



an Analytical Study of Imam Al-Ghazali's Ayyuhal Walad Book: Implications for Contemporary Moral Education in Adolescents

Arika Amalia^{1,*}, Aisyah Ma'awiyah¹, Jufri¹

¹ Pascasarjana Program Magister, UIN Sultanah Nahrasiyah Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The complexities of moral teaching in modern society have intensified due to the rapid impact of globalization, technological progress, and evolving social dynamics. Concerns include moral degradation, reduced reverence for teachers and parents, and increasing misbehavior among adolescents demand immediate intervention from the educational system. This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology through a library research approach. The principal source is Ayyuhal Walad by Imam Al-Ghazali. Data collection was executed using documentation, and content analysis was employed for data interpretation. The findings suggest that Imam Al-Ghazali's insights in Ayyuhal Walad establish a significant basis for moral teaching among adolescents. His ideology emphasizes the necessity of a comprehensive equilibrium between academic advancement and emotional-spiritual growth, contending that knowledge devoid of virtuous behavior, genuine aim, and spiritual purification is ineffectual. Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy synthesizes intellect, emotion, and spirit, striving for ethical excellence and proximity to the holy. His ideas are significantly pertinent to contemporary moral education frameworks, providing a structure that promotes both academic proficiency and spiritual and ethical development. Al-Ghazali's educational framework—comprising tazkiyah, takhalli, and tahalli—constitutes an essential enhancement to contemporary education systems that frequently overlook moral and spiritual growth.

1. Introduction

The significance of Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts in Ayyuhal Walad for contemporary children's moral education is evident in his holistic approach (Fatkhurrokhim & Bustam, 2024). He underscores the transmission of knowledge while also imparting the significance of sincerity, faith, and the application of ethical ideals in daily life (Faizin et al., 2023). This concept is crucial in addressing the issues of the contemporary period, where education frequently emphasizes cognitive development while neglecting moral formation (Nizar, 2024). The examination of Imam Al-Ghazali's ideas in Ayyuhal Walad seeks to enhance scholarly understanding and significantly contributes to the evolution of moral education for children, aligning with contemporary requirements and challenges (Hafiza & Qayyum, 2022). This research aims to integrate classical thought with

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: arikaamalia195@gmail.com

contemporary educational techniques, ensuring that the esteemed principles of Islam remain pertinent and applicable in cultivating a future generation with virtuous morals (Ramadhani & Surya, 2024).

Examining contemporary phenomena reveals a deficiency of morals in today's youth, exemplified by juvenile delinquency, inadequate parental guidance, the pervasive influence of social media, moral decay in student-teacher relationships, erosion of familial ethics, promiscuity, adverse environmental factors, societal challenges, neglect of moral literature, social rivalry, and bullying, among others (Ayu Ritnaning Tias et al., 2025). These are instances that frequently arise in every region. This occurs due to an absence of moral education (Baharshah et al., 2021).

Consequently, in light of the numerous instances of children's moral deficits observed today, researchers aim to investigate and study Imam Al-Ghazali's insights in *Ayyuhal Walad* concerning children's education, and examine its pertinence to contemporary concepts of moral education for children (Hamdani et al., 2021). Through the analysis of his beliefs, it is anticipated that pragmatic answers or recommendations may be identified, which can be integrated into contemporary education to cultivate a generation with Islamic character, hence eliminating instances of moral inadequacies in youngsters (Abdul Jabbar Qamar, 2022).

Moral education embodies virtuous qualities intertwined with faith and piety (Suriadi et al., 2020). Islamic ethics cannot be actualized without piety, and conversely, devotion lacks significance without ethics. Without noble morals, an individual's faith and piety will not flourish; such a person is likely to be selfish and self-centered, disregarding the interests of others (Mahmudulhassan et al., 2024). This circumstance will undoubtedly undermine the primary objective of moral instruction in Islam.

In this perspective, the insights of Imam Al-Ghazali in the Book of *Ayyuhal Walad* warrant examination (Indana & Mustofa, 2024). Al-Ghazali's perspectives on children's education highlight the importance of affection, ethical instruction, and the cultivation of virtuous character, aligning with human rights concepts, particularly the entitlement of children to a respectable and dignified education (Taja et al., 2022). This study seeks to examine Imam Al-Ghazali's perspectives in the Book of *Ayyuhal Walad* concerning children's education and its applicability to contemporary moral education for youngsters (Arisanti et al., 2025). This study aims to offer a novel viewpoint on Islamic education that aligns with contemporary demands.

2. Methodology

The study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology utilizing a library research strategy. The fundamental aspect of this study is that the analyzed data comprises a written work presented as a document, specifically in the form of a book or literature. This study investigates Imam al-Ghazali's perspectives on child education, utilizing literature review and discourse analysis of relevant texts authored by scholars and thinkers who contribute to the research corpus.

The methodology was used due to the study's emphasis on Imam al-Ghazali's concepts in the text *Ayyuhal Walad*, which are philosophical and normative in nature. This study seeks to elucidate the principles of moral education and the methodologies for instructing children as proposed by Al-Ghazali, while also examining their applicability to contemporary educational contexts.

The data sources comprise primary data: the book "*Ayyuhal Walad*" by Imam al-Ghazali, published by Dar al-Kitab al-Ilmiyah in Beirut. Secondary data, namely pertinent literature including *Ihya' Ulumiddin*, *Nasaihul 'Ibad*, the works of Prof. Yusuf Madani, along with books, essays, and theses addressing Al-Ghazali's perspectives on children's moral education. Data were gathered via documentation methods, specifically by tracing and examining written materials including books,

papers, and pertinent online sources. The procedures encompass locating sources, validating validity, determining relevance, and analyzing content.

The data were evaluated objectively and methodically utilizing the content analysis method. This analysis aims to elucidate Al-Ghazali's classical concepts and correlate them with the contemporary requirements of children's moral education within familial, educational, and communal settings.

3. Results

3.1 Biography of Imam Al-Ghazali

In the realm of Islamic education, a prominent scholar known as Hujjatul Islam and Mujadid emerged in the fifth century Hijriah. Al-Ghazali was a scholar proficient in multiple disciplines, including fiqh, usul, logic, philosophy, and Sufism (Arif, 2019). His prolific output encompassed hundreds of publications, establishing Imam Al-Ghazali as a reference for scholars throughout history (Azhari & Mustapa, 2021). Al-Ghazali's ideas have been extensively examined by intellectuals and academics. Imam Al-Ghazali's full name is Abu Hamid Zainal Abidin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Ahmad. He was born in the city of Thus, Iran, around 450 H / 1058 AD. He had his initial education in his hometown of Thus, Iran. Prior to his father's demise, Imam Al-Ghazali pursued his education under a Sufi, a close associate of his father, utilizing a modest bequest bequeathed by his father. Under the tutelage of the Sufis, Imam Al-Ghazali examined the Qur'an and Hadith; in addition to the Qur'an, he also absorbed narratives of sagacious individuals and committed mystical love poetry to memory (Murdani & Fauzi, 2024). Upon exhausting his educational funds, he pursued further studies at a madrasah to learn fiqh under Ahmad Ar-Radzakani. At 15, he pursued his schooling in Jurjan to enhance his studies in fiqh under the tutelage of his instructor, Abu Nashr al-Isma'ili. Upon reaching the age of 17, At the age of 20, Al-Ghazali returned to Thus to study fiqh and kalam with al-Juwaini in Naisyapur.

Following the demise of his instructor, Imam Al-Ghazali returned to Muaskar to confer with a minister named Nizamu al-Mulk. He resided in the city for five years. Following a five-year residence in Muaskar, Imam Al-Ghazali relocated to Baghdad (Kristiyo Sambodo et al., 2025). He also formulated scientific counterarguments against the Bathiniyah sect and philosophical doctrines.

In 489 H / 1096 AD, Imam Al-Ghazali chose to abandon his scholarly career and esteemed role in Baghdad. During his quest for spiritual enlightenment, he paused and resided in many locations. One of the significant locations he visited was Jerusalem. In this sacred city, he established residence in a zawiyah (spiritual hut) situated near the Dome of the Rock, a site rich in historical and spiritual significance for Muslims.

That year, Al-Ghazali persisted on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He undertook the trip to Mecca, visited the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in Medina, and also paid respects at the tomb of the Prophet Ibrahim (AS) in Hebron. This trek encompassed not just a physical expedition but also a process of soul purification and a quest for profound existential significance.

The year 492 AH/1099 CE signified Al-Ghazali's return to his native city of Tūs, following approximately eleven years of spiritual exile. During that period, he underwent a significant internal metamorphosis. His spiritual experiences and profound contemplation culminated in a significant realization: "The Sufis constitute a group that genuinely adheres to the path to God." Their lifestyle is the most virtuous, their road is the most direct, and their ethics are the most pristine.

Nevertheless, his spiritual accomplishments did not render Al-Ghazali indifferent to social reality. Upon observing the moral and theological decline affecting the Muslims during that period, he felt compelled to reengage and contribute to society. He ultimately acquiesced to the proposal of Fakhr al-Mulk, progeny of the deceased Nizam al-Mulk (vizier of the Seljuk Empire), to resume his teaching at the Nizamiyah Madrasah, a prominent institution of learning in Baghdad. There, he devoted

himself for about three years to educating and guiding the Muslim generation. Circa 503–504 AH/1110 CE, Al-Ghazali returned to Tūs and opted for a more tranquil and concentrated existence. In his homeland, he established a madrasah for the study of Islamic sciences and a khanqah as a center for spiritual advice for Sufis and their disciples.

There, Al-Ghazali dedicated the remainder of his life to researching, teaching, cultivating the spirituality of God-seekers, and composing significant works that continue to serve as primary references in numerous domains of Islamic knowledge. He passed away on Sunday, 14 Jumadil Akhir 505 H / 18 December 1111 AD, at the age of 55, bequeathing a significant intellectual and spiritual legacy to the Islamic world.

3.2 Imam Al-Ghazali's Perspectives on Adolescent Education in the Book Ayyuhal Walad

The researcher examined Imam Al-Ghazali's ideas presented in the Book Ayyuhal Walad, particularly those pertaining to moral instruction for adolescents. The researcher categorized the principal aspects of Al-Ghazali's thinking into many indicators deemed pertinent to the enhancement of teenage morality within the framework of contemporary Islamic education, based on the study's findings. These indicators embody the fundamental values highlighted by Al-Ghazali in the education and guidance of youth towards the cultivation of virtuous character.

This study employs the following indicators: (1) The significance of applied knowledge, highlighting Al-Ghazali's focus on the necessity of not merely acquiring knowledge but also implementing it in daily life; (2) The cultivation of sincere intentions, underscoring the importance of establishing a solid spiritual foundation in the pursuit of knowledge and virtuous actions; (3) The safeguarding of the heart and enhancement of morals, encompassing the aspect of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) as a fundamental basis for character development.

The three indications serve as a foundation for examining the book's content and evaluating the relevance of Al-Ghazali's messages to contemporary adolescent moral education. The subsequent part will provide a comprehensive analysis of each indication, grounded in the findings from the Ayyuhal Walad book and correlated with modern educational theory and environment.

Imam Al-Ghazali, a distinguished scholar and important Islamic philosopher, held a significant perspective on education, particularly in molding the character of teenagers. For him, education transcends the mere transmission of knowledge; it must also cultivate the morality, character, and spirit of individuals, enabling them to develop into obedient, wise, and socially beneficial members of society.

In his book Ayyuhal Walad, Imam Al-Ghazali provides several significant pieces of counsel that embody the fundamental concepts of adolescent education. This book targets young kids, encouraging them to seek knowledge externally while also applying that knowledge through tangible acts. He asserted that knowledge devoid of application is ineffectual, and an individual will not be salvaged solely by the quantity of knowledge, but by the extent of its practical use.

3.3 The Importance of Practiced Knowledge

Imam Al-Ghazali, in his book Ayyuhal Walad, asserted that knowledge devoid of application offers no benefits and may even become a liability in the afterlife. He claimed that only knowledge that causes virtuous actions can redeem individuals, including adolescents who are navigating their quest for identity. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasized that knowledge ought to catalyze transformations in one's attitude and conduct. For adolescents, the significance of applied knowledge serves as the cornerstone for character development and transcending simply theoretical understanding devoid of action. This was articulated by Imam Al-Ghazali in the book Ayyuhal Walad, which asserts that:

يَا هَذَا الْوَلَدُ: لَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مُفْلِسًا، وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْأَحْوَالِ خَالِيًا، فَإِنَّهُ يَتَيَقَّنُ أَنَّ الْعِلْمَ الْمَجْرَدَ لَا يَأْخُذُ بِأَيْدٍ

Meaning: O my son, do not be a person who is bankrupt from charity, and do not be empty of (spiritual) circumstances, because knowledge alone (without charity) will not provide help.

Imam Al-Ghazali discusses the concept of individuals who are impoverished in terms of charitable deeds. In the context of Islam, education holds a fundamental role in the development of a well-rounded individual, both in this life and the afterlife. Islamic education aimed at fulfilling the ultimate purpose of life, specifically existence in the hereafter, necessitates a more comprehensive and integrative methodology. One method that can be employed is the integration of knowledge and philanthropy in Islamic education. The book "Minhajul Abidin" by Imam Al-Ghazali illustrates a strong connection between knowledge and compassion.

The book Minhajul Abidin examines the evolution of human ethics through the lens of Sufi growth. Al-Ghazali underscores the cultivation of virtuous ethics while also highlighting the significance of worship, which has the potential to restore divine values within society. Consequently, it is imperative to cultivate students' awareness of the significance of Islamic education as a basis for generosity and to safeguard them from engaging in charitable acts devoid of knowledge.

Consequently, it can be inferred that knowledge and virtuous actions are interconnected and should be concurrently implemented in Islamic education to fulfill the ultimate objective of life through the practice of good deeds as a means of applying knowledge. In fact, Islamic education frequently emphasizes knowledge acquisition while neglecting the importance of virtuous actions. This may result in individuals possessing knowledge yet lacking virtuous actions aligned with the genuine goal of life. Consequently, a strategy is required that integrates knowledge and virtuous actions within Islamic education.

The author's analysis reveals a profound connection between knowledge and virtuous actions, as articulated by Imam Al-Ghazali, who cautions against being spiritually impoverished in good deeds. He underscores the importance of performing good actions to avoid being among the lost, as individuals who possess knowledge yet fail to apply it are deemed futile, signifying that their knowledge yields no benefit. Through the application of knowledge, we can enhance our spiritual awareness of our relationship with Allah SWT through both understanding and virtuous actions. Another advantage of engaging with knowledge is its contribution to moral and ethical instruction, as the ethical dimension is paramount in religion.

Imam Al-Ghazali provided examples in the book Ayyuhal Walad of individuals who failed in performing the following charitable acts:

مِثَالُهُ: لَوْ كَانَ عَلَى رَجُلٍ فِي بَرِّيَّةٍ عَشْرَةُ أَسْيَافٍ هِنْدِيَّةٍ، مَعَ أَسْلِحَةٍ أُخْرَى، وَكَانَ الرَّجُلُ شَجَاعًا وَأَهْلَ حَرْبٍ، فَحَمَلَ عَلَيْهِ أَسَدٌ مُهَابٌ، مَا ظَنَنْتُكَ؟ هَلْ تَدْفَعُ الْأَسْلِحَةَ شَرُّهُ مِنْهُ بِلَا اسْتِعْمَالِهَا وَضَرْبِهَا؟ وَمَنْ الْمَعْلُومُ أَنَّهَا لَا تَدْفَعُ إِلَّا بِالتَّحْرِيكِ وَالضَّرْبِ فَكَدًّا لَوْ قَرَأَ رَجُلٌ مِائَةَ أَلْفِ مَسْأَلَةٍ عِلْمِيَّةٍ وَتَعَلَّمَهَا، وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِهَا، لَا يُفِيدُ إِلَّا بِالْعَمَلِ

Meaning: For example, if a man is in the forest carrying ten Indian swords and other weapons, and he is a brave and skilled fighter, then a fierce lion attacks him. What do you think? Can those weapons repel the lion's attack without being used and swung? Of course not, because those weapons are only effective if used correctly and swung properly. Likewise, if someone studies and memorizes a hundred thousand scientific problems, but does not practice them, then that knowledge will not be useful unless it is practiced.

The researcher's analysis indicates that Imam Al-Ghazali's example serves as a fable illustrating the significant loss experienced by individuals who remain at the intellectual stage of acquiring information, potentially possessing the ability to articulate it well, yet fail to use it as a guiding principle in their actions. According to Al-Ghazali, genuine knowledge is that which inspires action, rather than mere information that embellishes the intellect. Knowledge devoid of action is likened to a formidable weapon rendered ineffective in crucial circumstances; it is futile and may even have adverse consequences in the hereafter.

This story philosophically addresses the primary role of knowledge in Islam as a conduit for attaining proximity to Allah and enhancing moral character. Knowledge serves not as the ultimate objective, but as the pathway to redemption, both in this life and the afterlife. Al-Ghazali, a prominent Sufi figure and philosopher, asserted that the efficacy of education is not gauged by the quantity of ideas acquired, but by the moral and spiritual metamorphosis evident in practical life.

Imam Al-Ghazali theologically emphasized the concept of hisab (calculation of actions). An individual possessing knowledge yet failing to apply it will bear greater accountability than an uninformed one. Knowledge serves as a justification for him. This is the significance of "great loss" in the parable.

3.3 Nurturing Authentic Objectives

One of the main points in Al-Ghazali's advice to his students is about intentions. He emphasized that intentions are the basis of all deeds. Without true and sincere intentions for Allah, knowledge and deeds are in vain. In the moral education of adolescents, the formation of sincere intentions is a very important spiritual aspect to be instilled from an early age. Amidst the tendency of adolescents to seek social recognition, Al-Ghazali reminded that intentions must be cleansed of *riya'*, *sum'ah*, or worldly goals alone. Imam Al-Ghazali said in the book *Ayyuhal Walad*:

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، كَمْ مِنْ لَيْلَةٍ أَحْيَيْتَهَا بِتَكَرُّرِ الْعِلْمِ وَمُطَالَعَةِ الْكُتُبِ، وَحَرَمْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ النَّوْمَ؛ لَا أَعْلَمُ مَا كَانَ الْبَاعِثُ فِيهَا؟
إِنْ كَانَتْ نِيَّتُكَ عَرْضَ الدُّنْيَا، وَجَذَبَ حُطَامُهَا، وَتَحْصِيلَ مَنَاصِبِهَا، وَالْمُبَاهَاةَ عَلَى الْأَقْرَانِ وَالْأَمْثَالِ، فَوَيْلٌ لَكَ، ثُمَّ وََيْلٌ لَكَ

Meaning: O my son, how many nights have you spent repeating lessons and reading various books, until you forbid sleep from yourself; but I do not know, what actually drives you to do that? If your intention is to achieve worldly pleasures, collect its wealth, obtain a position, and be proud in front of friends and fellow human beings, then woe to you, woe to you.

Imam al-Ghazali has a very deep understanding of the importance of sincere intentions in every deed. He emphasized that intention is the main foundation that determines the value and acceptance of a deed in the sight of Allah. According to him, outward deeds may appear good, but if the intention is corrupted such as for praise, status, or the world, then the deed becomes useless in the sight of Allah.

A sincere intention is a pure intention only to gain Allah's pleasure. Sincerity means cleansing the heart from all forms of hypocrisy, *riya* (wanting to be praised), *sum'ah* (wanting to be heard), and all other worldly motivations. In every deed, be it worship such as prayer, fasting, or in daily activities such as working and seeking knowledge, sincere intentions are the most important thing in determining whether the deed is accepted or not by Allah. Imam al-Ghazali explained that outward deeds without sincere intentions will be in vain, even though they appear good and beneficial.

Sincere intention is the key to all success, both in this world and the hereafter. When someone does a deed with a sincere intention, he not only gets worldly benefits but also great rewards in the

sight of Allah. Even simple deeds if done with a sincere intention can be very valuable in the sight of Allah.

3.4 Maintaining the Heart and Improving Morals

Imam Al-Ghazali paid great attention to cleanliness of the heart as the main key in forming morals. Imam Al-Ghazali said that the heart is the control center of behavior, and if the heart is damaged, then all deeds will also be damaged. Therefore, teenagers must be guided to always introspect, stay away from heart diseases such as arrogance, envy, and love of the world, and improve themselves through deeds and dhikr. Al-Ghazali's thoughts teach the importance of moral education that starts from within, not just externally or formally.

Imam Al-Ghazali said in the book *Ayyuhal Walad*:

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ: النَّصِيحَةُ سَهْلَةٌ، وَالْمُسْكِلُ قَبُولُهَا، لِأَنَّهَا فِي مَذَاقِ مُتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى مُرَّةٌ، إِذِ الْمَنَاقِبِ مَحْبُوبَةٌ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ، عَلَى الْخُصُوصِ مَنْ كَانَ طَالِبَ الْعِلْمِ الرَّسْمِيِّ.

Meaning: O my son, giving advice is easy, but what is difficult is receiving it. Because advice is bitter in the hearts of people who follow their desires, because (religious) prohibitions are loved by their hearts, especially for those who only seek formal (outward) knowledge.

Imam al-Ghazali warned about the importance of sincere intentions in seeking knowledge so as not to become arrogant and hard-hearted, which causes rejection of kindness and advice. Al-Ghazali also likened despicable morals to dangerous scorpions under clothes that must be removed immediately, but people who are shackled by lust often reject advice and are even hostile to the advice giver, which shows weak faith. Knowledge without charity and cleansing the heart can potentially shake faith and lead to error.

Imam Al-Ghazali in the book *Ihya Ulumuddin* said that:

فَإِنَّ الْأَخْلَاقَ السَّيِّئَةَ حَيَّاتٌ وَعَقَّارِبُ لَدَاغَةٍ، فَلَوْ نَبَّهْنَا مُنَبِّهٌ عَلَى أَنَّ تَحْتَ ثَوْبِنَا عَقْرَبًا، لَتَقَلَّدْنَا مِنْهُ مَنَةً وَفَرَحْنَا بِهِ، وَاشْتَغَلْنَا بِإِزَالَةِ الْعَقْرِبِ وَإِبْعَادِهَا وَقَتْلِهَا.

Meaning: Bad morals are poisonous snakes and scorpions that sting. If someone tells us that there is a scorpion under our clothes, we will surely accept it as a gift and be happy with it, then we start to get rid of, distance ourselves from, and kill the poisonous animal.

Imam Al-Ghazali gave some tips so that we can accept input and advice from others easily, lightly, sincerely, openly, and humbly. He invited us to change our perspective on advice. According to him, advice should not be seen as a lesson or command that is patronizing. Instead, consider advice as a warning voice that indicates a hidden danger, such as the presence of a poisonous animal under our clothes that can be dangerous. In the Qur'an, Allah says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهُ

Meaning: Indeed, lucky is the person who purifies the soul. (Q.S. Asy-Syams Verse 9)

In Ibnu Kasir Takwil's interpretation, the meaning of the verse can be said to be that truly lucky is the person who purifies himself by obeying Allah as said by Qatadah, and cleanses him of despicable morals. Such things have also been narrated from Mujahid, Ikrimah, and Sa'id ibn Jubair. The meaning of this verse is the same as what is mentioned in other verses through His words.

This verse is an important foundation in the self-development and spiritual development of a Muslim. Purifying the soul (tazkiyatun nafs) includes efforts to cleanse the heart of diseases such as envy, envy, riya, and arrogance, and replacing them with praiseworthy qualities such as sincerity, patience, and tawadhu'. Guarding the heart is the main part of the process of purifying the soul. The heart is the center of intention and the source of all deeds; If the heart is clean, then behavior will reflect goodness. On the other hand, a dirty heart will give birth to bad morals.

Therefore, improving morals is impossible without first protecting and purifying the heart. Noble morals are born from a clean heart - a heart filled with love for Allah, compassion for others, and a strong desire to stay away from immorality. By guarding the heart and improving morals, a person is carrying out the tazkiyah process as intended in the verse. This is the path of luck promised by Allah, because cleanliness of the soul is the key to salvation in this world and the hereafter.

Based on Imam Al-Ghazali's explanation, the author analyzes his statement. It is found that he emphasized the importance of purifying the heart and soul so that a person is able to accept advice, subdue his lusts, and make knowledge a means of approaching Allah, not just intellectual achievement. True knowledge is that which leads to humility and a willingness to continue to improve oneself.

Imam Al-Ghazali in the book *Ayyuhal Walad* provides further information about guarding the heart and improving morals:

مُسْتَعِيلٌ بِفَضْلِ النَّفْسِ وَمَتَاقِبِ الدُّنْيَا، فَإِنَّهُ يَحْسِبُ أَنَّ الْعِلْمَ الْمُجَرَّدَ وَسِيلَةٌ، سَتَكُونُ نَجَاتَهُ وَخَلَاصُهُ فِيهِ، وَأَنَّهُ مُسْتَعْنٍ عَنِ الْعَمَلِ وَهَذَا اغْتِقَادُ الْفَلَّاسِفَةِ.
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ، أَلَا يَعْلَمُ هَذَا الْقَدَرُ؟! أَنَّهُ حِينَ حَصَلَ الْعِلْمُ، إِذَا لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِهِ، يَكُونُ حُجَّةً عَلَيْهِ آكَدَ، كَمَا قِيلَ: إِنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَالِمٌ لَمْ يَنْفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِعِلْمِهِ."

Meaning: A person who is busy with the nobility of the soul and the virtues of the world, thinks that knowledge alone is a means that will save him and free him. He feels that he does not need charity. This is the belief of the philosophers. Glory be to Allah the Almighty, he does not know that when he has acquired knowledge, but does not practice it, then that knowledge becomes a stronger argument to lead him astray. As the Prophet said: 'Indeed, the people who will be punished the most severely on the Day of Resurrection are the scholars who are not used by Allah with their knowledge.'

Imam Al-Ghazali, who emphasized the importance of practicing knowledge, not just knowing it theoretically. Imam Al-Ghazali strongly criticized people who made knowledge a goal, not a means to get closer to Allah. They felt that it was enough to know the theory of goodness, without trying to practice it. They were proud of their scientific degrees, even though this knowledge had not changed their morals and spiritual life.

3.5 The Significance of Imam Al-Ghazali's Ideas in Ayyuhal Walad Regarding Moral Education for Adolescents in Contemporary Society

In the contemporary age characterized by ethical dilemmas and value crises, Al-Ghazali's insights remain highly pertinent. A significant number of adolescents today become disoriented due to the absence of a spiritual leader. Education emphasizes cognitive development and academic success excessively, but character formation and spiritual guidance are sometimes overlooked.

Consequently, to assess the pertinence of Imam Al-Ghazali's ideas in *Ayyuhal Walad* to contemporary moral education for teenagers, scholars employ many indicators organized according to fundamental dimensions of moral education. These factors encompass educational objectives, imparted values, problems of moral education for teenagers, and a balanced approach to cognitive

and affective education. Each facet is examined by juxtaposing the doctrines espoused by Al-Ghazali with the requirements and methodologies of contemporary moral education. This indicator reveals the degree to which Al-Ghazali's classical ideas remain pertinent, adaptable, and essential in developing a comprehensive and contextual model of moral instruction for adolescents.

3.6 Conformity with the Objectives of Modern Moral Education Highlighting Ethical and Spiritual Principles

Imam Al-Ghazali's insights in the Book *Ayyuhal Walad* are highly pertinent to the notion of moral education for adolescents in contemporary society. In the book, Al-Ghazali underscores the significance of experiential knowledge, genuine intents, nurturing the heart, and the necessity for instructors capable of offering spiritual advice. These notions align closely with the pressing necessity for moral education among teenagers in contemporary society, when youth require not just academic understanding but also robust moral and spiritual direction.

In the face of globalization, technological advancements, and evolving family values, children frequently struggle to establish their adolescent identity and moral framework. Al-Ghazali contends that education transcends mere knowledge dissemination; it is a transformative process of the spirit necessitating continual mentorship and authentic exemplars. The analogy of knowledge devoid of application resembles an unused weapon, illustrating that a child's character and morals are cultivated not solely via memorization and theory, but through habit, experience, and exemplification.

Equally significant, Al-Ghazali underscored the cultivation of the heart and *mujahadah* (self-struggle) as fundamental to education. The human heart is analogous to a field that requires the removal of thorns and weeds, representing immoral behaviors, to cultivate virtuous qualities, symbolized by noble values. This technique involves patience, insight, and ongoing practice, rather than mere mastery of the subject matter. This perspective aligns with the contemporary methodology of character education, which prioritizes the gradual and holistic cultivation of virtuous habits, moral growth, and spirituality. In this setting, principles such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, and discipline must be ingrained through genuine experience and a process of introspection, rather than merely taught.

Imam Al-Ghazali's teachings in *Ayyuhal Walad* significantly enhance the present approach to character education. The principles he presents, including the primacy of charity over knowledge, the sincerity of intention, moral development, the role of instructors as spiritual mentors, and the necessity of *mujahadah* for heart purification, constitute a robust foundation for character education rooted in ethics and spirituality. In a progressively rational and technical society, Al-Ghazali's spiritual perspective is crucial for cultivating a well-rounded individual: informed, ethical, and devout. Consequently, Al-Ghazali's ideas continue to be pertinent and should serve as a reference in formulating character education that addresses contemporary moral difficulties while reinforcing the spiritual foundation of pupils.

Imam Al-Ghazali underscored the connection between humanity and God as the foundation of all virtuous actions and education. All virtuous actions should be aimed at God, and education must be pursued to draw oneself nearer to Him. This principle is crucial in contemporary character education, particularly within the framework of religious Indonesian society. Moral education devoid of divine values often appears arid and formalistic. Incorporating the spiritual principles articulated by Al-Ghazali enhances the significance and robustness of character education.

Consequently, the methodology of moral education that prioritizes the cultivation of intention, honesty, self-reflection, and the pursuit of mentors who nurture children's emotional growth is highly pertinent to contemporary educational systems. Al-Ghazali's ideas offer a robust logical and practical

basis for cultivating youngsters with virtuous morals, sincere spirits, and the resilience to confront the facts of the world with steadfast spiritual beliefs. Imam Al-Ghazali's reflections in the Book *Ayyuhal Walad* indicate that authentic moral education is founded on the consistent instillation of moral and spiritual principles, executed with affection, and directed by ethical educators. This aligns with the philosophy of character education, which seeks to cultivate individuals with virtuous traits, accountability, integrity, discipline, and the capacity to coexist harmoniously in a diverse community.

3.7 Moral Education for Modern Children in the Age of Digitalization and Moral Crisis

Imam Al-Ghazali's *Ayyuhal Walad* can help address the issues of moral education for children at a time of growing digitalization and moral crises. Information technology, social media, and digital content that doesn't necessarily promote positive ideals influence children and teenagers today. Unconscious behavior, perspective, and character are typically shaped by unlimited information, even bad information. In this situation, moral education is crucial.

Imam Al-Ghazali believed that education should enhance the soul and instill virtue. In *Ayyuhal Walad*, he stressed practicing knowledge, purifying intentions, and cleansing hearts of evil. This lesson is relevant to a young generation that is smart but morally weak. Al-Ghazali's beliefs encourage educators and parents to focus on academics and moral and spiritual development to prepare children for outside influences.

Open access to knowledge and inadequate control over passively acquired values are the biggest challenges in educating children in the digital age. Children mimic real-world and boundless virtual conduct. Imam Al-Ghazali preached that knowledge should be used to transform morality, not just be a pile of knowledge. Al-Ghazali acknowledged that children are creatures who create their personalities through values and consistent moral behaviors, not logic and theory.

Formal mechanisms and academic assessments alone are insufficient in this setting. Deep spirituality from Imam Al-Ghazali. He thinks children's hearts should be touched and cleaned of envy, arrogance, worldliness, and worship laziness. This procedure involves intensive, loving spiritual mentoring, or *tarbiyah*. Even intellectually gifted youngsters might slip into moral crises without this touch. This applies to today's kids, who are smart with technology yet lose their integrity and social duty.

Moral education relies heavily on parents and instructors. A child needs a spiritual adviser who teaches knowledge and values, according to Imam Al-Ghazali. Today's children need actual role models. Many youngsters lose role models because both parents work and schools focus too much on grades. Thus, youngsters seek identity and values from non-educational social media.

Our moral dilemma, including diminishing respect for parents and teachers, bullying, consumer behavior, and social sensitivity, is caused by a lack of deep moral education. Al-Ghazali has always stressed the need of connecting knowledge and deeds. Al-Ghazali compares it to a person with numerous swords who doesn't use them when attacked by a lion in *Ayyuhal Walad*. No amount of knowledge is valuable if it is not used to shape character and enhance oneself.

Al-Ghazali stressed the importance of true intentions in learning. In the digital age, many kids learn for popularity, status, or social pressure. According to Al-Ghazali, all recognized deeds begin with the appropriate intention.

Thus, learning that stresses ideals and objectives is more important than memorization. This requires the modern school system to create an instructive and spiritually transformational curriculum. The notion of *tarbiyah* introduced by Al-Ghazali is also applicable if cultivated through role model-based character education. Teachers and parents must model Islamic values, not only teach them. Children learn honesty by watching their teachers live honestly. Thus, to address digitalization's issues, technology should be balanced with moral and heart education.

Finally, Imam Al-Ghazali's ideas are useful for spirituality-based character education. Ayyuhal Walad might inspire Islamic schools and educational institutions to create a more practical moral development module that meets today's children's demands and adapts to societal dynamics. Educational systems that create intelligent but immoral people fail. Imam Al-Ghazali left a crucial legacy to avoid this failure.

Al-Ghazali's lessons in Ayyuhal Walad regarding generosity, teacher guidance, purifying the heart, and sincerity in pursuing knowledge are relevant to moral education in the digital age of temptations and moral crises. His teachings address the critical need for modern education to return to its roots: educating the full individual, not just the mind but also a devout and noble soul.

4. Conclusions

This study highlights how Imam Al-Ghazali's teachings in Ayyuhal Walad are relevant to modern adolescent moral education after a thorough analysis. First, Al-Ghazali's Ayyuhal Walad gives a solid foundation for moral teaching in youngsters. His theories cover both theoretical and practical approaches to teenage moral and spiritual issues. In an age when education focuses cognitive development and academic performance, Al-Ghazali's ideology emphasizes the necessity to reconcile intellectual intelligence with spiritual and emotional maturity. His emphasis on knowledge, good deeds, true intentions, and soul purification corresponds with modern moral education's goals of developing integrity, empathy, and social responsibility in pupils. Second, Al-Ghazali's thoughts are pertinent to growing digitization and youth moral dilemmas. The digital world gives youngsters unprecedented access to information, but it also erodes morality, conduct, and identity. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on spiritual direction (*mursyid*), heart education, and character formation through modeling and disciplined practice (*riyadhah al-nafts*) offers crucial solutions. He believes moral education requires habituation, regular monitoring, and authentic role models from parents, teachers, and the community. Therefore, Ayyuhal Walad promotes a personal, transforming, and spiritually and morally nurturing education.

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