

Identifying the goals and content of the second year of secondary school moral education curriculum based on the thoughts of Imam Muhammad Ghazali

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Abstract

The issue of moral and religious education is one of the essential needs of every human society, which is a responsibility for parents and education planners, especially during childhood and adolescence. The present study was conducted with the aim of identifying the goals and content of the moral education curriculum for second-year high school students based on the ideas of Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali. The study is applied in terms of its purpose and qualitative in terms of its method of work, using content analysis. The statistical population of the study was the translated books of Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali and articles published in this field between 2016 and 2023. The sample size continued until conceptual saturation, and the validity of the data was obtained through three-way data processing and reliability from an agreement coefficient of 0.74, and the research tool was a questionnaire. The findings of the study showed that disciplinary goals, understanding goals, and educational goals are the most important goals of moral education from the perspective of Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali. The curriculum content, based on the views of Imam Muhammad Ghazali, includes recognizing and teaching virtues (the virtues of morality), identifying faults (eliminating vices), and managing children. As a result, it can be said that using this curriculum plays a role in improving educational environments and promoting students' moral values.

Key Words: Curriculum, moral education, Imam Muhammad Ghazali, disciplinary goals.

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Introduction

Education is one of the most important and complex matters that has a very influential role in human life. Education is an institution that has a direct impact on the moral and cultural approach of society, because during childhood and adolescence, teachings are institutionalized in a person's existence and proper upbringing is formed, and most people in society, regardless of language and culture, spend at least one academic period in school (Bast, 2016). Childhood and adolescence, as the most sensitive stage of cognitive and moral development, are considered the best opportunity to establish religious and value education. During this period, the individual's personality is formed and he is more prepared to understand abstract concepts such as ethics and spirituality (Masoudi Morghmalaki et al., 2023). One of the important issues that contemporary education faces is the issue of moral education. The importance of moral education in educational and upbringing systems is obvious and undeniable. Basically, morality and moral education constitute one of the fundamental pillars of human culture. For this reason, this issue has long been considered in Islamic culture and has also been the focus of researchers in many countries today (Alipour et al., 2019).

On the other hand, one of the important elements of the educational system is the curriculum, which forms the central core of all educational activities. The curriculum actually plays a guiding role for learning in schools and records the learner's experiences (Glathorne, Bosch, Whitehead, and Bosch, 2015). One of the important elements of the educational system is the curriculum, which forms the central core of all educational activities. The curriculum is actually a guide for learning in schools that records the learner's experience as an observer (Glathorne, Bosch, Whitehead, & Bosch, 2015). In this regard, the role and importance of curricula and their designers in the realization of religious education is very sensitive, and the lack of skilled and competent planning causes serious damage to this field (Karami Doroodkhani, Ghahremani, & Kazempour, 2023). In moral education, the curriculum can play a coordinating role of all factors involved in education. Moral education requires providing specific educational and nurturing environments for the flourishing and consolidation of moral values (Koshi & Rastegari, 2023). Moral education curriculum means planning for how to employ and cultivate talents and internal forces of moral capabilities and develop and consolidate morally desirable behaviors (Gandamkar et al., 2019). Evidence indicates that Iranian society currently needs more attention than anything else to cultivate people who are endowed with moral values (Alipour and Maleki, 2022).

Based on research and studies conducted in the field of education, there are serious and obvious shortcomings, and the children of this land and region, despite the rich Islamic and Iranian heritage and the inexhaustible source of God and other reliable sources of Islamic scholars, do not experience appropriate educational and social conditions, and these shortcomings are reflected in the behavior of individuals in society, especially young people. Issues such as identity crisis, lack of communication and social skills, atheism,

and disregard for Islamic values and beliefs are becoming more prevalent and have caused irreparable damage to the social system. These issues require serious attention and determination from educational experts to conduct research in this regard (Taghipour Zahir, 2007). However, so far, a moral education curriculum has not been designed and developed for general education courses. According to the results of the research (Afkari, 2014), despite the importance of the role of the education institution in the process of educating students and the fundamental centrality of textbooks in the process of education, an important issue such as moral education has not been addressed seriously and scientifically in textbooks. On the other hand, cultural invasion, by creating a wave of doubts in the moral and religious fields, attacks young people and weakens the foundations of their moral and religious education (Hemmat Banari, 2001)

Since the most important social institution in our society is education, which deals with the moral education of students based on the ideology of Islam, the ideology of Islam must be included in school curricula and emerge in the behavior of students. (Vakhshuri, 2022),

Given that Ghazali is one of the thinkers who has explained morality and moral education in detail in his works. Moral education from Ghazali's perspective is: gradual correction and moderation of the three powers of lust, anger, and intellect through knowledge, asceticism, and its continuation in order to reach divine proximity so that this flow becomes the queen of his soul and he acts on it without reflection (Kaviani and Fasihi Ramandi, 2012). Al-Ghazali is committed to the Ash'ari school of thought, a determinist and mystic, and given his religious approach to ethics (since he believes in religious goodness and ugliness), a kind of supernatural bliss is at the center of his ethical thinking. Reason must submit to the Sharia because he believes in three levels of existence and divides the entire universe into three categories: the lowest level is the material world, and in this level the absolute necessity of the divine will is one hundred percent established; the second level, which is the world of spirit and consciousness, in which relative freedom is established; and in the third level, where God is located, absolute freedom is established and man is a being with a spirit and consciousness (Al-Ghazali, 2007). Therefore, focusing on education and training and curriculum shows; No educational system can be found that strives to educate people but does not have a specific direction in this work; therefore, education has various fields and aspects, one of the most important and fundamental of which is the field of "Moral education", but this field requires extensive scientific studies. Considering what was stated, this research was conducted with the aim of identifying the goals and content of the moral education curriculum for the second year of secondary school based on the ideas of Imam Muhammad Ghazali.

Research question

What are the goals and content of the second year of secondary school moral education curriculum based on the thoughts of Imam Muhammad Ghazali?

Methodology

The present study is applied in terms of its purpose and qualitative in terms of its method of work, and is of the content analysis type. The present study was conducted in two steps as follows.

Step 1: Reviewing the background and finding articles written about the topic of the curriculum from the perspective of Imam Muhammad Ghazali in the period 1395-1402 Step 2: Explaining the elements of the curriculum with a moral education approach (qualitative) The target population in this study was all the works published by Khawaja Nasir al-Din Ghazali in Persian. Purposive sampling method was used to select the sample. The sample size was organized based on the data saturation rule. Thus, in the study, in order to explain the elements of the moral education curriculum, all the content of the book Kimiya Saadat and Chehel Haqiqat, Jame' al-Anwar and Majma' al-Asrar, the study and the parts that can be used to design the moral education curriculum were extracted, and this qualitative content analysis continued until there was no paragraph related to the subject under study. Also, the materials and contents that existed in the articles and theoretical and empirical background related to moral education were selected.

In fact, the book "Alchemy of Happiness" is not directly taught in the school curriculum, but this work is considered as one of the important philosophical and moral sources in the history of Islamic thought, especially in the field of moral education. This book is not only important in terms of philosophical and moral content, but also can be effective as a strong theoretical basis in designing moral curricula. In this research, instead of focusing on directly teaching this book in schools, the aim is to examine the moral and philosophical principles contained in the thoughts of Imam Muhammad Ghazali, which can be indirectly used in designing the content of the moral education curriculum for the second year of secondary school. In other words, this book and other similar works by Ghazali are used as a theoretical basis for creating moral content in curricula, so that students gain a deeper understanding of moral and human concepts and these concepts are implemented at different educational levels.

The statistical population studied in the qualitative research stage includes the following: The book Al-Kimiya al-Saadat was analyzed and the content of moral education was extracted from it. Scientific sources and domestic and foreign research published related to the moral education curriculum from 1990 to 2018 in databases and dissertation databases. The sample studied in the qualitative research stage. The sample studied in this research in the qualitative stage included paragraphs and content related to the moral education curriculum in the 1-volume set of the Al-Kimiya al-Saadat book, as well as domestic and foreign articles and documents related to moral education. The sample size continued until conceptual saturation. The validity of the research was achieved through the triangulation of data and sources, and the reliability of the research was achieved through a coding agreement coefficient of 0.74.

Figure 1. The coding process in qualitative research.



Research Findings

The discussions in the article aim to provide a more comprehensive analysis and improve the understanding of ethical concepts. Specifically, they have been selected to clarify the relationships between concepts and their effects on educational goals.

Table 1. Categories related to the goals of moral education from the perspective of Khawaja Nasir al-Din al-Ghazali.

of Khawaja Nashir al-Din al-Ghazali.		
Concepts	Subcategories	Categories
Causes and remedies of anger	Anger	Purifying the heart from undesirable morals (mahlakat)
Causes and remedies of arrogance	Arrogance	
Treatment of strangeness	Strangeness	
Types of cruelty	misguidance and pride	
Negligence		
Finding the Reward of Silence	Eliminating the dangers of bad speech and the plagues of the tongue	
The Pests of the Tongue		
The Truth of Patience	Patience	
Patience is Half Faith		
The Truth of Gratitude	Gratitude	
Finding the Fault of Creation in Gratitude		
The Truth of Thinking	Thinking	Gorging the heart with desirable morals (manjiyat)
Finding Thinking for What It Is Required for		
Finding Thinking in the Wonders of God Almighty's Creation		
Finding Thinking in the Supreme Being		

According to the analyses conducted and the results summarized in Table 1, the main categories of moral education from the perspective of Imam Muhammad Ghazali were: cleansing the heart from undesirable morals (mahlakat), which includes the subcategories of anger, arrogance, wonder, negligence, misguidance, and pride, recognizing the evils of the tongue, and the second category of adorning the heart with desirable morals (manjiyat), which consists of the subcategories of patience, gratitude, and contemplation.

What is the content of the moral education curriculum based on the ideas and thoughts of Khwaja Nasir al-Din Ghazali?

Table 2. Themes related to the moral education methods of Imam Muhammad Ghazali

Text	Teaching-Learning Strategies
So whoever gets used to doing good deeds and good character emerges in him, and the secret of what the law of good deeds has said is that the purpose of this conversion of the heart is from an ugly form to a good form. And whatever a person gets used to, it becomes his nature; for a child was initially evasive of high school and teachers, and when he is forced to study, it becomes his nature, and when he grows up, all his pleasure is in knowledge, and he himself cannot bear it. Rather, whoever gets used to playing pigeon racing or chess or gambling, it becomes his nature to give up the whole world and everything in it and not give it up; rather, things that are against his nature become his nature due to habit. (Ghazali, 1983: pp. 11-12)	Habit
If a child is told to go to high school to become a president, he himself does not know what the pleasure of being a president is, but one should say, "Go to high school so that I can give you a polo ball and a ball to play with at night, so that the child, out of greed and greed, will go to high school." (Ghazali, 1982: p. 18) When a child does something good and develops a good character, praise him for it and give him something to be happy about and praise him in front of people. (Ghazali, 1992: p. 28) When a child misbehaves, rebuke him once in private and say: "Don't do this to anyone, so that you become disgraced among people and they think of you as a nobody." (Ghazali, 1982: p. 19) This hadith of hell was like telling a child that if he does not go to high school, he will be sent to the school of his parents. If this principal looks at this example, he will know that the teacher who sends the child away is worse than not going to high school and being sent to the school of his parents. (Ghazali, 1992: p. 291)	Encouragement and Persuasion
Know that fear also has three aspects: weak, strong and moderate; and Mahmud is moderate from him, and weak was that which is not beyond work, because of the behavior of women, and strong was that which was feared from him, and there was fear of despair, and fear of illness, unconsciousness and death, and both of these are reprehensible, because fear in itself is not perfection, because of monotheism, knowledge and love, and this is because this is not in the attributes of God Almighty, but fear is not without ignorance and helplessness. However, fear is a perfection in addition to the state of the heedless, which is like a whip that makes children go beyond learning and does not go beyond the path of instruction, or it was so strong that it makes the child and the veil somewhere think or break. Both of these are not useful, but it must be moderate to prevent them from sin and make them eager to obey. (Mohammad Attaran, 1987: p. 73) It is up to the teacher of children to discipline them with fear and persuasion, not with beating and torture. (Mohammad Attaran, 1987: p. 73)	Threat and Punishment
It is necessary that the child, after playing, be allowed to return home from school; beautiful play, so that he can be free from the pain of school, and that in such a way that the game does not cause him fatigue and pain. (Group of Authors, p. 133)	Play

The findings in Table 2 show that the main categories of the desired content of Imam Muhammad Ghazali's moral education were: habit, encouragement and persuasion, punishment and threat, and play.

Discussion and conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of identifying the goals and content of the second-year secondary school moral education curriculum based on the ideas of Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali. The findings showed that the main categories of the desired content of Ghazali's moral education were: cleansing the heart from undesirable morals (mahlakat), which includes the subcategories of anger, arrogance, wonder, negligence, misguidance, and pride, recognizing the evils of the tongue, and the second category of decorating the heart with desirable morals (manjiyat), which includes the subcategories of patience, gratitude, and contemplation. Also, the main categories of the desired content of Khawaja Nasir al-Din al-Ghazali's moral education were: habit, encouragement, punishment, and threat, and play.

In explaining these findings, it can be said that paying too little attention to all social problems makes us aware of the importance of education. A process that apparently refers to the individual, but in fact deals with all aspects of human existence. Because many of the virtues and qualifications of man are revealed in society and many of his needs are met by others, for this reason, moral education, as one of the important functions of education, expresses how the moral behavior of man in the group and society is expressed (Heidrizadeh et al., 2018). Moral education has such a prominence that it is rare to find a scientist who has not commented on it, and some have even considered paying attention to it more important than the personal dimensions of education. Therefore, education does not only have a heavenly goal, but also pays attention to all the characteristics of human life (Moradi Mukhlis and Heydari, 2019). In this regard, scientists have played the most important role in collecting schools. They have come to understand the expression of their educational views by presenting a specific system that is derived from the way they reason about the universe and humans. In fact, scientists have always been the most influential factor in the process of education by presenting their educational views and their goals and objectives, as well as by challenging other educational ideas, in a way that today, some philosophical foundations must be accepted for the selection and selection of educational methods (Marouf and Asani, 2016). Moral education, as one of the transcendent manifestations of education, the main goal of which is the moral development of students in a way that makes them "good and virtuous" individuals, is something that educators and teachers are forced to pay attention to directly or indirectly (Tan et al., 2017). Defining education, Ghazali said: Education is the management of the soul by moderating the powers and tendencies through knowledge, but Al-Khawaja considered education to be the care of the development and appearance of a person on his natural path towards perfection. Al-Ghazali considered the goal of education to be the journey of the soul and inner self of man towards the truth

and the attainment of divine intimacy and nearness. Al-Ghazali emphasized the attainment of truths in choosing the goal of education. Achieving will through thinking or relying on experience and intuition, cultivating reason, was Al-Ghazali's educational method. In his educational method, Al-Ghazali recommended educators to use the theory of habit. He warned educators - as much as possible - against corporal punishment of children, and regarding play, he did not pay due attention to its role in education and upbringing; he only mentioned play to relieve boredom. In discussing moral education, Al-Ghazali referred to the purification of instincts and the variability of morality, and considered the prophets (peace be upon them) to be the best model of morality, and called vice an excess or excess in the powers (lust, anger, and speech). Cultivating moral excellence develops a sense of responsibility, empathy, and honesty in students. These qualities not only contribute to their personal growth, but also form the foundation for a more compassionate and just society. By prioritizing moral education, we not only prepare students for academic success, but also empower them to become moral leaders and responsible global citizens. This is an investment in their future and the future of society as a whole. To achieve the goal of Islamic moral education, it is necessary to transform the school and classroom into an environment where students are introduced to moral topics and these teachings are included in their curriculum. This research has limitations. In research that uses interviews, there is a problem in establishing rapport with respondents and instilling a sense of trust in them in order to obtain accurate and correct answers, which this research also faced. Many experienced people in the community were unable to cooperate with this research for various reasons, and this research was deprived of their constructive and insightful opinions. Another limitation of this research is that this study only examined the foundations and goals of the moral education curriculum from the perspective of Imam Muhammad Ghazali. According to the results of this research, it is suggested that moral education in this era, more than ever before, should take on a rational face. It is also suggested that other elements be studied in future research by other researchers. It is suggested that the results of the present study be used to design a moral education curriculum model to review, correct, and restore the current state of moral education in secondary school. Since teachers and other education personnel are the main and influential factors in the education process, it is suggested that they be given the necessary training in this regard. Due to the vast scope of moral education and its expansion outside of school, it is suggested that necessary training be provided to raise awareness of other factors affecting it, such as family, media, etc.

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