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The Concept of Learning Ethos in the Book Bidayatul Hidayah: Al Ghazali's Epistemological Perspective and Its Relevance to Character Education

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Abstract

The rampant phenomenon of moral decadence in the current dynamics of national education shows a gap in the application of the principles of learning ethos. To respond to this phenomenon, the government has launched a Character Education Strengthening (PPK) policy in the national education system. This study aims to examine in depth the epistemological direction of the concept of learning ethos in Bidayatul Hidayah by Imam Al-Ghazali, as well as to provide academic legitimacy to the PPK policy as a strategic effort in dealing with moral decadence. The research method used is library research with content analysis techniques. The results show that the epistemology of learning ethos in Bidayatul Hidayah includes: sincere intentions as reflected in the introduction; self-awareness as seen in the discussion of obedience; good manners and ethics as explained in the subchapter on ethics in relating to Allah SWT and fellow creatures; and the aspect of responsibility as shown in the subchapter on leadership (Imam). These learning ethos values, such as sincere intentions, self-awareness, good manners and ethics, and responsibility, are highly relevant and urgently needed as an epistemological foundation for overcoming the rampant phenomenon of moral decadence in the current era of disruption. This study recommends that the learning ethos values of Bidayatul Hidayah be incorporated into the implementation of Character Education Strengthening (PPK) and learning practices in educational institutions. Furthermore, further research is recommended to test these implementation values through field research to obtain empirical evidence regarding their effectiveness in shaping student behavior.
Keywords: Learning Ethos, Epistemology, The Book of Bidayatul Hidayah, Imam Al Ghazali

Maraknya fenomena dekadensi moral dalam dinamika pendidikan nasional saat ini menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan dalam penerapan prinsip etos belajar. Untuk merespons fenomena tersebut, pemerintah telah mencanangkan kebijakan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK) dalam sistem pendidikan nasional. Penelitian ini bertujuan

menelaah secara mendalam arah epistemologi konsep etos belajar dalam Bidayatul Hidayah karya Imam Al-Ghazali, sekaligus memberikan legitimasi akademis terhadap kebijakan PPK sebagai upaya strategis dalam menghadapi dekadensi moral. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi kepustakaan (library research) dengan teknik analisis isi (content analysis). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa epistemologi etos belajar dalam Bidayatul Hidayah mencakup: niat yang tulus sebagaimana tercermin dalam bagian muqadimah; sikap mawas diri yang tampak dalam pembahasan tentang ketaatan; adab dan etika yang baik sebagaimana dijelaskan dalam subbab etika bergaul dengan Allah SWT dan sesama makhluk; serta aspek tanggung jawab yang ditunjukkan dalam subbab tentang kepemimpinan (Imam). Nilai-nilai etos belajar tersebut, seperti: niat yang tulus, sikap mawas diri, adab dan etika yang baik, serta tanggung jawab, sangat relevan dan memiliki urgensi penting untuk dijadikan sebagai landasan epistemologi dalam mengatasi maraknya fenomena dekadensi moral di era disrupsi saat ini. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar nilai-nilai etos belajar dalam Bidayatul Hidayah diintegrasikan ke dalam implementasi Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK) dan praktik pembelajaran di lembaga pendidikan. Selain itu, penelitian selanjutnya disarankan menguji implementasi nilai-nilai tersebut melalui penelitian lapangan guna memperoleh bukti empiris mengenai efektivitasnya dalam membentuk karakter peserta didik.
***Kata Kunci**: Etos Belajar, Epistemologi, Kitab Bidayatul Hidayah, Imam Al Ghazali*

INTRODUCTION

The environment plays a central role in the growth and development process of every individual. A good environmental condition will foster the development of a positive personality, while a poor environment can cause damage to the formation of an individual's personality. Similarly, the current reality of the national educational environment, with the increasingly prevalent phenomenon of moral decay, such as bullying, sexual harassment, and hate speech on social media, demonstrates a deviation from the principles of learning ethos in the current national education system.

Responding to this reality, the existence of character education, which the government has launched, has become a necessity in facing the challenges of moral decadence today. The concept of Strengthening Character Education (PPK) launched thru Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 87 of 2017 substantially legitimizes the growth of good learning ethos principles. If we examine the Concept of Strengthening Character Education (PPK) further, it contains the following: 1. Encouraging the growth of religious attitudes, steadfastness in practicing religious teachings believed to be a manifestation of self-commitment in applying religious values, which is expected to lead to the growth of mutual respect among religious communities and build social harmony (Hutabarat, 2023; Jiang, 2024). 2. Honesty, an attitude that reflects a person's commitment to always being consistent in speech and action (Vivekananda and Meenakshi, 2024). 3. Tolerance, a behavior that shows respect and acceptance of diversity, such as religion, ethnicity, culture, and the opinions of others, which implies the creation of a harmonious life (Sukandarman and Sofa, 2024; Zaynah and Alif, 2025). 4. Discipline, a commitment reflected in a person's personality to obey the applicable rules and regulations, both in educational environments and society (Irfan and Mulyani, 2023).

As for the 5, attitude, it is hard work. Behavior that demonstrates a person's commitment, sincerity, and consistency in completing obligations or tasks optimally

(Grabowski, Chudzicka-czupała and Stapor, 2022; Udin *et al.*, 2022; Shehab, 2025). 6. Creative Attitude, an individual's personal ability to generate new and innovative ideas to address current problems (Ritter and Mostert, 2017). 7. Independent Attitude, an attitude that reflects a person's capacity to make decisions and act responsibly in fulfilling obligations (Piesesa and Camellia, 2023). 8. Democratic Attitude, behavior that places one's rights and obligations on par with others, thus creating fairness in social interaction (Mahardin *et al.*, 2022). 9. National Spirit Attitude, an attitude that prioritizes the interests of the nation and country above personal or group interests, with an orientation toward unity and common progress (Juliani and Bastian, 2023). 10. Responsible Attitude, an individual's awareness to carry out entrusted tasks and obligations with full sincerity, without being based on pressure or intervention (Gampu, Pinontoan and Sumilat, 2022). The concept of Character Education Strengthening (PPK) launched by the government essentially aims to foster the growth of a holistic learning ethos among students (Nurhuda and Haq, 2020). The main goal of PPK is to revitalize the character of the nation's next generation based on noble values, resulting in a highly competitive, strong-charactered, and virtuous next generation, while upholding the values of cultural and national traditions (Haryati and Hidayat, 2023; Maisaroh and Untari, 2024).

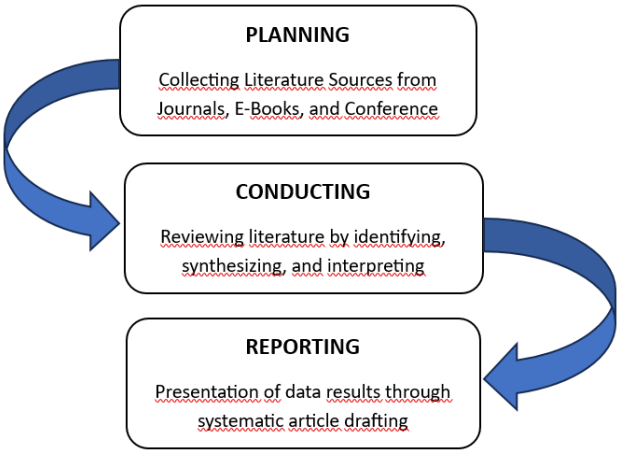
A number of previous studies have confirmed the urgency and relevance of al-Ghazali's book Bidayatul Hidayah in explaining the importance of moral and character education (Habibah *et al.*, 2023). These studies show that the moral education values internalized in this book include: emphasizing obedience in performing worship, applying polite behavior in daily life, and guarding oneself and one's heart from sinful deeds (Wanto, 2024). In line with the findings of (Surya and Anshori, 2025), they state that the concept of strengthening character education in Bidayatul Hidayah includes religious values manifested through manners in communicating with Allah, tolerance demonstrated through ethics in interacting with the general public, politeness reflected in students' ethics towards teachers, and the values of honesty and hard work emphasized through the role of teachers as role models. Furthermore, al-Ghazali also places the heart as the center of human morality and character formation. This concept is realized through spiritual training (*riyadhah*), control of desires (*mujahadah al-nafs*), and purification of the soul (*tazkiyyah al-nafs*) so that inner stability and noble character are achieved (Hasan and Tamam, 2018). However, none of the previous studies have explicitly discussed the relevance of the concept of learning ethos in the book Bidayatul Hidayah. Therefore, this research is important to fill the gap in previous studies. By observing, examining, and highlighting the importance of the concept of learning ethos in the current era of disruption, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of the epistemology of the concept of learning ethos in the book Bidayatul Hidayah. The purpose of this study is to explore in depth the epistemology of the concept of learning ethos in Al Ghazali's book Bidayatul Hidayah in overcoming the rampant phenomenon of moral decadence in the current era of disruption.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study on the epistemological analysis of the concept of learning ethos in the book Bidayatul Hidayah by Imam Al Ghazali is categorized as library research using content analysis as the data analysis technique. This research model was chosen based on the relevance of the data characteristics obtained by the researcher through searching by reading, understanding, recording, and synthesizing various literature sources, such as scientific journal articles, conference proceedings, e-books, and other supporting

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documents relevant to the topic of discussion, both in print and electronic form (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Özden, 2024). The framework of this literature study includes the stages of identification, assessment, evaluation, and interpretation of all relevant literature that has been collected. This developed model refers to the research by Triandini *et al* (2019), which is the reference for implementing the stages of this literature study.



Gambar 1: Framework for the Literature Review Study

The next step is to establish criteria for assessing whether the data collected is suitable as a source of research literature. The following are the research criteria used as a reference in selecting relevant data.

Table 1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for article selection

No	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	All articles discussing the concept of learning ethos and studies of the book Bidayatul Hidayah	All articles that do not discuss the concept of learning ethos and the study of the book Bidayatul Hidayah
2	All articles with a DOI	All articles that do not have a DOI
3	Articles published between 2016 and 2025	Articles published after 2016
4	All articles written in English and Indonesian	All articles that are not written in English or Indonesian

After the data was identified based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, the next step was to analyze key concepts related to the learning ethos in Al-Ghazali's Bidayatul Hidayah. This analysis focuses on the epistemological constructs that underlie the idea of learning ethos, such as the urgency of setting intentions (tashhih al-niyyah) before seeking knowledge and the internalization of manners and ethics in the learning process. Furthermore, the findings regarding the epistemology of the learning ethos are relevant to current developments, particularly in response to the emergence of moral decadence and mental health crises among the younger generation. The main reason the researcher chose the Book of Bidayatul Hidayah as the object of study in this research is that its coverage is comprehensive in substance. This book not only explains the guidelines for worship, but also describes the importance of refraining from sinful acts and emphasizes ethics and manners in interacting with parents, teachers, and friends. Therefore, with such

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characteristics of discussion, the researcher considers this book relevant to be understood, examined, and analyzed in order to respond to the phenomenon of moral decline and mental health crisis.

RESULT

History records that in the treasury of classical Islamic thought, there appeared a prominent Muslim scholar who was renowned throughout the world with the title Hujjatul Islam, namely Sheik Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Akhmad Al-Ghazali ath-Thusi asy-Syafi'I (Khamim, Lutfi and Afad, 2021), or better known as Imam Al-Ghazali. He was a Muslim thinker who was an expert in Islamic sciences, such as: Islamic philosophy, Sufism, jurisprudence, theology (kalam), and various other general disciplines, which made him one of the most influential figures in the history of Islamic civilization (Zakiah Darajat, 1984: 213).

Imam Al Ghazali was born in a village called Teheren, in the District of Thus, Persian Khurasan Province, in the year 450 AH (1058 AD). It was also in that province that Al Ghazali passed away on 14 Jumadil Akhir 505 AH (December 19, 1111 AD) (Abdullah, 2002: 29). He was not only known as the defender of Islam (*hujjatul islam*), but was also called the Ornament of Religion (Zainuddin) and the Drowning Ocean (Bahrun Mughriq) (Sulaiman, 1986: 20; Ibnu Rusn, 1998: 9). His thirst for knowledge led him to leave his hometown (Thus) and embark on a journey to seek knowledge from the leading scholars of that time. One of them is Sheik Abul Ma'al Al Juwaini, or as he is more famously known as Imam Al Haramain, a Shafi'i school scholar who follows the Ash'ariyah school of thought. While studying with him, Al Ghazali was given the nickname "the overwhelming ocean" (Bahrun Mughriq) due to the vastness and brilliance of Al Ghazali's knowledge and his extraordinary debating skills (Sulaiman, 1986: 20).

The long and winding intellectual journey of Imam Al Ghazali demonstrates his seriousness (Learning Ethos) in seeking knowledge. As the spirit of learning ethos was immortalized by Al Ghazali in the introduction to his monumental work titled Bidayatul Hidayah, as follows:

فَاعْلَمْ اَيُّهـــَا الْحَرِيْصُ الْمُقْبِلُ عَلَى اقْتِبَاسِ الْعِلْمِ الْمُظْهِرُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ صِدْقَ الرَّغْبَةِ وَفَرْطَ التَّعَطُّسِ
اِلَيْهِ اِنَّكَ اِنْ كُنْتَ تَقْصِدُ بِطَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ الْمُنَافَسَةَ وَالْمُنَاهَاةَ وَالتَّقَدُّمُ عَلَى الْاَقْرَانِ وَاسْتِمَالَةَوُجُوْهِ النَّاسِ
اِلَيْكَ وَجَمْعَ حُطَامِ الدُّنْيَا فَاَنْتَ سَاعٍ فِى هـــَدْمِ دِيْنِكَ وَاِهـــْلاَكِ نَفْسِكَ وَبَيْعِ اخِرَتِكَ بِدُنْيَاكَ
فَصَفْقَتُكَ خَاسِرَةٌ وَتِجَارَتُكَ بَائِرَةٌ وَمُعَلِّمُكَ مُعِيْنٌ لَكَ عَلَى عِصْيَا نِكَ وَشَرِيْكٌ لَكَ فِى
خُسْرَانِكَ وَهـــُوَ كَبَائِعِ سَيْفٍ مِنْ قَاطِعِ طَرِيْقٍ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ اَعَانَ عَلَى مَعْصِيَةٍ
وَلَوبِشَطْرِ كَلِمَةٍكَنَا شَرِيْكًا لَهُ فِيْهَا

Translation: Know, O people who seek knowledge, from whom earnestness and a thirst for knowledge are evident. If you seek knowledge with the intention of competing, boasting, surpassing your peers, seeking sympathy from others, or hoping for worldly wealth, then you are truly striving to destroy your religion, ruin yourself, and sell your afterlife for the sake of the world.

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Thus, you experience failure, your trade suffers losses. And your teacher becomes the one who has helped you commit sin and becomes your partner in that loss. That guru is like someone selling a sword to a bandit. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever helps in the realization of a sinful act, even with just a word, he is already a partner in that act" (Al Imam Hujjatul Islam Al Ghazali, 1995: 4). The above text articulation shows Imam Al Ghazali's call to always be careful in setting intentions, especially when seeking knowledge. Because good intentions will be recorded by Allah SWT as deeds calculated as acts of worship. However, the opposite is true if the intention is bad, as articulated in the text above, such as: seeking knowledge for self-aggrandizement, to gain praise, or solely to seek wealth, or to gain sympathy from others. Such intentions, in essence, will only harm oneself. Imam Al-Ghazali likened it to an action equivalent to wanting to destroy one's own religion.

وَاِنْ كَانَتْ نِيَّتُكَ وَقَصْدُكَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ اللّٰهِ تَعَالٰى مِنْ طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ الْهِدَايَةَ دُوْنَ مُجَرَّدِ الرِّوَايَةِ فَابْشِرْ فَاِنَّ الْمَلٰئِكَةَ تَبْسُطُ لَكَ اَجْنِحَتَهَا اِذَا مَشَيْتَ وَحِيْتَانَ الْبَحْرِ تَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ اِذَا سَعَيْتَ

وَلَكِنْ يَنْبَغِى لَكَ اَنْ تَعْلَمَ قَبْلَ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ اَنَّ الْهِدَايَةَ الَّتِى هِيَ ثَمْرَةُ الْعِلْمِ لَهَا بِدَايَةٌ وِنِهَايَةٌ وَظَاهِرٌ وَبَاطِنٌ وَلاَ وُصُوْلَ اِلَى نِهَايَتِهَا اِلاَّبَعْدَاَحْكَامِ بِدَايَتِهَا وَلاَعُثُوْرَ عَلَى بَاطِنِهَا اِلاَّ بَعْدَالْوُقُوْفِ عَلَى ظَاهِرِهَا,

Tanslation: And when your intention and purpose, between yourself and Allah SWT, in seeking knowledge to gain guidance, is not merely to know or obtain information, then rejoice.

Indeed, the angels spread their wings for you when you walk, and the fish in the sea seek forgiveness for you when you strive to seek knowledge. However, you should first learn that guidance is the fruit of knowledge before knowing anything else. Guidance has a beginning and an end, and encompasses both outward and inward aspects. One will not reach the end without understanding the beginning, and will not attain the inward without knowing the outward.

DISCUSSION

Implicitly, Imam Al-Ghazali articulates the concept of the epistemology of learning ethos in the Book of Bidayatul Hidayah through several stages, as follows:

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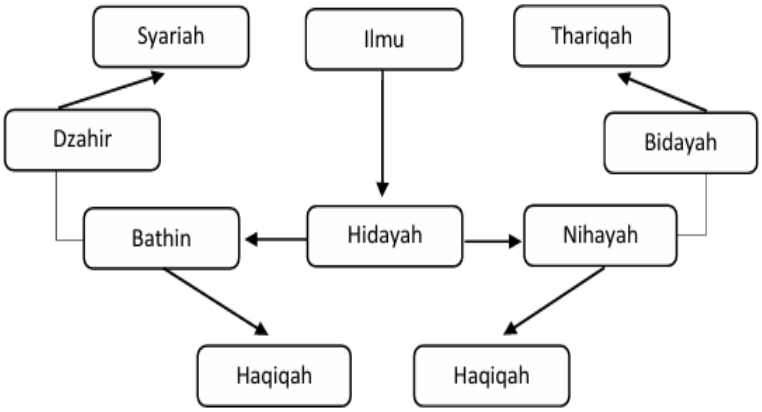


Figure 2. The Epistemology of Science According to Imam Al Ghazali

Al-Ghazali argues that the knowledge that is studied will bear fruit in the form of guidance. In the book Maraqil 'Ubudiyah by Imam an-Nawawi al-Jawi, guidance is defined as walking the path to Allah SWT (Subaidi *et al.*, 2023). From this, it can be concluded that the knowledge that is learned is not only expected to increase one's knowledge, but also to bring one closer to Allah SWT, who is the main source of knowledge and truth. As confirmed by research conducted by Sholiha and Azimi (2024), useful knowledge is knowledge that is based on faith, manners, and righteous deeds. Thus, in this context, learning becomes a means to increase faith and devotion to Allah SWT, not merely to teach social status. Research by Permadi *et al.* (2025) also legitimizes the statement regarding the importance of balance in pursuing religious and general (scientific) knowledge through the concept of integrating Islam and science.

Walking the path to Allah does not mean being limited to worship such as praying or fasting continuously, but can be understood more broadly as a form of carrying out His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. Carrying out commands can take the form of maintaining good relations with fellow brothers and sisters and showing tolerance towards followers of other religions (Surya and Anshori, 2025). As shown by research conducted by Leu (2025) in Kupang, religious values are manifested in the practice of peaceful coexistence, interfaith cooperation, and peaceful conflict resolution, so that religious rituals are connected to social ethics and harmony among religious communities. It is also relevant to studies on social behavior in religious moderation in Tohpati, Taliwang, and Balun villages, which conclude that peaceful coexistence, mutual acceptance, mutual respect, and cooperation are the core of religious moderation and the basis of social integration (Nassaruddin *et al.*, 2020; Wulandari *et al.*, 2025). Various studies on religious moderation (in schools, campuses, and villages of moderation) also legitimize this by showing that religious obedience translates into effective attitudes that foster mutual respect for differences, anti-violence, and interfaith cooperation (Sabri, Nst and Halimah, 2022; Atho, Huda and Nashihin, 2025; Mas'ud, 2025).

Walking the path to Allah SWT, called hidayah, has several stages. One of them is bidayah, which must be passed before reaching the second stage, which is the peak called nihayah. Bidayah includes sharia and thariqah. Sharia is the laws established by Allah SWT that must be obeyed, including obligations, sunnah, prohibitions against haram things, and recommendations to avoid makruh or syubhat (unclear laws) (Surya and Anshori, 2025). Meanwhile, thariqah is the path to carry out obligations, sunnah, and avoid prohibitions with great care. This is relevant to the practice of implementing Sufism

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values in daily life, such as: Tazkiyatun nafs: the process of purifying the soul from despicable traits, Mujāhadah nafs: the struggle against lust in order to submit to Sharia values, Riyādhah: spiritual exercises such as zikr, wirid, or sunnah fasting (Fauziyah, 2021; Anwar, Fikri and Izza, 2025; Bayhaqi *et al.*, 2025). The second stage, nihayah, contains the essence, which is a deep understanding such as believing in the truth of the names and attributes of Allah SWT. This is the core of the bidayah journey to perfection.

Part of bidayah includes the apparent aspect containing sharia, as well as the inner aspect containing haqiqah. The apparent and the inner, or sharia and haqiqah in the context of guidance, are two things that cannot be separated from one another. Sharia without haqiqah shows that sharia does not bear fruit, while haqiqah without sharia will not contain goodness in it. Therefore, the distinction between bidayah and nihayah, as well as between the outer and inner aspects in the structure of guidance, has similarities even though they are not completely identical. The necessity of going through guidance before reaching nihayah, or the outer before the inner, is likened by scholars to the following analogy: sharia is like a boat, thariqah is like the ocean, and haqiqah is like a pearl. To obtain the pearl, one must inevitably use the boat.

At a glance, the epistemological explanation of the concept of learning ethos contained in the monumental work of Imam Al Ghazali, Bidayatul Hidayah, has a very comprehensive scope of discussion that is relevant to the daily life of a Muslim, including: the procedures for worshiping Allah SWT, guidance on avoiding sinful acts, and good ethics in interacting with other people. After understanding the concept of learning ethos in Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective, which has been articulated through his monumental work, the epistemology of learning ethos in the book Bidayatul Hidayah can be summarized as follows:

Table 2 Relevance to the Subsections of the Book Bidayatul Hidayah

Epistemology of Learning Ethos	Relevance to the Subsections of the Book Bidayatul Hidayah
Sincere Intention	الْمُقَدِّمَةُ كِتَابُ بِدَايَةُ الْهِدَيَةِ
Self-awareness	اَلْقِسْمُ الْاَوَّلُ فِى الطَّاعَاتِ
Good Manners and Ethics	آدَابُ الصُّحْبَةِ وَالْمُعَاشَرَةِ مَعَ الْخَالِقِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالٰ وَمَعَ الْخَلْقِ
Responsibility	آدَابُ الْاِمَامَةِ وَالْقُدْوَةِ

The epistemological aspects of learning ethos in the book Bidayatul Hidayah above are not explicitly reflected in the meaning of the subchapter. Rather, it can be understood as a form of qarinah (figurative expression). Referring to the term ilmu balaghah, Qorinah serves as an indicator that a word is not intended in its original (literal) meaning, but in its figurative (metaphorical) meaning. In the context of the epistemology of learning ethos, sincere intentions are one of the important factors that must be properly arranged before a person begins the process of seeking knowledge. As emphasized by Al-Ghazali in the opening of his work, bad intentions in seeking knowledge are likened to destroying one's own religion and preventing the knowledge being studied from providing blessings.

The next aspect is self-awareness, which is one of the fundamental factors that must be instilled before someone embarks on the process of seeking knowledge. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes that self-control (Mawas diri) in the context of seeking knowledge serves to maintain the knowledge that has been obtained so that it always provides

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blessings (benefits) (Rachmawati, Sofa and Sugianto, 2025; Syaffutra, Sudarman and Zarkasi, 2025). A number of studies by Quraisy, Holis and Hasan, (2023); Azizah and Abidin (2025); Habibi *et al.* (2025) also confirm that the goal of education according to Al-Ghazali is to shape the character and spirituality of a Muslim so that they have comprehensive (kaffah) competence. Therefore, the success of knowledge is not only measured by the extent to which knowledge concepts can be understood, but also by the extent to which that knowledge can have an impact on changing morals and increasing a Muslim's closeness to Allah. Meanwhile, good manners and ethics are the main foundation for a person in the process of seeking knowledge and interacting with their peers. Imam Al-Ghazali analogizes that knowledge without manners is like fire without firewood; it will not last long and will not be beneficial. Knowledge that is not accompanied by manners will only give rise to arrogance and pride. Conversely, good manners make knowledge a light that guides and improves morals.

The aspect of responsibility, individual awareness to carry out tasks and obligations to seek knowledge with patience and sincerity, without being based on pressure or intervention, Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes that every deed, including the process of seeking knowledge, must be accompanied by a sense of responsibility for the consequences and obligations attached to it. This does not only mean fulfilling obligations outwardly, such as studying diligently or completing tasks on time, but also broadly encompasses inner dimensions such as honesty, trustworthiness, and personal commitment.

The epistemology of the concept of learning ethos offered by Imam Al Ghazali in his book Bidayatul Hidayah actually emphasizes that the process of seeking knowledge cannot be separated from the moral and spiritual dimensions that accompany it. Knowledge is not merely a process of accumulating information, but rather a path toward the formation of strong morals and character. Therefore, the concept of learning ethos proposed by Al-Ghazali, such as sincere intentions, self-awareness, manners, ethics, and responsibility, becomes an important foundation in responding to the phenomenon of moral decadence that is rampant in today's era of disruption. When the orientation of the learning process emphasizes sincerity and self-awareness, education no longer produces individuals who are only intellectually intelligent, but also emotionally mature and have integrity in their social behavior. This is in line with the character education strengthening (PPK) paradigm that has been announced by the government in Permendikbud Number 87 of 2017, which substantially emphasizes a balance of learning for students, covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, so that students are not only expected to excel intellectually, but also have honest, trustworthy, and responsible personalities.

The epistemology of learning ethos offered by Imam Al Ghazali explicitly places a sense of responsibility at the core of the learning process. Al Ghazali views learning not only as a formal, outward obligation that must be fulfilled, but also as an inner commitment that guides students to always be consistent in honesty, patience, and trustworthiness. The growth of a learning ethos in the personality of learners can be a concrete response to various phenomena of moral decline occurring among the younger generation. These phenomena include bullying (Sarni, Mengge and Abbas, 2025; Utami, Deriwanto and Idris, 2025), hate speech through social media (Prasetyo *et al.*, 2024; Hamidiyah and Aripin, 2025), sexual harassment, fights between students, and drug abuse (Prihatmojo and Badawi, 2020; Firdaus, Stefany and Hadia, 2025). In addition, the younger generation also faces a mental health crisis characterized by increased anxiety,

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), mental fatigue (*burnout*), and phone snubbing (*phubbing*) behavior (Kurniawan and Widiyanti, 2023).

Thus, the epistemology of the concept of learning ethos formulated by Imam Al Ghazali in the Book of Bidayatul Hidayah is not only relevant in shaping the intellectuality of students, but also has strategic significance in responding to various phenomena of moral decline and mental health crises. Within this epistemological framework, Al Ghazali emphasizes the importance of complementary integration between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in the learning process. Learning is not only understood as the transfer of knowledge, but also as a process of shaping the awareness, attitudes, and actions of students based on moral and spiritual values. Therefore, this epistemological foundation of learning ethos is expected to shape students with a complete personality, namely individuals who grow holistically in intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that preventing the rampant phenomenon of moral decadence in the current national education system requires not only a response from government policy, but also a strong epistemological foundation in building a synergistic education system oriented towards intellectual, moral, and character development, one of which is by setting a good example of learning ethos for students. Imam Al Ghazali, in his book entitled Bidayatul hidayah, has provided comprehensive guidance in each chapter of this book that we can examine, observe, and synthesize in overcoming the problem of moral decadence in the current era of disruption, by internalizing the concept of learning ethos in the learning process, such as: setting intentions before seeking knowledge, cultivating the application of good manners and ethics in interacting with peers, teachers, and elders. The concept of learning ethos contained in the book Bidayatul Hidayah includes: sincere intentions, self-awareness, good manners and ethics, and responsibility. These learning ethos values are certainly very relevant in overcoming the rampant phenomenon of moral decadence in the current era of disruption. Theoretically, this study contributes to a new contextual paradigm synthesis regarding the relevance of the concept of learning ethos in the book Bidayatul Hidayah. Meanwhile, in practical terms, this study contributes to expanding the knowledge of Islamic education on the importance and urgency of the concept of learning ethos in the book Bidayatul Hidayah. The limitations of this study lie in its focus, which highlights the phenomenon of moral crisis (moral decadence) by examining one main piece of literature. Therefore, the researchers recommend that future studies use more literature, a variety of approaches, and more widely discussed research subjects, such as the mental and academic crises of Gen Z, including: excessive anxiety, Fear of Missing Out (*FoMO*), and mental exhaustion (*Burnout*).

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