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Re-actualizing Al-Ghazālī's Concept of Adab in the Pesantren Tradition in the Era of Educational Disruption

Hudan Ngisa Anshori
Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo
hudan.anshory@uinponorogo.ac.id
Basuki
Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo
basuki@uinponorogo.ac.id
Iyoh Mastiyah
Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional
iyoh001@brin.go.id

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Abstract

Educational disruption has intensified the need to reconsider ethical foundations of Islamic education, particularly teacher–student relationships, the pursuit of knowledge, and moral responsibility in digital learning environments. This study re-examines *al-Ghazālī's* concept of *adab* in *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, particularly *Kitāb al-ʿIlm*, to develop a contextually relevant framework for its revitalization in contemporary Islamic education and *pesantren*. Employing qualitative conceptual analysis of *al-Ghazālī's* primary text and contemporary scholarly literature, the study addresses the conceptual foundations of *adab*, its relevance to contemporary educational relationships and digital ethics, and the pedagogical and institutional mechanisms for its actualization. The findings conceptualize *adab* as an integrated ethical-spiritual orientation encompassing the learner's intention, intellectual humility, relational responsibility, and the pursuit of beneficial knowledge. The study reconstructs the relationship between *adab*, knowledge, action, and wisdom as a recursive educational process and proposes a four-dimensional interpretive framework: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and contextual. Its implementation is articulated through teacher exemplarity, daily habituation, institutional culture and governance, and critical digital adaptation. The framework contributes to Islamic education by connecting classical ethical thought with contemporary pedagogical relationships, institutional responsibility, and digital learning challenges. It offers a conceptual foundation for contextual implementation and further empirical investigation in diverse Islamic educational settings.

Keywords: *Adab*, *Al-Ghazālī*, *Pesantren*, digital disruption, Islamic education

INTRODUCTION

Teacher–student relationships extend beyond the transmission of instructional content, encompassing pedagogical interactions shaped by authority, care, trust, mutual responsibility, and respect for the pursuit of knowledge. In Islamic educational thought, students (santri) are expected to honour both knowledge and teachers as essential conditions for acquiring beneficial knowledge [1], while the deliberate cultivation of proper manners through collaborative teaching practices can help create a more focused learning environment and facilitate students' understanding of the material [2]. Contemporary studies further associate supportive teacher–student relationships with students' sense of school belonging, engagement, and emotional experiences [3], and highlight how these relationships and their ethical expectations extend into digital environments, where forms of interaction and demands for digital literacy continue to evolve [4]. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that the ethical quality of teacher–student relationships is central to meaningful learning; however, the distinctive contribution of Islamic education lies in orienting this relationship not only toward academic achievement but also toward the moral and spiritual purpose of seeking, understanding, and practising beneficial knowledge.

In Islamic educational thought, this question can be examined through the concept of *adab*, which should not be understood merely as politeness, etiquette, classroom compliance, or reciprocal respect as a social convention. Although such practices may reflect aspects of *adab*, its meaning is more comprehensive. In *al-Ghazālī's* educational perspective, *adab* is closely associated with the proper ordering of the self, the purification of intention, the recognition of the status and value of knowledge, and the ethical responsibilities of both teachers and learners. It thus encompasses not only outward conduct but also the inward orientation that informs educational relationships, shaping how knowledge is pursued, received, and ultimately applied. This perspective provides a framework for examining ethical challenges in teacher–student relationships, including reported incidents of physical conflict and alleged abuse in Indonesian schools. For example, media reports in January 2026 documented a physical altercation involving a teacher and several students at a public vocational

[1] Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarnūjī, *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim Ṭarīq at-Ta'allum* (As-Sunnah Collage, 2020), 13; Bakr Aboo Zayd, *The Etiquette of Seeking Knowledge* (1987), 44.

[2] Saiful Anwar et al., 'Etiquette Learning through the Team Teaching Model', *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 4 (2025): 822, https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v9i4.281.

[3] Ali Ibrahim and Wafaa El Zaatari, 'The Teacher–Student Relationship and Adolescents' Sense of School Belonging', *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25, no. 1 (2020): 382–95, https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1660998; Giuliana Pastore and Reto Luder, 'Teacher-Student-Relationship Quality in Inclusive Secondary Schools: Theory and Measurement of Emotional Aspects of Teaching', *Frontiers in Education* 6 (April 2021): 643617, https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.643617.

[4] Laura Camas Garrido et al., 'The Teacher-Student Relationship in the Use of Social Network Sites for Educational Purposes: A Systematic Review', *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research* 10, no. 1 (2021): 137–56, https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2021.1.591.

school in Tanjung Jabung Timur, Jambi [5], reportedly following insulting remarks, while another report in February 2026 described allegations of inappropriate treatment of a pupil by a teacher at an elementary school in Jember [6]. These incidents, as reported by the media, raise concerns about the protection of students, the exercise of educational authority, and the maintenance of ethical relationships within schools. However, individual cases should not be taken as sufficient evidence of a general crisis across the education system; rather, they illustrate the importance of strengthening institutional responsibility, child protection, and ethical pedagogical practices. From this standpoint, *adab* offers a normative perspective for understanding how educational relationships can be grounded in mutual respect, responsible authority, care, and the moral purpose of teaching and learning.

Pedagogical relationships characterized by a lack of mutual respect and ethical interaction may undermine student engagement and adversely affect academic achievement. Research indicates that positive teacher–student relationships can help regulate students' emotional experiences, encourage classroom participation, strengthen learning capacities, and support academic achievement and goal attainment [7]. Furthermore, the emotional quality of these relationships may have a stronger influence on student engagement and achievement than teachers' professional and didactic competence alone [8]. Relationships grounded in care, trust, respect, compassion, openness, and collaboration have also been associated with academic achievement, identity development, a sense of school belonging, and teacher accountability[9]. These findings establish the educational significance of relational ethics. Nevertheless, although contemporary relational theories explain how supportive interactions contribute to learning and student development, they do not necessarily address the specifically spiritual and moral foundations through which educational relationships are understood in Islamic thought. This distinction provides a basis for examining how Islamic educational ethics can complement contemporary understandings of teacher–student relationships.

In Islamic educational thought, this question can be explored through the concept of *adab*. Rather than reducing *adab* to politeness, etiquette, classroom compliance, or reciprocal respect as social conventions, it is necessary to understand its broader moral and spiritual dimensions. In *al-Ghazālī's* educational thought, *adab* is associated with the proper ordering of the self, the purification of intention, recognition of the status

[5] Ferdi Almunanda et al., 'Viral Guru Dan Para Murid Di Jambi Berkelahi, Disdik Mediasi', *Viral Guru Dan Para Murid Di Jambi Berkelahi, Disdik Mediasi*, 14 January 2026, https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8307497/viral-guru-dan-para-murid-di-jambi-berkelahi-disdik-mediasi.

[6] A. Habiburrahman, 'Komisi X DPR RI Kecam Kasus Guru Telanjangi Murid SD Di Jember', *Komisi X DPR RI Kecam Kasus Guru Telanjangi Murid SD Di Jember*, 14 February 2026, https://jatim.nu.or.id/nuonline/komisi-x-dpr-ri-kecam-kasus-guru-telanjangi-murid-sd-di-jember-mOS03.

[7] Pinyu Dai, 'The Influence of Teacher-Student Relationship on Students' Learning', *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media* 40, no. 1 (2024): 241–47, https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/40/20240764.

[8] Pastore and Luder, 'Teacher-Student-Relationship Quality in Inclusive Secondary Schools', 5.

[9] Ibrahim and El Zaatari, 'The Teacher–Student Relationship and Adolescents' Sense of School Belonging'.

and value of knowledge, and the ethical responsibilities of those who teach and learn. It therefore encompasses both outward conduct and inward orientation, shaping not only how educational participants interact but also why knowledge is pursued, how it is received, and for what purposes it is practiced. In this respect, *adab* contributes a normative and spiritual dimension to discussions of pedagogical relationships: educational interaction is evaluated not solely by its effects on engagement or achievement but also by its orientation towards moral formation, responsible conduct, and the pursuit of beneficial knowledge.

A closer examination of *Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī's Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, particularly the *Kitāb al-ʿIlm*, provides a textual foundation for this analysis. *Al-Ghazālī* discusses the merit of knowledge, the responsibilities of teachers, and the duties of learners as interconnected dimensions of the educational process. His account should not be interpreted as a one-sided demand for student deference. Teachers also bear substantial ethical and pedagogical obligations: they are expected to orient their teaching towards God, demonstrate care for learners, consider their capacities, and embody the knowledge they communicate. The relationship is therefore asymmetrical in terms of roles and authority, yet reciprocal in ethical responsibility. A teacher's knowledge and institutional position do not exempt the teacher from *adab*; rather, they intensify the obligation to exercise authority with care, justice, and restraint. This reading also requires a critical distinction between *al-Ghazālī's* original textual formulations and their contemporary interpretation. His thought should not be treated as a ready-made solution to every modern educational problem, but as a normative resource whose relevance must be examined in relation to changing pedagogical, social, and institutional conditions.

The contemporary relevance of this framework becomes particularly important in the context of digital learning. This relevance, however, should not assume that technology inherently causes moral decline or that educational relationships in the past were uniformly humanistic. Digital platforms can expand access to knowledge, communication, and collaboration, while also presenting challenges concerning privacy, academic integrity, attention, misinformation, unequal participation, and the boundaries of teacher–student communication. A systematic review of research on social networking sites in education highlights the continuity of teacher and student roles across online and offline environments and the ethical implications of digitally mediated relationships [10]. Similarly, the educational use of artificial intelligence raises questions about responsible judgement, disclosure of technological assistance, personal-data protection, and accountability for learning. The central issue, therefore, is not whether digital technology is inherently beneficial or harmful, but how its use can be guided by pedagogical and ethical principles. From an Islamic educational perspective, *adab* offers a framework for critically evaluating these practices by

[10] Camas Garrido et al., 'The Teacher-Student Relationship in the Use of Social Network Sites for Educational Purposes'.

connecting technological engagement with moral responsibility, respect for others, and the purpose of acquiring and applying knowledge.

Pesantren provides a significant institutional context for examining the re-actualisation of *adab* because its educational practices often integrate formal instruction, religious learning, communal routines, teacher exemplarity, and institutional norms. The published study has explored character formation through institutional quality practices, daily routines, curriculum integration, and the role of educators in pesantren[11]. Other studies have examined the internalization of character values among *santri* and the use of learning materials as instruments of ethical formation [12]. Research on *tazkiyat al-nafs* in the thought of al-Ghazālī has also discussed the relationship between purification of the soul and educational formation [13]. These studies provide valuable insights into the institutional and pedagogical processes through which Islamic character and values are cultivated. Nevertheless, the literature reviewed for this article indicates a need for a more integrated relational analysis that brings together the conceptual meaning of *adab* in *al-Ghazālī's* educational thought, the ethical responsibilities of teachers and students, and the institutional and digital conditions of contemporary *pesantren* education. In particular, further conceptual clarification is needed to distinguish *adab* from etiquette alone, examine the relationship between role-based authority and reciprocal ethical responsibility, and explain how classical ethical principles may be critically interpreted and adapted to contemporary educational settings.

Accordingly, this article does not claim that previous scholarship has overlooked *al-Ghazālī*, *adab*, or character education in *pesantren*. Rather, its research gap concerns the limited integration of these discussions into a single conceptual analysis of teacher–student relationships that connects classical Islamic educational ethics with contemporary relational scholarship and the institutional realities of *pesantren*. The article's novelty lies in developing a four-dimensional interpretive framework comprising ontological, epistemological, axiological, and contextual dimensions. These dimensions are further related to four interacting mechanisms for the educational re-actualisation of *adab*: teacher exemplarity, habituation, institutional

[11] Defi Firmansah et al., 'Transformation of Students' Religious Character Through Daily Habituation Programs A Case Study at Pesantren Anak Sholeh Baitul Qur'an', *At-Ta'dib* 21, no. 1 (2026): 140–54, https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v21i1.12; Muhammad Arfan Mu'ammar, 'Professional Islamic Education Teacher in Pesantren on Imam Al Murtadla Az-Zabidi's Perspective (an Analysis of Ithafu As-Sadah Al- Muttaqin)', *At-Ta'dib: Journal of Pesantren Education* 20, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v20i1.27; Ahmad Saifulloh and Jia Ying Neoh, 'TQM Implementation in Character Education: Lessons Learned from Pesantren Gontor', *At-Ta'dib* 17, no. 1 (2022): 18, https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v17i1.8047.

[12] Pradi Khusufi Syamsu, *Character Education Through Arabic Textbooks at Modern Pesantren in Cirebon (Case Study at Al-Muqoddas Modern Pesantren)*, (Ponorogo) 20, no. 1 (2025): 4–16, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v20i1.32; Syaifulloh Yusuf et al., 'The Internalization of Character Values among Santri: A Case Study at Budi Mulia Student Pesantren Yogyakarta', *At-Ta'dib* 21, no. 1 (2026): 86–111, https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v21i1.21.

[13] Laode Muhammad Alfateh Arifin et al., 'The Concept of Soul Education With "Tazkiyatun Nafs" According Imam Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah', *At-Ta'dib* 17, no. 1 (2022): 96, https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v17i1.7893.

culture, and critical digital adaptation. This framework is proposed as the authors' conceptual synthesis derived from the interpretation of *al-Ghazālī's* text and relevant contemporary scholarship; it is not presented as a framework explicitly formulated by *al-Ghazālī* or as an empirically validated model applicable to all pesantren. Through this synthesis, the article seeks to explain how *adab* can serve as a moral and spiritual foundation for educational relationships while remaining responsive to contemporary pedagogical and institutional challenges.

Based on this background, the article addresses three research questions: (1) How is *adab* conceptualised in *al-Ghazālī's Kitāb al-ʿIlm*, particularly in relation to the ethical responsibilities of teachers and students? (2) How can this conception contribute to contemporary discussions of teacher–student relationships and the ethics of digital learning? (3) Through what pedagogical and institutional mechanisms can *adab* be re-actualised in contemporary *pesantren* while remaining open to critical and contextual adaptation? Accordingly, this study aims to clarify the conceptual foundations of *adab* in *al-Ghazālī's* educational thought, analyse its relational and contemporary implications, and formulate a context-sensitive interpretive framework for its re-actualisation in *pesantren* education.

METHOD

This study uses qualitative library research with an interpretive and critical textual orientation. It combines close reading of a classical primary source with a focused review of contemporary scholarship. The primary source is the *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* in *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*. The analysis is limited principally to the sections addressing the merit and classification of knowledge, the duties of teachers, and the duties and manners of learners. Other parts of the *Iḥyāʾ* are consulted only when they clarify concepts directly relevant to the analysis, particularly intention, moral discipline, and *tazkiyat al-nafs*. This delimitation prevents the article from treating the entire *Iḥyāʾ* as though it had been analyzed in equal depth.

The secondary corpus consists of peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books relevant to four themes: Islamic educational ethics and *al-Ghazālī*; teacher–student relationships; *pesantren* character formation and institutional culture; and digital learning or educational technology ethics. The period 2020–2026 applies to the contemporary secondary literature, not to the classical primary text. The date range was selected to capture recent discussions while retaining foundational scholarship where necessary to interpret the primary text. Sources were included when they directly addressed at least one of the four themes, provided identifiable authorship and publication information, and appeared in peer-reviewed journals or academic publications. The review is focused and interpretive rather than a systematic review claiming exhaustive coverage of all databases.

The literature was identified through Google Scholar and journal or publisher portals using keywords related to *al-Ghazālī's* concept of *adab*, teacher–student

relationships, Islamic educational ethics, *pesantren* character education, and digital learning ethics. Sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research questions, without claiming a PRISMA-based systematic review or an exhaustive literature search. Data analysis involved four stages: extracting relevant passages from the *Kitāb al-ʿIlm*; coding key concepts; grouping codes into themes concerning teacher and learner responsibilities, relational ethics, and the purpose of knowledge; and synthesizing these themes with contemporary scholarship on *pesantren* education and digital learning. The analysis distinguished *al-Ghazālī's* textual statements from the authors' interpretations and contemporary implications. Accordingly, the proposed four-dimensional framework and the relationship among *adab*, knowledge, action, and wisdom constitute the authors' analytical reconstruction, not an explicit taxonomy formulated by *al-Ghazālī*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Conceptual of Adab in Al-Ghazālī's Educational Thought

In Islamic educational thought, *adab* is a fundamental dimension of knowledge because it connects intellectual development with moral conduct and spiritual formation. Although commonly translated as manners, etiquette, or politeness, *adab* encompasses more than outward behaviour. In *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, particularly the *Kitāb al-ʿIlm*, al-Ghazālī positions *adab* as a moral and spiritual orientation that shapes the intention, process, and purpose of learning [14]. It is therefore distinct from politeness, which concerns socially acceptable interaction; discipline, which often emphasizes compliance with rules; and mutual respect, which concerns recognition of others' dignity. *Adab* integrates these outward expressions with inner moral awareness, intellectual responsibility, and accountability before God. Its spiritual foundation is related to *tazkiyat al-nafs*, or purification of the soul, although the two concepts are not interchangeable: *tazkiyah* emphasizes inner purification, whereas *adab* also governs relationships with knowledge, teachers, fellow learners, and the wider community. Contemporary studies similarly highlight the relevance of spiritual purification and moral formation in Islamic education [15].

Al-Ghazālī assigns teachers an ethical responsibility that extends beyond transmitting knowledge to guiding learners' intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. Teachers should demonstrate sincerity, compassion, patience, and exemplary conduct, while adapting instruction to students' capacities and providing guidance appropriate to their level of understanding [16]. Pedagogical authority is

[14] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Dar ibn Hazm, 2005), 60.

[15] Arifin et al., 'The Concept of Soul Education With "Tazkiyatun Nafs" According Imam Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah'; Ahmad Komarudin et al., 'Relevansi Konsep Al-Ghazali terhadap Pendidikan Akhlak di Era Digital', *Ta dib Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (2026): 231–40, https://doi.org/10.29313/tjpi.v14i2.8755.

[16] al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 68–70.

therefore inseparable from moral accountability. It should be exercised through care, fairness, and professional responsibility rather than arbitrary control or demands for unquestioning obedience. Contemporary discussions reinforce these principles by emphasizing teacher sincerity, moral exemplarity, sensitivity to learners' needs, and professional ethics in digital environments [17].

Al-Ghazālī also identifies ten duties for learners in the *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* [18]. These can be analytically grouped into three interconnected dimensions. *First*, spiritual readiness and learning orientation involve purifying the self, cultivating virtuous character, and pursuing knowledge with sincere intentions rather than merely seeking status or material benefit. *Second*, relational ethics and intellectual humility involve respecting teachers, listening attentively, and avoiding arrogance, without excluding reasoned questions or critical discussion. *Third*, intellectual discipline and the organisation of knowledge involve recognising the importance of different disciplines, establishing foundational knowledge, and pursuing learning systematically according to one's capacities. These categories are the authors' analytical grouping of *al-Ghazālī's* ten duties, not a classification explicitly formulated by *al-Ghazālī*. Research in pesantren contexts further indicates that ethical dispositions are cultivated through habituation, discipline, role modelling, and the integration of educational and religious routines [19]

The responsibilities of teachers and learners form complementary dimensions of an ethical educational relationship. Although their positions are asymmetrical in terms of knowledge and pedagogical authority, both are bound by ethical responsibilities. Learners should demonstrate respect, humility, and intellectual discipline, while teachers bear heightened responsibility because of their authority and influence over students. Respect does not require unconditional submission, just as authority does not exempt teachers from accountability. Students may respectfully question explanations or express reasoned disagreement, while teachers must protect learners' dignity and respond with fairness and care. This interpretation is consistent with contemporary research recognising the importance of positive teacher–student relationships for students' educational and developmental outcomes [20]. However, *adab* extends beyond relational quality by grounding educational interaction in spiritual accountability and the pursuit of beneficial knowledge.

The relationship between *adab*, knowledge, action, and wisdom can be represented as *adab*, *knowledge*, *action*, *wisdom*. This sequence is the authors' analytical synthesis

[17] Faqih Abdul Aziz and Dewi Aisyah, 'The Digital Professional Adab Paradigm: Reconstructing Classical Islamic Educator Ethics for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teachers', *Research Journal on Teacher Professional Develpment* (Semarang) 3, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21580/rjtpd.v3i01.33779; Azmi Izuddin et al., 'Adab in Teacher–Student Relations: An Analysis of Al-Ghazali's Educational Thought', *AL-ADABIYAH: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* (Jeember) 7, no. 1 (2026), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35719/adabiyah.v7i1.1263.

[18] al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 60–68.

[19] Firmansah et al., 'Transformation of Students' Religious Character Through Daily Habituation Programs A Case Study at Pesantren Anak Sholeh Baitul Qur'an'; Yusuf et al., 'The Internalization of Character Values among Santri'.

[20] Valentin Emslander et al., 'Teacher–Student Relationships and Student Outcomes: A Systematic Second-Order Meta-Analytic Review.', *Psychological Bulletin* 151, no. 3 (2025): 365–97, https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000461.

rather than a formal hierarchy explicitly formulated by *al-Ghazālī*. It illustrates how *adab* provides the ethical orientation for acquiring knowledge, knowledge informs responsible action, and the integration of knowledge and action contributes to wisdom. Thus, educational achievement should not be measured solely by intellectual acquisition but also by the ethical purpose and responsible application of knowledge. The sequence is conceptual rather than strictly linear, since the cultivation of *adab*, the development of knowledge, and the refinement of action may reinforce one another.

The re-actualization of *adab* requires institutional practices that support the internalisation of ethical values. In pesantren, this can be pursued through teacher exemplarity (*uswah hasanah*), daily habituation, integration of values into educational activities, and the cultivation of an institutional culture that reinforces ethical conduct. Recent studies highlight the contribution of habituation, communal routines, and institutional culture to the development of students' religious character and discipline.

In digital learning environments, *adab* requires contextual adaptation rather than rejection of technological change. Its principles can guide responsible communication, privacy protection, academic integrity, information verification, and the ethical use of digital and artificial-intelligence tools. Recent research on *pesantren-based* madrasah and digital professional ethics indicates that classical Islamic values remain relevant when critically interpreted in relation to contemporary educational practices [21]. Accordingly, this article proposes an interpretive framework comprising four dimensions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and contextual and four mechanisms of re-actualization: teacher exemplarity, habituation, institutional culture, and critical digital adaptation. These dimensions and mechanisms represent the authors' analytical reconstruction, not a taxonomy explicitly established by *al-Ghazālī*. The framework connects the spiritual and intellectual foundations of *adab* with teacher–student responsibilities and the institutional conditions necessary for ethical education in contemporary *pesantren*.

The Relevance of Adab in Al-Ghazālī's Educational Thought in the Era of Educational Disruption

Educational disruption has transformed the landscape of education through digital technology, artificial intelligence, and the global circulation of knowledge. These developments offer new opportunities for learning but also introduce ethical challenges concerning information reliability, academic integrity, social interaction, and the formation of students' character. The challenges should not, however, be attributed solely to technological advancement. Rather, they indicate the need to strengthen the ethical foundations of educational practices. Nadlir argue that teacher education must respond to global challenges, including technological disruption, humanitarian issues, and socio-cultural fragmentation, by moving beyond the

[21] Saifudin et al., *Between Adab and Digital Learning: A Qualitative Case Study in Indonesian Pesantren-Based Madrasah*, 7, no. 1 (2026), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37567/ijgie.v7i1.5146.

conventional transmission of pedagogical knowledge [22]. Similarly, Pratiwi highlights concerns about educational orientations that may neglect the development of *syakhṣiyyah* (moral personality)[23]. In this context, *al-Ghazālī's* conception of *adab* in *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, particularly the *Kitāb al-ʿIlm*, offers a relevant normative foundation because it integrates spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions into the educational process [24].

First, *adab* is relevant to strengthening moral responsibility and digital ethics. The extensive use of social media and digital platforms has changed the ways individuals communicate, access information, and interact within educational environments. Laode, dentifies uncontrolled social media use as one factor associated with changes in individual behavior [25]. Nevertheless, digital technology should not be regarded as inherently detrimental to morality; its educational consequences depend on how it is used and regulated. In this regard, *adab* provides an ethical orientation for developing self-control, intellectual honesty, responsible communication, and critical engagement with information. The principles of *tabayyun* (verification) and *ahl al-dhikr* (referring to knowledgeable authorities) are particularly relevant to preventing the uncritical acceptance and dissemination of information [26]. These values also provide a basis for responsible engagement with artificial intelligence, including verifying generated information, acknowledging assistance, and maintaining responsibility for one's academic work. Contemporary discussions of responsible AI in education similarly emphasise the importance of ethical guidance for teachers and students [27].

Second, the re-actualisation of *adab* contributes to restoring the holistic purpose of education. Education should not be limited to the transmission of knowledge and the achievement of academic performance, but should also develop students' moral awareness, spiritual maturity, and capacity for responsible action. *Al-Ghazālī* places ethical and spiritual formation at the centre of the pursuit of knowledge, indicating that the value of learning is closely related to its purpose and application [28]. Idris similarly emphasize the importance of cultivating *adab* in the educational process [29].

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[22] Nadlir et al., 'Humanizing Teacher Education for Madrasah Contexts: A Curriculum Model Integrating Ethical Reflection on Socio-Scientific Issues', *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025): 2583513, https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2583513.

[23] Siska Pratiwi, *Sistem Pendidikan Yang Hilang Arah, Merusak Relasi Guru Dan Siswa*, 2026, https://lapan6online.com/sistem-pendidikan-yang-hilang-arah-merusak-relasi-guru-dan-siswa/.

[24] al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 60–71.

[25] Laode Akbar, *Ketua Golkar Jakarta Ahmed Zaki Iskandar Soroti Merosotnya Adab Generasi Muda Akibat Dampak Negatif Media Sosial*, 2026, https://jakarta.akurat.co/bale-warga/834107/ketua-golkar-jakarta-ahmed-zaki-iskandar-soroti-merosotnya-adab-generasi-muda-akibat-dampak-negatif-media-sosial.

[26] Fatkhur Rohman et al., *Epistemologi Tarbawi Gen Z: Rekontekstualisasi Konsep Tabayyun Dan Ahl Al-Dzikr Sebagai Filter Hoax Dan Krisis Otoritas*, 2026, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52266/kreatif.v24i1.5765.

[27] Bokyung Go et al., 'Making AI in Education Responsible: Classroom-Ready Ethical Guidelines for Teachers and Students', *AI and Ethics* 6, no. 3 (2026): 337, https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-026-01176-2.

[28] al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 60–71.

[29] Muhammad Idris et al., 'The Concept of Adab Education and Its Relevance to Islamic Education in The Era of Society 5.0 : Analysis of The Interpretation of Surah Al Kahfi', *Islam Transformatif : Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2025): 59, https://doi.org/10.30983/it.v9i1.9229.

The integration of moral values through habituation and reflection can also contribute to positive behavioral development and students' readiness to become role models in their communities [30]. This perspective is consistent with the argument that moral education should be integrated into the curriculum, school culture, extracurricular activities, and community life [31]. Thus, *adab* should be understood as an integral dimension of holistic education rather than an additional subject or a set of behavioral instructions.

Third, *adab* provides an ethical foundation for strengthening humanistic teacher–student relationships. *Al-Ghazālī's* educational thought places responsibilities on both teachers and learners. Teachers are expected to demonstrate sincerity, compassion, pedagogical sensitivity, and exemplary conduct, while students are encouraged to cultivate humility, discipline, respect, and intellectual honesty [32]. These responsibilities are reciprocal but not identical. Teachers hold greater pedagogical authority and therefore bear heightened responsibility for guiding learners, protecting their dignity, and exercising authority fairly. Students, meanwhile, are expected to engage sincerely and respectfully without being required to surrender their intellectual agency. Collaborative religious practices can support holistic character development [33], while humanistic and ethical principles in teacher education can strengthen transformative pedagogy [34]. Contemporary relational research also highlights the importance of positive teacher–student relationships for students' sense of school belonging and educational experiences [35]. Camas further demonstrate that ethical considerations remain important when educational relationships extend to social networking sites [36]. These findings complement *al-Ghazālī's* perspective by connecting relational quality with moral responsibility and the broader purposes of education.

Fourth, the concept of *adab* remains relevant as an ethical foundation for the use of technology and information. Its principles can guide students in evaluating information, communicating respectfully, protecting privacy, and maintaining academic integrity. Putri identify *adab* as an important moral, social, and

[30] Salamah Sa'diatul Wafa, *Integrating Moral Values through the Keputrian Program to Strengthen Students' Character at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jetis*, 20, no. 2 (2025): 117, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21111/attadib.v20i2.14788.

[31] Muhammad Syafiqurrohman, 'Implementasi Pendidikan Akhlak Integratif-Inklusif', *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Agama* 12, no. 01 (2020): 37, https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v12i01.240.

[32] al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 60–71.

[33] Suparno et al., *Religious Moderation as a Model for Character Education in Indonesia: A Case Study of Al-Fattah Islamic Elementary School in Sarolangun, Jambi*, 10, no. 2 (2025): 218, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/30983/islamtransformatif.v9i2.9674.

[34] Nadlir et al., 'Humanizing Teacher Education for Madrasah Contexts'.

[35] Ibrahim and El Zaatari, 'The Teacher–Student Relationship and Adolescents' Sense of School Belonging'; Pastore and Luder, 'Teacher-Student-Relationship Quality in Inclusive Secondary Schools'.

[36] Camas Garrido et al., 'The Teacher-Student Relationship in the Use of Social Network Sites for Educational Purposes'.

epistemological filter in young people's use of technology [37]. Similarly, Husna emphasize the contribution of *adab*-based education to the development of knowledgeable individuals with strong moral character [38]. These perspectives suggest that technological competence needs to be accompanied by ethical judgement. In the context of artificial intelligence, students should not accept generated outputs without verification, while teachers should model transparent and responsible technology use. Accordingly, *adab* does not function as an obstacle to technological innovation; rather, it provides moral direction for ensuring that technological engagement supports learning and human development.

Fifth, the actualization of *adab* requires institutional commitment and a holistic educational approach. Its development cannot depend exclusively on students' compliance or occasional moral instruction. It requires teacher exemplarity, continuous habituation, curriculum integration, and an institutional culture that consistently reinforces ethical values. The teacher's role as *murabbī* is particularly important because educational responsibility encompasses the development of students' intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual capacities. An integrated curriculum and humanistic teaching approach can support the formation of holistic personalities in response to global challenges [39]. Similarly, educators are responsible for developing students' intellectual (*head*), practical (*hand*), and emotional (*heart*) competencies so that they can contribute as individuals and members of society [40]. In *pesantren*, these principles can be cultivated through religious learning, communal activities, daily routines, and consistent interactions between teachers and students. Research on the *Al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* curriculum also highlights the contribution of classical texts, *tawḥīd*, and moral discipline to students' religious development [41]. Furthermore, the integration of religious and general knowledge, supported by consistent pedagogical practices and institutional culture, can contribute to the development of intellectually capable and socially responsible graduates [42]. Nevertheless, institutional traditions should not be assumed to guarantee ethical relationships automatically; their implementation must remain accountable to fairness, learner protection, and professional responsibility.

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[37] Ismarani Junia Putri et al., 'Relevansi Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Melayu di Era Media Sosial: Integrasi Adab dan Teknologi: Penelitian', *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat dan Riset Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2025): 12702–9, https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v4i2.4242.

[38] Jami'atul Husna et al., *Adab Sebagai Fondasi Ilmu: Perspektif Syed Muhammad Naquid Al-Attas Terhadap Krisis Pendidikan Modern*, 10 (2025): 225, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i04.34624.

[39] Abdul Rohman et al., 'Integrating Traditional-Modern Education in Madrasa to Promote Competitive Graduates in the Globalization Era', *Cogent Education* 10, no. 2 (2023): 14, https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2268456.

[40] Zulherma Zulherma et al., 'Konsep Pendidikan Rasulullah dan Refleksi Kompetensi Holistik Sahabat', *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Agama* 13, no. 2 (2021): 426, https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v13i2.909.

[41] Muhammad Hambal Shafwan, *Implementation of the Al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ Curriculum and Santri Religious Attitudes in Pesantren*, 20, no. 2 (2025): 62, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v20i2.39.

[42] Alhamuddin Alhamuddin, *Bridging Faith and Knowledge: Reframing Holistic Islamic Education for Integrity-Based Character Formation*, pt 2, 20 (2025): 33, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21111/attadib.v20i2.14681.

Overall, the relevance of *al-Ghazālī's* conception of *adab* lies in its capacity to connect the moral and spiritual purposes of education with contemporary pedagogical and technological realities. It provides a normative foundation for strengthening digital ethics, restoring the holistic purpose of education, developing humanistic teacher–student relationships, and integrating moral values into institutional practices. Importantly, *adab* cannot be imposed exclusively on students. Teachers also carry ethical obligations, including sincerity, compassion, pedagogical discernment, and consistency between instruction and conduct. Respect for teachers should not be interpreted as unconditional submission, just as pedagogical authority should not exempt educators from accountability. Therefore, re-actualising *adab* requires a reciprocal but differentiated ethical relationship in which teachers and students fulfil their respective responsibilities while maintaining human dignity. Through this approach, *al-Ghazālī's* educational thought can contribute to the development of Islamic education that is spiritually grounded, intellectually responsible, humanistic, and responsive to the challenges of educational disruption.

The Institutional Actualisation of *Adab* in Contemporary Pesantren

Pesantren have historically functioned not only as institutions for transmitting Islamic knowledge but also as environments for cultivating religious character and moral responsibility [43]. Within this tradition, *adab* is developed through the interaction of knowledge, spiritual orientation, exemplary conduct, and everyday educational practices. *Al-Ghazālī's* educational thought provides a relevant ethical foundation because it places moral and spiritual formation alongside the pursuit of knowledge. In contemporary *pesantren*, however, the actualization of *adab* requires more than the preservation of traditional practices. It requires sustained pedagogical and institutional responses to changing social, cultural, and technological conditions.

The institutional actualization of *adab* can be understood through four interconnected mechanisms: *First*, teacher exemplarity constitutes a fundamental mechanism in the cultivation of *adab*. In *pesantren*, the *kiai* and teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral examples whose conduct demonstrates the relationship between learning, religious commitment, and social responsibility. The role of the *kiai* in maintaining scholarly continuity and cultivating students' ethical dispositions is reflected in the practices of exemplary conduct and communal [44]. Similarly, the *uswah hasanah* of religious leaders contributes to the internalization of religious and social values within the *pesantren* environment [45]. This is consistent with

[43] Choirun Niswah et al., 'Analisis Peran Lembaga Pendidikan Pesantren Dalam Membagun Karakter dan Ilmu Pengetahuan', *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisipin* 3, no. 6 (2025): 308, https://doi.org/10.60126/jim.v3i6.984.

[44] Muhammad Asrori et al., 'The Living Tradition: Menelusuri Warisan Intelektual Islam Dalam Kurikulum Pesantren Al-Itqon, Jawa Tengah', *Indonesian Journal of Social Science and Education (IJOSSE)* 2, no. 1 (2026): 386, https://doi.org/10.62567/ijosse.v2i1.1854.

[45] Siti Ayu Nuriana and Muhammad Arif Syihabuddin, *Optimalisasi Budaya Pesantren Salaf dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri*, 3, no. 2 (2026): 172, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.71242/ks0saz91; Didit Ruhdiyanto et al., 'Peran Kiai

al-Ghazālī's emphasis on teachers' ethical responsibilities and exemplary conduct [46]. Nevertheless, teacher authority should not be interpreted as unrestricted power. Although the teacher–student relationship is asymmetrical in terms of roles and authority, it entails reciprocal ethical responsibilities, with teachers carrying greater obligations for students' welfare and protection. Respect for teachers must therefore remain compatible with respectful questioning and critical learning [47].

Second, daily habituation enables *adab* to develop from formal instruction into dispositions expressed through everyday conduct. Activities such as communal prayer, Qur'anic recitation, disciplined study, service, and shared responsibilities provide opportunities for students to practice religious and social values. These practices are consistent with the *pesantren* tradition of simplicity, collectivity, voluntary service, and wisdom [48]. The cultivation of values such as *iffah*, *amanah*, and *tawadhu'* also requires exemplary behavior, habituation, and reflective activities [49]. Research on character education in *pesantren* similarly highlights the contribution of daily routines and habituation to students' religious character formation [50]. However, habituation should not be regarded as automatically producing ethical development. Everyday interactions must be examined to determine whether they reinforce or contradict the values formally taught by the institution. Thus, the hidden curriculum becomes an important dimension of *adab* formation because students learn not only from explicit instruction but also from institutional routines, relationships, and social practices [51].

Third, institutional culture and governance provide the organizational conditions necessary for sustaining *adab*. Its cultivation cannot depend solely on the personal example of individual teachers or the compliance of students; it also requires consistency between institutional values, leadership, educational policies, disciplinary procedures, and peer relationships. *Pesantren-based* character education therefore involves the integration of ethical values into learning activities, institutional arrangements, and the broader educational environment [52]. A holistic approach to Islamic education also requires the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions rather than focusing exclusively on academic achievement

dalam Pembinaan Akhlak Santri di Pondok Pesantren Pagelaran III', *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 7, no. 3 (2024): 2638–44, https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i3.4037.

[46] al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 68–71.

[47] Camas Garrido et al., 'The Teacher-Student Relationship in the Use of Social Network Sites for Educational Purposes'.

[48] Nur Hidayat, *Kontribusi Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Tradisional Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Bangsa*, 2020, 17, http://journal.staislantaboer.ac.id/index.php/medikom/article/view/15.

[49] Wafa, *Integrating Moral Values through the Keputrian Program to Strengthen Students' Character at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jetis*, 117.

[50] Firmansah et al., 'Transformation of Students' Religious Character Through Daily Habituation Programs A Case Study at Pesantren Anak Sholeh Baitul Qur'an'; Yusuf et al., 'The Internalization of Character Values among Santri'.

[51] Nuriana and Syihabuddin, *Optimalisasi Budaya Pesantren Salaf dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri*, 172; Ruhdiyanto et al., 'Peran Kiai dalam Pembinaan Akhlak Santri di Pondok Pesantren Pagelaran III', 2642.

[52] Saifulloh and Neoh, 'TQM Implementation in Character Education'; Syamsu, *Character Education Through Arabic Textbooks at Modern Pesantren in Cirebon (Case Study at Al-Muqoddas Modern Pesantren).*

[53]. Recent studies further emphasize the importance of integrating role modelling, habituation, curriculum, and pesantren culture in sustaining character education [54]. Accordingly, disciplinary practices should be grounded in fairness, care, accountability, and respect for students' dignity. Institutional authority must protect the educational community rather than legitimize coercion or unaccountable power. This requires leadership that can preserve *pesantren* identity while responding constructively to institutional and social change [55].

Fourth, critical digital adaptation extends the principles of *adab* into contemporary learning environments. Digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and social media have changed how students access information, communicate, and produce knowledge. These developments create ethical challenges concerning academic integrity, attention, misinformation, privacy, personal-data protection, and responsible participation in digital spaces. The *pesantren* response should not be based on rejecting technology or assuming that technological development inevitably causes moral decline. Rather, technology needs to be integrated through critical guidance and clear ethical responsibilities. This is consistent with the view that *pesantren* can embrace technological innovation and curriculum development while maintaining Islamic values [56]. Responsible AI use also requires transparency, verification of information, appropriate acknowledgement of AI assistance, and protection of personal data [57]. At the same time, digital learning should complement rather than replace meaningful pedagogical relationships and direct ethical guidance [58].

Taken together, these four mechanisms demonstrate that the re-actualization of *adab* in contemporary *pesantren* is a continuous process involving individual conduct, pedagogical practices, institutional governance, and engagement with technological change. Its effectiveness depends on the coherence between what the institution

[53] Ricki Yakup Tukiyah and Betty Maulirosa Bustan, 'Konsep Pendidikan Holistik di Pesantren: Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Imam Al-Ghazali: Konsep Pendidikan Holistik di Pesantren: Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Imam Al-Ghazali', *Jurnal Studi Pesantren* 4, no. 1 (2024): 26, https://doi.org/10.35897/studipesantren.v4i1.811.

[54] Lasmanah, 'Analisis Implementasi Hidden Curriculum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri Di Pesantren Indonesia', *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 11, no. 1 (2026), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v11i1.43724; Muhammad Anas Ma'arif and Muhamad Arif, 'Sustaining Character Education in Pesantren: A Holistic and Culturally Embedded Learning Ecosystem', *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 45, no. 2 (2026), https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v45i2.94968.

[55] Laila Fathiyyah and Hilda Khafizhatul Khusna, 'Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kiai Pesantren Salaf Di Era Disrupsi 5.0 Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Kulon Banon, Desa Kajen, Kabupaten Pati', *Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kiai Pesantren Salaf Di Era Disrupsi 5.0 Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Kulon Banon, Desa Kajen, Kabupaten Pati* 45 (2024): 30, https://doi.org/10.15575/gdcs.v45i.2549; Ridwan Maulana Rifqi Muzakky et al., 'Transformasi Pesantren Menghadapi Era Revolusi Digital 4.0', *ALADALAH: Jurnal Politik, Sosial, Hukum dan Humaniora* 1, no. 3 (2023): 241, https://doi.org/10.59246/aladalah.v1i3.371.

[56] Syaefuddin Ahrom Al Ayubbi, 'Kepemimpinan Kiai dalam Transformasi Pendidikan Pesantren di Era Disrupsi', *Journal of Social Movements* 1, no. 2 (2024): 137, https://doi.org/10.62491/jsm.v1i2.2024.32.

[57] European Commission, *Guidelines on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence and Data in Teaching and Learning for Educators* (Publications Office of the European Union, 2026), https://doi.org/doi:10.2766/7967834.

[58] Nawalul Mutawakkil and Ahmad Barizi, 'Peran Kiai dalam Menghadapi Masyarakat Era Disrupsi: Epistemologi Kepemimpinan (Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Bustanul Makmur 2 Banyuwangi)', *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 7, no. 8 (2024): 9284–92, https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i8.5269.

teaches, what educators exemplify, what students experience in daily life, and how the institution responds to emerging challenges. Thus, *adab* should be understood not merely as a set of behavioral rules but as an integrated ethical and spiritual orientation that informs the pursuit of knowledge, human relationships, institutional responsibility, and participation in contemporary society.

The Four Dimensional Framework for the Revitalization of *Adab*

Building on the four institutional mechanisms discussed above, this article proposes a four-dimensional framework for interpreting the revitalization of *adab* in contemporary Islamic education: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and contextual dimensions. This framework is an interpretive synthesis developed from *al-Ghazālī's* educational thought and contemporary literature; it is not a four-dimensional model explicitly formulated by *al-Ghazālī*. The dimensions clarify the philosophical foundations and educational functions of *adab*, while teacher exemplarity, daily habituation, institutional culture and governance, and critical digital adaptation provide the mechanisms through which these foundations can be enacted.

Ontological dimension: the nature and purpose of knowledge and the learner.

The ontological dimension concerns the nature of knowledge and the kind of person education seeks to cultivate. From *al-Ghazālī's* perspective, knowledge is not merely information or an instrument for material achievement but a means of drawing closer to God and contributing to individual and social benefit. Respect for knowledge is therefore closely related to the moral quality of the learner's life [59]. This understanding positions the learner as a spiritual and moral agent rather than merely a cognitive performer. Spirituality-based education consequently has an important role in character formation [60]. In contemporary education, this dimension provides a basis for reorienting learning towards human development, ethical responsibility, and spiritual purpose without disregarding the practical value of knowledge.

Epistemological dimension: *adab* and the responsible pursuit of knowledge.

The epistemological dimension explains how knowledge should be sought, received, evaluated, and communicated. *Adab* shapes the learner's intention, intellectual humility, discipline, and readiness to receive knowledge responsibly. It is therefore more than social etiquette; it provides an ethical foundation for the process of knowing. [61], drawing on M. Amin Abdullah's integrative-interconnective

[59] Sayid Ahmad Ramadhan and Hendra Sucipto, 'Adab Terhadap Ilmu Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali', *AL-MURABBI: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan dan Keislaman* 10, no. 2 (2023): 9, https://doi.org/10.53627/jam.v10i2.5297.

[60] Eny Maria Qonita and Akhmad Nurul Kawakip, 'Relevansi Pemikiran Al-Ghazali dan William James dalam Pendidikan Karakter melalui Program Orientasi Santri Baru', *Tarbiyatuna Kajian Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025): 55, https://doi.org/10.69552/tarbiyatuna.v9i1.2882.

[61] Muh Ramadhan and Andi Faisal, *Reaktualisasi Konsep 'Adab' Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Studi Komparatif Kritis Pemikiran Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas Dan M. Amin Abdullah*, 11 (2026): 71, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v11i01.42329.

perspective, highlight the potential of *adab* to facilitate dialogue among contemporary and fragmented fields of knowledge. Similarly, [62] emphasize its significance in the process of acquiring and internalizing knowledge. This dimension also concerns teachers' responsibility to provide accurate instruction and guide learners ethically. In contemporary settings, it includes academic honesty, critical evaluation of information, responsible use of technology, and scrutiny of AI-generated outputs. The integration of Islamic values, teacher exemplarity, and collaboration among families, schools, and communities can further support the development of intellectually capable and ethically responsible learners [63].

Axiological dimension: the benefits and moral consequences of knowledge.

The axiological dimension addresses the purposes and consequences of knowledge. Knowledge has value not only through intellectual achievement but also through the ethical conduct, social contribution, and spiritual development it supports. Axiology concerns the values, ethics, aesthetics, and morals associated with the use of knowledge [64]. In Islamic education, the pursuit of knowledge is consequently directed towards human benefit and the strengthening of faith and devotion to Allah [65]. This orientation is closely connected to *tazkiyat al-nafs*, through which learning is expected to contribute to the refinement of personal dispositions and the development of beneficial action. Character education likewise supports empathy, noble conduct, and social responsibility [66]. Accordingly, educational practices should connect religious understanding with responsible conduct towards other people and the natural environment [67]. This dimension also requires teachers to exercise their authority for learners' development and the common good.

Contextual dimension: *pesantren* culture and contemporary challenges.

The contextual dimension concerns how the principles of *adab* are interpreted and implemented within particular institutional, cultural, and technological environments. *Pesantren* provide important resources for ethical and spiritual formation through communal learning, religious practices, teacher guidance, and the preservation of local traditions. Their contribution also extends to social solidarity, cultural preservation,

[62] Millati Qanitatin et al., *Hubungan antara Adab dan Ilmu dalam Dasar-Dasar Pendidikan Islam*, 2025, 1476.

[63] Sheilda Nurgenti, 'Revitalisasi Nilai Pendidikan Islam Imam Al-Ghazali dalam Ihya' Ulumuddin', *Ngaji: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (2025): 106, https://doi.org/10.24260/ngaji.v4i2.83.

[64] Annisa Mayasari et al., 'Aksiologi Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Keislaman', *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (2022): 218, https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v5i1.401.

[65] Ahmad Syukri and Ahmad Fadhil Rizki, 'Aksiologi Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Manfaatnya bagi Manusia', *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia* (Bali) 4, no. 2 (2021): 194, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v4i2.35975.

[66] Faelasup and Rizky Handayani, 'lmplementasi Pendidikan Karakter dalam Menumbuhkan Kepedulian Sosial Siswa Madrasah Tsanawiyah', *Jurnal IHSAN : Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 3 (2025): 605, https://doi.org/10.61104/ihsan.v3i3.1298.

[67] Khubni Maghfirotun and Eka Nur Mahzumah, 'Implementasi Pendidikan Berbasis Adab Dalam Pengembangan Karakter', *Jurnal Cendekia* 12, no. 1 (2020): 71, https://doi.org/10.37850/cendekia.v12i1.88.

and community empowerment [68]. These functions demonstrate the potential of *pesantren* as socio-spiritual environments for holistic character development [69]. Such development requires synergy among the exemplary conduct of the *kiai*, institutional policies, and learning practices that internalize religious and social values [70]. In the digital era, contextual adaptation also requires institutions to address academic integrity, privacy, misinformation, and responsible technology use without abandoning their ethical and educational purposes.

The four dimensions operate as an interconnected framework rather than as separate or sequential stages. The ontological dimension establishes why knowledge and human development matter; the epistemological dimension guides how knowledge is responsibly pursued; the axiological dimension evaluates the purposes and consequences of learning; and the contextual dimension translates these commitments into institutional and technological practices. These dimensions are operationalized through four mechanisms: teacher exemplarity, daily habituation, institutional culture and governance, and critical digital adaptation. Their interaction is intended to cultivate learners who demonstrate ethical responsibility, intellectual integrity, beneficial action, spiritual awareness, and the capacity to engage critically with contemporary society. The relationship between *adab*, knowledge, action, and wisdom is therefore understood here as a recursive educational process: ethical orientation informs the pursuit of knowledge, knowledge guides action, and reflection on action further develops moral and spiritual understanding.

Theoretical Contribution and Implications for Islamic Education

The proposed framework offers three contributions to contemporary discussions of Islamic education. *First*, it connects *adab* with the nature, acquisition, and purposes of knowledge, thereby positioning ethical formation as integral to educational processes rather than as an additional component of character education. This perspective complements research emphasizing the importance of trust, care, emotional support, and belonging in teacher–student relationships [71]. *Second*, it conceptualizes teacher–student relations as ethically reciprocal while recognizing the teacher's greater responsibility arising from institutional authority. This prevents *adab* from being reduced to student obedience while leaving educators' conduct and

[68] Muhammad Aras et al., 'Kontribusi Pondok Pesantren dalam Pembentukan Masyarakat dan Penguatan Budaya Lokal', *Journal of Education Science* 4, no. 2 (2025): 224, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58917/aijes.v4i2.232; Siti Zulaika et al., 'Tradisi Pesantren Sebagai Benteng Moral Dan Budaya Bangsa', *Jurnal Recoms* 2, no. 2 (2025): 178, https://doi.org/10.59548/rc.v2i2.586.

[69] Trio Sulistio Wibowo, *Pesantren Sebagai Ekosistem Pendidikan Karakter: Studi Tentang Pembentukan Kepribadian Santri*, 2026, 38, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.67755/as-shiraj.v1i2.148.

[70] Jazilurrahman and Miftahus Salam, 'Transformasi Pendidikan Pesantren Menuju Model Pendidikan Islam Inklusif Dalam Mewujudkan Ekosistem Multikultural Santri', *Jurnal Penelitian* 10, no. 1 (2026): 39, https://doi.org/10.21043/jupe.v10i1.1366.

[71] Emslander et al., 'Teacher–Student Relationships and Student Outcomes'; Ibrahim and El Zaatari, 'The Teacher–Student Relationship and Adolescents' Sense of School Belonging'; Pastore and Luder, 'Teacher-Student-Relationship Quality in Inclusive Secondary Schools'.

accountability unexamined. *Third*, it connects philosophical principles with identifiable institutional mechanisms, showing how *adab* can be cultivated through educational relationships, everyday routines, institutional governance, and responsible engagement with digital technology.

For contemporary Islamic education, the framework can inform teacher development, curriculum design, student orientation, disciplinary policies, and digital learning guidelines. For *pesantren*, it offers an analytical basis for examining whether institutional teachings about *adab* are reflected consistently in teachers' conduct, students' everyday experiences, leadership decisions, and technology-related practices. Its application, however, should not be treated as a universal prescription. Differences in institutional history, leadership, student characteristics, resources, and technological readiness require contextual interpretation and stakeholder participation.

Ultimately, the framework demonstrates that revitalizing *adab* is not simply a return to classical educational practices or a general recommendation to strengthen student character. It is an effort to reconnect the ethical foundations of knowledge with pedagogical relationships, institutional responsibility, and contemporary educational realities. Its conceptual contribution lies in explaining the relationship between philosophical dimensions and practical mechanisms, while its empirical applicability requires further examination across diverse Islamic educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *al-Ghazālī's* concept of *adab* in *Kitāb al-ʿIlm* provides a substantive ethical and spiritual foundation for addressing contemporary challenges in Islamic education. *Adab* encompasses more than politeness, discipline, or student obedience; it involves the cultivation of intention, intellectual humility, moral responsibility, spiritual awareness, and appropriate relationships with knowledge, teachers, fellow learners, and society. Teacher responsibilities and student conduct are therefore inseparable from the educational purpose of pursuing beneficial knowledge and developing morally responsible individuals.

The study further demonstrates that *al-Ghazālī's* conception of *adab* remains relevant to contemporary teacher–student relationships and digital learning ethics. By integrating ethical disposition, the pursuit of knowledge, beneficial action, and spiritual formation, *adab* offers a perspective that complements contemporary concerns with relational trust, educational responsibility, academic integrity, critical engagement, and digital accountability. The relationship between *adab*, knowledge, action, and wisdom are reconstructed as a recursive process in which ethical orientation guides learning and action, while reflection deepens moral and spiritual development.

To translate these principles into contemporary educational practice, the study proposes a four-dimensional interpretive framework encompassing ontological,

epistemological, axiological, and contextual dimensions. These dimensions are operationalized through teacher exemplarity, daily habituation, institutional culture and governance, and critical digital adaptation. The framework connects philosophical foundations with pedagogical processes and institutional practices, providing a more systematic approach than general recommendations for character education. In *pesantren*, it may inform curriculum development, teacher formation, institutional policies, disciplinary practices, and digital learning guidelines. Nevertheless, its implementation requires contextual adaptation and empirical evaluation across different educational settings. The study therefore positions the revitalization of *adab* not as a return to tradition alone, but as a critical and sustainable reconstruction of Islamic educational ethics in response to contemporary challenges.

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