

Confirmation Bias and the Pursuit of Truth in Al-Ghazali's 'Tahafut al-Falasifah': A Critical Reflection

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's critique of philosophers in Tahafut al-Falasifah. Confirmation bias, a cognitive tendency to seek and interpret information that aligns with pre-existing beliefs, may have influenced Al-Ghazali's critique of Peripatetic philosophy. The analysis focuses on how Al-Ghazali's epistemological framework, emphasizing divine revelation over reason, shaped his argumentation. This paper reveals how confirmation bias plays a role in his selective interpretation of philosophical arguments. Ultimately, the study offers insights into the relationship between theology and philosophy in classical Islamic thought.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of confirmation bias is a critical concern in the study of epistemology and the pursuit of truth in classical Islamic philosophy. Confirmation bias refers to the tendency of individuals to seek out and interpret information in a way that confirms their pre-existing beliefs and assumptions, effectively limiting their ability to objectively evaluate and consider alternative perspectives.

In the context of classical Islamic philosophy, this bias can have significant implications for the way in which scholars and thinkers approach the search for truth. The tension between philosophical ethics, which draws on human reason and experience, and religious ethics, which is grounded in divine revelation, can create a dynamic in which individuals may be inclined to interpret information in a way that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs and worldviews.

This phenomenon is evident in the ongoing debates and controversies surrounding the role of Islamic philosophy within the broader field of Islamic studies. While some scholars and intellectuals have embraced the value of Islamic philosophical thought, others have been more skeptical, viewing it as a deviation from the true teachings of Islam.

The impact of confirmation bias on the pursuit of truth in classical Islamic philosophy is further complicated by the complex and multifaceted nature of the field itself. As scholars have noted, the development of ethical theories and decision-making processes in Islamic philosophy has often overlooked the rich tradition of Islamic epistemology and its potential to inspire robust and universal ethical frameworks.

To address the challenge of confirmation bias in the study of classical Islamic philosophy, it is essential for scholars and thinkers to approach the subject with a deep appreciation for the diverse range of perspectives and methodologies that have shaped this field. This may involve engaging with a wider range of sources and traditions, including non-Islamic philosophical and religious perspectives, in order to broaden one's understanding and challenge one's own biases.

The study of confirmation bias, the tendency to seek or interpret information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs, holds immense significance in the context of Al-Ghazali's seminal work, *Tahafut al-Falasifah*. This philosophical treatise, which challenged the rationalist arguments of the Peripatetic philosophers, provides a compelling case study for examining the influence of confirmation bias on the pursuit of objective truth and knowledge.

Al-Ghazali's approach in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* is characterized by a dialectical method of questioning and responding, which reflects his deep-seated intellectual curiosity and unwillingness to accept knowledge at face value. This meticulous and questioning attitude towards established philosophical doctrines suggests an awareness of the potential pitfalls of confirmation bias, as Al-Ghazali sought to critically examine the foundational premises of his philosophical opponents. Moreover, the work's emphasis on the limitations of human reason and the importance of divine revelation in the

attainment of true knowledge highlights the complex interplay between rationality, faith, and the subjective biases that can shape our understanding of reality.

Confirmation bias is a well-documented cognitive phenomenon that has profound implications for our ability to perceive and interpret the world around us objectively. In the context of contemporary philosophical discourse, the study of confirmation bias in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* can shed light on the ongoing debates surrounding the nature of truth, the role of subjectivity in knowledge-production, and the challenges of achieving true objectivity in philosophical and scientific inquiry.

The present study aims to analyze the specific purpose of examining confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's criticism of philosophers within the work *Tahafut al-Falasifah*. The analysis will also outline the limitations of the discussion in this text.

Al-Ghazali, a renowned Islamic scholar, utilized a dialectical method in his approach to knowledge, which involved a process of doubt and questioning to arrive at beliefs and understanding. This is evident in his critical examination of other rational thinkers, whom he believed were responsible for the decline of Islam according to the epistemology of *irfani*. Al-Ghazali's argumentative criticism in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* goes beyond merely intending to refute the allegations of these philosophers, as it also reveals the method employed in his argumentation.

The theoretical underpinnings of the methodologies used in studying *falsafa*, the Islamic philosophical tradition, have been explored in previous research. This study, however, does not focus on the conventions of mainstream academia, such as documentation, archiving, and comparative studies. Instead, it aims to think about the prospects of renewing selected leitmotifs from the constellation of hybrid philosophical traditions in *falsafa*, while transcending the typical approaches.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Confirmation Bias

Confirmation bias, the tendency to seek and interpret information in a way that confirms one's existing beliefs and preconceptions, has long been a subject of significant interest in the domains of cognitive psychology and epistemology. This cognitive phenomenon has profound implications for our understanding of how individuals and societies acquire, process, and validate knowledge, and has become a central point of discussion in contemporary philosophical discourse.

From a cognitive psychological perspective, confirmation bias can be understood as a manifestation of various well-documented biases, such as the primacy effect, expectancy effects, and observer effects. These biases suggest that our perception and interpretation of information are heavily influenced by our prior beliefs, expectations, and the context in which the information is presented. In the forensic domain, for example, studies have shown that the

presence of a confession or other incriminating information can lead to a confirmation bias that corrupts the judgments of both expert and lay witnesses. This cognitive bias is not limited to the individual level, but can also be observed at the societal and institutional levels. In the context of scientific and technological development, confirmation bias can lead to the overlooking of disconfirming evidence, the selective interpretation of data, and the reinforcement of existing paradigms, even in the face of contra-irritative findings. This is particularly concerning in fields such as remote sensing, where the analysis of technical data can be skewed by the confirmation bias of the researchers.

The implications of confirmation bias extend beyond the realm of psychology and technology, however, as it also has significant epistemological ramifications. The tendency to seek and interpret information in a way that confirms one's existing beliefs can profoundly impact the way we construct and validate knowledge, leading to the perpetuation of false beliefs, the suppression of alternative perspectives, and the reinforcement of existing power structures.

In the context of contemporary philosophical discourse, the study of confirmation bias has become increasingly relevant, as thinkers grapple with questions of truth, objectivity, and the nature of knowledge itself. By examining the cognitive and epistemological underpinnings of confirmation bias, philosophers have sought to develop a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which our individual and collective beliefs are shaped, and the implications this has for the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of human understanding.

Tahafut al-Falasifah in Modern Studies

The *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, penned by the renowned Islamic scholar Al-Ghazali, has long been a subject of intense scholarly scrutiny and debate. Al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, or "The Incoherence of the Philosophers," is widely recognized as a pivotal text in the history of Islamic thought. The work is built upon Al-Ghazali's masterful use of the dialectical method, which he employs to engage in a dynamic question-and-answer format with his imagined philosophical adversaries. This approach, known as the *jawab wa su'al* or "response and question," reflects Al-Ghazali's deep-rooted skepticism and his unwavering commitment to subjecting knowledge claims to rigorous scrutiny.

Contemporary scholars have delved into the intricacies of Al-Ghazali's argumentative strategies, highlighting the sophistication of his critique. Notably, Al-Ghazali's unwillingness to accept any knowledge at face value, and his insistence on a process of deep inquiry and questioning, have been lauded as hallmarks of his intellectual prowess. The dialectical method employed in the *Tahafut al-Falasifah* not only serves to challenge the philosophical positions of his contemporaries but also reflects Al-Ghazali's own epistemological journey, as he navigates the complex terrain of belief and knowledge.

Contemporary interpretations of the *Tahafut al-Falasifah* have also explored the broader implications of Al-Ghazali's work, particularly its impact on the trajectory of Islamic intellectual thought. Some scholars have argued that

Al-Ghazali's critique of philosophical rationalism, while significant, may have also contributed to a perceived stagnation in the field of Quranic exegesis and philosophical interpretation. This debate continues to resonate within the broader landscape of Islamic studies, as scholars grapple with the complex interplay between faith, reason, and the role of philosophy in the Islamic tradition.

For example, one study examines Al-Ghazali's argumentative criticism in the *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, noting that his use of the dialectical method reflects a deep-seated curiosity and unwillingness to accept knowledge without rigorous examination. Another source discusses the broader implications of Al-Ghazali's work, suggesting that his critique of philosophical rationalism may have contributed to a perceived stagnation in Quranic exegesis and philosophical interpretation.

In conclusion, the *Tahafut al-Falasifah* continues to be a subject of intense scholarly interest and debate, with contemporary researchers delving into the nuances of Al-Ghazali's methodological approach and the broader implications of his work. The diversity of interpretations and the ongoing discussions surrounding this pivotal text are a testament to the enduring relevance and complexity of Al-Ghazali's intellectual legacy within the realm of Islamic thought.

Al-Ghazali's Epistemology

Al-Ghazali, a renowned Islamic philosopher, has left an indelible mark on the discourse of epistemology within the Islamic intellectual tradition. His seminal works delve into the intricate workings of the human mind, the nature of truth, and the methods by which knowledge can be attained.

At the heart of Al-Ghazali's epistemological framework lies a deep-seated skepticism towards the unquestioning acceptance of knowledge. He emphasizes the importance of a rigorous process of doubt and questioning, which he believes is essential for the attainment of true and lasting knowledge. Al-Ghazali's epistemology is rooted in his theological underpinnings, wherein he views knowledge of God's names and attributes as the ultimate pursuit of the human intellect.

Al-Ghazali's critique of the philosophical tradition of his time, as articulated in his work "*Tahafut al-Falasifah*", showcases his commitment to a dialectical approach to knowledge acquisition. He meticulously examines the arguments of his philosophical adversaries, engaging in a process of question-and-answer that aims to expose the flaws and inconsistencies in their reasoning. Through this method, Al-Ghazali not only challenges the prevailing philosophical consensus but also lays the foundation for his own epistemological framework, which emphasizes the role of reason, revelation, and spiritual intuition in the pursuit of truth.

Criteria for the legitimacy of knowledge, according to Al-Ghazali, involve the harmony between the rational and the spiritual realms. He posits that true knowledge must be grounded in a deep understanding of the theological implications of the divine names and attributes, which serve as a

prototype for ethical conduct and human flourishing. Al-Ghazali's virtue-ethical approach to epistemology highlights the interconnectedness of knowledge, ethics, and the cultivation of the soul, thereby presenting a holistic vision of the human pursuit of truth.

According to recent scholarship, Al-Ghazali's epistemological thought has remained a subject of extensive study and debate. Scholars have delved into the nuances of his argumentative style, the dialectical nature of his approach, and the broader implications of his epistemological framework for the Islamic intellectual tradition. This thought-provoking exploration of Al-Ghazali's epistemology serves as a testament to the enduring relevance and complexity of his philosophical legacy.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative, literature-based approach focusing on the textual analysis of Al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah*. Various secondary sources, including contemporary scholarly interpretations, are utilized to understand the manifestation of confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's arguments. The study relies on hermeneutic methods to explore Al-Ghazali's dialectical reasoning and its potential cognitive biases. Comparative analysis between Al-Ghazali's critiques and the philosophers' arguments is conducted to highlight the selective nature of his critique.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Manifestation of Confirmation Bias

Al-Ghazali's critical analysis of philosophical thought in his work *Tahafut al-Falasifah* has been a subject of extensive scholarly debate. This paper aims to identify and analyze the potential forms of confirmation bias that may have emerged in Al-Ghazali's argumentation when critiquing the views of the philosophers.

The concept of confirmation bias, which refers to the tendency to seek, interpret, and prioritize information that confirms one's preexisting beliefs or hypotheses, is particularly relevant in understanding Al-Ghazali's approach to critiquing philosophical ideas. Al-Ghazali's background as a theologian and his commitment to upholding the tenets of Islamic belief may have influenced the way he engaged with and evaluated the arguments of the philosophers he sought to refute.

One potential manifestation of confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's work is the selective attention and emphasis given to certain philosophical claims that were more easily refutable or contradictory to Islamic teachings, while potentially overlooking or downplaying aspects of philosophical arguments that may have been more nuanced or compatible with Islamic thought. Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's use of the dialectical method of speech, characterized by a back-and-forth questioning and refutation, may have led him to frame the philosophical positions in a way that accentuated their perceived flaws and inconsistencies.

The existing scholarship on Al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah* provides valuable insights into his argumentative approach and the potential biases that

may have shaped his critiques. These studies suggest that Al-Ghazali's deep curiosity and desire to seek knowledge through a process of doubt and questioning may have coexisted with a strong commitment to upholding Islamic beliefs, which could have influenced the way he engaged with and evaluated the philosophical ideas he sought to refute. The analysis of Al-Ghazali's argumentative strategies and the potential forms of confirmation bias in his work can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complexities and tensions inherent in the intellectual exchange between theology and philosophy in the Islamic tradition.

Second potential manifestation of confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's work is the selective interpretation and application of logical reasoning. While Al-Ghazali was highly skilled in the use of logic, he may have leveraged this skill to primarily reinforce his own theological positions, rather than engaging in a truly impartial and balanced evaluation of the philosophical arguments. This selective use of logic could have led Al-Ghazali to emphasize certain logical flaws or inconsistencies in the philosophers' arguments, while potentially overlooking or minimizing the strengths and merits of their reasoning.

Third potential form of confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's work is the tendency to frame the philosophical positions in a way that aligns with his own preconceptions and biases. Al-Ghazali's deep commitment to Islamic beliefs and his desire to protect the theological foundations of his faith may have shaped the way he presented and characterized the philosophical ideas he sought to refute. This could have resulted in a portrayal of the philosophers' views that was more one-dimensional or caricatured, rather than a nuanced and balanced representation of their actual positions.

In his seminal work, "Tahafut al-Falasifah", the renowned Islamic scholar Al-Ghazali engaged in a critical analysis of the philosophical concepts proposed by his contemporaries, particularly regarding the metaphysical notion of the eternity of the world.

Al-Ghazali's critique of the philosophers' metaphysical concepts is rooted in his epistemological framework, which emphasizes the importance of doubt and questioning as a means of attaining true knowledge. The dialectical nature of his arguments, framed as a series of questions and responses, reflects this methodological approach. However, as some scholars have pointed out, Al-Ghazali's arguments may have been influenced by a confirmation bias, wherein he selectively focused on evidence that supported his own beliefs while dismissing or downplaying counterarguments.

The ideological critique of Al-Ghazali's thought suggests that his socio-political, cultural, and religious context might have played a significant role in shaping his philosophical positions. This contextual analysis highlights the potential impact of confirmation bias on his argumentative approach, as he may have been inclined to defend the prevailing religious orthodoxy against the perceived challenges posed by the philosophers' metaphysical views.

Furthermore, the nature of the philosophical tradition within which Al-Ghazali operated, characterized by a dialectical and adversarial approach, may

have further accentuated the role of confirmation bias in his critique of the philosophers. As the paper on "Falsafa" suggests, the methodologies employed in studying Islamic philosophy often prioritize documentation, archiving, and comparative analysis, rather than engaging with the deeper epistemological and ideological underpinnings of the philosophical discourse.

First, Al-Ghazali's argumentative strategy in the "Tahafut al-Falasifah" is characterized by a rigorous questioning and critical examination of the philosophers' metaphysical claims, particularly regarding the eternity of the world. This dialectical approach, which Al-Ghazali refers to as "jawab wa su'al" (question and answer), reflects his belief in the importance of doubt and inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge. However, as some scholars have argued, Al-Ghazali's arguments may have been influenced by a confirmation bias, where he selectively focused on evidence that supported his own religious beliefs while dismissing or downplaying counterarguments that challenged his position.

Second, the ideological critique of Al-Ghazali's thought suggests that his socio-political, cultural, and religious context played a significant role in shaping his philosophical positions. This contextual analysis highlights the potential impact of confirmation bias on his argumentative approach, as he may have been inclined to defend the prevailing religious orthodoxy against the perceived challenges posed by the philosophers' metaphysical views.

Third, the nature of the philosophical tradition within which Al-Ghazali operated, characterized by a dialectical and adversarial approach, may have further accentuated the role of confirmation bias in his critique of the philosophers. As the paper on "Falsafa" suggests, the methodologies employed in studying Islamic philosophy often prioritize documentation, archiving, and comparative analysis, rather than engaging with the deeper epistemological and ideological underpinnings of the philosophical discourse.

Al-Ghazali is known for his profound and critical analysis of various philosophical concepts, including the notion of causality. His work, "Tahafut al-Falasifah", has been extensively studied and debated, particularly regarding his critique of philosophical determinism. One aspect that warrants further examination is the potential influence of confirmation bias on Al-Ghazali's perspectives and his evaluation of the causal relationship.

Confirmation bias, a cognitive bias that leads individuals to seek and interpret information in a way that confirms their preexisting beliefs, can significantly shape one's understanding and interpretation of complex philosophical ideas. Al-Ghazali's background and religious affiliations may have predisposed him to certain biases that influenced his analysis of the philosophical concepts of causality and determinism.

The analysis of this potential influence can provide valuable insights into the broader context and motivations behind Al-Ghazali's critiques. Examining how confirmation bias may have shaped his views can shed light on the nuances and complexities underlying his arguments, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of his philosophical discourse.

Determinism according to Al-Ghazali maintained that all events are causally linked, and that the universe operates according to a fixed set of natural laws. However, Al-Ghazali strongly rejected this notion, arguing that it undermined the concept of divine omnipotence and challenged the fundamental tenets of Islamic theology.

Al-Ghazali's criticism of determinism was multifaceted, as he sought to reconcile the philosophical concept with his religious beliefs. He engaged in a dialectical approach, raising questions and challenging the assumptions of the philosophers, in an attempt to uncover the flaws and inconsistencies in their arguments.

In his critique, Al-Ghazali's emphasis on the role of God in shaping the course of events and his rejection of the notion of necessary causation may have been influenced by confirmation bias. His theological convictions and commitment to upholding the sovereignty of the divine may have led him to scrutinize the philosophical arguments through a lens that prioritized the preservation of his religious worldview.

The analysis of Al-Ghazali's work and the potential impact of confirmation bias can shed light on the complexities of the philosophical discourse and the broader social, cultural, and religious contexts that shaped his perspectives. The consequences of such biases can be far-reaching, as they can influence the interpretation and reception of philosophical ideas, ultimately shaping the trajectory of intellectual discourse.

In his thought provoking work, "An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines," Seyyed Hossein Nasr highlights the significance of understanding the "irrational" elements in the writings of influential Islamic thinkers like Avicenna. This observation underscores the importance of critically examining the role of confirmation bias in shaping the perspectives of these scholars, including Al-Ghazali.

Al-Ghazali, a renowned Islamic scholar, has extensively discussed the concept of physical resurrection in his works. His arguments on this topic have been the subject of much scholarly debate, with some philosophers challenging his interpretations. This part aims to provide a critical examination of the potential for confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's argumentation regarding the physical resurrection and his rebuttal of philosophical interpretations.

Al-Ghazali's writings on the topic of physical resurrection have been widely studied and analyzed by scholars. His dialectical approach, which involves a process of questioning and answering, has been praised for its intellectual rigor. However, some researchers have raised concerns about the potential for confirmation bias in his argumentation. Al-Ghazali's deep curiosity and commitment to finding the truth may have led him to selectively interpret evidence that supports his beliefs, while potentially overlooking or dismissing evidence that contradicts his position.

Averroes, a prominent Islamic philosopher, has critically examined Al-Ghazali's philosophical works, including his commentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima*. Averroes argues that Al-Ghazali's teachings on the nature of the soul and the afterlife are incompatible with his own philosophical analysis of the

soul's activities, which leaves no room for personal immortality or continued individual existence. This suggests a potential conflict between Al-Ghazali's religious beliefs and his philosophical reasoning, which may be indicative of confirmation bias.

The paper will further explore the implications of this potential confirmation bias in Al-Ghazali's argumentation and how it may have influenced his interpretation of the concept of physical resurrection and his refutation of philosophical perspectives on the matter. By examining the sources; Yahya et al. (2020), Lubis & Rozi (2020), Taylor (2012), Taylor (2004) and critically analyzing Al-Ghazali's approach, the part aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities surrounding this important theological and philosophical debate.

The study of falsafa, or Islamic philosophy, has long been a subject of scholarly debate, with the methodologies employed in its examination often coming under scrutiny. In this section, we will explore the strengths and weaknesses of Al-Ghazali's argumentative methodology in his seminal work, *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, through the lens of confirmation bias and scientific objectivity.

Al-Ghazali, a renowned Islamic scholar and theologian, is known for his rigorous critique of the philosophical traditions of his time, particularly those of the *Falasifah*, or Islamic Philosophers. His methodological approach in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* is characterized by a dialectical style of argument, which invokes an imaginary trial-like setting to challenge the assertions of his philosophical opponents. This approach, while intellectually stimulating, raises questions about the potential for confirmation bias to influence the objectivity of his analysis.

The strength of Al-Ghazali's methodology lies in its adherence to the dialectical tradition, which encourages a critical examination of competing perspectives and a relentless pursuit of truth. This approach allows him to engage with the philosophical arguments of the *Falasifah* on their own terms, while also exposing the weaknesses and contradictions inherent in their positions. However, the potential for confirmation bias to influence his interpretation of the *Falasifah*'s arguments cannot be ignored, as Al-Ghazali may have been predisposed to finding flaws in their reasoning due to his own theological convictions.

The dialectical nature of Al-Ghazali's methodology, which involves a back-and-forth exchange of arguments and counterarguments, also raises questions about the degree of objectivity he maintains throughout his analysis. The study of *Tahafut al-Falasifah* has revealed that Al-Ghazali's argumentative criticism is often accompanied by a rhetorical flourish, suggesting that his aim may have been not only to refute the *Falasifah* but also to assert the superiority of his own theological perspective.

The weak points of Al-Ghazali's methodology, as highlighted by scholars, include his reliance on specific textual sources, his tendency to selectively engage with the arguments of his opponents, and his occasional use of *ad hominem* attacks to undermine their credibility. Additionally, some

scholars have argued that Al-Ghazali's approach may have been influenced by the socio-political and cultural context of his time, which could have further compromised the objectivity of his analysis.

Despite these potential limitations, Al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah* remains a seminal work in the history of Islamic philosophy, and his methodological approach continues to be the subject of intense scholarly debate. The ongoing discussion surrounding the strengths and weaknesses of his argumentative criticism serves as a testament to the enduring relevance and complexity of this philosophical tradition.

Epistemological Implications

The philosophical and theological discourse surrounding Islam has long been a subject of debate and discussion. This paper aims to explore the epistemological implications of the confirmation bias present in *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, a seminal work by the renowned Islamic scholar al-Ghazali, and its impact on the development of Islamic philosophical thought and intercultural dialogue.

Al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, or "The Incoherence of the Philosophers," is a critical examination of the philosophical views of his time, particularly those of the Aristotelian school of thought. Through a series of dialectic arguments, al-Ghazali sought to expose the logical inconsistencies and epistemological shortcomings of the prevailing philosophical approaches. However, in his critique, al-Ghazali may have been influenced by a confirmation bias, which can have significant implications for the development of Islamic philosophical thought and its engagement with other intellectual traditions.

Confirmation bias, the tendency to seek out and interpret information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs and assumptions, is a well-documented cognitive phenomenon. In the context of *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, al-Ghazali's critical approach may have been shaped by his own firmly held religious convictions, leading him to prioritize the validation of his Islamic worldview over a more impartial and open-minded evaluation of the philosophical arguments presented by his opponents.

This confirmation bias in al-Ghazali's work may have had far-reaching consequences for the trajectory of Islamic philosophical thought. By casting doubt on the validity of philosophical reasoning and its ability to reconcile with religious tenets, al-Ghazali's arguments may have contributed to a growing skepticism towards philosophical inquiry within the Islamic intellectual tradition. This, in turn, could have hindered the further development and refinement of Islamic philosophical thought, limiting its potential to engage in fruitful dialogue with other philosophical traditions.

The implications of al-Ghazali's confirmation bias in *Tahafut al-Falasifah* are multifaceted and far-reaching. It highlights the challenges that can arise when religious and philosophical worldviews collide, and the potential for cognitive biases to shape the course of intellectual discourse. Understanding these implications can offer valuable insights into the complex dynamics that

have shaped the development of Islamic philosophy and its engagement with other civilizations, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the intellectual history of Islam.

In the contemporary philosophical landscape, the debates surrounding the objectivity and pluralism of truth have become increasingly complex and multifaceted. At the heart of this discourse is the issue of confirmation bias, a cognitive phenomenon that has significant implications for how we approach and engage with knowledge and truth claims.

The writings of the renowned Islamic philosopher Al-Ghazali offer a unique and insightful perspective on this ongoing debate. Al-Ghazali's dialectical approach to knowledge acquisition, characterized by a deep-rooted skepticism and unwavering pursuit of truth, provides a valuable counterpoint to the potential pitfalls of confirmation bias.

As noted in one source, Al-Ghazali's argumentative criticism against the rationalist thinkers of his time was not simply a rebuttal, but a carefully constructed process of questioning and seeking answers, driven by a profound desire to uncover the truth. This approach, rooted in the principle of doubt, stands in stark contrast to the tendency of confirmation bias to selectively seek and interpret information in a way that reinforces pre-existing beliefs.

The philosophical discourse on objectivity and pluralism of truth has long been a subject of intense debate, with proponents of various schools of thought weighing in on the matter. While some, like Paul Boghossian, have argued for a more absolutist view of objectivity, others, such as Richard Rorty, have advocated for a more relativistic understanding of truth.

Al-Ghazali's critique, however, transcends this binary and offers a more nuanced perspective. By rejecting the notion of unequivocal objectivity while simultaneously acknowledging the existence of multiple, potentially valid ways of knowing the world, Al-Ghazali's thought aligns with the epistemic pluralism espoused by contemporary thinkers.

The relevance of Al-Ghazali's critique in the context of contemporary philosophical debates on objectivity and the pluralism of truth cannot be overstated. His emphasis on the critical examination of knowledge claims and the importance of questioning one's own biases resonates strongly with the ongoing efforts to address the pervasive influence of confirmation bias in various domains of inquiry.

The discourse on methodology in philosophical research has long been shaped by the dialectical exchanges between various schools of thought. In recent years, the recognition of confirmation bias as a ubiquitous cognitive phenomenon has added a new layer of complexity to this ongoing debate. This section seeks to synthesize the insights from Al-Ghazali's critical approach and the modern understanding of confirmation bias, with the aim of developing a more comprehensive philosophical research methodology.

Al-Ghazali, the renowned Islamic philosopher, was a trenchant critic of the prevailing epistemological assumptions of his time. He emphasized the importance of doubt and questioning in the pursuit of knowledge, arguing that a true understanding can only be attained through a rigorous examination of

one's own beliefs and biases. This dialectical approach, which involves a constant interplay of inquiry and self-reflection, is particularly relevant in the context of modern philosophical research, where the problem of confirmation bias has been extensively studied.

The study of Al-Ghazali's argumentative criticism reveals that he was not merely engaged in a polemic against other thinkers, but rather sought to uncover the deeper assumptions and blind spots that shape our understanding of the world. This resonates with the modern awareness of confirmation bias, which suggests that our cognitive processes are often biased towards information that confirms our existing beliefs, while dismissing or distorting evidence that challenges them.

By integrating Al-Ghazali's critical approach with the insights from contemporary research on confirmation bias, we can develop a more robust and self-aware philosophical research methodology. This methodology would involve a constant questioning of one's own assumptions, a willingness to consider alternative perspectives, and a commitment to seeking out disconfirming evidence.

Furthermore, the adoption of a mixed-methods research design, which combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, can be a valuable tool in this endeavor. The integration of different methodological perspectives can help researchers overcome the limitations of any single approach, and foster a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study finds that Al-Ghazali's critique of the philosophers, particularly his refutation of rationalist arguments, reflects elements of confirmation bias. His theological commitments shaped his selective critique, which prioritized divine revelation over philosophical inquiry. While Al-Ghazali's arguments demonstrated intellectual rigor, the bias toward defending Islamic theology may have limited a more balanced philosophical exchange.

The study focuses primarily on Al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah* and does not extend its findings to his broader works. Moreover, it relies on secondary interpretations, which may introduce additional bias.

Future research should explore Al-Ghazali's other works and how his theological convictions influenced his broader intellectual discourse. Comparative studies with other Islamic philosophers, such as Averroes, could provide deeper insights into the extent of confirmation bias in Islamic philosophical traditions.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has certain limitations; therefore, future research is recommended with broader scope and approach to obtain more optimal results.

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