Logic and Faith in for Strengthening the Islamic Education Curriculum: An Analysis of the Thought of Classical Scholars

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

The Islamic Education (IE) curriculum struggles to balance reasoning ('aql) and religion (naql). This conflict between reason and religious texts could lead to a poorly integrated curriculum that separates spiritual and intellectual parts, impeding faith-based critical thinking. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze and identify models of integration between logic and faith in the thought of classical Islamic scholars, as well as to formulate their implications for strengthening and developing a holistic contemporary IS curriculum. This study uses a qualitative approach with textual analysis methods and critical literature studies of key works by prominent classical scholars (such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd) that explicitly discuss the relationship between philosophy/logic and Islamic sciences (sharia and kalam). Data are analyzed comparatively and interpretively to extract an integrative framework. The results indicate that classical scholars do not separate logic from faith. Logic is considered an essential tool (wasilah) for verifying theological truth, refuting doubts (syubhat), and constructing solid arguments in defense of Islamic doctrine. Their thinking offers an integrative model in which reason serves as a supporter and strengthener of faith (iman), rather than as its opponent. This model emphasizes that the pinnacle of reason lies in recognizing its limits and submitting to revolution. This article presents a theoretical and practical framework for Islamic education curriculum developers to provide critical thinking and logical argumentation resources without sacrificing spiritual depth. This dissertation produces graduates with deep faith and maturity, and integrated reasoning to face modern difficulties.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Education (IE) is essentially a conscious and planned effort to shape individuals who possess harmony between the spiritual and intellectual dimensions (Sahin, 2018; Lahmar, 2020). Its primary goal is to produce insan kamil—a complete person—capable of fulfilling the role of caliph on earth, grounded in solid faith and

intelligent reason (Budiyanti et al., 2020). In the contemporary context, the Islamic education system frequently encounters a significant challenge characterized by a stark division between religious sciences (ulumuddin) and rational or general sciences (ulum 'aqliyyah) (Karim et al., 2024).

This dichotomy is rooted in historical debate, but its impact is clearly felt in contemporary curricula: (1) Cognitive: Islamic Education (IE) curricula tend to emphasize the naqli aspect (transmission of texts, memorization, and tradition) exclusively, while neglecting the development of critical thinking and logical reasoning skills ('aql) (Bahri & Suparto, 2025). As a result, graduates may be strong in dogma but vulnerable to modern challenges that demand rational analysis and argumentation. (2) Affective/Spiritual Aspect: Conversely, when the rational aspect is acknowledged, it is often presented as foreign or even contradictory to faith, which can ultimately weaken students' convictions when confronted with atheistic or secularist narratives that emphasize logic without spiritual boundaries.

This situation creates a critical gap. Islamic education requires a curriculum capable of integrating logic (mantiq or 'aql) as a powerful methodological tool for understanding and strengthening faith (naql or shari'ah) (Daud, 2023; Meliani et al., 2023). Without this integration, Islamic education risks producing two extreme types of graduates: those who are pious but uncritical, or those who are critical but lack the foundation of faith (Altinyelken, 2021; Saada & Magadlah, 2021).

The struggle between reason and revelation is not a new issue; it has been at the heart of Islamic intellectual discourse since the early centuries. Historically, this debate can be grouped into three main camps: (1) Extreme Rationalist Camp: This camp, represented by several Mu'tazilite factions, tends to grant supreme authority to reason (Amir & Rahman, 2024). They argue that theological truth must first be verified rationally. This approach, although brilliant in constructing arguments, at some point was accused of ignoring some texts of revelation (Nash) that were considered contrary to reason. (2) Extreme Traditionalist Camp: This camp, which tends to be literalistic, rejects the use of Greek philosophy and logic in theology. They argue that the Nash (holy texts) are perfect and human reason is too limited to interfere with divine matters. The use of logic (mantiq) is often considered an innovation or a gateway to disbelief (zandaqah). (3) Integrative/Ash'ariyah and Maturidiyah Camp: The largest and most influential camp, pioneered by figures such as Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari, tries to bridge the two extremes. They employ logic as a methodological instrument to defend and validate the veracity of revelation. Logic (mantiq) is permitted and even required in the field of kalam (theology) to face rational arguments from outside parties.

This debate reached its peak during the Golden Age of Islam, when great scholars were not only experts in religious knowledge but also mastered the rational sciences, including logic, mathematics, and medicine. Figures such as Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Rushd demonstrated that logic is a neutral discipline, capable of being used for both religious and secular purposes (Kurmanaliyeva, 2021; Hashas, 2021).

However, the most relevant figure in the context of the Islamic Education curriculum is Imam Al-Ghazali (Gyagenda, 2021; Khairul Anam, 2024; Azizah & Abidin, 2025).

Through his works Tahafut al-Falasifah and Miyār al-'Ilm, Al-Ghazali, on the one hand, criticized philosophy for its deviations, but on the other hand, he validated and included logic (mantiq) as a mandatory prerequisite for studying other sciences, including theology and fiqh (Fachrudin, 2021). Al-Ghazali's actions effectively normalized the use of logic in Islamic schools and curricula for centuries, establishing it as a crucial bridge between reason and revelation (Mujahidin, 2024; Jalaldeen & Al-Hidabi, 2025).

Unfortunately, in modern Islamic education curricula in various countries, including Indonesia, this integrative spirit inherited from classical scholars tends to fade (Basri, 2022; Ilhamsyah & Ramli, 2024). Islamic education (especially at the secondary and tertiary levels) tends to be fragmented (Akrim, 2022; Kosim et al., 2023). Religious subjects are often presented in a format that is less intellectually challenging, focusing more on narrative and ritual, while general subjects (including logic and philosophy) are presented without explicit connections to the foundations of faith.

The consequences of this fragmentation include: Fragile Dogmatic Understanding: Students memorize religious doctrine without being equipped to defend or explain it systematically and logically. Inability to Address Discourse Pluralism: Graduates struggle to process contradictory information in the digital age due to a lack of a strong framework for distinguishing valid (sahih) arguments from doubtful (syubhat) arguments. Delayed Intellectualization of Faith: The potential of reason as an instrument for deepening the experience of faith (through reflection, tadabbur, and tafakkur) is not maximized in the learning process. Therefore, a curriculum reorientation based on an integration model that has proven successful in the past, namely the model developed by classical scholars, is needed (Alizadeh et al., 2022; Mufarokah et al., 2025).

Much research has been conducted on logic and faith in Islam (Akrami, 2017; Akrami, 2020; Yusoff, 2022), but this article offers significant novelty, particularly in relation to curricular implications. Previous research often focuses on theoretical-philosophical analyses of the intersection of reason and reason (e.g., the debate between Ibn Rushd and Al-Ghazali). The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to extract a pedagogical framework and explicit curricular analysis from the thought of classical scholars. We do not simply rehash the debate but ask: How can Al-Ghazali's or Ibn Rushd's model of integration be transformed into a concrete syllabus, teaching methods, and learning objectives in a 21st-century Islamic education curriculum?

Many studies view logic as an independent philosophical discipline (Sagi, 2021; Martin, 2023). We will focus our analysis on the views of classical scholars who position logic (mantiq) as a methodological tool (wasīlah)—that is, a correct way of thinking—that is mandatory for mastering the Islamic sciences (sharia and kalam). This approach will demonstrate that integration does not mean teaching a course in the philosophy of logic, but rather instilling logical reasoning competencies in every religious subject, from Fiqh (the principle of legal istinbat) and Tafsir (avoiding wild interpretations) to Aqidah (the formulation of arguments).

The results of this research are expected to formulate a model for an Islamic education curriculum based on logical competencies (Logic-Based Islamic Curriculum). This model will propose a paradigm shift from a curriculum based on memorization to

a curriculum based on logical reasoning, where each religious learning achievement is linked to reasoning skills (inductive, deductive, and abductive) as recommended by classical scholars.

Islamic education in the digital age demands more than simply the transfer of textual knowledge; it demands the ability to dialogue, argue, and adapt (Restalia & Khasanah, 2024; Zahraini et al., 2025). Classical scholars have bequeathed a sophisticated framework for integrating the potential of reason and the power of faith. By reanalyzing their thinking, this article aims not only to examine intellectual history but also to provide a practical contribution in the form of a curriculum-strengthening model that can address the challenges of dichotomies, thereby producing a generation of Muslims with solid faith and enlightened reason. This research will serve as a bridge that brings the methodological wisdom of classical scholars into the practice of contemporary Islamic education.

2. METHOD

This research is qualitative in nature, focusing on the interpretation and in-depth understanding of classical texts. Historical-Philosophical: This approach is used to trace the historical roots and philosophical framework of the debate between logic ('aql) and faith (naql) in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Curriculum Analysis: This approach is used to formulate the practical implications of classical scholars' thought for the design and strengthening of contemporary Islamic Education (IE) curricula.
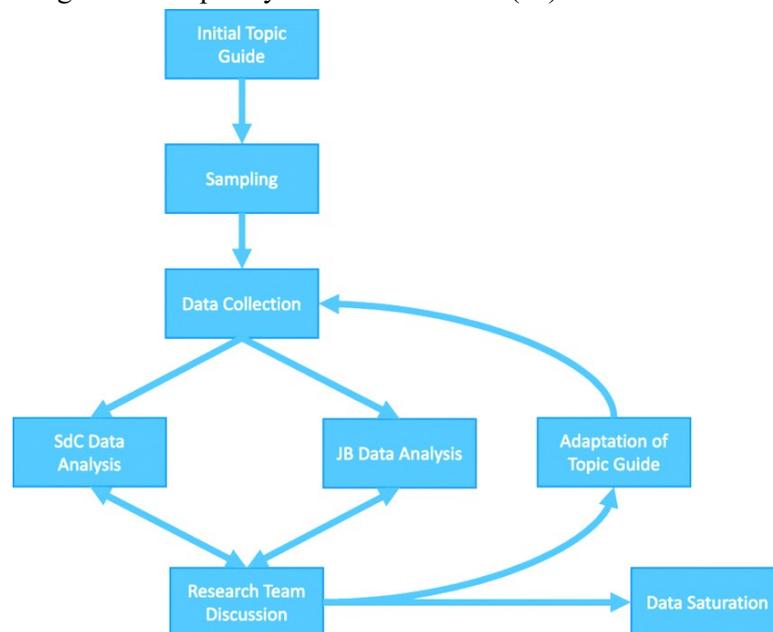
Figure 1. Flowchart Qualitative Research

The data in this study are secondary data sourced from: (1) Primary Data Sources (Classical Texts): Fundamental works of classical scholars that explicitly discuss the relationship between mantiq (logic) or falsafah (philosophy) with shari'ah

(law/revelation) and kalam (theology). Primary examples: the works of Imam Al-Ghazali (Miyār al-Ilm, Tahāfut al-Falāsifah), the works of Ibn Rushd (Fasl al-Maqāl), and the works of other scholars representing the rationalist (Mu'tazilite) and traditionalist schools. (2) Secondary Data Sources (Contemporary Studies): Literature, scientific journals, and books containing interpretations, critical analyses, and pedagogical implications of the thoughts of classical scholars in the context of modern Islamic education and curriculum.

Data were collected through systematic documentation or literature review techniques. The steps included: (1) Identification of Key Texts: Determining authoritative editions and translations of the classical works that were the main focus. (2) Close Reading: Conducting repeated and in-depth readings of sections of the text that discuss the definition of logic, its function, its limitations, and its relationship to religious knowledge. (3) Cataloging Arguments: Collecting and organizing the main arguments of classical scholars regarding the model of integration of 'aql and naql.

The collected data were analyzed using several qualitative analytical techniques, namely: (1) Content Analysis: Identifying central themes (such as the legitimacy of mantiq, maqāṣid al-shari'ah, and the function of reason) in classical texts and categorizing them. (2) Comparative Analysis: Comparing the views of scholars from different schools of thought (e.g., Asy'ariyah vs. Ibn Rushd) to find common ground (integration) and dichotomy (dichotomy) between logic and faith. (3) Interpretative-Hermeneutic Analysis: Interpreting the implicit meaning and historical context behind the use of logic by classical scholars. (4) Curriculum Synthesis: Formulating the results of theoretical analysis (integration model) into practical recommendations for strengthening the Islamic Education curriculum (e.g., formulating learning outcomes or teaching methods).

The focus of this research is on the model of integration of logic and faith offered by classical scholars, with the scope of the analysis drawn up to its pedagogical implications for reforming the Islamic education curriculum.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this study, based on a textual analysis of the works of classical scholars (especially Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, and the theological literature of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah), show that these scholars did not reject logic outright, but rather offered a rich and methodologically integrated model to strengthen the Islamic Education (IS) curriculum.

Legitimizing Logic (Mantiq) as a Tool (Wasilah)

Classical scholars, especially after Imam Al-Ghazali, succeeded in legitimizing logic as a neutral and essential discipline for understanding Islamic sciences.

- Logic Is Not an End: Logic is not considered an end in itself (ghāyah) or part of the creed, but rather merely a methodological tool (wasīlah).

- Prerequisites for Knowledge: Al-Ghazali, in his works "Miyār al-Ilm" and "Al-Mustashfā min Ilm al-Usul," emphasized that logic is a preamble (preface) or a mandatory prerequisite for anyone wishing to study sciences that require strong reasoning, such as Usul Fiqh and Ilmu Kalam (Theology of the Theology). Without logic, reasoning in religious sciences risks falling into error (talfīq).
- Logic to Safeguard Revelation: Logic is used to filter correct arguments and premises from erroneous ones, so that the text (revelation) can be interpreted and defended against doubt (syubhat) and deviant interpretations (ta'wil yang liar).

Model of the Relationship between Logic and Faith

Analysis of the thought of classical scholars yields a model of the relationship that is complementary and hierarchical, not dichotomous.

Logic as a Servant of Faith (Khadim al-Iman)

This model, dominant in the Ash'arite tradition, places logic under the authority of revelation. Reason plays an important role, but revelation is the ultimate source of truth.

- Verification Function: Reason is tasked with verifying the truth of revelation (tashdīq) and defending the creed. A classic example is the use of demonstrative arguments (burhān) in theology to prove the existence and oneness of God.
- Limits of Reason: Reason is recognized as having limits (hudūd) and is unable to independently reach the unseen (ghaybiyyāt). In this area, reason must submit to the information conveyed by revelation (naql).

Logic as a Partner of Authentication (Ittiṣāl)

This model, advocated by Ibn Rushd in Fasl al-Maqāl, argues that there is no fundamental conflict between philosophy/logic and sharia.

- Single Truth: Ibn Rushd argued that the truth attained through reason (hikmah) is the same as the revealed truth (shari'ah). If there is a conflict, then the religious text (nash) must be interpreted (ta'wil) metaphorically to align with logical reasoning.
- The Obligation of Philosophy: Ibn Rushd even stated that rational and philosophical thinking (including the use of logic) is a commandment of the Shari'a, based on verses that encourage i'tibar (deep reflection).

Synthesis: While differing in the level of authority granted, both models agree that logic is a crucial component for deepening and defending faith.

Curricular Implications in Contemporary Islamic Education

The results of this study indicate that the contemporary Islamic Education curriculum can be strengthened by adopting methodological principles from classical scholars:

a. Shifting Focus to Reasoning Competence: The curriculum must shift from merely transmitting content to cultivating reasoning competence.

- Integration of Logic in Religious Studies: Logic should not be a stand-alone subject, but should be integrated as a teaching method in:

- Aqidah: Training students to construct syllogisms (qiyās) to prove theological doctrines and refute atheist arguments (following the kalam tradition).
- Fiqh: Training students to understand and apply deductive and inductive (analogical) principles in legal reasoning (istinbat) (following the Usul Fiqh tradition).
- Tafsir/Hadith: Training students to use logical analysis to test the validity of interpretations and avoid baseless interpretations.

b. Strengthening Critical Appraisal of Sources: Through logic, students are encouraged to critically examine all sources of information (texts and reality), which will ultimately strengthen their belief in the truth of revelation after undergoing a process of intellectual testing.

The model of integration of logic and faith by classical scholars is a relevant solution to address the dichotomy crisis in Islamic Religious Studies. Its implementation requires a curriculum that emphasizes logic as a religious methodology—a correct way of thinking to achieve truth based on revelation—rather than merely theoretical knowledge.

Discussion

This discussion section interprets research findings regarding the model of integration of logic and faith in the thought of classical scholars and analyzes its relevance to addressing the challenges of dichotomy in the modern Islamic Education (IS) curriculum.

Reanalyzing the Contemporary Dichotomy

The research findings confirm that during the golden age of Islam, great scholars did not view logic and faith as polar opposites, but rather as a complementary pair. This fact stands in stark contrast to the practice of the modern Islamic Education curriculum, which often separates religious knowledge from critical reasoning (Bhat & Bisati, 2025; Jarmer, 2025).

Historical and Pedagogical Contradictions

The dichotomy that exists in the modern curriculum—where religious subjects emphasize memorization and blind submission, while general knowledge teaches rationality without spiritual boundaries—is a deviation from the Islamic intellectual tradition inherited by classical scholars (Duryat, 2021).
- Causes of the Deviation: This separation is largely due to the reduction of the function of reason in post-medieval Islamic education, possibly triggered by political conflict and a wariness of Greek speculative philosophy. However, criticism of philosophy (such as that of Al-Ghazali) is actually an attempt to purify and regulate the use of logic, not to reject it altogether.

- Curricular Implications: When logic is removed from the religious curriculum, it removes a method for students to: (1) understand the depth of doctrine, and (2) defend that doctrine from the attacks of modern ideology.

The Concept of Logic as a Wasīlah (Tool)

The finding that classical scholars (particularly Al-Ghazali) legitimized logic as a neutral tool (wasīlah) and a prerequisite for studying Usul Fiqh and Kalam is a key point. This challenges the view that logic is a dangerous foreign science. Logic, within the classical framework, is a methodological discipline for achieving verifiable truth, both rational truth and revealed truth (Martínez et al., 2019).

Classical Integration Models: Complementary and Hierarchical

Analysis of the thought of classical scholars leads to two main integration models that must be considered in strengthening the curriculum.

Logic as a Strengthener of Faith (Al-Ghazali's Model)

Al-Ghazali represents a highly pragmatic position: logic should be used to prevent scholars from methodological errors in drawing legal (istinbāt) and theological (istiṣlāḥ) conclusions (Abdullah, 2020). This model is ideal for Islamic jurisprudence because:

- Filtering Doubt: Logic functions as a "filter" that allows students to identify and ward off ambiguous thinking (syubhat) before it undermines faith.
- Reason as a Servant: This model positions reason as a servant of faith (khādim al-īmān), ensuring that reasoning is always anchored in the objectives of the Shari'a (maqāṣid al-syarī'ah) and does not exceed the metaphysical boundaries that can only be reached by revelation (naql).

Logic as a Partner for Authentication (Ibn Rushd's Model)

Ibn Rushd's view, while more radical, offers a strong justification for incorporating deep thinking skills into the curriculum (Abdul-Jabbar & Makki, 2024; Kadir, 2024). If the Shari'a mandates i'tibar (reflection), then logic is the best method for carrying out this mandate.

- Textual Rationalization: This model encourages the curriculum to teach students how to use reason to authenticate and rationalize the deeper meanings of texts, which is essential for navigating the complexities of modern society.
- Intellectual Courage: This model fosters intellectual courage in students, assuring them that Islam is not in conflict with ultimate rationality.

These findings have significant implications for strengthening the Islamic Education (IE) Curriculum, which can be summarized in the "IE Curriculum Based on Classical Methodology" model. The objectives of the Islamic Education curriculum should no longer focus solely on what is known (what to know), but should shift to how to think (how to think) within an Islamic framework (Atmojo et al., 2022; Moslimany et al., 2024). A concrete example: Learning Outcomes in the subject of Aqidah (Faith) should not only be "Analyze the Pillars of Faith," but also "Be able to construct demonstrative

arguments (burhān) to prove the existence and oneness of God, and distinguish between valid and doubtful arguments."

Logic should be taught horizontally across all religious subjects, not as a separate subject.

Table 1. Horizontal Integration: Logic as a Cross-Disciplinary Method

Subjects	Methodological Application of Classical Logic
Aqidah	Learning the science of kalam and syllogism for tawḥīd (oneness).
Fiqh	Analysis of qiyās (analogy), istidlāl (reasoning), and deduction in Usul Fiqh.
Tafsir/Hadith	Using semantic and critical analysis to avoid faulty or illogical ta'wil.
Character Education	Training moral consistency and value coherence (Practical Logic).

Strengthening the curriculum through the integration of logic and faith ultimately aims to shape the Insan Kāmil—the complete person—that Islamic Education aspires to. Graduates must possess Faith that Resists the Test: Belief that has undergone a process of intellectual verification, not merely an emotional inheritance. Submissive Reason: The ability to reason critically and recognize that revelation is the ultimate source of truth.

By restoring logic to its essential role as a methodological tool, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum can be strengthened to produce a people who are intellectually intelligent, spiritually strong, and able to engage effectively in global discourse.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the dichotomy between logic ('aql) and faith (naql) that is often experienced in contemporary Islamic Education (IE) curricula is a deviation from the intellectual tradition of classical scholars. An examination of the perspectives of prominent scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd reveals that they do not dismiss logic; instead, they incorporate it as a methodological instrument (wasīlah) vital for comprehending, validating, and defending the veracity of Islamic teachings. The integration model offered by classical scholars has two main characteristics, namely (1) Logic as a Prerequisite: Logic (mantiq) is recognized as a tool science (mukadimah) that must be mastered before studying the Islamic sciences that require strict reasoning, such as Usul Fiqh and Ilmu Kalam. (2) Hierarchical Complementary Relationship: Reason functions as a servant and strengthener of faith (khādim al-īmān). Reason is used to construct solid arguments (burhān) and refute doubts (syubhat), but it is subject to the limits set by revelation (naql) in metaphysical matters (ghaybiyyāt). Therefore, strengthening the Islamic Education curriculum must be carried out through a methodological reorientation that emphasizes logical reasoning competency in every religious subject, thus producing graduates with solid faith and enlightened reason and capable of facing modern challenges holistically.

As a suggestion, conduct intensive training for Islamic education teachers on the thinking methods of classical scholars in Usul Fiqh and Ilmu Kalam. Teachers must be

equipped with the ability to teach religious material not only through memorization but also through discussion and systematic argumentation. Furthermore, further research is needed that focuses on curriculum implementation models that have been logically integrated across various levels of education (schools, madrasas, and universities), including efficacy studies on student learning outcomes in terms of their faith strength and critical reasoning abilities.

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