. Al-Jīlānī’s educational process began with a figure in Sufism and a renowned scholar, namely Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Ṣawmā‘ī, who was none other than his own grandfather. From his grandfather, an extraordinary interest in knowledge or ‘ilm emerged, both in the field of uṣūl and furū‘. This became the motivation for the young al-Jīlānī to embark on a scholarly journey to the city of Baghdad, which at that time was the center of the civilization of knowledge (Al-Jaelani, 2016). The young al-Jīlānī arrived in the region known as the "City of a Thousand and One Nights" at the age of 18, in 488 AH/1095 AD, when Baghdad was under the leadership of Caliph al-Mustazhir Billāh (Asqalani, 2002).

Baghdad was a sea of knowledge for al-Jīlānī. He studied various sciences, including Sufism, the Qur’an, Fiqh, Hadith, Kalām, literature, and other religious knowledge. (Ihsan, Moh. Isom & Sahidin, 2017) The author of the book *al-Funūn*, Abū al-Wafā’, ‘Alī bin ‘Aqīl, a prominent scholar in Baghdad, was al-Jīlānī’s teacher. In the field of Fiqh, he predominantly followed the Ḥanbalī school. His teachers included Shaykh Abū Sa‘īd al-Mubārak bin ‘Alī al-Mukharramī. Shaykh Sa‘īd passed on the madrasah to al-Jīlānī, who eventually became known by the name Qādiriyyah. In the field of hadith, al-Jīlānī studied under Abū Ghālib al-Bāqillānī, Muḥammad bin ‘Alī bin Maymūn, Abū Muḥammad Ja‘far bin Muḥammad al-Qādirī, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī bin Aḥmad al-Karkhī, Abū Ṭālib Yūsuf, Aḥmad al-Bannā’, Abū al-Barakāt al-Siqṭī, and others. After completing his scholarly journey, al-Jīlānī then practiced the ṭarīqah under the guidance of Shaykh Ḥammād bin Muslim al-Dabbās (Nashr, 2018).

Looking at the biography of the long scholarly journey of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, it is quite audacious to make baseless accusations claiming that al-Jīlānī was misguided and only for the Sufi community. Al-Jīlānī also produced many works in various fields of knowledge, including Sufism, jurisprudence, ethics, and theology. The phenomenal work *Sirr al-Asrār* plainly presents Sufism, *Futūḥ al-Ghayb* explores the world, the state of the soul, desires, and the status of reliance

on God, fear, and hope in God. In the field of the Qur'an, he provided the exegesis *Tafsīr al-Jīlānī*. Not to be missed are two books currently being studied by researchers, namely *Fath al-Rabbānī* and *al-Ghunyah*, which are also extraordinary works of al-Jīlānī and widely studied in the country, especially by practitioners of the Qādiriyyah order.

Pedagogical Values in *Fath al-Rabbānī*

The classical work entitled *Fath Ar-Rabbani Wal Faidhu Ar-Rahmani* is one of the masterpieces of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani, consisting of 379 pages and sixty-two main Topics. This work can be considered a primary reference for many books used by followers of the *Qodariyah* order in Indonesia. Its defining feature is the use of strong arguments in each discussion, whether derived from the words of Allah (the Qur'an) or the sayings of the Prophet (Hadith). The use of arguments serves to reinforce the author's commitment to the authenticity of his writings and to demonstrate his scholarship. Furthermore, the book *Fath Ar-Rabbani*, in the context of Islamic education, presents the following core values:

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First, the pedagogical values of *Fath al-Rabbānī* are found in the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) as a form of spiritual cultivation, to cleanse the heart from inner ailments such as ostentation and envy. The definition of soul purification is not explicitly stated by the Shaykh in the book. However, it is implied in different wording in *Fath al-Rabbānī*:

نُظِّفْ قَلْبَكَ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سِوَى اللَّهِ، وَاقْطَعْهُ عَنِ الْخَلْقِ، يَصِلَكَ بِالْحَقِّ

Meaning: Purify your heart from everything except Allah, and detach (your desires) from creatures, and you will surely attain the Truth.

Or, in another narration, it is mentioned:

جَاهِدْ نَفْسَكَ وَهَوَاكَ، فَإِنَّهُمَا عَدُوَاكَ

Meaning: Fight your lust and desires, for indeed both are your enemies.

The brief narrative above leads us to the conclusion that Islamic education should not only aim at cognitive factors but also at cultivating spiritual awareness. In the study of education, this book contains strong religious and moral values as a basis for character development (Rangkuti, 2017).

Secondly, the book *Fath al-Rabbānī* highlights the integrative relationship between knowledge and action; knowledge brings no benefit without real practice. This correlates with the concept of holistic Islamic education, namely a combination of knowledge and action as a form of value actualization (Khairudin, 2015). This can be found explicitly in *Fath al-Rabbānī*:

اعْمَلْ بِمَا عَلِمْتَ، يُورِثَكَ اللَّهُ عِلْمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمْ

Meaning: Apply or practice what you have learned (knowledge), and Allah will grant (increase knowledge of) what you do not yet know.

Al-Jīlānī, in the 12th discussion topic, emphasizes the necessity of practicing knowledge as an ethical responsibility, as well as an effort to gain a deeper understanding. Indeed, he also strongly criticizes the scholars who do not practice their knowledge, as cited in *Fath al-Rabbānī*:

يَا عَالِمًا لَا تَعْمَلْ، مَا أَشَدَّ حَزْبِيكَ

Meaning: O 'people of knowledge' who are unwilling to put knowledge into practice, how great is your disgrace.

Finally, al-Jīlānī in the book *Fath al-Rabbānī* adopts an educational approach of advice/*mau'izah* (guidance), which is reflective and persuasive in scholarly assemblies. We often find this narrative in the text of *Fath al-Rabbānī* when al-Jīlānī addresses his students with the phrase *Yā Ghulām* or *Yā Qawm* before giving guidance. This emphasizes that this approach (guidance) highlights pedagogical values that are communicative and humanistic, where the educator plays a role in guiding the spiritual and moral development, touching the emotional aspects of the students.

Pedagogical Values in *al-Ghunyah*

al-Ghunyah li-Tālibī Tarīq al-Haqq is a classical heritage work that is also the work of Shaykh al-Jīlānī, and its content is of a monotheistic nature. *al-Ghunyah* seeks to integrate the dimensions of

Sufism, Sharī'ah, and creed in a single comprehensive study. In the researcher's reading, the book *al-Ghunyah* is essentially integral by combining the dimensions of reality and Sharī'ah. In its aim to guide a servant towards Allah, this book does not directly provide a separation between the dimension of exoteric Fiqh rules and the dimension of inner Sufism. Thus, positioning both (Fiqh and ṭasawwuf) as complementary elements. Another characteristic of this book is the emphasis on the foundations of the Prophet's Hadith and the Qur'an. The discussion in the book *al-Ghunyah* refers to textual foundations, which shows al-Jīlānī's commitment to the authority of revelation as an absolute source of truth. Furthermore, if related to Islamic education, the pedagogical values in the book *al-Ghunyah* include:

First, the book *al-Ghunyah* focuses on the integral development of Fiqh and its essence, which includes fostering morality, Sharī'ah, and creed as the foundation of Islamic education. The aspect of *tawḥīd* (monotheism) serves as the primary foundation before other aspects, as it underpins all elements in the framework of Islamic education. It states in the book *al-Ghunyah*,

عليك بتوحيد الله عز وجل، وترك الشرك ظاهره وباطنه، فإنه أصل الدين وأساس العمل

Meaning: you should affirm the oneness of Allah and abandon both apparent and hidden forms of polytheism, for it is the foundation of religion and the principle of actions.

This narrative serves as evidence that monotheism is not only a theological aspect but also has implications for education from a broader perspective. In this perspective, education aims to instill monotheistic values in all aspects of human life, including the learning process, which must be oriented toward the Lord of all worlds. Borrowing the idea of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, knowledge is not value-free, but is bound by ethical morals and monotheism. Furthermore, *al-Ghunyah* emphasizes the importance of harmonizing monotheism and deeds (religious-theistic), as in the following quote,

لا ينفع علم بلا عمل، ولا عمل بلا إخلاص، ولا إخلاص إلا بالتوحيد

It means: knowledge is no benefit without action, and no action is accepted except with sincerity and monotheism.

The quotation in the book *al-Ghunyah* leads us to the conclusion that its source is monotheism. This book emphasizes that Islamic education is centered on Allah (theocentric) (Rijal, 2024).

Secondly, the book *al-Ghunyah* places a more specific emphasis on the education of worship and Shari'ah discipline to create a religious personality. Education is not merely theoretical, but must also be understood as a normative and practical activity in the form of structured practice of worship. This is reflected in the subchapters of *al-Ghunyah*, which present fiqh rules such as the commands to perform prayer, fasting, zakat, charity, and other fiqh deeds.

Third, al-Jilani also highlights the pedagogical aspect in the form of morals. The book *al-Ghunyah* depicts *ḥablun min Allāh*, morals characterize *ḥablun min al-nās*, and even morals with the environment (*ḥablun min al-ʿālam*). This indicates the existence of an Islamic educational concept that comprehensively includes aspects of monotheism, social life, and the environment.

Comparative Analysis

Both books, namely *Faḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī* and *al-Ghunyah li-Ṭalībī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq*, when compared, show similarities in integrating pedagogical values such as monotheism, ethics, and deeds as the core of Islamic education. This statement is in line with the Islamic view that spiritual and moral values are inseparable in Islamic education (al-Attas, 1999).

The most striking and significant difference in the researcher's reading of the two books is that *Faḥ al-Rabbānī* emphasizes a reflective spiritual approach, focusing more on nurturing the heart and spiritual awareness. In contrast, *al-Ghunyah* emphasizes a systematic normative approach, highlighting Shari'ah law as well as the form and practical structure of learning.

This differentiation serves as evidence that the pedagogical orientations of the two books are different, yet these differences actually complement each other, producing a Religious-Theistic dimension; "the religious" dimension is manifested in the book *al-Ghunyah* through practical aspects of religious life, such as prayer, fasting, zakat, charity, and others. Meanwhile, "the Theistic" dimension is shown in the book *Faḥ al-Rabbānī*, focusing on the inner, monotheistic aspect by affirming the oneness of Allah without doubt.

Relevance in Modern Education

The pedagogical values of both books are highly relevant as an antidote to the disease of modern pedagogical schizophrenia, namely personality crises, spiritual emptiness, and moral degradation. The surprising outcome of comparing the two books is the discovery of a holistic educational theory—a *Religious-Theistic* education. This educational theory can integrate all aspects of learning, including spiritual, emotional, and moral dimensions. It represents a blend of theoretical and practical—monotheistic and applied approaches. This far surpasses *Bloom's taxonomy*, which deals only with affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains and is barren of spiritual insight.

Furthermore, both of these classical texts remain relevant when contextualized in modern education today, which aims for a balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects. True education is not only *the transfer of knowledge*, but also *the transfer of ideology and spiritual processes* (Nasr, 1987).

It is important to note that education based on spirituality has been proven to foster character building and emotional stability, so that a person is not only intellectually gifted but also stable in personality (Haque, 2004).

Through an in-depth analysis of two ancient references by al-Jīlānī, the researcher finally concluded that classical heritage is still worthy of being a guide for modern education. Therefore, it is not something shameful if we look back at the scholarly legacy of classical scholars and integrate it to construct knowledge and education in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

The content of the conclusion is the formulation of answers to research objectives and research hypotheses, not a summary of research results. Conclusions are concise, clear and concise based on the results and discussion, made in paragraph form (not numerical), contain research findings as a synthesis between the results of data analysis and discussion results, and emphasize new things that contribute to the development of religious, social and cultural sciences. Suggestions (if necessary), contain academic recommendations, real follow-up, or policy implications for the conclusions obtained. The content of the suggestions must be in line with the discussion. (Conclusions and suggestions should make up a maximum of 5% of the total number of pages of the journal manuscript) [Conclusions and suggestions are written using Times New Roman-12 font, upright, with 1 space].

This research leads us to the conclusion about the pedagogical values in *Fath Ar-Rabbani* and *Al-Ghunyah*, which offer the concept and framework of Islamic education that is comprehensive and integrative. These two classical references emphasize monotheistic education by integrating knowledge, action, and morals as mutually integrated elements in relation to the formation of the perfect human being.

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From the results of the analysis, *Fath al-Rabbānī* emphasizes a reflective spiritual approach, focusing on the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), inner transformation, and awareness of the

heart. In contrast, *al-Ghunyah* emphasizes a systematic normative approach, centered on the application of Shari'ah, disciplined religious practices, and structured worship. Although these two approaches are contradictory, in essence, they complement and strengthen each other.

The result of integrating these two approaches is a formula for *the Religious-Theistic* Islamic education model, which is a formula that collaborates the depth of spirituality (theistic dimension) with concrete religious practices (religious dimension). This model formula goes beyond the limitations of modern secular education, which tends to draw a dividing line between spirituality, *moral building*, and intellectual development.

More deeply, the findings of this research indicate that the crisis in modern education, characterized by moral degradation, spiritual emptiness, and what is called “pedagogical schizophrenia,”—can be addressed through the study and reintegration of the classical Islamic intellectual heritage (*turats*). The teachings of Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani provide a new perspective that education not only functions as *a process of transferring knowledge*, but furthermore is a holistic process that also includes aspects of faith development, ethics, and *spiritual awareness*.

More deeply, the findings of this research indicate that the crisis in modern education, characterized by moral degradation, spiritual emptiness, and what is called “pedagogical schizophrenia,”—can be addressed through the study and reintegration of the classical Islamic intellectual heritage (*turāth*). The teachings of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī provide a new perspective that education not only functions as *a process of transferring knowledge*, but furthermore is a holistic process that also includes aspects of faith development, ethics, and *spiritual awareness*.

Ultimately, this study leads us to the conclusion that classical Islamic texts remain highly relevant in addressing contemporary educational problems and challenges. The synthesis of monotheism, knowledge, action, and ethics found in these two works provides a solid foundation for reconstructing a holistic Islamic education system—namely, a system capable of producing humans who are intellectually smart, spiritually resilient, and morally virtuous.

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