

Reconstructing *Adab* as an Integrative Educational Framework: Educators, Students, Knowledge, and Environment in Ibn Jamā‘ah’s *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi‘ wa al-Mutakallim*

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Abstract

Islamic education seeks to join intellectual development to moral and spiritual formation, yet how a classical text can articulate that union as a working structure remains underexamined. Ibn Jamā‘ah’s *Tadhkirat al- wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab ‘Ālim wa al-Muta‘allim* offers an extended account of the ethics of teaching and learning. Still, its prescriptions have been cataloged descriptively rather than analyzed as an interconnected system. This study aimed to reconstruct those prescriptions into an integrative educational framework. Using a qualitative textual–conceptual design, the study applied content analysis to the 96 prescriptions in the *Tadhkirat*: 38 concerning educators, 36 concerning students, 11 concerning books, and 11 concerning the educational environment. Each prescription was coded and classified by three epistemic levels, distinguishing the text’s explicit categories from the study’s analytical inferences. The analysis found that the four domains form a single relational structure rather than four separate codes: piety (*taqwa*) provides the normative foundation; educator and student *adab* constitute the domains of ethical practice; and exemplarity *qudwa* and habituation function as formative mechanisms operating across knowledge, books, and learning space, with internalized *adab* (character) posited as a prospective outcome. The five-level structure is the study’s analytical reconstruction, not a model that Ibn Jamā‘ah himself states, and its relationships are conceptual rather than empirically validated. The framework reframes *adab* as a principle that is simultaneously personal, relational, and institutional, and brings a classical Islamic text into dialogue with contemporary scholarship on educational purpose, intellectual virtue, and moral formation, while cautioning against transferring historical forms directly to present-day settings.

Keywords: *adab*; Ibn Jamā‘ah; Islamic educational ethics; moral formation; educational ecology; virtue and exemplarity.

Introduction

Education transmits knowledge, but it also forms the person who receives it. Whether moral formation belongs at the core of education or is added to it afterward remains contested, and this contest has sharpened in the character-education literature. Kristjánsson documents how the field is burdened by persistent misconceptions that character education is inevitably indoctrinatory, paternalistic, or conservative, and argues that these misconceptions obscure a defensible Aristotelian core.¹ Dishon and Goodman press a complementary worry from within: where character is reduced to compliance and cut loose from substantive values, habituation becomes behavior management rather than moral formation.² Read together, these two critical interventions frame a live problem: how to connect habituated conduct to the values it is meant to embody, for which historically distant traditions may hold underused conceptual resources.³ One such resource is the Islamic concept of *adab*, in which the pursuit of knowledge and the formation of the knower were never treated as separable.

Adab binds the acquisition of knowledge to the manner in which knowledge is embodied. Recent scholarship reads it not as etiquette but as an organizing principle of education: In'ami et al., *adab* in al-Attas's thought to the formation of the good person,⁴ and Ahmed shows that a culturally coherent Islamic pedagogy (*tarbiyah* for *shakhsyah*, or education for identity) treats character and knowledge as a single formative project rather than parallel tracks.⁵ The point is reinforced from the epistemic side by Günther's study of al-Ghazālī, in which even logic, the most formal of disciplines, is framed as a means of moral and intellectual cultivation.⁶ Across these accounts, *adab* functions as a

¹ K. Kristjánsson, "Ten Myths about Character, Virtue, and Virtue Education – plus Three Well-Founded Misgivings," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 61, no. 3 (2013): 269–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2013.778386>.

² G. Dishon and J. F. Goodman, "No Excuses for Character: A Critique of Character Education in No-Excuses Charter Schools," *Theory and Research in Education* 15, no. 2 (2017): 182–201, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878517720162>.

³ Moh. Dannur, Ikram Shaliadi, and Zainullah, "Pastoral Datafication and Wasathiyah in Practice: Digital Behaviour Governance as Religious Moderation in an Indonesian Pesantren," *Al-Insyiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 12, no. 2 SE-Articles (n.d.): 174–89, <https://doi.org/10.35309/2mc64w25>.

⁴ M. In'ami, Bambang, and I. S. Wekke, "Contextualising Adab in Islamic Education from the Perspective of Al-Attas," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 20, no. 1 (2025): 145–58, <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol20no1.11>.

⁵ Farah Ahmed, "Tarbiyah for Shakhsyah (Educating for Identity): Seeking out Culturally Coherent Pedagogy for Muslim Children in Britain," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 42, no. 5 (2012): 725–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2012.706452>.

⁶ S. Günther, "Al-Ghazālī on Logic as a Means of Learning: Historical Evidence and Educational Implications," *Al-Abhath* 73, no. 1–2 (2025): 27–71, <https://doi.org/10.1163/2589997X-0730102003>.

framework relating knowledge, morality, and educational purpose, which is the sense in which this study uses the term.

Among classical sources, Ibn Jamā'ah (639–733 AH/1241–1333 CE) offers one of the most systematic treatments of this relationship. His *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*⁷ addresses, in turn, the conduct of educators, the conduct of learners, the learner's relation to books, and conduct within places of learning. The text has attracted sustained study. In the international literature, Zaman analyzes Ibn Jamā'ah's account of the “potential of instructors and learners,” establishing the work's relevance to the philosophy of learning beyond its Indonesian reception.⁸ That reception is itself substantial: Roziqin and Nurmawati examine his educational philosophy;⁹ Hamzah et al.,¹⁰ Arip et al.,¹¹ Al Azhari et al.,¹² and Ritonga et al.¹³ reconstruct the adab of educators and students and relate it to the aims of Islamic education. Comparable classical treatments have been read the same way. Rosyidin and Jasmi, for instance, trace Hasyim Asy'ari's absorption of precisely this genre of *adab al-ālim wa al-muta'allim*.¹⁴

Two features characterize this scholarship. It is largely descriptive, cataloging categories of manners as discrete themes, and, with the recent exception of Zaman, it is

⁷ Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Jamā'ah, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*, ed. M. H. al-Nadwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2005). Badr al-Din Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Ibn Jama'ah, *Tadhkirat al-Sami' wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-Ālim wa al-Muta'allim*, ed. Muhammad ibn Mahdi al-'Ajmi, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Basha'ir al-Islamiyyah, 2012), <https://www.worldcat.org/title/298938427>.

⁸ M. Zaman, “The Art of Learning and the Perfection of Its Aspect: Ibn Jamā'ah on the Potential of Instructors and Learners,” in *Studies in Education and Religion in Ancient and Pre-Modern History in the Mediterranean and Its Environs*, vol. 26 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2025), 437–60.

⁹ M. K. Roziqin and E. Nurmawati, “Pemikiran Pendidikan Ibn Jama'ah dan Relevansinya terhadap Pendidikan Kontemporer,” *Dinamika: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan dan Keislaman* 4, no. 1 (2019): 105–26, <https://doi.org/10.32764/dinamika.v4i01.368>.

¹⁰ M. Hamzah et al., “Islamic Educational Thought of Ibn Jama'ah: Critical Analysis of Teaching and Learning Objectives,” *Tadris: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 17, no. 1 (2022): 211–21, <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v17i1.5821>.

¹¹ S. Arip, A. Gani, and A. Amirudin, “Konsep Adab Menuntut Ilmu dalam Perspektif Ibn Jama'ah dan Relevansinya terhadap Tujuan Pendidikan Islam,” *JIIIP – Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 4 (2023): 2603–14, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i4.1885>.

¹² Y. H. Al Azhari et al., “Rekonstruksi Adab Guru dan Murid Menurut Ibn Jama'ah dalam Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' serta Relevansinya terhadap Pendidikan Modern,” *Jurnal Dinamika Pendidikan* 2, no. 2 (2026): 581–88.

¹³ M. T. Ritonga, I. Irwansyah, and H. A. Harahap, “Konsep Pendidikan Adab dalam Kitab Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa al-Mutakallim Karya Ibn Jama'ah,” *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat* 5, no. 3 (2026): 1897–1921, <https://doi.org/10.56832/edu.v5i3.2513>.

¹⁴ M. A. Rosyidin and K. A. Jasmi, “The Absorption of Islamic Education Thought of KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari through the Teaching of Adab al-Ālim wa al-Muta'allim,” *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 2 (2023): 611–40, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol22.iss2.art12>.

concentrated in Indonesian-language outlets and has had limited traction in the international educational ethics debate.¹⁵

The consequence is an asymmetry: Ibn Jamā‘ah’s prescriptions have been identified far more thoroughly than the relationships among them have been explained. Even Zaman’s philosophically serious treatment centers on the human poles, instructor and learner, rather than on how spiritual orientation, exemplarity, repeated practice, books, and educational space operate together as a single mechanism of formation.¹⁶ This matters most once *adab* is approached as an educational structure rather than a list, a move whose payoff recent work makes visible: Amiruddin et al. reconstruct *ranggang* as an epistemic infrastructure linking relational pedagogy, gradual learning, and *adab qabl al-‘ilm*,¹⁷ and Fauziah and Hasanah reconstruct the epistemology of curriculum from a *tawhīdic* worldview.¹⁸ Both show that a classical form yields more when read as a connected structure than as an inventory. No comparable structural reconstruction exists for the *Tadhkirat*, whose four-domain scope makes it an unusually complete candidate for such a reconstruction.

Three sequential questions guide the study:
 RQ1: How does the *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi‘ wa al-Mutakallim* conceive *adab* across its four domains (educators, students, books, and the educational environment)?
 RQ2: What functional relationships connect these domains, such that *adab* operates as a single mechanism of educational formation rather than as separate categories of conduct?
 RQ3: How can these relationships be reconstructed into an integrated conceptual framework of *adab*-based education, and what does that framework contribute to contemporary debates on educational ethics? The first question establishes what the text prescribes; the second, the relations among its prescriptions; the third, the framework those relations support and its wider stakes.

¹⁵ See the studies cited in notes 8–12 and the comparison in Supplementary Table S2; Zaman, “The Art of Learning,” is the principal exception. Zaman, “The Art of Learning and the Perfection of Its Aspect: Ibn Jamā‘ah on the Potential of Instructors and Learners.”

¹⁶ Zaman, “The Art of Learning and the Perfection of Its Aspect: Ibn Jamā‘ah on the Potential of Instructors and Learners.”

¹⁷ Amiruddin et al., “From Peripheral Tradition to Epistemic Core: *Ranggang* in Acehnese Islamic Educational Thought,” *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 50, no. 1 (2026): 331–52, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v50i1.1733>.

¹⁸ M. Fauziah and A. Hasanah, “Reconstructing Curriculum Epistemology through the Tawhidic Worldview: A Conceptual Framework,” *International Journal of Islamic Khazanah* 16, no. 1 (2026): 55–77, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijik.v16i1.54317>.

The contribution is a conceptual reconstruction, not the discovery of new prescriptions. In response to the first question, the study provides an auditable coding of all 96 prescriptions in the *Tadhkirat*, making the path from text to framework transparent. Answering the second, it identifies the relationships connecting spiritual orientation, educator and student conduct, exemplarity, repeated practice, books, and educational space. Answering the third, it reconstructs these as a multi-level structure. It puts it into genuine dialogue with international scholarship on the purpose of education, intellectual virtue, exemplarity, and the ecology of moral formation, including disagreement. The study does not claim that Ibn Jamā‘ah formulated this framework, that it has been empirically validated, or that medieval educational forms transfer directly to contemporary institutions; these qualifications are maintained throughout rather than reserved for the Conclusion.

Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative, textual–conceptual design. Its object is a single classical educational text and the educational logic embedded within it; its aim is interpretive reconstruction rather than measurement or intervention. Following the logic of qualitative content analysis as set out by Krippendorff and by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña,¹⁹ dispersed prescriptions are treated as textual data, coded, and reorganized into a conceptual structure. The design is deliberately not a systematic review: secondary literature positions the study and furnishes its theoretical dialogue, but Ibn Jamā‘ah’s positions are established solely from the primary text. This distinction matters for the study’s validity claims; the framework’s warrant rests on the text, not on the volume of secondary work consulted.

The primary source is Ibn Jamā‘ah’s *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi‘ wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-‘Ālim wa al-Muta‘allim*, edited by M. H. al-Nadwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2005).²⁰ The study worked throughout from this printed edition; “manuscript” is used only in the historical sense of the work’s original composition and never implies consultation of a handwritten codex. All page references correspond to this edition.

¹⁹ K. Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004); Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014).

²⁰ Ibn Jamā‘ah, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi‘ wa al-Mutakallim*. M ibn I ibn S Ibn Jama‘ah, *Tadhkirat Al-Sāmi‘ Wa Al-Mutakallim Fī Adab Al-‘ālim Wa Al-Muta‘allim*, ed. M H al-Nadwī (Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2005).

The work is organized in five parts: (1) the virtue of knowledge and of those who teach and learn it; (2) the *adab* of the educator; (3) the *adab* of the learner; (4) *adab* toward books as the instruments of knowledge; and (5) *adab* of residence in places of learning. Parts two through five constitute the prescriptive corpus.

Secondary literature served two functions, which were kept analytically separate. For positioning (Supplementary Table S2), studies whose primary focus is Ibn Jamā‘ah or the *Tadhkirat* were purposively identified; work that mentions him only in passing was excluded from direct comparison. Because variant transliterations otherwise cause records to be missed, both forms of the author’s name (“Ibn Jama’ah”/“Ibnu Jama’ah”) and of the title (“*Tadhkirat*”/“*Tadzkirat*”) were used in searching. For theoretical dialogue (Discussion), works on educational purpose, virtue ethics, intellectual virtue, exemplarity, relational pedagogy, and the ecology of moral formation were selected for conceptual relevance to the reconstructed categories. In neither function is secondary literature the analytical object; the primary text remains the analytical object.

The unit of analysis is the individual *adab* prescription as demarcated by Ibn Jamā‘ah’s own textual divisions, each discrete injunction (*naw’*) within the four prescriptive parts. One prescription is one coding unit. Where a prescription contains several sub-injunctions, these were coded under the parent unit rather than split, preserving the text’s own boundaries. This yields a corpus of 96 units: 38 on educators, 36 on students, 11 on books, and 11 on the educational environment. Fixing the unit to the text’s own divisions, rather than to themes imposed by the analyst, is the first safeguard against reading a preferred structure into the source.

All four prescriptive parts were read in full, and each prescription was extracted verbatim in Arabic with a working English rendering. For every unit, the following were recorded: part and section; page in the 2005 edition; the salient original term where analytically significant (e.g., *murāqaba*, *taṣḥīḥ*, *quḍwa*, *takrār*); and the translation. This inventory constitutes the audit trail (Supplementary Table S1), through which every subsequent analytical claim can be traced to a located passage.

Coding proceeded in three passes. Open coding assigned each prescription a descriptive code capturing its manifest content. Consolidation grouped codes into thematic categories based on shared educational functions (e.g., spiritual integrity, ethical

pedagogy, epistemic discipline). Higher-order categorization examined the relationships among these categories, from which the framework’s structure was derived.

Throughout, three epistemic levels were recorded explicitly for every claim, and this labeling is carried into the Results and Discussion rather than left implicit:

1. Level A, textually explicit: terms and divisions Ibn Jamā‘ah himself states (e.g., *murāqaba* as the educator’s first disposition; *qudwa* as the section heading for the exemplar).
2. Level B, analytical inference: groupings and relationships the present study derives across several prescriptions (e.g., reading the text’s repeated *takrār* injunctions collectively as a mechanism of habituation; naming the whole an “educational ecology”).
3. Level C, contemporary interpretation: connections drawn to modern concepts, confined to the Discussion and marked by explicit interpretive language.

Separating these levels is the study’s central defense against the charge that the framework is merely the analyst’s preferred reading imposed on the text: what the text says, what the study infers, and what the study connects to modern debate are never allowed to blur.

Adab prescriptions often serve more than one function: a rule about books may also express habituation, and an educator’s conduct may also function as exemplarity; some units are genuinely multi-valent. Where a unit could reasonably belong to more than one category, it was assigned to the category corresponding to its primary educational function, with the secondary function documented on the coding sheet rather than suppressed. Recording rather than hiding these overlaps prevents the final categories from appearing artificially discrete and leaves alternative codings open to inspection.

From the higher-order categories, the framework was built by asking of each what educational role it plays relative to the others: normative orientation, domain of practice, formative mechanism, or environing condition. The result is an inference about the text’s internal logic, not a model that Ibn Jamā‘ah himself states. Its relationships are analytical, not empirically tested causal claims; this governs how the framework and its figure are presented and captioned.

Coding was performed by a single analyst, which favors interpretive depth and consistency but lacks the corroboration that a coding team would provide; this is

acknowledged in the Limitations section rather than glossed over. Four procedures support trustworthiness. First, the analysis began with the text’s own terms and divisions (level A) before any modern concepts were introduced. Second, every claim is tied to a located passage through the audit trail (Supplementary Table S1), making the reconstruction traceable. Third, contemporary categories enter only as dialogue in the Discussion, signaled by explicit interpretive language and never attributed to Ibn Jamā‘ah. Fourth, where a term’s historical sense and its modern rendering diverge, the divergence is stated rather than smoothed. Together, these procedures address dependability (through the audit trail) and confirmability (through the level-A/B/C separation), the qualitative analogs of reliability and objectivity.

Results

The results answer the three research questions in sequence. The subsections address RQ1 (what the text prescribes across its four domains), RQ2 (the relationships among them), and RQ3 (the reconstructed framework). Each claim is marked by epistemic level: what the text states explicitly (A) and what the study infers analytically (B); connections to contemporary concepts (C) are held to the Discussion.

The Architecture of the *Tadhkirat*

Ibn Jamā‘ah structures the work in five parts. The first grounds the enterprise in the virtue of knowledge, adducing Qur’anic verses, prophetic reports, and scholarly statements. The remaining four are prescriptive and define the study’s corpus: the *adab* of the educator, of the learner, toward books, and of residence in places of learning.

This architecture is itself the first finding bearing on RQ1. At the level of the text’s own organization (A), *adab* is not confined to the teacher–student relation. It is distributed across four objects: the person of the educator, the person of the learner, the material instruments of knowledge, and the physical-institutional space of study. Any reading that reduces the *Tadhkirat* to interpersonal etiquette is therefore contradicted by the text’s own division of the subject.

Distribution of the 96 Prescriptions

The four prescriptive parts yield 96 discrete prescriptions, distributed as in Table 1.

Table 1.
Distribution of the 96 *adab* prescriptions across domains and subdomains.

Domain	Subdomain	N
Educator	toward the self	12
	toward knowledge (the lesson)	12

	toward students	14
Student	toward the self	10
	toward the educator	13
	toward learning and peers	13
Books	acquisition, verification, preservation	11
Environment	conduct in places of residence and study	11
Total		96

The two human domains carry the greatest weight (38 and 36), yet 22 prescriptions (almost a quarter) concern books and the environment (B). This proportion is analytically consequential: it is large enough that an account restricting *adab* to persons would omit a substantial, textually deliberate part of the corpus.

Educator *Adab*

The educator prescriptions, by the text’s own demarcation, divide into conduct toward the self (12), toward knowledge (12), and toward students (14). Conduct toward the self is anchored first in *murāqaba*, the educator’s sustained awareness of God “in private and in public, guarding it in all his movements, stillness, words, and deeds,” for he is “a trustee (*amīn*) of the knowledge deposited with him” (p. 80). The subsequent prescriptions (safeguarding knowledge, *zuhd*, purity of intention, humility, and continuous self-cultivation) extend this orientation into disposition (A).

Conduct toward knowledge concerns responsible transmission: preparing the lesson, ordering disciplines by priority, moderating delivery, and refusing to teach beyond one’s competence, which the text condemns as “toying with religion and a cause of contempt” p. 43). Conduct toward students turns on sincerity, compassion “as toward one’s own child,” equity among students, and attentiveness to their differing capacities (A).

Analytically (B), these 38 prescriptions cohere as a single conception of pedagogical authority that is at once spiritual, ethical, and technical; the educator’s competence and character are presented as inseparable conditions of the right to teach, not as separate registers.

Student *Adab*

The student prescriptions divide into conduct toward the self (10), toward the educator (13), and toward learning and peers (13). Conduct toward the self begins with purifying the heart “from every deceit, impurity, rancor, envy, and corrupt belief and character” so that it becomes fit to receive knowledge (p. 128), followed by sincerity, disciplined use of time, *wara‘*, moderation, and careful choice of company. Conduct

toward the educator centers on respect, patience, and attentive listening; conduct toward learning emphasizes gradual progression (*tadarruj*), verification (*taṣḥīḥ*) before memorization, repetition, regular attendance, disciplined questioning, and sharing knowledge with peers (A).

Analytically (B), the sequence is significant: the text subordinates the student's intellectual work to prior ethical and spiritual preparation ("knowledge is the worship of the heart," p. 128), so that epistemic discipline (how one handles knowledge) and moral discipline (how one regulates the self) are presented as a single order, not two.

Adab Toward Books

The fourth part treats the learner's conduct toward books as "the instruments of knowledge" (*ālat al-ʿilm*) through 11 prescriptions on acquisition, verification (*taṣḥīḥ*), handling, placement, copying, and lending (p. 163).

The governing prescription is instructive. The student should procure needed books (by purchase, hire, or loan) "because they are the instrument of attainment" (*li-annahā ālat al-taḥsīl*); yet he must not "make their acquisition and abundance his share of knowledge, and their collection his portion of understanding, as many pretenders to jurisprudence and hadith do," citing the verse, "If you are not a retaining, comprehending, / then your collecting of books is of no use" (p. 164).

Analytically (B), the text subordinates the instrument to its epistemic end: *adab* here governs the learner's relation to the material infrastructure of knowledge, distinguishing possession of the means from attainment of the end.

Adab of the Educational Environment

The fifth part concerns residence in places of learning (*sukna al-madāris*), "for they are, in most cases, [students'] dwellings" (p. 180), through 11 prescriptions on the choice of institution and conduct within the shared space.

The opening prescription is telling: the student should choose, so far as possible, a school "whose endower was nearer to scrupulousness (*waraʿ*) and further from innovation (*bidʿa*)" (p. 193). What is at stake is not accommodation but the moral and epistemic provenance of the environment of study (A).

Analytically (B), the text extends ethical expectation to the setting itself: formation is presented as depending not only on persons and books but on the character of the institution and space within which they meet.

Relationships Among the Domains (RQ2)

Read against one another, the four domains prove interlocking rather than parallel. Three relationships are evident (B).

A shared normative source. Both the educator’s and the student’s conduct toward the self begin with the same orientation: God-consciousness, sincerity, and purification of the heart (pp. 80, 128). One disposition anchors both human domains rather than two separate ethics.

Transmission through the exemplar. The educator’s conduct toward students and the student’s conduct toward the educator converge on the teacher as *qudwa*, the very term Ibn Jamā‘ah uses to title the section on “the student’s adab toward his teacher and his exemplar (*qudwa*)” (p. 86). Exemplarity is thus named by the text (A), not imported by the study; what the educator embodies is what the learner is directed to observe and emulate.

Extension to instruments and space. The same ethical logic (care, verification, order, and scrupulousness) is attached to the non-human components of education. The learner’s approach to a book (verifying before memorizing) mirrors the epistemic discipline required of learning itself, and the choice of a scrupulously founded school (p. 193) extends that discipline to the institution. Taken together, these relationships indicate that *adab* functions as one relational principle operating across persons, knowledge, instruments, and space, rather than as four discrete codes.

The Reconstructed Framework (RQ3)

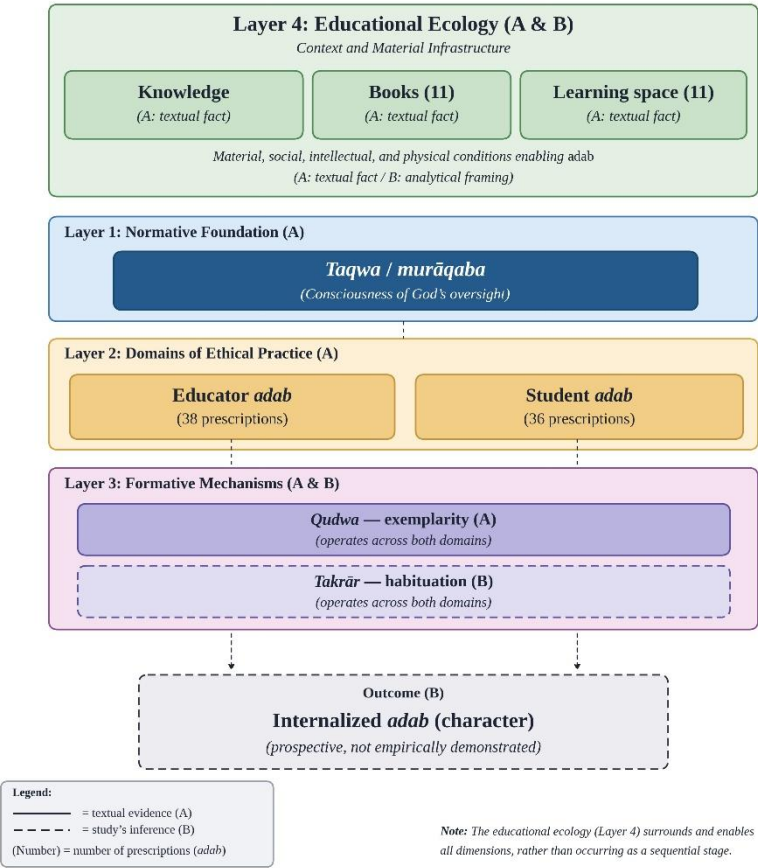
The 96 prescriptions can accordingly be reconstructed as a multi-level structure, its levels distinguished by educational role and each element marked by epistemic status:

1. Normative foundation (A). *Taqwa* / *murāqaba*, placed first among the educator’s dispositions (p. 80) and governing the student’s purification of intention, the orientation from which conduct in both human domains proceeds.
2. Domains of ethical practice (A). Educator *adab* (38) and student *adab* (36) are the fields, textually demarcated, in which the foundation is enacted.
3. Formative mechanisms (A/B). *Qudwa*, exemplary transmission through the teacher, textually explicit (A; p. 86); and habituation through *takrār*, the repeated practice the text repeatedly enjoins, which the present study reads collectively as a mechanism of

- habituation (B). The text prescribes the repeated acts; naming their cumulative function “habituation” is the study’s inference.
4. Environing condition (A/B). Knowledge, books (11), and learning space (11) are the material and institutional fields within which the mechanisms operate. That the text extends *adab* to books and residence is explicit (A); reading these together as a single “educational ecology” is the study’s analytical framing (B).
 5. Outcome (B). Internalized *adab* (character), the formation toward which the other four levels are directed. The text prescribes conduct; that this conduct issues in internalized character is the study’s inference and remains prospective rather than demonstrated.

These five levels and their ordering constitute the answer to RQ3. Their relationships are analytical inferences about the text’s internal logic, not empirically tested causal claims; Figure 1 presents the structure, distinguishing textually grounded elements (A) from the study’s analytical additions (B), and its caption explicitly states this limitation.

Figure 1
Reconstructed Multi-Level Framework of Adab in Ibn Jamā‘ah’s *Tadhkirat*



Reconstructed multi-level framework of adab in Ibn Jamā‘ah’s *Tadhkirat*. Solid outlines denote textually explicit elements (Level A); dashed outlines denote the study’s analytical inferences (Level B). The relationships are conceptual rather than empirically tested causal claims, and the outcome level is prospective

Discussion

From etiquette to a relational ethics of education

The central analytical result is that the *Tadhkirat*’s 96 prescriptions form one interlocking structure rather than four codes of conduct. This reframes what *adab* is. Read as an inventory, it is etiquette; read structurally, it is a relational ethics of education, a principle ordering the relations among persons, knowledge, instruments, and space. The strongest internal warrant for this reading (B) is the text’s allocation of nearly a quarter of the corpus to books and environment: etiquette between persons cannot explain prescriptions governing the verification of a book or the moral provenance of an institution.

This positions the study against, not merely alongside, the existing scholarship. The predominantly descriptive literature catalogs Ibn Jamā‘ah’s prescriptions without articulating their relations; even Zaman’s philosophically serious treatment centers on the “potential of instructors and learners,” the two human poles, whereas the present reconstruction locates those poles within a four-domain structure that includes the non-human conditions of learning.²¹ The contribution is thus not new prescriptions but the relational architecture that makes them a system. A terminological boundary should be fixed here: this study treats *adab* as the historical category under analysis, ethics as its normative dimension, moral formation as the developmental process it addresses, and character as an approximate modern rendering of its intended outcome, approximate because “character” in current usage need not carry the spiritual orientation *adab* presupposes.

The normative orientation of knowledge

That Ibn Jamā‘ah opens the educator’s *adab* with *murāqaba* rather than pedagogical technique indicates that, in his conception, the pursuit of knowledge is normatively oriented from the outset (B). This speaks directly to the contemporary debate over the purpose of education. Biesta argues that education cannot be reduced to the measurement

²¹ Zaman, “The Art of Learning and the Perfection of Its Aspect: Ibn Jamā‘ah on the Potential of Instructors and Learners.”

of outcomes because a prior question of purpose always governs it; the *Tadhkirat* offers a strong historical instance of exactly this claim, subordinating technique to a normative end.²² Ahmed's account of *tarbiyah* for *shakhsyah* (education for identity) converges here: both treat the formation of the person, not the delivery of content, as the organizing aim.²³

The divergence is as instructive as the convergence. Biesta's concern is to *recover* purpose against a measurement culture that has displaced it; Ibn Jamā'ah faces no such displacement: for him, the normative orientation is foundational and unquestioned. Reading them together (C) suggests that what contemporary theory must argue for, the classical text can presuppose, which is precisely why the historical case is analytically useful: it models an education in which purpose is structurally prior rather than defensively reasserted. We do not claim equivalence of context; the point is that the *Tadhkirat* supplies a fully worked example of purpose-led education that current debate reaches for but rarely finds intact.

Pedagogical Authority as Ethical

The educator's prescriptions confer authority to teach as constituted by ethical standing, not merely by position or expertise: the teacher is *amīn*, forbidden to teach beyond competence and bound to equity and compassion. This enters a live contemporary conversation. Buzzelli and Johnston argue that teaching is unavoidably moral and that classroom authority is bound up with the teacher's moral standing;²⁴ Grande and Lennerfors refine this by characterizing the teacher as virtuous, caring, and free, thereby giving analytical shape to what "ethical authority" entails.²⁵

Here, the *Tadhkirat* both confirms and presses beyond the modern accounts (C). Where much contemporary framing treats ethics as a professional requirement layered onto competence, Ibn Jamā'ah makes moral character *constitutive* of the authority itself: teaching beyond one's competence is not merely poor practice but "toying with religion."

²² Gert Biesta, "Good Education in an Age of Measurement: On the Need to Reconnect with the Question of Purpose in Education," *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability* 21, no. 1 (2009): 33–46, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9>.

²³ Ahmed, "Tarbiyah for Shakhsyah (Educating for Identity): Seeking out Culturally Coherent Pedagogy for Muslim Children in Britain."

²⁴ C. A. Buzzelli and B. Johnston, "Authority, Power, and Morality in Classroom Discourse," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 17, no. 8 (2001): 873–84, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(01\)00037-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00037-3).

²⁵ V. Grande and T. T. Lennerfors, "The Virtuous, the Caring, and the Free: Ethical Theory to Understand the Ethics of the Teacher as a Role Model," *European Journal of Engineering Education* 49, no. 1 (2024): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2023.2236959>.

The stronger claim is philosophically interesting because it is also riskier: it ties epistemic authority so tightly to moral standing that a failure of character would, on this view, void the right to teach. Modern relational-ethics accounts stop short of that identification. Naming this divergence (rather than assimilating Ibn Jamā‘ah to Buzzelli and Johnston) is what makes the comparison analytically productive.

Epistemic discipline as intellectual virtue

The student prescriptions bind intellectual work to ethical self-regulation: purification precedes reception; *tadarruj* and *taṣḥīḥ* precede memorization; and repetition structures the approach to knowledge itself. This maps onto, and complicates, the contemporary literature on intellectual virtue. Pritchard²⁶ argues that the proper aim of education is the cultivation of intellectual virtue rather than the mere transmission of information; the *Tadhkirat*’s subordination of memorization to prior verification and purification is a recognizably virtue-epistemological stance *avant la lettre* (C).

The complication and the study’s contribution to this dialogue concern *taṣḥīḥ*, the verification of a text’s accuracy before committing it to memory. Heersmink²⁷ and Cassinadri²⁸ extend virtue epistemology to the digital condition, treating search engines and generative AI as environments that can enhance or erode intellectual virtue. It is tempting to enlist Ibn Jamā‘ah’s *taṣḥīḥ* as a medieval anticipation of information literacy, but the anachronism must be marked. His concern is the *integrity of transmitted knowledge* within a manuscript culture of chains and copies, not the evaluation of competing digital sources. The productive point is not that he solves the modern problem but that he treats the *reliability of one’s epistemic sources as a matter of virtue*, the same move contemporary virtue epistemology makes, arrived at from an entirely different technological condition. Kotzee and Carter, however, caution that intellectual-virtue education struggles to yield concrete action guidance; the *Tadhkirat* is notable here

²⁶ D. Pritchard, “Epistemic Virtue and the Epistemology of Education,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 47, no. 2 (2013): 236–47, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12022>.

²⁷ R. Heersmink, “A Virtue Epistemology of the Internet: Search Engines, Intellectual Virtues and Education,” *Social Epistemology* 32, no. 1 (2018): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2017.1383530>.

²⁸ G. Cassinadri, “ChatGPT and the Technology–Education Tension: Applying Contextual Virtue Epistemology to a Cognitive Artifact,” *Philosophy & Technology* 37, no. 1 (2024): 14, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-024-00701-7>.

precisely because it supplies the operational specificity (verify, then memorize; progress gradually) that the modern program is charged with lacking.²⁹

The exemplar and the limits of exemplarism

The framework's first formative mechanism, *qudwa*, is textually explicit: the teacher functions as an exemplar the learner observes and emulates. Exemplarity is one of the most contested topics in current moral education, and situating *qudwa* within that contest, rather than simply endorsing it, is where the reconstruction earns its contemporary purchase.

The case for exemplars is well developed: Vaccarezza recovers ancient models of the exemplary life,³⁰ and Henderson marks the renewed centrality of exemplars and emulation.³¹ But the objections are serious. Croce³² argues that exemplarism risks indoctrination and falters in its applicability: how does a learner identify the right exemplar or emulate it rightly without independent judgment? Carr catalogs the hazards of role-modeling for character;³³ Watson argues that an exemplar-centered approach can actually *suppress* the inquisitiveness that intellectual character requires.³⁴ Read against these critiques (C), the *Tadhkirat* is neither refuted nor vindicated but clarified. Two features of Ibn Jamā'ah's account bear directly on the objections. First, *qudwa* is not free-standing: it operates only atop the normative foundation of *taqwa*, so emulation is anchored in a substantive value orientation rather than in the exemplar's personality, a partial answer to the indoctrination worry. Second, the learner's own *adab* includes disciplined questioning and verification, which supplies exactly the independent judgment Watson fears exemplarism erodes. The *Tadhkirat* thus embeds its exemplar within countervailing prescriptions; whether that fully answers Croce's applicability

²⁹ B. Kotzee and J. A. Carter, "Educating for Intellectual Virtue: A Critique from Action Guidance," *Episteme* 18, no. 2 (2021): 177–99, <https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2019.10>.

³⁰ M. S. Vaccarezza, "Paths to Flourishing: Ancient Models of the Exemplary Life," *Ethics and Education* 15, no. 2 (2020): 144–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2020.1731105>.

³¹ E. Henderson, "Special Issue on Exemplars and Emulation in Moral Education: Guest Editorial," *Journal of Moral Education* 53, no. 1 (2024): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2291213>.

³² M. Croce, "Exemplarism in Moral Education: Problems with Applicability and Indoctrination," *Journal of Moral Education* 48, no. 3 (2019): 291–302, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2019.1579086>; M. Croce, "Moral Exemplars in Education: A Liberal Account," *Ethics and Education* 15, no. 2 (2020): 186–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2020.1731658>.

³³ D. Carr, "The Hazards of Role Modeling for the Education of Moral and/or Virtuous Character," *Philosophical Inquiry in Education* 30, no. 1 (2023): 68–79, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1099903ar>.

³⁴ L. Watson, "Educating for Inquisitiveness: A Case against Exemplarism for Intellectual Character Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 48, no. 3 (2019): 303–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2019.1589436>.

objection is doubtful, and we do not claim it does, but it shows the classical account to be more structurally defended against these critiques than a bare appeal to role models would be.

Habituation is bound to principle

The second mechanism, habituation, is the study’s inference (B) from the text’s insistence on *takrār*. The neo-Aristotelian literature treats habituation as the core process of virtue formation,³⁵ repeated practice under guidance that continues into adulthood rather than being confined to childhood.³⁶ The *Tadhkirat*’s pairing of *qudwa* with *takrār* reproduces this exemplar-plus-practice structure with striking fidelity (C).

What the classical case contributes to the modern debate is the tight binding of habituation to a normative end. Kristjánsson defends character education against the charge of mindless habituation,³⁷ and Dishon and Goodman warn against habituation severed from substantive values and reduced to compliance.³⁸ Ibn Jamā‘ah’s structure is instructive on exactly this fault line: *takrār* is never behavior management, because it is subordinated throughout to *taqwa*: repetition in the service of a normative orientation, not repetition as conditioning. Peterson situates character education within its political and individual dimensions; the *Tadhkirat* offers a case in which the individual’s habituation is neither politically instrumentalized nor value-neutral, but is oriented to a transcendent end.³⁹ We invoke Dishon and Goodman here as one critical vantage on a specific mechanism, not as a verdict on the field, and the convergence with virtue ethics is conceptual, not genealogical: Ibn Jamā‘ah is no Aristotelian, yet his structure independently ties exemplarity and habituation to values in the way current debate has come to demand.

³⁵ J. Steutel and B. Spiecker, “Cultivating Sentimental Dispositions through Aristotelian Habituation,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 38, no. 4 (2004): 531–49, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0309-8249.2004.00398.x>.

³⁶ W. Sanderse, “Does Aristotle Believe That Habituation Is Only for Children?” *Journal of Moral Education* 47, no. 1 (2018): 98–110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2017.1387524>.

³⁷ Kristjánsson, “Ten Myths about Character, Virtue, and Virtue Education – plus Three Well-Founded Misgivings.”

³⁸ Dishon and Goodman, “No Excuses for Character: A Critique of Character Education in No-Excuses Charter Schools.”

³⁹ A. Peterson, “Character Education, the Individual and the Political,” *Journal of Moral Education* 49, no. 2 (2020): 143–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2019.1653270>.

The educational ecology and the contribution to Islamic education

The reconstruction's most distinctive move (B) is to read books and environment as an *educational ecology*, extending ethical attention beyond persons to the material and institutional conditions of formation. This is where the study reaches furthest beyond existing Ibn Jamā'ah scholarship, which stops at the teacher–student dyad. It also connects to work that reads Islamic education as a formative culture rather than a delivery system: Lahmar⁴⁰ describes an Islamic “wisdom-based cultural environment,” and Yang's bio-ecological analysis argues that moral education fails when it overweights individual agency and neglects the enviroing systems of formation.⁴¹ Ibn Jamā'ah's extension of *adab* to books and residence anticipates, in its own idiom, precisely this ecological insight (C).

For contemporary Islamic education, the value is at the level of principle, not prescription. Reconstructions such as Amiruddin et al.'s⁴² *rangkang* and Fauziah and Hasanah's⁴³ *tawhīdic* curriculum epistemology show a wider scholarly turn toward reading classical resources as connected structures; the present framework contributes to that turn with a specific claim: that integrity, exemplarity, disciplined learning, and educational environment form one system, so that an institution's routines, relationships, and spaces either reinforce or undercut the values it teaches. What the framework offers is a lens for asking that question, not a validated instrument for answering it.

Boundary conditions

The contribution must be bounded, and the bounds are integral to the argument rather than concessions appended to it. *First*, this is a reconstruction of one text and is not offered as representative of Islamic education as such. *Second*, the framework's relationships are analytical inferences about the text's internal logic, not empirically tested causal claims: the study presents no evidence that these prescriptions produce internalized character, and the framework's outcome level is therefore prospective rather than demonstrated. Third, the historical setting (a manuscript culture of scholarly circles

⁴⁰ Fella Lahmar, “Islamic Education: An Islamic ‘Wisdom-Based Cultural Environment’ in a Western Context,” *Religions* 11, no. 8 (2020): 409.

⁴¹ C Yang, “Moral Education in Mainland China Today: A Bio-Ecological Systems Analysis,” *Journal of Moral Education* 50, no. 4 (2021): 436–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1784714>.

⁴² Amiruddin et al., “From Peripheral Tradition to Epistemic Core: Rangkang in Acehese Islamic Educational Thought.”

⁴³ Fauziah and Hasanah, “Reconstructing Curriculum Epistemology through the Tawhīdic Worldview: A Conceptual Framework.”

and endowed *madāris*) differs fundamentally from contemporary mass, digital, and institutional education; the *tashīh* prescriptions do not resolve digital misinformation, *qudwa* is not a theory of teacher effectiveness, and habituation here is not evidence of behavioral causation. Following In’ami et al.,⁴⁴ we treat contextualization as interpretation rather than transfer: the historical meaning is reconstructed first, and contemporary relevance is drawn only at the level of principle. These limits do not weaken the contribution; they define the register (conceptual, historical, and interpretive) in which it holds.

Limitations

The limitations here are methodological; they complement the stated conceptual boundary conditions. First, the study rests on a single classical text. That focus gives the analysis depth, but it also means the framework describes the *Tadhkirat* specifically rather than Islamic educational thought as a whole. Generalizing further would require comparative work with other classical treatments, such as the *adab al-‘ālim wa al-muta‘allim* tradition, traceable in Hasyim Asy’ari, or the wider corpus that includes al-Ghazālī and al-Zarnūjī.

Second, the analysis is interpretive. Its higher-order categories, and the order in which they sit, reflect defensible choices, not the only possible ones. The audit trail (Supplementary Table S1) and the explicit level-A/B/C separation make those choices traceable and open to challenge. Still, they do not remove the interpretive element: a different analyst might group the 96 prescriptions differently, especially at the points of genuine multi-valence recorded on the coding sheet.

Third, a single analyst coded the text. That gave the coding consistency and depth, but it lacks the intercoder corroboration that a team design provides. Independent recoding of the corpus against the audit trail would strengthen the framework.

Fourth, the analysis relies on a single printed edition (al-Nadwī, 2005) and our own translations from Arabic. A different critical edition or a different rendering of key terms such as *murāqaba*, *qudwa*, and *takrār* could shift the points of emphasis. The framework’s terminological claims, especially the level-A status of *qudwa*, are only as secure as the edition consulted.

⁴⁴ In’Ami, Bambang, and Wekke, “Contextualizing Adab in Islamic Education from the Perspective of Al-Attas.”

Fifth, the framework is conceptual, and its outcome level is prospective. We make and test no empirical claim. Whether the reconstructed relationships hold in practice, and whether the prescriptions bear on actual moral formation, are questions this design cannot answer. The next section identifies them as priorities for future work.

Conclusion

This study reconstructs the dispersed *adab* prescriptions in Ibn Jamā‘ah’s *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi‘ wa al-Mutakallim* into a single, integrated educational framework. The 96 prescriptions across the text’s four domains (38 for educators, 36 for students, 11 for books, 11 for the educational environment) form one relational structure, not four separate codes of conduct: *taqwa* is the normative foundation; educator and student *adab* are the domains of ethical practice; *qudwa* (textually explicit) and habituation through *takrār* (analytically inferred) are the formative mechanisms; and knowledge, books, and learning space form an educational ecology within which these mechanisms operate, with internalized *adab* as the prospective outcome.

The theoretical contribution is twofold. The framework reframes *adab* as an integrative principle, at once personal, relational, and institutional, rather than a set of discrete rules, and it brings a classical Islamic text into dialogue, including disagreement, with international scholarship. In that dialogue, the *Tadhkirat* proves a productive interlocutor: a worked example of purpose-led education, a strong account of ethically constituted teaching authority, an operationally specific model of intellectual virtue, and an exemplar mechanism grounded in *taqwa* and balanced by independent inquiry.

The contribution is deliberately bounded: the five-level structure is our analytical reconstruction, not a model Ibn Jamā‘ah states; the framework is conceptual, not empirically validated; its relationships are analytical, not causal; and medieval educational forms are not claimed to transfer directly to contemporary institutions.

Three lines of future work follow: comparative reconstruction across the classical *adab* corpus, testing whether the four-domain structure is peculiar to Ibn Jamā‘ah or characteristic of the genre; empirical inquiry in Islamic schools and *pesantren*, examining how these principles work in practice; and translational work applying the framework’s ecological insight to present concerns such as digital moral formation and institutional design.

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Ethics Statement

This study employed a literature review methodology and used information obtained exclusively from published and publicly available scholarly sources. The study did not involve human participants, animals, direct interaction with individuals, or the collection of personally identifiable or sensitive data. Therefore, ethical approval and informed consent were not required.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Author Contributions

Bahosin Sihombing contributed to conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing of the original draft, and project administration. Syamruddin Nasution contributed to methodology, formal analysis, investigation and systematic identification of relevant literature, data curation, visualization, and writing – review and editing. Sawaluddin contributed to supervision, project administration, and writing – review and editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) to assist with language editing, clarity, readability, and the organization of the manuscript. All AI-generated content has been critically reviewed and verified by the authors. The authors retain full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

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