Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

KHAUF AND RAJA' IN IMAM AL-GHAZALI'S THOUGHT AS A FOUNDATION FOR THE FORMATION OF SELF CONTROL

***Andika Dwi Saputra[1], M.Maulana Mas'udi[2], Mahmud Muhsinin[3]**
[1,2,3] Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, Indonesia
Email: saputraandik878@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the concepts of *khauf* and *raja'* in Imam Al-Ghazali's thought and their relevance to the formation of *self-control* in modern life. The study uses a qualitative approach with *library research*. The main source of the study is the book *Minhajul 'Abidin* by Imam Al-Ghazali, supported by various scientific literature on Sufism, Islamic psychology, and *self-control*. Data were analyzed using content analysis techniques through the process of identifying, interpreting, and synthesizing concepts related to *khauf, raja'*, and *self-control*. The results show that *khauf* functions as a *self-control* mechanism that originates from spiritual awareness of supervision and accountability before God. This concept encourages individuals to control their desires, increase self-reflection, and form a strong moral awareness. Meanwhile, *raja'* acts as a motivational force that fosters optimism, psychological resilience, and a spirit of self-improvement through hope in God's grace. This study found that the balance between *khauf* and *raja'* forms a comprehensive pattern of *self-control* because it integrates spiritual, moral, and psychological dimensions simultaneously. Therefore, the concept of *khauf* and *raja'* in Imam Al-Ghazali's thinking has significant relevance as a basis for strengthening *self-control* in facing various moral, emotional, and social challenges in the modern era.

Keywords: *Khauf, Raja', Imam Al-Ghazali, Self Control*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konsep *khauf* dan *raja'* dalam pemikiran Imam Al-Ghazali serta relevansinya terhadap pembentukan *self-control* dalam kehidupan modern. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*). Sumber utama penelitian adalah kitab *Minhajul 'Abidin* karya Imam Al-Ghazali yang didukung oleh berbagai literatur ilmiah mengenai tasawuf, psikologi Islam, dan pengendalian diri. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik content analysis melalui proses identifikasi, interpretasi, dan sintesis konsep-konsep yang berkaitan dengan *khauf, raja',* dan *self-control*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *khauf* berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pengendalian diri yang bersumber dari kesadaran spiritual terhadap pengawasan dan pertanggungjawaban di hadapan Allah. Konsep ini mendorong individu untuk mengendalikan hawa nafsu, meningkatkan muhasabah, serta membentuk kesadaran moral yang kuat. Sementara itu, *raja'* berperan sebagai kekuatan motivasional yang menumbuhkan optimisme, ketahanan psikologis, dan semangat memperbaiki diri melalui harapan terhadap rahmat Allah. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa keseimbangan antara *khauf* dan *raja'* membentuk pola *self-control* yang komprehensif karena mengintegrasikan dimensi spiritual, moral, dan psikologis secara bersamaan. Oleh karena itu, konsep *khauf* dan *raja'* dalam pemikiran Imam Al-Ghazali memiliki relevansi yang

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

signifikan sebagai landasan penguatan *self-control* dalam menghadapi berbagai tantangan moral, emosional, dan sosial di era modern.
Kata Kunci: *Khauf, Raja', Imam Al-Ghazali, Self Control*

***

A. Introduction

The development of modern life has transformed various aspects of human behavior, particularly those related to the capacity for self-control. Advances in digital technology, the rapid flow of globalization, and accelerated social change have created an increasingly complex and competitive reality. This situation requires individuals to adapt to conveniences and challenges that emerge simultaneously. Amid an instant and open culture, individuals have become more vulnerable to impulses that may influence how they think and act. Phenomena such as social media addiction, declining ethics in social interaction, increasing consumerism, and various forms of moral crisis among adolescents indicate that self-control is an important issue in modern society. In psychology, self-control is understood as an individual's ability to manage emotions, direct internal impulses, and regulate behavior so that it remains consistent with social norms and positive life goals (Hidayah, 2025). This capacity concerns not only behavioral restraint but also mature cognitive awareness and emotional regulation.

Various studies show that self-regulation is closely related to mental health, emotional stability, and an individual's capacity to cope with social pressures in modern life (Aqmar, 2025). Individuals with good self-control are generally better able to manage stress, avoid risky behavior, and maintain a more optimal quality of life. Conversely, low self-control is often associated with maladaptive behavior, including aggression, digital addiction, and difficulty coping with increasingly complex psychological pressures in the contemporary era (Cholili et al., 2024). These phenomena indicate that self-control should not be limited to the behavioral dimension alone but needs to be understood through a more comprehensive approach that integrates psychological, social, and spiritual aspects.

In modern life, conventional psychology has generally emphasized cognition, rationality, and human behavior as the basis for understanding self-control. This approach has made a major contribution to explaining the psychological mechanisms that influence individual behavior. Nevertheless, the spiritual dimension has often not been a primary focus, even though it plays an important role in character formation and moral awareness. Higher religiosity is known to be associated with better emotional regulation and a stronger capacity to control impulsive behavior (Al Karofi, 2023). Spirituality is also related to the search for meaning in life, psychological balance, and individual mental well-being (Hasanah, 2023). From this perspective, integrating psychological and spiritual approaches is important for developing self-control that is not only behaviorally strong but also morally and spiritually mature.

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, self-control has long been an important theme, particularly in Sufi thought. One figure who devoted considerable attention to the

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

cultivation of the human soul was Imam Al-Ghazali. His thought places spirituality as a fundamental element in the formation of personality and the development of human qualities. According to Al-Ghazali, self-control is not merely concerned with regulating outward behavior but also includes the process of purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs), which is oriented toward closeness to Allah. Within this framework, Al-Ghazali introduces khauf and raja' as two central elements in the human spiritual journey. Khauf refers to fear of Allah that encourages a person to avoid sin and restrain negative impulses, whereas raja' refers to hope in Allah's mercy and forgiveness, which fosters enthusiasm, optimism, and confidence in living one's life (Fairuzzaman, 2025). A balanced relationship between khauf and raja' forms an important foundation for character formation, the development of moral awareness, and the strengthening of human self-control (Muslih & Subhi, 2022).

In Imam Al-Ghazali's thought, khauf is understood not merely as an emotional feeling of fear but as a form of spiritual awareness arising from an understanding of the moral consequences of every human action. This awareness has a constructive function because it encourages individuals to act more carefully while increasing sensitivity to moral and ethical values. Khauf is associated with strong internal control, which in turn relates to the ability to restrain negative impulses and avoid potentially harmful behavior (Al Karofi, 2023). Research findings also indicate that religiosity is significantly associated with self-control, particularly among Muslim adolescents and university students (Hidayah, 2025). This suggests that the internalization of spiritual values is closely related to the capacity for self-control and more adaptive behavior.

Alongside khauf, raja' occupies an equally important position in spiritual development because it functions as a balancing force in religious life. Raja' is understood as hope in Allah's mercy, compassion, and forgiveness, which can foster optimism and the conviction that every individual has an opportunity to improve and enhance the quality of life. The presence of raja' is important because it can prevent khauf from developing into excessive fear that leads to despair. The balance between the two contributes to the formation of a healthy and stable psychological condition. In modern psychology, hope is known to be closely related to resilience, emotional regulation, and mental health (Sari & Karim, 2023). Individuals who maintain a positive view of the future are generally better able to face life pressures, adapt to difficult situations, and manage their emotions more effectively (Rahman & Aziz, 2023).

The concept of self-control in Islam is understood more broadly than in Western psychological approaches because it encompasses interrelated spiritual, moral, and emotional dimensions. Self-control is directed not only toward regulating behavior but also toward cultivating a pure heart and deep inner awareness. Religious values are known to be associated with positive behavior and individual self-regulation (Botha & Dahmann, 2024). In addition, religiosity is related to emotional stability and a tendency to display prosocial behavior in society (Fadilah & Muhibbin, 2023). From this perspective, a spiritual approach in Islam may be regarded as a relevant alternative for strengthening

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

self-control while addressing various moral and psychological problems arising in modern life.

Low self-control can be observed in the increasing prevalence of various deviant behaviors in society, particularly among adolescents. Misuse of social media, aggressive tendencies, and weak emotional control provide concrete illustrations of this condition (Boer et al., 2021). This situation shows that modern education continues to face challenges in forming comprehensive moral and spiritual awareness. A dominant emphasis on academic and cognitive aspects is often not sufficiently balanced by character formation and the strengthening of spiritual values. This situation creates room for alternative approaches capable of reaching the inner dimension of human beings more deeply. In this regard, Sufism may be considered relevant because it offers a process of self-cultivation oriented toward purification of the soul and the strengthening of spiritual awareness.

Sufism offers an approach to self-cultivation centered on purification of the soul, restraint of desires, and the strengthening of spiritual awareness. Through spiritual practices such as dhikr, muhasabah, and tafakkur, individuals may develop a stronger and more sustainable capacity for self-control. This approach is not directed solely toward outward behavioral change but also addresses internal aspects related to character formation and personality quality. Previous studies show that spiritual practices within the Sufi tradition contribute to increased self-discipline and strengthened moral awareness (Fauziyah, 2021). This perspective indicates that synergy between psychology and Sufism has substantial potential to build self-control that is not only behaviorally strong but also spiritually and morally mature.

Several previous studies have connected Al-Ghazali's thought, or Sufi values more generally, with self-control and Islamic psychology. Fairuzzaman (2025) integrates Al-Ghazali's ideas on self-regulation with psychology; Muslih and Subhi (2022) examine spiritual intelligence from a Sufi perspective; Al Karofi (2023) develops a Sufi approach to the psychology of self-control; and Hidayah (2025) examines the relationship between religiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-control among adolescents. These studies generally demonstrate the relevance of Islamic spirituality to self-control in broad terms, but they have not specifically mapped khauf and raja' onto established components of self-control in contemporary psychology. The novelty of this study lies in its use of Muraven and Baumeister's (2000) strength model of self-control as a mapping framework, so that khauf and raja' are not merely discussed in parallel with self-control in general but are positioned within specific psychological functions: khauf within the standards and monitoring components, and raja' within the motivation component. Through this mapping, the study aims to produce a more structured conceptual synthesis of the relationship between khauf and raja', while also offering a counter-perspective to the assumption of resource limitation (depletion) in Western self-control models through the principle of spiritual motivational renewal contained in Al-Ghazali's thought.

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative library research approach, with Minhajul 'Abidin by Imam Al-Ghazali (Al-Ghazali, 2013) as the primary data source and journal articles and books related to Sufism, Islamic spirituality, and self-control as secondary data. As its analytical framework, the study uses Muraven and Baumeister's (2000) strength model of self-control, which divides self-control into four components: standards (behavioral reference standards), monitoring (awareness of self-observation), strength (the capacity to resist impulses), and motivation (the drive to use that capacity). This framework enables the concepts of khauf and raja' to be mapped onto specific psychological functions rather than merely juxtaposed in general terms with self-control.

The analysis was conducted using content analysis, with the unit of analysis consisting of Al-Ghazali's statements in Minhajul 'Abidin concerning khauf and raja'. The analytical process involved four stages: (1) identifying and extracting all statements, Qur'anic verses, and illustrations related to khauf and raja' in the text; (2) categorizing each statement into one of the four components above for example, statements concerning awareness of moral consequences were categorized as standards, while statements concerning hope that encourages obedience were categorized as motivation; (3) comparing the categorization results with findings from contemporary psychology for each component in order to identify points of convergence and differences in underlying foundations spiritual in Al-Ghazali and rational-cognitive in the comparative framework; and (4) synthesizing the relational pattern between khauf and raja', including aspects of Al-Ghazali's thought that may enrich the assumptions of the model. Through these stages, Minhajul 'Abidin serves as the principal data source, while the strength model of self-control functions as a comparative framework that maps khauf and raja' specifically rather than merely descriptively and in parallel.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Biography of Imam Al-Ghazali

Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali, widely known in the Islamic world as Imam Al-Ghazali, was born in Tus, a city in the Khurasan region of present-day Iran, in 450 AH/1058 CE, into a modest Persian family known for its strong inclination toward knowledge and Sufism. He died in the same city in 505 AH/1111 CE (Watt, 1963). He received his early education in his hometown and later continued his studies in Jurjan before pursuing more advanced learning under Imam Al-Haramain Al-Juwaini at the Nizamiyah Madrasa in Nishapur, where he gained a strong scholarly foundation in theology, jurisprudence, logic, and philosophy. Because of his remarkable intelligence from a young age and his rapidly growing reputation among scholars of his time, he was appointed chief lecturer at the Nizamiyah Madrasa in Baghdad, one of the most prestigious academic positions in the Muslim world at that time, on the direct recommendation of the vizier Nizam al-Mulk. Because of the breadth of his knowledge

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

and his skill in theological debate against various intellectual currents of his era, he was later given the title Hujjat al-Islam, literally meaning "the Proof of Islam" (Fikri, 2022).

As an influential intellectual, Al-Ghazali is regarded as having made a major contribution to integrating Sufism into the mainstream of Islamic thought, which had previously tended to be dominated by jurisprudential and theological approaches. He also contributed to the reform of Islamic education and critically engaged the rationalist philosophy that was developing rapidly in his era, thereby enriching Islamic theological discourse as a whole (Hamzah et al., 2024).

Although he was at the height of his intellectual career and had achieved extraordinary fame in Baghdad, Al-Ghazali experienced a profound and multidimensional spiritual crisis involving not only epistemological doubt but also serious psychological turmoil that at one point made it difficult for him to continue teaching. This crisis eventually led him to question radically the sufficiency of kalam and rational philosophy in bringing human beings to certainty of knowledge (yaqin) and genuine inner tranquility (Rosmizi & Yucel, 2016). This existential crisis ultimately became the principal reason for his decision to leave the rational-scholastic paths that he had long studied and mastered and to turn to Sufism as the path he believed could lead to true knowledge and genuine happiness rather than merely logical truth (Hamzah et al., 2024).

He described this inner struggle in detail and reflectively in his autobiographical work Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal, or "Deliverance from Error," which remains regarded as one of the most important documents of intellectual introspection in the history of Islamic thought and has been translated and extensively annotated by Western scholars as part of the broader study of Al-Ghazali's thought (McCarthy, 1980). The crisis eventually led him to leave his prestigious academic position and the fame he had built over many years in Baghdad in order to adopt a simpler ascetic life, traveling to cities such as Damascus and Jerusalem for approximately ten years (Watt, 1963).

During this period of travel and seclusion, he deepened his engagement with Sufism not merely as an academic and theoretical field but as a spiritual practice and lived experience. It was also during this period that he wrote his most influential monumental work, Ihya' Ulum al-Din, which later became a major reference for Muslims in harmoniously integrating sharia, ethics, and Sufism (Rosmizi & Yucel, 2016). After this long period of travel, he briefly returned to teaching in Nishapur at the urging of the Seljuk ruler of his time before eventually deciding to settle permanently in Tus, his hometown, until the end of his life (Nofal, 1993).

Throughout his life, Al-Ghazali was known as a highly productive author. Some scholars estimate that he wrote dozens, perhaps more than fifty, works spanning theology, jurisprudence, legal theory, logic, philosophy, Sufism, and ethics (Watt, 1963). His most monumental and influential work is Ihya' Ulum al-Din, or "The Revival of the Religious Sciences," an encyclopedic text that integrates ritual law, ethics, and spiritual psychology

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

within a comprehensive framework of religious life and is regarded by many as one of the most widely read Islamic texts after the Qur'an and hadith (Hamzah et al., 2024).

In addition to this major work, he wrote Tahafut al-Falasifah, or "The Incoherence of the Philosophers," a critical work that challenged major doctrines of Avicennian philosophers, particularly concerning divinity, causality, and the eternity of the universe. It later generated a long philosophical debate and prompted Ibn Rushd's response in Tahafut al-Tahafut. He also wrote other important works, including Maqasid al-Falasifah, which objectively presents the teachings of the philosophers before critiquing them; Al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-Usul, an encyclopedic work in legal theory; and Mizan al-'Amal, written near the period of his retirement (Watt, 1963). His autobiographical work Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal was written late in his life as both a defense and a reflective explanation of his decision to leave his academic career for a mystical life (McCarthy, 1980).

Minhajul 'Abidin, which serves as the primary data source in this study, is one of Al-Ghazali's works written in the later period of his life, after the completion of Ihya' Ulum al-Din. Some scholars regard it as a shorter, simpler, and more practical version of the major ideas he had previously developed at length, making it more accessible to general readers who wish to study Sufism without navigating the full complexity of Ihya' Ulum al-Din. The book is structured around seven 'aqabah, literally meaning "ascents" or obstacles that a servant must pass through on the spiritual journey toward Allah. These include the obstacles of knowledge, repentance, worldly temptation, spiritual impediments, motives behind action, gratitude, and finally khauf and raja', positioned as the seventh and concluding obstacle of the entire journey. This structure indicates that, in Al-Ghazali's view, the balance between fear and hope is not merely one theme among many spiritual themes, but the culmination and completion of the entire process of soul purification that a servant must attain in drawing closer to Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2013). This structural position is the main reason the book was selected as the primary data source for this study.

The life journey and spiritual struggles described above provide the background for understanding why Al-Ghazali's thought on khauf and raja' cannot be treated merely as abstract theological concepts formulated speculatively. Rather, they represent a maqam, or spiritual station, emerging from his own inner struggle between fear of negligence and sin on the one hand and hope in Allah's help and mercy on the other—an existential tension that he experienced directly throughout his life rather than one formulated only from an academic distance.

2. The Concept of Khauf in Imam Al-Ghazali's Thought

In Minhajul 'Abidin, Al-Ghazali explains that fear of Allah is a means of protecting human beings from sinful acts and the impulses of desire (Al-Ghazali, 2013). Khauf is not understood merely as emotional fear, but as spiritual awareness that encourages caution in thought and action a form of internal control rooted in moral

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

consciousness. This view is reinforced by Qur'an 39:16, "So fear Me, O My servants," which emphasizes the moral function of fear in keeping human beings on the path of piety.

From a Sufi perspective, khauf forms part of the process of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), because reason alone is not always regarded as sufficient to control desire when sensual impulses become stronger than rational considerations (Syukur et al., 2003). This is consistent with Qur'an 75:36, "Does man think that he will be left neglected?" a verse emphasizing human moral accountability for every action and therefore requiring continuous self-monitoring. This concept reveals a close relationship between spiritual and psychological dimensions. The ability to regulate emotions, impulses, and behavior known in modern psychology as self-control is associated with mental health and the capacity to cope with life pressures (Botha & Dahmann, 2024). The difference, however, lies in the foundation employed: Al-Ghazali places spiritual awareness at the core of self-control, whereas models of self-control in Western psychology including the strength model used in this study tend to emphasize rational processes and cognitive mechanisms without referring to a transcendent dimension. This difference in foundation creates space for the more specific mapping developed in the following section. Al-Ghazali also cites Qur'an 4:123 concerning recompense for wrongdoing, which he understands as cultivating caution and personal responsibility.

The function of khauf is also evident in preserving sincerity in worship preventing self-admiration (ujub) through awareness of one's weakness (Al-Ghazali, 2013) and as a means of introspection (muhasabah), because an individual who fears Allah will act more cautiously as a result of feeling constantly observed. Simuh (2019) emphasizes that fear of Allah in the Sufi tradition is not intended to produce despair, but to foster spiritual awareness that continuously encourages self-improvement. This introspective function is relevant to modern life, which is marked by increasing impulsive behavior; excessive social media use, for example, has been found to be associated with poorer mental health and lower self-control among adolescents (Boer et al., 2021).

This relationship is also reflected in riyadah practices such as fasting, which are known to be associated with increased self-control, presumably through habituation to resisting desire and strengthening spiritual discipline (Fauziyah, 2021). From this discussion, khauf may be understood as a form of spiritual awareness that establishes moral standards for behavior (standards) while simultaneously encouraging continuous self-monitoring (monitoring), two functions examined further within the strength model in the section on the relationship between khauf and raja'.

3. The Concept of Raja' in Imam Al-Ghazali's Thought

In Minhajul 'Abidin, Al-Ghazali explains raja' (hope) as an inner force that encourages consistency in obedience, given the human tendency to be more attracted to worldly pleasure than to fulfilling Allah's commands (Al-Ghazali, 2013). Raja' is not understood merely as emotional hope but as a spiritual drive that fosters enthusiasm for

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

virtuous action, as emphasized in Qur'an 39:53, "Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins."

One of the principal roles of raja' is to keep the heart steadfast when facing the difficulties of worship. In psychology, this parallels the function of motivation as a factor in psychological resilience: individuals with clear life goals and strong spiritual conviction tend to be better able to regulate emotions and maintain optimism when facing challenges (Yusuf, 2021). Al-Ghazali reinforces this view by citing Qur'an 42:25 concerning Allah's acceptance of repentance and forgiveness, emphasizing that hope in Him should generate optimism to continue self-improvement rather than passive resignation without effort.

Al-Ghazali illustrates this function through the examples of a honey seeker, a laborer, and a farmer who are willing to endure fatigue because they hope to obtain greater results in the future (Al-Ghazali, 2013). These examples show that hope strengthens psychological endurance (resilience), consistent with the view that spiritual conviction is associated with inner tranquility and the capacity to face life pressures (Daradjat, 2019). A similar function appears in the willingness to endure the difficulty of worship because of belief in the reward promised by Allah; hardship is no longer understood as a burden but as part of achieving spiritual happiness, paralleling the psychological function of religion in providing direction and meaning in life (Jalaluddin, 2020). This pattern is also consistent with findings that spirituality is associated with mental health and may function as a mediator of self-control among adolescents (Shroff et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, Al-Ghazali emphasizes that raja' is not passive hope. True hope must be realized through earnest worship and commitment to resisting desire, thereby carrying a moral dimension that encourages continuous improvement in spiritual quality and behavior (Mujib & Mudzakir, 2002). From this discussion, raja' can be understood as a spiritual force that performs the motivation function in self-control—the drive that moves individuals to actually use their capacity for restraint rather than merely possessing it passively, as discussed further within the strength model.

4. The Relationship between Khauf and Raja' in the Formation of Self-Control

Whereas the previous discussion examined khauf and raja' separately, this section maps their relationship onto the four components of self-control in Muraven and Baumeister's (2000) strength model: standards, monitoring, strength, and motivation. This mapping aims to show that khauf and raja' are not merely two generally complementary spiritual attitudes, as Al-Ghazali emphasizes through the analogy of a whip and bait for a wild animal (Al-Ghazali, 2013), but rather fulfill distinct and interdependent psychological functions in the formation of self-control capacity.

Khauf occupies the positions of both standards and monitoring. As standards, awareness of accountability before Allah, as emphasized in Al-Ghazali's citation of Qur'an 75:36 in the previous discussion, establishes a normative reference point for behavior. As monitoring, the practice of muhasabah encouraged by khauf functions as a

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

continuous process of self-observation, comparing actual behavior with those standards. These functions are consistent with findings that self-regulatory capacity is associated with behavioral stability and the ability to cope with psychological pressure (Botha & Dahmann, 2024), but they differ from the Baumeister model in the source of their reference point: standards and monitoring within khauf are transcendent, oriented toward Allah's supervision, rather than toward social norms or personal goals as is commonly assumed in contemporary psychology.

Raja', by contrast, occupies the position of motivation. The illustrations of the honey seeker, laborer, and farmer in Minhajul 'Abidin discussed previously (Al-Ghazali, 2013) essentially depict a motivational function: willingness to endure difficulty because of hope for future results. Within the self-control framework, motivation is the component that moves individuals to actually use their capacity for restraint rather than merely possess it passively. Without adequate motivation, the standards and monitoring generated by khauf risk remaining moral awareness that is not translated into action.

The most important point of convergence between the two concepts lies in the strength component the capacity to resist impulses which, in Baumeister's model, is described as a limited resource that may become depleted through use (ego depletion) (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Al-Ghazali's thought opens space for reconsidering this assumption. If khauf without raja' risks producing psychological pressure that drains the capacity to endure consistent with Al-Ghazali's warning that excessive fear may lead to despair then the presence of raja' may restore that capacity through continuous renewal of spiritual motivation: hope in Allah's mercy is not exhausted through use but can continually be accessed through worship and muhasabah. Thus, the balance between khauf and raja' can be understood not only as protection from two extreme tendencies, as emphasized by Al-Ghazali (Al-Ghazali, 2013), but also as a mechanism that may qualify the depletion assumption in Western self-control models: the capacity for restraint in religious individuals may not depend entirely on limited internal resources but may be renewed through a sustainable transcendent source of motivation.

This synthesis shows that the relationship between khauf and raja' forms a functional cycle that is more complete than conventional self-control models: khauf establishes standards and monitors discrepancies (standards-monitoring), raja' provides the drive to act (motivation), and their interaction determines whether the capacity for restraint (strength) is depleted or renewed. The association between Sufi spirituality, emotional stability, and mental health identified in Islamic psychology research (Cetinkaya, 2023) may be read as an empirical indication of this renewal mechanism, although direct testing of this relationship lies beyond the scope of this library study and remains open for future empirical research.

5. The Relevance of Imam Al-Ghazali's Thought to Modern Life

Imam Al-Ghazali's thought on khauf and raja' is highly relevant to various problems of modern life, particularly those related to moral crisis, mental health

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

problems, and declining self-control amid rapid technological development and social change. Contemporary life shows increasing impulsive behavior, social media addiction, hedonistic lifestyles, and a tendency toward weakening spiritual awareness in society. These phenomena underscore the importance of an approach to self-control that is not oriented solely toward rational aspects but also includes spiritual and moral dimensions as foundations of human behavior. In Minhajul 'Abidin, Al-Ghazali explains that human beings require a balance between khauf as fear of Allah and raja' as hope in His mercy in order to restrain desire and maintain behavior within the boundaries of goodness (Al-Ghazali, 2013). This thought underscores the role of spirituality as a foundation for building emotional stability and moral awareness amid the complexity of modern life.

The concept of khauf in Al-Ghazali's thought is strongly relevant to various moral problems faced by modern society, particularly those associated with weak self-control. Digital technology provides broad freedom that is often related to individuals' difficulty in regulating behavior. In Al-Ghazali's view, fear of Allah functions as an internal monitoring mechanism that encourages individuals to avoid deviant behavior and actions that may harm themselves or others. This position places spirituality as an important element in the formation of disciplined and responsible character (Singh et al., 2021). On this basis, khauf may be regarded as a relevant spiritual approach for strengthening self-control and helping individuals face moral challenges in contemporary life.

The concept of raja' is also highly relevant in helping modern individuals face increasingly complex psychological pressures and crises of meaning. Contemporary life, marked by high social demands, intense competition, and rapid change, often generates anxiety, stress, and even despair. In such circumstances, raja' functions as a source of spiritual strength that fosters optimism and the conviction that every individual has an opportunity to improve through Allah's mercy and compassion. Al-Ghazali explains that hope in Allah can become an inner energy that protects individuals from despair while encouraging them to remain steadfast in life (Al-Ghazali, 2013). Spirituality is closely related to the formation of positive behavior and the strengthening of psychological resilience when individuals face pressures of modern life and various situations of social crisis (Chow et al., 2021). Individuals with a strong spiritual orientation are generally better able to maintain optimism, preserve inner tranquility, and adapt to life challenges than those who lack a spiritual foundation.

Al-Ghazali's thought is also relevant to modern education, particularly in the character formation of younger generations. Modern education often places excessive emphasis on intellectual and academic aspects, while spiritual and moral development receives insufficient attention. As a result, many individuals possess high intellectual capacity but remain weak in self-control and social ethics. From Al-Ghazali's perspective, education aims not only to develop the intellect but also to purify the soul and cultivate good character. Educational approaches based on Islamic spiritual values play an important role in developing resilience, social tolerance, and behavioral regulation among students in a pluralistic modern society (Muchtar et al., 2025).

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

Therefore, khauf and raja' may be used as an approach to character education for forming a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also emotionally and spiritually mature.

The relevance of Al-Ghazali's thought is further evident in efforts to maintain mental health in modern society. Rapid technological development and dynamic social change often generate psychological problems such as emotional instability, social anxiety, and crises of meaning. In such situations, balance between khauf and raja' plays an important role because it can guide individuals away from two opposing tendencies. Excessive fear may trigger severe anxiety, whereas hope without moral awareness may encourage behavior that neglects responsibility and ethical boundaries. This view is consistent with findings by Stromback et al. (2021), which emphasize the relationship between self-control, behavioral stability, decision-making quality, and individual well-being. Individuals with good self-control are generally better able to regulate consumptive behavior, maintain emotional balance, and consider the consequences of their actions. On this basis, Al-Ghazali's spiritual concepts may be regarded as a relevant approach for helping modern individuals maintain mental health, strengthen self-control, and preserve emotional stability amid contemporary complexity.

Al-Ghazali's thought is also strongly relevant to various problems of digital ethics emerging in the age of social media. Although digital technology offers many conveniences and benefits, phenomena such as the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, cyberbullying, and social media addiction have become increasingly evident challenges in modern society. Many individuals lose moral sensitivity when interacting in digital spaces because of weak self-monitoring and declining spiritual awareness.

In this context, khauf functions as an ethical foundation that encourages individuals to act, communicate, and disseminate information on social media more carefully. Raja', meanwhile, helps individuals maintain a positive life orientation so that they are not easily affected by social pressure or negative influences in digital environments. This view is consistent with Suhartanto et al. (2021), who emphasize the role of religiosity in shaping behavior, decision-making, loyalty, ethics, and social responsibility in modern life. This relationship reinforces the position of Islamic spiritual values as a foundation that remains relevant in addressing moral and psychological challenges in the digital era.

The development of modern life has also contributed to increasing consumerism and materialistic tendencies across different sectors of society. Many individuals place worldly pleasure at the center of life, causing spiritual and moral values to become increasingly marginalized. In Al-Ghazali's view, this phenomenon is related to the dominance of desire when it is not adequately controlled. This situation underscores the importance of forming self-control grounded in a balance between khauf and raja' as a means of directing human behavior toward more meaningful values. This view is consistent with Puteri et al. (2022), who emphasize that individuals with good self-control tend to be better able to regulate consumptive behavior, maintain emotional stability, and

Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama
Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

consider the consequences of their actions. On this basis, the concepts of khauf and raja' in Al-Ghazali's thought may be regarded as a relevant spiritual foundation for helping modern individuals maintain balance amid strong currents of materialism and consumer culture.

The discussion above confirms that Imam Al-Ghazali's thought on khauf and raja' remains highly relevant to various challenges of modern life. These concepts concern not only religious spirituality but also contribute to the formation of self-control, the maintenance of mental health, the strengthening of character education, and the creation of balance in human life. Khauf and raja', as two complementary elements, provide a spiritual foundation that can guide individuals in regulating behavior, emotions, and life orientation more wisely. Within this framework, Al-Ghazali's thought reflects the potential of Islamic spirituality as a relevant approach to moral and psychological problems in contemporary society. The balance between fear of Allah and hope in His mercy gives khauf and raja' continuing contemporary value and makes them applicable as a foundation for personality formation and self-control in modern life.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that the concepts of khauf and raja' in Imam Al-Ghazali's thought can be specifically mapped onto the four components of self-control in Baumeister's strength model rather than being understood only as two generally complementary spiritual attitudes. Khauf fulfills the functions of standards and monitoring by establishing a moral reference based on awareness of accountability before Allah while also encouraging continuous self-monitoring through the practice of muhasabah. Raja', by contrast, fulfills the function of motivation, namely the inner drive that moves individuals to actually use their capacity for restraint, as illustrated by Al-Ghazali's examples of the honey seeker, laborer, and farmer in Minhajul 'Abidin.

The most important point of convergence between the two concepts lies in the strength component, namely the capacity to resist impulses, which in Baumeister's model is assumed to be a limited resource that can become depleted (ego depletion). This study finds that Al-Ghazali's thought opens space for qualifying that assumption: the balance between khauf and raja' suggests that the capacity for restraint among religious individuals may be renewed through continuous spiritual motivational renewal rather than depending solely on limited internal resources. This constitutes the principal conceptual contribution of the study: the relationship between khauf and raja' functions not only as a spiritual foundation but also offers a counter-perspective to the depletion assumption that has long been dominant in Western studies of self-control.

Imam Al-Ghazali's thought on khauf and raja' also remains relevant to problems of modern life, particularly moral crisis, weak self-control, mental health problems, and increasing impulsive behavior in the digital era. Spiritual values in Al-Ghazali's Sufism may therefore serve as an alternative approach that complements conventional self-

Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

control models by adding a spiritual dimension as a source of motivational renewal that has received limited attention within Western psychological frameworks.

This study is limited by its nature as library research: the argument concerning spiritual motivational renewal (renewable motivation) is interpretive and based on a textual reading of Minhajul 'Abidin, and it has not yet been empirically tested. Future research should empirically examine whether individuals who internalize a balance between khauf and raja' actually demonstrate a different pattern of recovery in self-control capacity compared with those who do not, for example through experimental designs adapting the ego-depletion paradigm to the context of Islamic religiosity.

REFERENCE

Abd Rahman, M. R. Bin, & Yucel, S. (2016). The Mujaddid of His Age: Al-Ghazali And His Inner Spiritual Journey. *UMRAN - International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies (EISSN: 2289-8204)*, *3*(2), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.11113/umran2016.3n2.56

Ahmad Muhammad Al Karofi. (2023). Sufistic Urgency In Influencing The Psychology Of Self-Control Of One's Behavior. *IJIP : Indonesian Journal of Islamic Psychology*, *5*(1), 69–77. https://doi.org/10.18326/ijip.v5i1.62

Boer, M., Stevens, G. W. J. M., Finkenauer, C., de Looze, M. E., & van den Eijnden, R. J. J. M. (2021). Social media use intensity, social media use problems, and mental health among adolescents: Investigating directionality and mediating processes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *116*, 106645. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106645

Botha, F., & Dahmann, S. C. (2024). Locus of control, self-control, and health outcomes. *SSM - Population Health*, *25*, 101566. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2023.101566

Cetinkaya, M., & Billings, J. (2023). Systematic review of the relationship between Islamic-Sufi spirituality and practice and mental well-being. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *26*(10), 1065–1080. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2023.2256265

Cholili, A. H., Achmad Mubarok, M. Yogi Anggoro, Shafira Angelia Putri, & Muhammad Mubasysyir Munir. (2024). The Effect of Dzikir Intensity on Self-Control in Psychology Students. *Madinah: Jurnal Studi Islam*, *11*(2), 275–284. https://doi.org/10.58518/madinah.v11i2.2797

Chow, M. I. S. P., Hashim, A. H., & Guan, N. C. (2021). Resilience in adolescent refugees living in Malaysia: The association with religiosity and religious coping. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *67*(4), 376–385. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764020957362

Diana, V. (2020). Kesehatan Mental (Sejarah Kesehatan Mental). In *Halodoc.Com* (Issue

Volume 6, Number 2, September 2026, pp: 357-373
E-ISSN: 2797-6440 P-ISSN: 2797-7722
DOI: 10.22373/arj.v6i2.35491

March). Gunung Agung. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Diana-Fakhriyani/publication/348819060_Kesehatan_Mental/links/60591b56458515e834643f66/Kesehatan-Mental.pdf.

Fairuzzaman, R. R. (2025). Al-Ghazali on Self-Regulation: Integration with Psychology. *Proceedings of Islamic Studies*.

Fauziyah, S. (2021). Impact of Fasting as Riyadhah on Self-Control Among Islamic Boarding School Students in Yogyakarta. *Millah*, *20*(2), 301–326. https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol20.iss2.art5

Hamzah, S., Abdullah, Usman, & Kurais. (2024). Sejarah Intelektual Islam: Kontribusi dan Pengaruh Pemikiran Al-Ghazali terhadap Dunia Islam Abad ke-11 M. *Batuthah: Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam*, *3*(2), 115–130. https://doi.org/10.38073/batuthah.v3i2.1785

Hasanah, U. (2023). NURTURING SELF-CONTROL THROUGH SPIRITUAL JOURNEY: ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE HAJJ. *Multazam : Jurnal Manajemen Haji Dan Umrah*, *3*(2), 37. https://doi.org/10.32332/multazam.v3i2.8122

Imam Al-Ghazali. (2013). Minhajul Abidin Jalan Para Ahli Ibadah. In A. H. as-Sasaky, D. I. Ba'adillah, & M. Alkatiri (Eds.), *KHATULISTIWA* (Cetakan Pe). Khatulistiwa Press.

M. Amin Syukur. (2003). Tasawuf kontekstual: solusi problem manusia modern. In *Pustaka Pelajar bekerjasama dengan LPK2 dan Suara Merdeka*. Pustaka Pelajar bekerjasama dengan LPK2 dan Suara Merdeka.

M. Kamalul Fikri, S.Th.I., M. A. (2022). *Imam Al-Ghazali: Biografi Lengkap Sang Hujjatul Islam*. Laksana. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=JTVnEAAAQBAJ&dq=Perjalanan+intelektual+al+ghazali&lr=&source=gbs_navlinks_s

Miftahul, K., & Desky, A. F. (2025). THE INFLUENCE OF FANATICISM AND RELIGIOSITY ON VERBAL. *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, *5*(1), 1–12.

Muchtar, N. E. P., Mu'ammar, M. A., & Wiyanti, E. (2025). Resilience Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Facing Religious Diversity in Junior High School Students. *Jurnal Cendekia Media Komunikasi Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam*, *17*(01), 186–200. https://doi.org/10.37850/cendekia.v17i01.969

Mujib, A., & Mudzakir, J. (2002). *Nuansa-Nuansa Psikologi Islam*. Raja Grafindo Persada.

Muraven, M., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). Self-Regulation and Depletion of Limited

Resources: Does Self-Control Resemble a Muscle? *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*(2), 247–259. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.2.247

Muslih, M., & Subhi, M. R. (2022a). Spiritual Quotient in Tasawuf Perspective. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *11*(03). https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v11i03.2236

Muslih, M., & Subhi, M. R. (2022b). Taxonomy Of Spiritual Quotient Learning Outcomes: an Insight From Tasawwuf Perspective. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *11*(03), 643. https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v11i03.2236

Noer Hidayah. (2025). Religiosity, Emotional Intelligence, and Self-Control: A Mediation Analysis in Islamic Higher Education Contexts. *Journal An-Nafs: Kajian Penelitian Psikologi*, *10*(2), 92–107. https://doi.org/10.33367/psi.v10i2.7768

Nofal, N. (1993). Al-Ghazālī. *Prospects*, *23*(3–4), 519–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02195133

Puteri, H. E., Arinda, N., Dewi, S., & Sari, G. (2022). Self-Control and Consumptive Behavior Control in Purchasing Internet Services for Social Networking Among Muslim Millennials. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *2*(6), 118–129. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejsocial.2022.2.6.361

Rahman, F., & Aziz, A. (2023). Self-Regulation in Islamic Psychology Perspective. *Jurnal Psikologi Islam*, *10*(2), 145–158.

Saifuddin, A. M. (2020). Kesehatan Mental dalam Perspektif Psikologi dan Agama. *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat*, *15*(2), 120–130. https://journal.unnes.ac.id/nju/index.php/kemas/article/download/19878/10123

Sari, L., & Karim, A. (2023). Hope and Emotional Regulation in Muslim Youth. *Jurnal Psikologi Integratif*, *11*(1), 55–67.

Shehadi, F., McCarthy, R. J., al-Ghazālī, & al-Ghazali. (1982). Freedom and Fulfillment. An Annotated Translation of al-Ghazālī's al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl and Other Relevant Works of al-Ghazālī. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *102*(2), 374. https://doi.org/10.2307/602542

Shroff, D. M., Breaux, R., & von Suchodoletz, A. (2023). Understanding the association between spirituality and mental health outcomes in adolescents in two non-Western countries: Exploring self-control as a potential mediator. *Development and Psychopathology*, *35*(3), 1434–1443. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579421001334

Simuh. (2019). *Tasawuf dan perkembangannya dalam Islam*. Raja Grafindo Persada. https://books.google.com/books/about/Tasawuf_dan_Perkembangannya_dalam_Islam.html?hl=id&id=xRuvDwAAQBAJ

Singh, J., Singh, G., Kumar, S., & Mathur, A. N. (2021). Religious influences in unrestrained consumer behaviour. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *58*,

102262. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102262

Strömbäck, C., Lind, T., Skagerlund, K., Västfjäll, D., & Tinghög, G. (2017). Does self-control predict financial behavior and financial well-being? *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance*, *14*, 30–38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbef.2017.04.002

Suhartanto, D., Dean, D., Sarah, I. S., Hapsari, R., Amalia, F. A., & Suhaeni, T. (2021). Does religiosity matter for customer loyalty? Evidence from halal cosmetics. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, *12*(8), 1521–1534. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-03-2020-0069

Susilo, H. B., Permadi, D. A., Ubaidillah, F. A., & Hasan, N. (2023). Religiusitas dan perilaku prososial santri. *PSYCOMEDIA : Jurnal Psikologi*, *3*(1), 16–22. https://doi.org/10.35316/psycomedia.2023.v3i1.16-22

Watt, W. M. (1963). *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of al-Ghazālī*. Edinburgh University Press.