

## The Phenomenon of Fatherlessness in Families in the Concept of Love from the Perspective of Al Ghazali and St. Agustinus

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**Abstract:** *This study discusses the phenomenon of Fatherlessness, defined as the absence of a father figure either physically or emotionally, which significantly affects a child's psychological, social, and spiritual development. Using a qualitative method through a library research approach, this article examines the concept of love from the perspectives of Al-Ghazali and St. Augustine as a philosophical response to the effects of Fatherlessness. Al-Ghazali emphasizes the concept of mahabbah in Sufism, viewing love as a means of purifying the soul and drawing closer to God. St. Augustine introduces ordo amoris, the proper order of love, in which love for God must be prioritized as the path to true happiness. Both thinkers assert that transcendental love toward God can spiritually compensate for the absence of a father figure. The findings show that such a religiously rooted approach to love may help individuals develop emotional resilience and spiritual balance. Thus, their philosophies offer a relevant alternative framework for understanding and addressing the impacts of Fatherlessness in the modern era.*

**Keywords:** *Fatherless, Love, Al-Ghazali, St. Augustine*

**Abstrak:** *Penelitian ini membahas fenomena Fatherless, yaitu ketiadaan sosok ayah secara fisik maupun emosional, yang berdampak pada perkembangan psikologis, sosial, dan spiritual anak. Dengan metode kualitatif melalui pendekatan studi kepustakaan, artikel ini mengkaji konsep cinta dari perspektif Al-Ghazali dan St. Agustinus sebagai solusi filosofis terhadap dampak Fatherless. Al-Ghazali menekankan konsep mahabbah dalam sufisme, yaitu cinta sebagai sarana penyucian jiwa untuk mendekat kepada Tuhan. St. Agustinus menawarkan gagasan ordo amoris, yaitu tatanan cinta yang benar di mana cinta kepada Tuhan menjadi yang utama dan mengarahkan manusia pada kebahagiaan sejati. Keduanya menegaskan bahwa cinta transendental kepada Tuhan dapat menjadi pengganti spiritual atas kehilangan figur ayah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan cinta religius ini dapat membantu individu membangun ketahanan emosional dan keseimbangan spiritual. Dengan demikian, pemikiran cinta menurut Al-Ghazali dan*

*St. Agustinus relevan dijadikan kerangka alternatif dalam memahami dan mengatasi dampak fenomena Fatherless di era modern.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Fatherless, Cinta, Al-Ghazali, St. Augustine*

## Introduction

Fatherless refers to the situation of the absence of a father figure in a child's life, both psychologically and physically.<sup>1</sup> According to Wardah Roudhotina in the Airlangga Safe Space webinar on June 25, 2023, fatherless is a phenomenon of minimal or no role of a father figure in the process of raising children, both psychologically and physically. This issue has become a hot topic on social media as a form of Fatherless behavior, showing the lack of a father figure in their lives.<sup>2</sup> The phenomenon of Fatherlessness is multidimensional and is influenced by various social, economic, and cultural aspects.<sup>3</sup> The causes of fatherlessness also include the death of a father, divorce, or the loss of a father's role physically or psychologically even though legally he is still a father.<sup>4</sup>

Fatherless phenomenon has had a real impact on life, starting from individual problems that then spread and affected society.<sup>5</sup> One case occurred in Surabaya, where a 13-year-old child experienced sexual violence by his biological father, his older brother and two uncles.<sup>6</sup> Head of Criminal Investigation Unit of Surabaya Police AKBP Hendro Sukmono said that this case of abuse had been going on since 2020 against a 13-year-old child or victim by four members of his family and was only revealed on January 5, 2024 after an external family reported the incident to the police.<sup>7</sup> According to Hendro, this child had experienced sexual abuse since he was in 3rd grade of elementary school or 9 years old and the last incident occurred in January 2024.<sup>8</sup> This case shows that the absence

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<sup>1</sup> Anselmus Agung Pramudito, Diana Putri Arini, and Irene Prilia Bevi Utomo, "A Phenomenological Study of Fatherlessness in Female Prisoners," *Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 8 (2024): 76–91, <https://doi.org/10.25077/jip.8.1.73-91.2024>.

<sup>2</sup> Sela Septi Dwi Arista, "Looking at the Fatherless Phenomenon, the Absence of the Role of a Father Figure," Airlangga University, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Yupi Anesti and Mirna Nur Alia Abdullah, "Fatherless Phenomenon: Causes and Consequences for Children and Families," *WISSEN: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2024): 201–3, <https://doi.org/10.62383/wissen.v2i2.105>.

<sup>4</sup> Mariamy, "The Phenomenon of Fatherless in Indonesia," Radio Republik Indonesia, 2025, <https://www.rri.co.id/lain-lain/1265658/fenomena-fatherless-di-indonesia>.

<sup>5</sup> Rizal Fadli, "The Impact of Fatherlessness on Child Development," halodoc, 2023, <https://www.halodoc.com/artikel/dampak-fatherless-bagi-perkembangan-anak>.

<sup>6</sup> Esti Widiyana, "Child Raped by Biological Father-Brother-2 Uncles Traumatized to Evacuated by Mother," *Detik Jatim*, January 20, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/jatim/hukum-dan-kriminal/d-7151824/anak-diperkosa-ayah-kandung-kakak-2-paman-trauma-hingga-diungsikan-ibunya>.

<sup>7</sup> BBC, "'People who should provide protection, instead commit crimes' – How could the case of sexual abuse of a junior high school student in Surabaya by her father, brother and two uncles happen?," *BBC News Indonesia*, 23 January 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c72gnyxrd0o>.

<sup>8</sup> BBC.

of a father's role in providing protection can cause children to become victims of violence in the family.<sup>9</sup>

Another case was found by Pramudito, et al. (2024) in a phenomenological study of fatherlessness in female prisoners which showed that the loss of a father figure played a role in causing them to fall into promiscuity and drug abuse, which ultimately led them to the criminal justice system.<sup>10</sup>

Another impact was also found by Delvia Sinca (2022), that children who experience fatherlessness in childhood tend to have difficulty building healthy relationships with the opposite sex.<sup>11</sup> Some seek attention through excessive romantic relationships, while others avoid interaction.<sup>12</sup> This is reinforced by Junaidin et al. (2023) by concluding that fatherlessness also triggers anxiety about marriage. Individuals who experience it often have negative perceptions of men, using experiences with their fathers as a reference to avoid similar partners. The father figure should act as a positive role model in shaping girls' views of men, but his absence actually worsens their fear of marriage.<sup>13</sup>

These cases reflect how the absence of a father figure in a family not only impacts the life of the individual child, but can also trigger broader consequences, such as increased risk of exploitation, domestic violence, and involvement in deviant behavior.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, understanding the broader impact of fatherlessness is crucial in designing solutions that are not only curative but also preventive.<sup>15</sup>

Fatherless phenomenon is also related to the emergence of undisciplined behavior in children in educational environments.<sup>16</sup> Head of the Integrated Psychological Service Unit (ULPT) Unisba Dinda Dwarawati said that children who grow up without a father figure tend to have difficulty obeying rules, act on their own, and are more vulnerable to being involved in cases of violence in the world of education.<sup>17</sup> One tragic example is the case of the death of a student at the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School

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<sup>9</sup> Febriyanti, "The Shadow of Sexual Violence Behind Fatherless," Amanat.id, 2024, <https://amanat.id/bayang-bayang-kekerasan-seksual-di-balik-fatherless/>.

<sup>10</sup> Pramudito, Arini, and Utomo, "Phenomenological Study of Fatherlessness in Female Prisoners."

<sup>11</sup> Delvia Sinca, "The Attitude of Fatherless Women in Choosing a Life Partner (Case Study in Pino Raya, South Bengkulu Regency)," *E-Repository of IAIN Bengkulu Library (FATMAWATI SUKARNO STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY (UINFAS) BENGKULU*, 2022), <http://repository.iainbengkulu.ac.id/id/eprint/8093>.

<sup>12</sup> Marhatisya Deyhan Somi Putri, "Fatherless, Afraid of Marriage: What's the Connection?," Kumparan.com, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Junaidin et al., "Marriage Anxiety in Early Adult Women Who Experience Fatherlessness," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 4 (2023): 16649–58, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i4.2839>.

<sup>14</sup> Indah Fitrah Yani, "7 Psychological Impacts of Children Without Fathers and Tips for Raising Them," Hellosehat, 2025, <https://hellosehat.com/parenting/remaja/kesehatan-mental-remaja/anak-dibesarkan-tanpa-ayah/>.

<sup>15</sup> Mariamy, "Fatherless Phenomenon in Indonesia."

<sup>16</sup> Endah Asih, "Fatherless Phenomenon Increasingly Encourages Juvenile Delinquency," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 2023, <https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/gaya-hidup/pr-016533920/fenomena-fatherless-kian-menyuubur-kenakalan-remaja?page=all>.

<sup>17</sup> Asih.

due to violence committed by his seniors.<sup>18</sup> In some cases, children involved in school violence often come from families with minimal father involvement.<sup>19</sup> The absence of a father figure in parenting makes children more susceptible to adopting aggressive behavior patterns, especially when they are raised in an environment that demands excessive masculinity, resulting in toxic masculinity.<sup>20</sup>

Cases of violence against children continue to be a serious concern in Indonesia. According to KPAI records, throughout 2023 there were 3,000 cases of violence against children, with sexual violence being the most common type of case. KPAI Chairperson Ai Maryati Solihah revealed that in the past three years, violations of children's rights were most often committed by family members, including biological fathers and siblings.<sup>21</sup> In line with this data, the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) observed a spike in cases of violence in schools throughout 2024. JPPI National Coordinator Ubaid Matraji reported that data collected up to September 2024 recorded 293 cases of violence occurring in schools.<sup>22</sup> This condition is further strengthened by the results of the 2024 National Survey of Children and Adolescents' Life Experiences (SNPHAR) conducted by the Ministry of PPPA. Deputy for Special Protection of Children at the Ministry of PPPA, Nahar stated that SNPHAR 2024 involved 15,120 samples in 189 districts/cities showing that 11.5 million children aged 13-17 years (50.78%) had experienced violence during their lives, while in the last 1 year there were around 7.6 million children (33.64%) experienced the same thing.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, this survey also shows that emotional violence is the most common type of violence experienced by children during 2024, with 45% of children throughout their lives and 30% of children in the past year. This form of violence includes harsh treatment from parents and bullying based on SARA, physical stigma, and economic conditions by peers. In fact, peers are recorded as the main perpetrators of emotional violence with the largest percentage of 85.08% in women and 83.44% in men.<sup>24</sup> These

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<sup>18</sup> Luna Septalisa, "Violence in Schools: The Impact of Fatherless and Toxic Masculinity?," Kompas.com, 2022, [https://katanetizen.kompas.com/read/2022/10/07/153308985/kekerasan-di-sekolah-imbas-fatherless-dan-maskulinitas-racun?page=all#google\\_vignette](https://katanetizen.kompas.com/read/2022/10/07/153308985/kekerasan-di-sekolah-imbas-fatherless-dan-maskulinitas-racun?page=all#google_vignette).

<sup>19</sup> Wildah Alfasma, Dyan Evita Santi, and Rahma Kusumandari, "Loneliness and aggressive behavior in fatherless adolescents," *Journal of Psychological Research* 3, no. 01 (2022): 40–50, <https://doi.org/10.30996/sukma.v3i1.6948>.

<sup>20</sup> Septalisa, "Violence in Schools: The Impact of Fatherlessness and Toxic Masculinity?"

<sup>21</sup> BBC, "'The person who should have provided protection, instead committed the crime' – How could the case of the molestation of a junior high school student in Surabaya by her father, brother and two uncles happen?"

<sup>22</sup> Sania Mashabi and Mahar Prastiwi, "JPPI: Throughout 2024 There Were 293 Cases of Violence in Schools," Kompas.com, 2024, <https://www.kompas.com/edu/read/2024/10/24/163509171/jppi-sepanjang-tahun-2024-ada-293-kasus-kekerasan-di-sekolah>.

<sup>23</sup> Legal and Public Relations Bureau of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, "2024 SPHPN and SNPHAR Data, a Strong Foundation for Women and Children's Protection Policies," KOMDIGI, 2024, <https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/artikel-gpr/detail/data-sphpn-dan-snphar-2024-landasan-kuat-kebijakan-perlindungan-perempuan-dan-anak>.

<sup>24</sup> Legal and Public Relations Bureau of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, "Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Releases National Women's Life Experience Survey (SPHPN) and National Survey of Children and Adolescents' Life Experience (SNPHAR) 2024," Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2024, <https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/page/view/NTQzMw==>.

data indicate that the social environment, both in the family, school, and in relationships with peers, plays a major role in shaping children's experiences of violence, where children who grow up without a father figure (Fatherless) tend to be more vulnerable to looking for a reliable substitute figure, so that this condition is at risk of being exploited by perpetrators of violence.<sup>25</sup>

The absence of a father figure in a child's life is one of the factors that contributes to the increase in drug abuse among teenagers. Without a father figure who can provide emotional support and be a role model, they are more vulnerable to experiencing a crisis of self-confidence, withdrawing from their social environment, and falling into drug abuse and acts of violence.<sup>26</sup> This condition is in line with Kominfo 2021 data, which shows that drug abuse is dominated by young people aged 15-35 years, with 82.4% as users, 47.1% acting as distributors, and 31.4% acting as couriers.<sup>27</sup> Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs (Menko Polkam) Budi Gunawan in a press conference at the National Police Headquarters in South Jakarta on Thursday, December 5, 2024 stated that Indonesia is facing a drug emergency.<sup>28</sup> Based on data, the number of drug abusers in Indonesia reached 3.3 million people in 2024, with the majority aged 15 to 24 years.<sup>29</sup>

The loss of a father figure can also have an impact on a child's social and emotional development, especially in building healthy and stable romantic relationships in adulthood.<sup>30</sup> This impact is also reflected in the downward trend in marriage rates that has continued to occur in recent years.<sup>31</sup> Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of marriages in Indonesia has experienced a significant decline in the last three years, with the sharpest decline occurring in 2023, which only recorded 1,577,255 marriages, lower than in 2022 which reached 1,705,348 marriages.<sup>32</sup> Lecturer

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<sup>25</sup> Yulinda Ashari, "Fatherless in Indonesia and its impact on children's psychological development," *Psikoislamika: Journal of Psychology and Islamic Psychology* 15, no. September (2017): 16–17, <https://doi.org/10.18860/psi.v15i1.6661>.

<sup>26</sup> Putri Ragieli Cici Anggraeni, "THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FATHERLESS AND SELF-CONTROL IN STUDENTS OF STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 10, SEMARANG CITY," *UNISSULA Institutional Repository* (Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang, 2024), <http://repository.unissula.ac.id/id/eprint/35504>.

<sup>27</sup> BNN Public Relations, "Avoid Narcotics, Make the Young Generation of the Nation Smarter," National Narcotics Agency of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022, <https://bnn.go.id/hindari-narkotika-cerdaskan-generasi-muda-bangsa/>.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Ryan Aditya and Ardhito Ramadhan, "Emergency, Indonesia is Now a Country of Consumers and Producers of Drugs," *Kompas.com*, 2024, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2024/12/06/06272401/darurat-indonesia-kini-jadi-negara-konsumen-dan-produsen-narkoba>.

<sup>29</sup> Siti Yona Hukmana, "Drug Users Reach 3.3 Million People, Dominated by Teenagers," *MetroTV Knowledge to Elevate*, 2024, <https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/Ky6CP3YM-pengguna-narkotika-capai-3-3-juta-orang-didominasi-remaja>.

<sup>30</sup> Raisa Adilla Alhasni and Rudi Cahyono, "The Impact of Father Absence on Children's Romantic Relationships: A Narrative Review," *UNAIR Repository*, 2024, <http://repository.unair.ac.id/id/eprint/133562>.

<sup>31</sup> Dea, "Marriage Rate in Indonesia Freefalls: Marriage Is Scary, Yes or No?," *Yesdok*, 2025, <https://new.yesdok.com/id/article/angka-pernikahan-di-indonesia-terjun-bebas-marriage-is-scary-yes-or-no>.

<sup>32</sup> CNN Indonesia, "Marriage Rate in Indonesia Continues to Decrease in the Last 6 Years," *CNN Indonesia*, 2024, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/gaya-hidup/20240306183127-284-1071319/angka-perkawinan-di-indonesia-terus-menurun-dalam-6-tahun-terakhir>.

in Psychology at Diponegoro University (Undip) Semarang, Amalia Rahmandani, stated that this change in social values, known as *marriage is scary*, was triggered by fear of marriage. The main factor that strengthens this fear is the rampant news about infidelity, child neglect, and domestic violence (KDRT).<sup>33</sup>

Fatherless phenomenon has several causes, namely from a social, divorce, and economic perspective.<sup>34</sup> First, the strong patriarchal culture that assumes that the role of men is only to earn a living while women take care of all household needs including educating and caring for children.<sup>35</sup> Second, divorce caused by frequent quarrels in the household that cannot be resolved.<sup>36</sup> Third, difficult economic conditions make the father prioritize work to earn money so that there is no time to be involved in raising his child.<sup>37</sup> According to Hasto Wardoyo, Head of the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN), the average marriage rate is 1.9 million per year, which when compared to the divorce rate with an average of 581 thousand per year, almost half of marriages in Indonesia end in divorce. Therefore, BKKBN also appeals to prospective couples and parents to maintain their physical and mental health.<sup>38</sup>

Children who lose their father figure or experience fatherlessness will experience psychological, social, character, and relational impacts.<sup>39</sup> First, emotional disorders in the form of anxiety, difficulty controlling emotions, and depression that arise due to feelings of loneliness, insecurity, and loss. Second, children will feel inferior, unsure of their own abilities because they do not receive mutual love or mutual respect from their father. Third, children will experience negative character development, such as difficulty being controlled, breaking rules, and other negative behaviors.<sup>40</sup> Fourth, children who experience fatherlessness may have difficulty in establishing social relationships, feel less able to express concern for others, and have problems building trust in social interactions. This can affect the child in establishing friendships with peers or building relationships

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<sup>33</sup> Titis Anis Fauziyah and Gloria Setyvani Putri, "The Decline in Marriage Rates and the Trend of 'Marriage is Scary', Here's the Explanation from Undip's Psychologist," Kompas.com, 2024, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2024/09/18/110230778/turunnya-angka-pernikahan-dan-tren-marriage-is-scary-begini-penjelasan>.

<sup>34</sup> Yupi Anesti and Mirna Nur Alia Abdullah, "Fatherless Phenomenon: Causes and Consequences for Children and Families."

<sup>35</sup> Arsyia Fajarrini and Aji Nasrul Umam, "The Impact of Fatherless on Children's Character in the Islamic Perspective," *Abata: Journal of Islamic Education for Early Childhood* 3, no. 1 (2023): 21–22, <https://doi.org/10.32665/abata.v3i1.1425>.

<sup>36</sup> Princess Diana and Agustina, "AN OVERVIEW OF MARRIAGE PERCEPTION IN YOUNG ADULT WOMEN WITH DIVORCE AND FATHERLESS PARENTS," *Journal of Social and Economics Research* 5, no. 2 (2023): 723, <https://idm.or.id/JSER/index.php/JSER>.

<sup>37</sup> Rusti Dian, "Indonesia Ranks 3rd as Fatherless Country in the World, Questioning the Existence of 'Fathers' in Children's Lives," Narasi, 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Lintang Budiyantri Prameswari, "High divorce rate, BKKBN continues to educate prospective brides and grooms," Antara: Indonesian News Agency, 2024.

<sup>39</sup> Arie Rihardini Sundari and Febi Herdajani, "The Impact of Fatherlessness on Children's Psychological Development," *Proceedings of the 2013 National Parenting Seminar* 53, no. 9 (2013): 256–71, <https://publikasiilmiah.ums.ac.id/bitstream/handle/11617/3973/A23.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> Christovel Ramot, "The Negative Impact of Losing a Father Figure (Fatherless) on Daughters," *klikdokter*, 2024, [https://www.klikdokter.com/psikologi/psikologi-keluarga/dampak-negatif-fatherless-pada-anak-perempuan?srsId=AfmBOooqi9S2Na0qqH\\_qQCwAlz4f58JFmQUYe7Ybq2tKtX1QkjkOIROT](https://www.klikdokter.com/psikologi/psikologi-keluarga/dampak-negatif-fatherless-pada-anak-perempuan?srsId=AfmBOooqi9S2Na0qqH_qQCwAlz4f58JFmQUYe7Ybq2tKtX1QkjkOIROT).

with life partners in the future.<sup>41</sup> Based on data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2021, there were 2,999,577 children out of 30.83 million children or 20.9% of children in Indonesia who grew up without the presence of a father, who did not live with their father, and who lost their father figure.<sup>42</sup>

After understanding the causes and negative impacts caused by the fatherless phenomenon, it is important to find a solution that can restore harmony in the family which is part of human needs.<sup>43</sup> Maslow initiated a hierarchy of human needs consisting of five levels, starting from the most basic needs. Each level further motivates a person to optimally fulfill the needs at the previous level.<sup>44</sup> According to Maslow, the first level of needs is physiological needs such as clothing, food, shelter and other biological needs to support life.<sup>45</sup> The second, safety needs or security needs, both psychological and physical security.<sup>46</sup> The third, belongingness and love or the need to have love and affection, this is an important aspect needed by humans because it is part of human social relationships.<sup>47</sup> According to Maslow, the need for love is very important to raise the spirit in living life, because love involves the process of giving and receiving affection that is manifested through behavior and patterns of mutual understanding.<sup>48</sup> The fourth, self-esteem or the need to feel appreciated. And finally, self-actualization needs or the need for self-actualization, this is a human need for his potential to achieve a certain ideal in life or self-acceptance. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if related to the phenomenon of fatherlessness, will be found certain needs in children that are not met, including the need for self-acceptance so that the concept of building a harmonious family is needed as a solution.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Rizal Fadli, "The Impact of Fatherlessness on Child Development," halodoc, 2023, <https://www.halodoc.com/artikel/dampak-fatherless-for-child-development?srsId=AfmBOorNF28n6lzXwrxFCQrY3cD8SQYNfofVcaifo4gOJMvg0SG7k5IA>.

<sup>42</sup> Diana and Agustina, "AN OVERVIEW OF MARRIAGE PERCEPTION IN YOUNG ADULT WOMEN WITH DIVORCE AND FATHERLESS PARENTS."

<sup>43</sup> Evanis Putri Ramadhani and Irsan, "HOUSEHOLD HARMONY AS AN EFFORTS TO PREVENT DIVORCE FROM ARIS MUNANDAR'S PERSPECTIVE," *Al-Mabsut: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 16, no. 2 (2022): 45–46, <https://doi.org/10.56997/almabsut.v16i2.686>.

<sup>44</sup> Ariyo Mardipep, Syafril, and Mangatur Sinaga, "Hierarchy of Needs in the Film Imperfect: Career, Love &," *Tambusai Education Journal* 7 (2023): 4037–39, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v7i1.5888>.

<sup>45</sup> Olivia Barcelona Nasution, "MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS," STIE YKPN, 2023, [https://www.stieykpn.ac.id/read/440/hirarki-kebutuhan-maslow.html#:~:text=Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of high-level needs \(psychogenic\)](https://www.stieykpn.ac.id/read/440/hirarki-kebutuhan-maslow.html#:~:text=Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of high-level needs (psychogenic)).

<sup>46</sup> Elza Sabillah and Hidayatul Fikra, "Conferences Series Learning Class Fulfillment of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as Motivation for Early Marriage in Generation Z," in Gunung Djati Conference Series, vol. 41, 2024, 3, <https://www.conferences.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/gdcs/article/view/2147>.

<sup>47</sup> Asep Kusnadi and Susi Nurpita, "Abraham Maslow's Theory of Needs in the Perspective of Sufism," *Journal of Education and Islam* 11, no. 2 (2023): 5–10, <http://journal.stit-insida.ac.id/index.php/alqalam/article/view/76>.

<sup>48</sup> Anggel Pames Lader Putri et al., "Love and Affection According to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," *ISTISYFA: Journal of Islamic Guidance and Counseling* 2, no. 03 (2023): 329, <https://ejournal.iainbengkulu.ac.id/index.php/istisyfa>.

<sup>49</sup> Maharani, Nurwahyuni Nasir, and Mira Sekar Arumi, "DESCRIPTION OF EMOTIONAL MATURITY OF EARLY ADULT WOMEN EXPERIENCING FATHERLESS (CASE STUDY IN TAMBELANG, BEKASI REGENCY)," *Journal of Psychology and Counseling Guidance* 4, no. 2 (2024): 4, <https://doi.org/10.6734/LIBEROSIS.V2I2.3027>.

To overcome the negative impacts of fatherlessness, an approach is needed that focuses not only on the legal and social aspects, but also on the psychological and emotional dimensions.<sup>50</sup> In this case, the concept of love becomes a fundamental element in rebuilding harmony in the family.<sup>51</sup> Love is not just an emotional expression, but also becomes the basis for the formation of a child's identity, instilling moral values, and creating a sense of security in the family.<sup>52</sup>

Love is the main foundation in all relationships, both between fellow human beings and in relationships with the Creator. As an expression of human inner feelings, love has a significant influence on life and is an integral element of human nature.<sup>53</sup> In their capacity as social beings, humans always need help from others to live their daily lives, because no individual can survive completely independently. The involvement of others in a person's life becomes very essential, so that love occupies a very important position in every aspect of human life. Love has the ability to unite humans in harmony and affection, creating connection and peace in social interactions.<sup>54</sup> The first form of love that humans receive when they are born into the world is the affection of their parents. Love from parents has a very important role so that problems will most likely arise if it is not fulfilled.<sup>55</sup> In this case, marriage is considered a sacred and holy solution, because it creates a happy family environment where love and affection between parents and children can develop optimally. Love and affection from both parents can determine the level of success of the child in the future.<sup>56</sup>

The phenomenon of fatherlessness has been widely studied in terms of its causes, psychological, social impacts, and practical solutions. However, studies on solutions based on the philosophy of love are still rare. The philosophy of love emphasizes the importance of love as a foundation in human relationships, but has not been widely studied as a basis for overcoming fatherlessness in families. Existing research focuses more on love from an emotional and practical aspect without examining in depth how the concept of love can be used to restore family harmony and strengthen the role of fathers in parenting. In addition, there have been no studies that link the concept of love in

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<sup>50</sup> Dwita Agustina Rahayu, Wahyuni, and Dewi Anggariani, "The Impact of Fatherlessness on Daughters (Case Study of Female Students at UIN Alauddin Makassar)," *Macora Journal* 3, no. 1 (2024): 131, <https://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/al-qadau/article/download/39203/18910/>.

<sup>51</sup> Ilham Laman et al., "The Influence of Fatherless on Children's Morals in the Study of Islamic Family Law," *Al-Qadau Journal: Islamic Family Law and Justice* 10, no. 2 (2023): 135–58, <https://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/al-qadau/article/download/39203/18910/>.

<sup>52</sup> Bunga Kinanti Setya Miko Putri and Lailia Rahmadanti, "The Phenomenon of Fatherlessness and Its Impact on Toxic Relationships in Couples: A Descriptive Study from the Perspective of Adolescents," *Proceedings of the 4th Indonesian Psychology Student Conference* (2023): 1–9, <https://prosiding.collabryzk.com/index.php/kmpi/article/view/4>.

<sup>53</sup> Fadilla Cahya Ramadanty, "The Concept of Mahabbah (Love) in the Book of Ihya Ulumuddin by Al-Al-Ghazali and Its Relevance to the Current Context" (Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University of Yogyakarta, 2021), <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/44807>.

<sup>54</sup> Gede Agus Siswadi, "Love in the Perspective of Jean-Paul Sartre's Existentialist Philosophy," *Sanjiwani: Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2023): 2, <https://doi.org/10.25078/sjf.v14i1.160>.

<sup>55</sup> M Yusuf, "Moral Education According to Ibn Miskawaih," *Mau'izhah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2018): 55, <https://doi.org/10.55936/mauizhah.v8i2.4>.

<sup>56</sup> Yupi Anesti and Mirna Nur Alia Abdullah, "Fatherless Phenomenon: Causes and Consequences for Children and Families."

philosophy, especially the thoughts of great philosophers, with preventive solutions to fatherlessness. Therefore, a deeper understanding of how love can improve family relationships is very important, especially through the perspectives of Al Ghazali and St. Augustine.

Thus, the problem that can be formulated in this study is how the concept of the philosophy of love according to Al Ghazali and St. Agustinus as religious figures can provide solutions in dealing with the phenomenon of fatherless families in Indonesia today? This study aims to examine and identify views on the concept of the philosophy of love from two religious figures who are also philosophers in dealing with the problem of fatherless families. This study is expected to provide an important contribution in finding solutions to the phenomenon of fatherless families through the concept of the philosophy of love, and is useful for anyone who wants to study the phenomenon of *Fatherless* families from the perspective of the philosophy of love.

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach *to* explore in depth the concept of love from the perspective of the philosophy of love in the context of the fatherless phenomenon. This study will apply a library study, namely a data collection technique by reviewing literature, books, notes, and various reports that are relevant to the problem being studied.<sup>57</sup> This method was chosen because it allows researchers to explore various perspectives and theories that are relevant to the topic, as well as reviewing existing literature to identify potential solutions.<sup>58</sup> This study will identify problems in references that have become references for researchers, then reveal a way out of the problem, thus giving birth to an appropriate concept and making conclusions from this research review. Descriptive data analysis techniques will be used in this study to describe the research results in detail.<sup>59</sup>

### **Biography, Works, and Concept of Love from Al Ghazali's Perspective**

Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali was born in 1058 in Thus, Persia. He studied under Imam al-Juwayni in Nishapur and became an outstanding student in the fields of fiqh, kalam, and philosophy.<sup>60</sup> His knowledge took him to Baghdad, where he was appointed as a teacher at the Madrasah Nizhamiyah by Wazir Nizam al-Mulk. However, at the peak of his glory, he experienced a spiritual crisis that made him leave his prestigious position and live a life of asceticism in various cities such as Damascus, Jerusalem, and Mecca.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Nur Hasanah, *Library Research Methods: Concepts, Theories, & Research Design*, ed. Nur Azizah Rahma (Malang: PT. Literasi Nusantara Abadi Group, 2023), <https://ebooks.gramedia.com/id/buku/metode-penelitian-kepuustakaan-> Pg. 2.

<sup>58</sup> JR Raco, *QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS: TYPES, CHARACTERISTICS, AND ADVANTAGES*, ed. Arita L (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 2010), [/https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/mfzuj](https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/mfzuj).

<sup>59</sup> Hasanah, *Library Research Methods: Concepts, Theories, & Research Design*. Pg. 77.

<sup>60</sup> Al Halim Kusuma and Laila Rahmadani, "Imam Al-Ghazali and His Thoughts," *EKHSIS: Journal of Economics, Sharia and Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.59548/je.v1i1.18>.

<sup>61</sup> Ruyatul Fauziah, "The Resurrection of Man in the Afterlife According to Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd," *Aqlania* 9, no. 2 (2018): 194–97, <https://doi.org/10.32678/aqlania.v9i02.2066>.

During this period of his search, he wrote *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin*, his great work that combines Islamic law with Sufism.<sup>62</sup> After returning to Thus, he founded a madrasah and khanqah for seekers of knowledge and Sufis, until he finally died in 1111 AD.<sup>63</sup>

As a great thinker, Al-Ghazali wrote many influential works in the Islamic world.<sup>64</sup> *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin* is one of his most famous works, discussing the purification of the soul and the relationship between knowledge, deeds, and spirituality.<sup>65</sup> He also wrote *Tahafut al-Falasifah* which contains his criticism of philosophical thought, especially the teachings of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina which he considered contradictory to Islam.<sup>66</sup> Al-Ghazali succeeded in bridging the understanding between sharia and spirituality by using an approach that combines intellectualism and Sufism, making him one of the most influential scholars in Islamic history.<sup>67</sup>

In *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin*, Al-Ghazali discusses the concept of love (*mahabbah*) as the culmination of the human spiritual journey.<sup>68</sup> According to him, true love is love for Allah, which can only be achieved through *ma'rifah* (knowledge of Allah) obtained through contemplation and deep reflection.<sup>69</sup> Love for Allah is not just a feeling, but an impulse that forms obedience and longing for Him.<sup>70</sup> He also explained that true love extends to all those related to Allah, including fellow humans in the bond of *mahabbah fillah* (love for Allah).<sup>71</sup> On the contrary, he warned that excessive worldly love, such as love for wealth and power, can lead humans astray and distance them from true happiness.<sup>72</sup> With

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<sup>62</sup> Fauziah.

<sup>63</sup> Lidia Artika et al., "Biography of Sufism Figure Al-Ghazali," *Journal of Educational and Cultural Research Studies* 1, no. 2 (2023): 29–55, <https://doi.org/10.59031/jkppk.v1i2.108>.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Faidah Nurin, "THE CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION FROM IMAM AL-GHAZALI'S PERSPECTIVE (A Study of Imam Al-Ghazali's Thought Figure in the Translated Book of *Ihya'Ulumuddin* by Purwanto)" (State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Jember, 2018), <http://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/30283/1/1.cover.skripsi-digabungkan%281%29.pdf>.

<sup>65</sup> Saidin Hamzah et al., "ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL HISTORY: THE CONTRIBUTION AND INFLUENCE OF AL-GHAZALI'S THOUGHT ON THE ISLAMIC WORLD OF THE 11TH CENTURY AD," *Batuthah: Journal of Islamic Padaban History* 3, no. 2 (2024): 115–30, <https://doi.org/10.38073/batuthah.v3i2.1785>.

<sup>66</sup> Ahmad Atabik, "Study of Al-Ghazali's Thoughts on Philosophy," *Fikrah* 2, no. 1 (2014): 19–40, <https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/fikrah/article/download/551/568>.

<sup>67</sup> Hamzah et al., "ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL HISTORY: THE CONTRIBUTION AND INFLUENCE OF AL-GHAZALI'S THOUGHT ON THE ISLAMIC WORLD IN THE 11TH CENTURY AD."

<sup>68</sup> Al Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin (Book Eleventh) Love of Allah and Intentions*, ed. by Irwan Kurniawan, 1 ed. (Bandung: Marja Publishers, 2020), <https://ipusnas2.perpusnas.go.id/book/6fe1a480-4b07-49bb-ba86-f335bca919d2>.

<sup>69</sup> Al Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Uumuddin (Third Book) Preserving the Qur'an, Zikr & Prayers. Time for Worship*, ed. by Irwan Kurniawan, 1st ed. (Bandung: Marja Publisher, 2020), <https://ipusnas2.perpusnas.go.id>.

<sup>70</sup> Al Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin (Fifth Book) Association, Uzlah, Travel, Music & Ecstasy. Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil, The Glory of the Prophet's Morals*, ed. by Irwan Kurniawan, 1st ed. (Bandung: Marja Publisher, 2020), <https://ipusnas2.perpusnas.go.id>.

<sup>71</sup> Al Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin (Sixth Book) Miracles of the Heart, Good Morals, Appetite & Lust Dangers of the Tongue*, ed. by Irwan Kurniawan, 1 ed. (Bandung: Marja Publishers, 2020), <https://ipusnas2.perpusnas.go.id>.

<sup>72</sup> Al Ghazali, *Ihya' "Ulumuddin (Book Eight) Love of Power and Riya". Arrogance and Ujub*, ed. by Irwan Kurniawan, 1st ed. (Bandung: Marja Publisher, 2020), <https://ipusnas2.perpusnas.go.id>.

this thought, Al-Ghazali emphasized that love is not just an emotion, but a path to the perfection of faith and eternal happiness.<sup>73</sup>

### **Biography, Works and Concept of Love from the Perspective of St. Augustine**

St. Augustine was born on November 13, 354 in Thagaste, Numidia (now Algeria) into a middle-class family. His father was a pagan, while his mother was a devout Christian. From an early age he was introduced to Christian teachings but only became interested in religion after a long intellectual journey.<sup>74</sup> He studied in Carthage, studied rhetoric, and lived a hedonistic life before experiencing a spiritual crisis that led to his conversion.<sup>75</sup> After exploring ideas such as Manichaeism and Neoplatonism, he was influenced by Bishop Ambrose and the verse in Romans 13:13-14.<sup>76</sup> In 387, he was baptized with his son and then left worldly life to pursue spirituality.<sup>77</sup>

After returning to Africa, St. Augustine founded a monastic community and became Bishop of Hippo.<sup>78</sup> He wrote many works that influenced Western Christian thought, such as *Confessions* and *The City of God*.<sup>79</sup> *Confessions* is a spiritual autobiography that describes his life journey and inner struggles, while *The City of God* discusses the duality between the earthly and heavenly worlds.<sup>80</sup> As a bishop, he was also active in fighting against heresies such as Donatism and Pelagianism.<sup>81</sup>

In *Confessions*, St. Augustine describes love as a force that moves humans. He distinguishes true love that leads humans to God from worldly love that leads astray.

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<sup>73</sup> Al Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin (Book Twelve) Awas & Wawas Diri. Meditation, Death & What Happens After*, ed. by Irwan Kurniawan, 1 ed. (Bandung: Marja Publisher, 2020), <https://ipusnas2.perpusnas.go.id>.

<sup>74</sup> OSA Bernardus Wos Baru, *Saint Augustine: His Spirituality and Historical Snippets of the Order of Saint Augustine in the Land of Papua*, ed. Yudi Dayu Rifanto (PT. Kanisius, 2022).

<sup>75</sup> Hilmi Aprilia Putri and Muhammad Ilham Aziz, "Philosophy of History in the Perspective of Saint Augustine," *Axiology: Journal of Education and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2023): 8–15, <https://doi.org/10.47134/aksiologi.v4i1.136>.

<sup>76</sup> Rahel Klara Bella Simanjuntak et al., "AGUSTINE'S (354-430) CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CHARACTER," *Pediaqu: Journal of Social and Humanitarian Education* 4, no. 1 (2025): 1–23.

<sup>77</sup> Edison RL Tinambunan, "Happiness According to Scepticism," *Widya Sasana Theological Philosophy Series* 24, no. 23 (2014): 220, <http://eprosiding.stftws.ac.id/index.php/serifilsafat/article/download/135/130>.

<sup>78</sup> Ivonne Sandra Sumual et al., "The Spirit of Augustine as a Model of Religious Education in Alleviating Poverty Issues in Indonesia: A Proposal for Asian Constructive Theology," *Journal of Theology and Christian Ministry* 5, no. 2 (2021): 192, <https://doi.org/10.33991/epigraphe.v5i2.308>.

<sup>79</sup> Hilmi Dwi Irawan et al., "Justice and Religiosity According to Saint Augustine," *Praxis: Journal of Applied Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (2024): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1111/praxis.xxxxxxx>.

<sup>80</sup> Herawati, "Augustine: Portrait of a Medieval Historian and Contribution to the Study of Islamic History," *Thaqafiyat* 13, no. 1 (2012): 149–54, <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/adab/thaqafiyat/article/view/25>.

<sup>81</sup> Valentinus Febianto Bayu Kurniawan, "A Review of the Holiness of Service from the Sinful Service of the Sacraments according to Saint Augustine of Hippo," *Focus* 1, no. 2 (2020): 75–82, <https://doi.org/10.26593/focus.v1i2.4531>.

<sup>82</sup>True love brings happiness because it is rooted in God, while love for power, wealth, and physical lust actually distances humans from the truth (*Book X, Chapter XXII-XXIII*).<sup>83</sup> He asserts that excessive love of worldly things makes humans lose their highest goal, which is God Himself (*Book II, Chapter V*). For Augustine, true love is not merely a desire, but an orientation of the soul towards the highest good.<sup>84</sup>

### **Fatherless and Its Relationship to the Concept of Love**

Family is the first place for children to learn about love and affection. The emotional relationship between parents and children is the basis for building a child's personality and social values.<sup>85</sup> Fathers, as one of the main figures in the family, play an important role in providing protection, guidance, and role models in social relationships. However, when a father is not physically or emotionally present (fatherless), the balance in the family is disrupted. Children lose a figure who should be a role model in understanding and feeling healthy love.<sup>86</sup> The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) even defines fatherless as the absence of a father's role in parenting, even though he may be physically present.<sup>87</sup>

Fatherlessness has a direct impact on how a child understands love, especially in romantic relationships in adulthood. For girls, fathers are often considered "first loves" who set the standard for how they should be treated in relationships.<sup>88</sup> When a father is absent or does not show affection, girls tend to have difficulty understanding healthy relationships. They may seek validation in the wrong places, get caught up in toxic relationships, or be afraid to get into relationships because they are worried about being abandoned.<sup>89</sup> In addition, fatherlessness also makes children more susceptible to identity crises and low self-esteem, which can lead to emotional instability in relationships.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine: Translated by Edward Bouverie Pusey (Original and complete edition) - 1909* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2023), <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confess.html#formats>.

<sup>83</sup> Augustine.

<sup>84</sup> Augustine.

<sup>85</sup> Rahayu, Wahyuni, and Anggariani, "The Impact of Fatherlessness on Daughters (Case Study of Female Students of UIN Alauddin Makassar)."

<sup>86</sup> Evelyn Diandra, "Love, Wounds and Loss," *Critical Girlhood Studies*, 2024, <https://www.criticalgirlhoodstudies.org/article/love-wounds-and-loss>.

<sup>87</sup> PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND CHILD PROTECTION, "Strengthening the Role of Fathers to Improve the Quality of Child Care," Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020, <https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/page/view/Mjg2MA==>.

<sup>88</sup> Diandra, "Love, Wounds and Loss."

<sup>89</sup> Sinca, "The Attitude of Fatherless Women in Choosing a Life Partner (Case Study in Pino Raya, South Bengkulu Regency)."

<sup>90</sup> Clara Puspita and Aan Setiadarma, "Interpersonal Communication with the Opposite Sex in Fatherless Women," *Journal of Communication Science* 11, no. 1 (2024): 11–20, <https://doi.org/10.31294/kom.v11i1.21339.g6403>.

The presence of a father in a harmonious family helps children understand the concept of healthy love by providing a sense of security, respect, and genuine affection.<sup>91</sup> In contrast, daughters in fatherless families often have difficulty building trust in their partners or even develop unhealthy emotional dependencies.<sup>92</sup> The patriarchal culture in Indonesia also exacerbates this phenomenon by positioning fathers only as breadwinners, not as emotional figures in the family.<sup>93</sup> However, in some cases, religious teachings and cultural values can be a saving factor that helps individuals understand love in a more positive form through the values of affection, forgiveness, and social support.<sup>94</sup> Thus, fatherlessness has a close relationship with the concept of love, because a person's emotional experiences since childhood determine how they understand and experience relationships in the future.

## Research Findings

### Fatherless Phenomenon in the Concept of Love from Al Ghazali's Perspective

The phenomenon of fatherlessness or the absence of a father's role in a child's life is increasingly becoming a concern in the modern era. The presence of a father in a family is not only limited to fulfilling material needs, but also as a giver of affection, protector, and moral and spiritual guide. When a child grows up without a father figure, he loses one of the sources of love and guidance that plays an important role in his spiritual and moral journey. This can lead to mental restlessness, loss of direction, and instability in understanding the true meaning of love. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, love is not just a feeling, but a fundamental principle that shapes human relationships with God and others.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, the loss of a father figure can have an impact on an individual's understanding of love, both in emotional, social, and spiritual aspects.<sup>96</sup>

Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulumuddin* states that true love begins with *ma'rifah*, which is knowing God with the heart and soul.<sup>97</sup> Without the guidance of a father, a child can experience emotional emptiness that makes it difficult for him to understand transcendental love. In his thoughts on *mahabbah*, Al-Ghazali emphasizes that love for God must be the basis for every other form of love, including love within the family.<sup>98</sup> In

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<sup>91</sup> Tariza Yefabilla Fauzi and Ike Herdiana, "The Relationship between Fatherless and Intimate Relationships in Young Adult Women," *Airlangga University Repository*, 2024, 1–8, <http://repository.unair.ac.id/id/eprint/133944>.

<sup>92</sup> Puspita and Setiadarma, "Interpersonal Communication with the Opposite Sex in Fatherless Women."

<sup>93</sup> Diandra, "Love, Wounds and Loss."

<sup>94</sup> Romadhona Awallia and Wijaya Kuswanto Cahniyo, "The Impact of Fatherlessness on the Emotional Development of Early Childhood," *Journal of Early Childhood Education* 9, no. 1 (2024): 101–12, <https://doi.org/10.32678/assibyan.v9i1.10017>.

<sup>95</sup> Rusmin Abdul Rauf, "The Station of Love in Al Ghazaly's View," *Jurnal Ushuluddin: Media for Islamic Thought Dialogue* 25, no. 1 (2023): 131–41, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jumdpi.v25i1.36407>.

<sup>96</sup> Yenni Mutia Husen, "METHOD OF ACHIEVING HAPPINESS IN AL-GHAZALI'S PERSPECTIVE" (AR-RANIRY DARUSSALAM STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY BANDA ACEH, 2018), <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/6266>.

<sup>97</sup> Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulumuddin (Book Eleventh) Love of Allah and Intentions*.

<sup>98</sup> Ramadanty, "The Concept of Mahabbah (Love) in the Book of Ihya Ulumuddin by Al-Al-Ghazali and Its Relevance to the Current Context."

this context, children who grow up without a father figure may have difficulty in building healthy love due to the lack of examples of how love should be given and received.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, individuals who experience fatherlessness need to rediscover the meaning of love through a spiritual approach so as not to get caught up in the search for worldly love alone.<sup>100</sup>

In *Kimiyatus Sa'adah*, Al-Ghazali explains that true happiness does not lie in fulfilling worldly needs, but in one's closeness to God.<sup>101</sup> For individuals who experience fatherlessness, the search for love is often diverted to material things or less meaningful social relationships. The loss of a father figure can cause a person to seek validation from the outside environment, which in some cases can lead to unhealthy relationship patterns or excessive emotional dependence.<sup>102</sup> According to Al-Ghazali, to achieve true happiness, a person must understand that true love is love that leads to goodness and brings one closer to God.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, facing the phenomenon of fatherlessness is not enough with just social support, but also requires a deeper understanding of love in accordance with the values of Sufism.<sup>104</sup>

Al-Ghazali divides love into several levels, where the balance between love for oneself, others, and God is the key to living life.<sup>105</sup> Children who lose the role of a father in their lives are at risk of experiencing this imbalance, which then affects the way they understand and express affection.<sup>106</sup> In *the Concept of Mahabbah in Ihya' Ulumuddin*, Ramadhanty (2021) states that love in Islam must be based on sincerity and obedience to Allah, because only in this way can love be a source of peace.<sup>107</sup> This concept can be a solution for those who experience fatherlessness, namely by strengthening spiritual relationships as a higher form of love, replacing the emotional emptiness left by the father figure.<sup>108</sup>

From a Sufi perspective, Al-Ghazali argues that true love is that which brings a person to true happiness, not just momentary emotional satisfaction.<sup>109</sup> In the context of fatherlessness, this understanding is important because it helps individuals to build a broader and deeper meaning of love. Although the loss of a father figure can cause

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<sup>99</sup> Ega Nasrudin, Aceng Kosasih, and Mokh. Iman Firmansyah, "Mahabbah and Ma'rifah in the Middle of Global Challenges from Tasawuf Perspective," *Jurnal Al – Qiyam* 4, no. 2 (2023): 34–35, <https://ojs.staiafurqan.ac.id/alqiyam/article/view/387/302>.

<sup>100</sup> Ahmad Zaini, "Imam Al-Ghazali's Sufistic Thought," *Esoteric: Journal of Morals and Sufism* 2, no. 1 (2016): 146–59, <https://doi.org/10.21043/esoterik.v2i1.1902>.

<sup>101</sup> Maulana Abi Khatfah, "Happiness in the Views of Imam Al-Ghazali and Thomas Aquinas: A Spiritual and Philosophical Comparison," *Journal of Islamic and Social Religious Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 200–201, <https://jurnal.itc.web.id/index.php/jkis/index>.

<sup>102</sup> Husen, "METHOD OF ACHIEVING HAPPINESS IN AL-GHAZALI'S PERSPECTIVE."

<sup>103</sup> Rauf, "The Station of Love in Al Ghazaly's View."

<sup>104</sup> Wahyu Budiantoro, "The Concept of Love (Mahabbah) in the Logic of Transcendental Communication," *Amerta: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–13, <https://ejournal.amertamedia.co.id/index.php/amerta/article/view/3>.

<sup>105</sup> Rauf, "The Station of Love in Al Ghazaly's View."

<sup>106</sup> Ramadanty, "The Concept of Mahabbah (Love) in the Book of Ihya Ulumuddin by Al-Al-Ghazali and Its Relevance to the Current Context."

<sup>107</sup> Ramadanty.

<sup>108</sup> Zaini, "Imam Al-Ghazali's Sufistic Thought," 2016.

<sup>109</sup> Husen, "METHOD OF ACHIEVING HAPPINESS IN AL-GHAZALI'S PERSPECTIVE."

emotional pain, a person can still find happiness through closeness to God and understanding that true love is not always present in physical form, but also in spiritual form.<sup>110</sup> In this way, individuals who experience fatherlessness can build emotional resilience and find a more meaningful meaning of life in accordance with the Sufi values taught by Al-Ghazali.<sup>111</sup>

### Fatherless Phenomenon in the Concept of Love from St. Augustine's Perspective

The phenomenon of fatherlessness or the absence of a father in a child's life is a complex social challenge in the modern era. In St. Augustine's thinking, love has an order that must be directed towards the highest good, namely God.<sup>112</sup> Referring to the results of his research on the role of fathers, Kosma Manurung concluded that fathers in the family act as figures who instill moral and spiritual values, and help children understand true and responsible love.<sup>113</sup> When fathers are absent, either physically or emotionally, children often have difficulty forming a healthy moral and emotional identity.<sup>114</sup> St. Augustine in *Confessions* describes his search for true love before finally finding peace in God.<sup>115</sup>

In *Confessions*, St. Augustine wrote that his soul was restless until he found God as the center of true love.<sup>116</sup> He criticized love that is only oriented towards oneself (*amor sui*), because this kind of love will lead humans to emptiness and alienation.<sup>117</sup> The phenomenon of fatherlessness can be related to this concept, because children who grow up without the presence of a father often have difficulty in understanding the true order of love.<sup>118</sup> Without the guidance of a father, children tend to look for substitutes for love

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<sup>110</sup> Eko Zulfikar, "The Relationship of Mahabbah According to QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 31 with Pancasila as the State Ideology: A Study of Imam al-Ghazali's Thoughts in the Book of Mukasyafat al-Qulub," *EAIC: Esoteric Annual International Conferences* 1, no. 01 (2022): 198–216, <http://103.35.140.33/index.php/EAIC/article/view/309>.

<sup>111</sup> Nasrudin, Kosasih, and Firmansyah, "Mahabbah and Ma'rifah in the Middle of Global Challenges From Tasawuf Perspective."

<sup>112</sup> Grace Son Nassa, "THE TRINITY IN THE VIEW OF AUGUSTINE FROM HIPPO AUGUSTINE'S VIEW OF THE TRINITY," *Te Deum (Journal of Theology and Ministry Development)* 11, no. 2 (2022): 215–235, <https://doi.org/10.51828/td.v11i2.191>.

<sup>113</sup> Kosma Manurung, "Examining Fathers' Contributions in Teaching Independence to Children," *EDULEAD: Journal of Christian Education and Leadership* 3, no. 1 (2022): 61–77, <https://doi.org/10.47530/edulead.v3i1.95>.

<sup>114</sup> Anggun Nurul Isma et al., "Ethics and the Plurality of Human Nature According to St. Augustine," *Praxis: Journal of Applied Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (2024): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.11111/praxis.xxxxxxx>.

<sup>115</sup> Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine: Translated by Edward Bouverie Pusey (Original and complete edition) - 1909*. Book III, Chapter I. (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2023), <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confess.html#formats>.

<sup>116</sup> Augustine. Book I, Chapter I

<sup>117</sup> Alfensius Alwino, "UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SELF-INTEREST ACCORDING TO AUGUSTINE AND HOBBS," *MELINTAS An International Journal of Philosophy and Religion (MIJPR)* 34, no. 3 (2018): 233–47, <https://doi.org/10.26593/mel.v34i3.3458.233-247>.

<sup>118</sup> Agustinus Tetiro, "Tension between Metaphysics and Theology in Augustine's Thought," *Jurnal Dekonstruksi* 9, no. 02 (2023): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.54154/dekonstruksi.v9i02.142>.

that do not always lead to true happiness, so they are more susceptible to egoism and the search for external validation.<sup>119</sup>

St. Augustine also introduced the concept of *ordo amoris*, the true order of love, in which love for God must be placed above all else.<sup>120</sup> If the father in the family serves as a role model in instilling these values, then the absence of the father can cause a distortion in understanding love.<sup>121</sup> This perspective is reinforced in the study of ethics and the plurality of human nature according to St. Augustine, who asserts that humans have a tendency to seek love and meaning in their lives.<sup>122</sup> In the context of fatherlessness, children often seek emotional validation from external sources that do not always lead them to true happiness.<sup>123</sup>

In addition, St. Augustine highlighted the concept of *totus Christus* in sacramental ecclesiology which emphasizes the importance of the community of faith in guiding individuals.<sup>124</sup> This idea emphasizes that love is not only individual but also collective, where the church and society can play a role in filling the void caused by the absence of a father figure.<sup>125</sup> Not only that, the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* which emphasizes that everything comes from God's will, can also be associated with the phenomenon of fatherlessness.<sup>126</sup> In St. Augustine's view, everything that happens in life is inseparable from God's plan, including the loss of a father figure.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, even though a child experiences the absence of a father, it can be a path to finding a higher true love, namely love for God.<sup>128</sup>

St. Augustine concludes his reflection on love by stating that the human heart will never find true peace until it rests in God.<sup>129</sup> He asserts that humans have a natural tendency to seek happiness, but true happiness will not be found in worldly things.<sup>130</sup> In the context of fatherlessness, children who lose a father figure often experience inner restlessness and try to find love in the wrong places.<sup>131</sup> However, according to St.

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<sup>119</sup> Manurung, "Exploring Fathers' Contributions in Teaching Independence to Children."

<sup>120</sup> Nassa, "THE TRINITY IN THE VIEW OF AUGUSTINE FROM HIPPO AUGUSTINE'S VIEW OF THE TRINITY."

<sup>121</sup> Manurung, "Exploring Fathers' Contributions in Teaching Independence to Children."

<sup>122</sup> Isma et al., "Ethics and the Plurality of Human Nature According to St. Augustine."

<sup>123</sup> Alwino, "UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SELF-INTEREST ACCORDING TO AUGUSTINE AND HOBBS."

<sup>124</sup> Angga Avila, "Sacramental Ecclesiology: Adopting Augustine's Totus Christus for Evangelical Ecclesiology," *Veritas: Journal of Theology and Ministry* 2, no. 2 (2021): 237–55, <https://doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v20i2.468>.

<sup>125</sup> Agung Sulle Padang, *From the Bible to Anime Discourse on Theology, Leadership, Education, and Social Issues*, First (LP2M IAKN TORAJA, 2021), [https://www.academia.edu/94161278/DARI\\_BIBLIKA\\_KE\\_ANIME\\_Diskursus\\_Seputar\\_Teologi\\_Kepemimpinan\\_Pendidikan\\_dan\\_Isu\\_Sosial](https://www.academia.edu/94161278/DARI_BIBLIKA_KE_ANIME_Diskursus_Seputar_Teologi_Kepemimpinan_Pendidikan_dan_Isu_Sosial).

<sup>126</sup> FX Prathama Adi, "Cosmological Studies According to Aurelius Agustinus in Confessiones," *Student Journal*, 2012, 1–109, <https://rumahfilsafat.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/jurnal-mahasiswa.pdf>.

<sup>127</sup> Avila, "Sacramental Ecclesiology: Adopting Augustine's Totus Christus for Evangelical Ecclesiology."

<sup>128</sup> Isma et al., "Ethics and the Plurality of Human Nature According to St. Augustine."

<sup>129</sup> Tetiro, "The Tension between Metaphysics and Theology in Augustine's Thought."

<sup>130</sup> Isma et al., "Ethics and the Plurality of Human Nature According to St. Augustine."

<sup>131</sup> Manurung, "Exploring Fathers' Contributions in Teaching Independence to Children."

Augustine, only love for God can provide true peace. Therefore, the solution for those who experience loss is not simply to find a replacement, but to direct their love to God as the source of perfect and eternal love.<sup>132</sup>

## Research Analysis

Based on the results of the study of the concept of love in the perspective of Al-Ghazali and St. Augustine, it was found that the phenomenon of fatherlessness has a significant impact on the psychological, social, and spiritual development of a child. The absence of a father figure not only affects the emotional aspect but also on how individuals understand and build love in their lives. Using a literature study approach, this study analyzes how these two figures provide an understanding of love that can be a solution in dealing with the phenomenon of fatherlessness .

From Al-Ghazali's perspective, true love is love for God (*mahabbah illahiyah*) which is the basis for all other forms of love, including love within the family. He believes that individuals who have lost a father figure can rediscover the meaning of love through a spiritual approach that prioritizes a relationship with God. The concept of *mahabbah* in Sufism explained by Al-Ghazali emphasizes that love must not depend on something that is mortal, but must be directed towards the Most Eternal. In the context of fatherlessness , children who have lost their father figure need to develop a higher love, namely love that is based on divine values so that they do not get trapped in excessive emotional sadness or look for love in the wrong place.

Meanwhile, St. Augustine in *Confessions* explains that true love can only be found in God, not in temporary worldly pleasures. He introduced the concept of *ordo amoris* or the true order of love, namely that love for God must be placed above all else. In relation to the phenomenon of fatherlessness , children who lose a father figure often have difficulty finding direction in life and emotional stability. If in Al-Ghazali's thinking the solution is found through *mahabbah* which brings oneself closer to God, then in St. Augustine's thinking, the solution is found in *ordo amoris* which guides individuals to direct their love to God as the main source of happiness.

The similarity between the two lies in the concept that true love should not rely on the mortal world, but should be oriented towards a relationship with God. However, the fundamental difference is that Al-Ghazali emphasizes a Sufi approach in understanding love as a means of achieving true happiness, while St. Augustine emphasizes the order of love that must be directed towards God so as not to fall into misleading worldly desires.

In a social context, the phenomenon of fatherlessness is not only related to the spiritual aspect but also has an impact on the pattern of relationships in society. Data that has been presented in the study shows that children who experience fatherlessness are more susceptible to emotional disorders, loss of self-confidence, and difficulty in

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<sup>132</sup> Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine: Translated by Edward Bouverie Pusey (Original and complete edition) - 1909* . Book X, Chapter XXIX (29)

establishing healthy relationships in adulthood. When viewed from the concept of love of the two characters, the solution for children who experience fatherlessness is to rebuild an understanding of true love, either through a Sufi approach in Islam or a theological approach in Christianity.

Thus, this analysis shows that the philosophy of love from Al-Ghazali and St. Augustine can be a relevant approach in understanding and overcoming the impact of fatherlessness on individuals and society. Understanding love in a religious context can help individuals who experience fatherlessness to overcome feelings of loss, build emotional resilience, and find a deeper meaning of love in their lives.

## **Conclusion**

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of fatherlessness in families through the concept of love in the perspective of Al-Ghazali and St. Augustine. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that fatherlessness not only has an impact on social and psychological aspects, but also on the way individuals understand and build love in their lives.

As for the answer to the research question, it was found that the concept of love in the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and St. Augustine has similarities and differences in explaining how someone can understand love in a fatherless situation. Both agree that true love should not rely on worldly things that are temporary, but must be directed to God as the main source of happiness. The difference lies in the approach used: Al-Ghazali emphasizes the aspect of *mahabbah* in Sufism which sees love as a path to God through the purification of the soul, while St. Augustine emphasizes the concept of *ordo amoris* where love must be directed to God so as not to fall into worldly error.

In terms of the main argument, this study shows that the concept of love from both characters can be a solution for individuals who experience fatherlessness. By understanding that true love is oriented towards God, individuals can overcome the loss of a father figure by building a stronger spiritual relationship. In addition, love based on divine values also helps form healthier social relations, both in the family and in community life.

A critical understanding of the issue of fatherlessness shows that this problem can not only be solved through psychological and social approaches, but also requires a deeper philosophical and spiritual approach. Therefore, this study provides a new perspective in understanding how individuals can rediscover the meaning of love in fatherless conditions by emulating the concept of love taught by great philosophers and theologians such as Al-Ghazali and St. Augustine.

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