

APPLYING AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS OF INTENTION IN
THE USAGE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE (GenAI) AMONG UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS

BY

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and
Heritage (in Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion)

AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed
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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) within higher education creates a complex ethical dilemma, challenging and likely compromising the foundations of academic integrity. Although these tools provide powerful assistance, the distinction between their legitimate use and academic misconduct is often blurred, highlighting the urgent need for a comprehensive ethical framework to guide their utilisation. While many studies have addressed this problem, there is a significant lack of moral philosophy-based approaches, especially from the Islamic philosophy approach. This study aims to address this gap by turning to the moral philosophy of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, focusing specifically on his views of intention. In al-Ghazali's view, intention serves as a fundamental ethical principle that defines the moral nature of an action; the moral value of an act is rooted in the intention behind it. This research first aims to explore the implications of GenAI in higher education. This study also seeks to analyse al-Ghazali's views of intention from the perspectives of moral philosophy and to explore the relevance of al-Ghazali's views on students' academic integrity in their use of GenAI. Employing a qualitative research design, this study conducted a thematic analysis of al-Ghazali's works, mainly *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, to construct a framework of intentionality. This framework subsequently was applied to analyse data gathered from interviews with undergraduate university students from Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, regarding their intentions for using GenAI applications, specifically ChatGPT, along with insights from lecturers concerning their views on incorporating this ethical framework to enhance academic integrity in students' learning journeys. The findings reveal that a student's ethical use of ChatGPT is predicated on the quality of their underlying intention, which is itself determined by their possession of the three forms of knowledge outlined by al-Ghazali. This research finds that the framework of al-Ghazali is a powerful diagnostic and formative tool that not only can be used to evaluate ethical readiness but also to develop institutional policies and educational interventions aimed at instilling integrity internally, instead of only imposing the rules externally.

الملخص البحث

أدى التطور السريع للذكاء الاصطناعي التوليدي (GenAI) في مجال التعليم العالي إلى خلق معضلة أخلاقية معقدة، مما يشكل تحدياً ويهدد أسس النزاهة الأكاديمية. على الرغم من أن هذه الأدوات تقدم مساعدة قوية، إلا أن التمييز بين استخدامها المشروع وسوء السلوك الأكاديمي غالباً ما يكون غير واضح، مما يُبرز الحاجة الملحة إلى إطار أخلاقي شامل لتوجيه استخدامها. وبينما تناولت العديد من الدراسات هذه القضية، لا تزال هناك فجوة واضحة في النهج المتأصلة في الفلسفة الأخلاقية، لا سيما من منظور الفكر الإسلامي. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى سدّ هذه الفجوة من خلال اللجوء إلى الفلسفة الأخلاقية لأبي حامد الغزالي، مع التركيز على رأيه في مفهوم النية. فحسب رأي الغزالي، تُعدّ النية مبدأً أخلاقياً أساسياً تحدّد على أساسه القيمة الأخلاقية لأي فعل؛ فقيمة الفعل الأخلاقية تنبع من النية الكامنة وراءه. تسعى هذه الدراسة أولاً إلى استكشاف آثار الذكاء الاصطناعي التوليدي (GenAI) في التعليم العالي. واعتماداً على منهجية بحثية نوعية، ستقوم هذه الدراسة بإجراء تحليل موضوعي لأعمال الغزالي الأساسية، ولا سيما كتاب "إحياء علوم الدين"، بهدف بناء إطار مفاهيمي للنية. سيتم تطبيق هذا الإطار لاحقاً لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من المقابلات مع طلاب جامعيين من كوتا كينابالو، بشأن نواياهم في استخدام تطبيقات GenAI، وتحديدًا ChatGPT، إلى جانب آراء المحاضرين بشأن دمج هذا الإطار الأخلاقي لتعزيز النزاهة الأكاديمية في مسيرة الطلاب التعليمية. تكشف النتائج أن الاستخدام الأخلاقي لـ ChatGPT من قبل الطلاب يعتمد على جودة نواياهم الأساسية، والتي تتحدد بدورها بامتلاكهم الأشكال الثلاثة للمعرفة التي حددها الغزالي. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن إطار الغزالي هو أداة تشخيصية وتكوينية قوية لا يمكن استخدامها فقط لتقييم الاستعداد الأخلاقي، بل أيضاً لتطوير سياسات مؤسسية وتدخلات تعليمية تهدف إلى غرس النزاهة داخلياً، بدلاً من فرض القواعد خارجياً فقط.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage in Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion.

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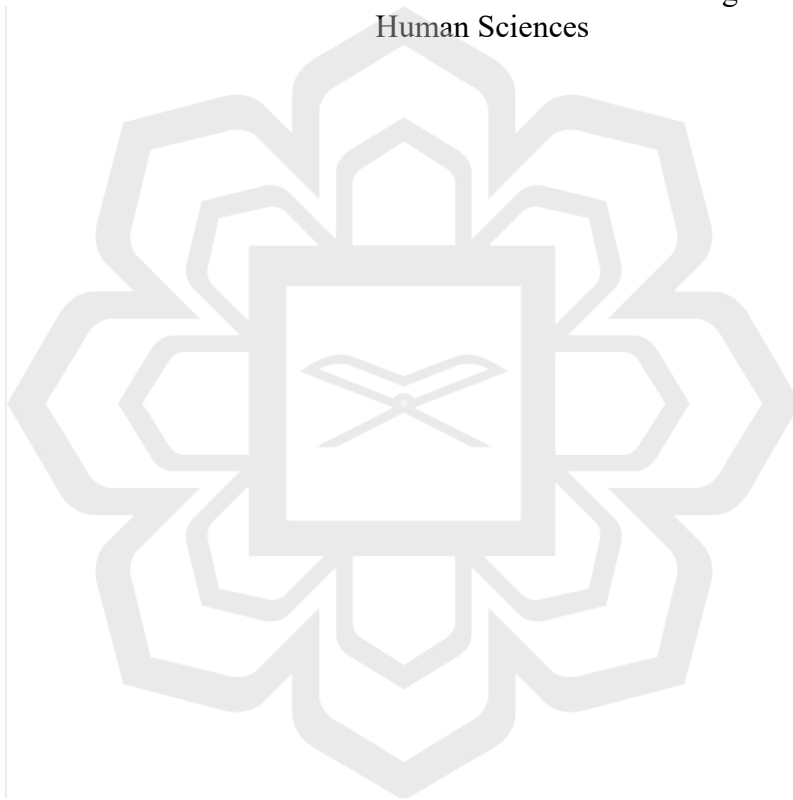
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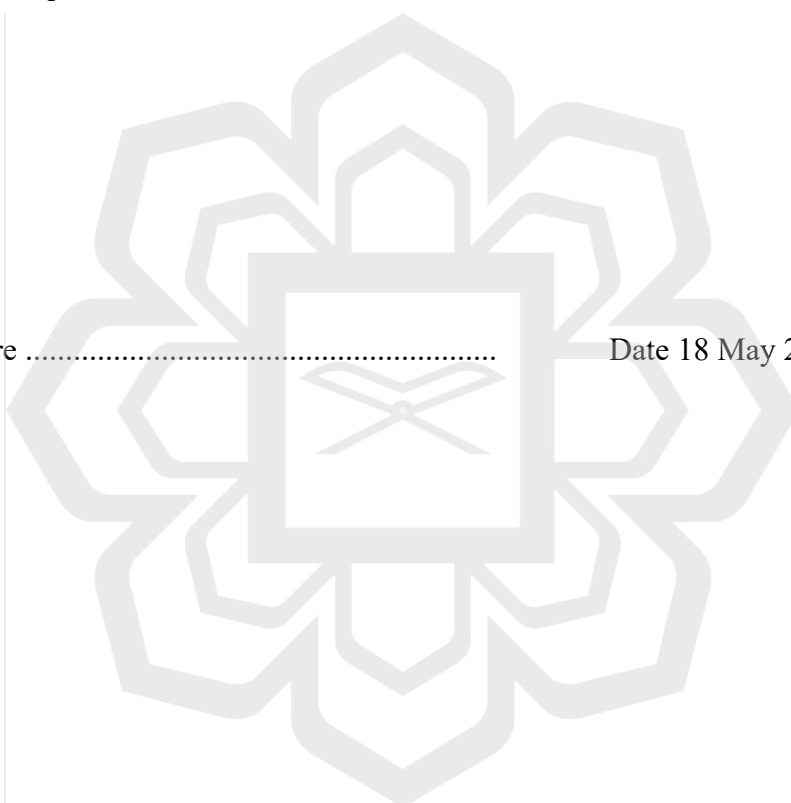
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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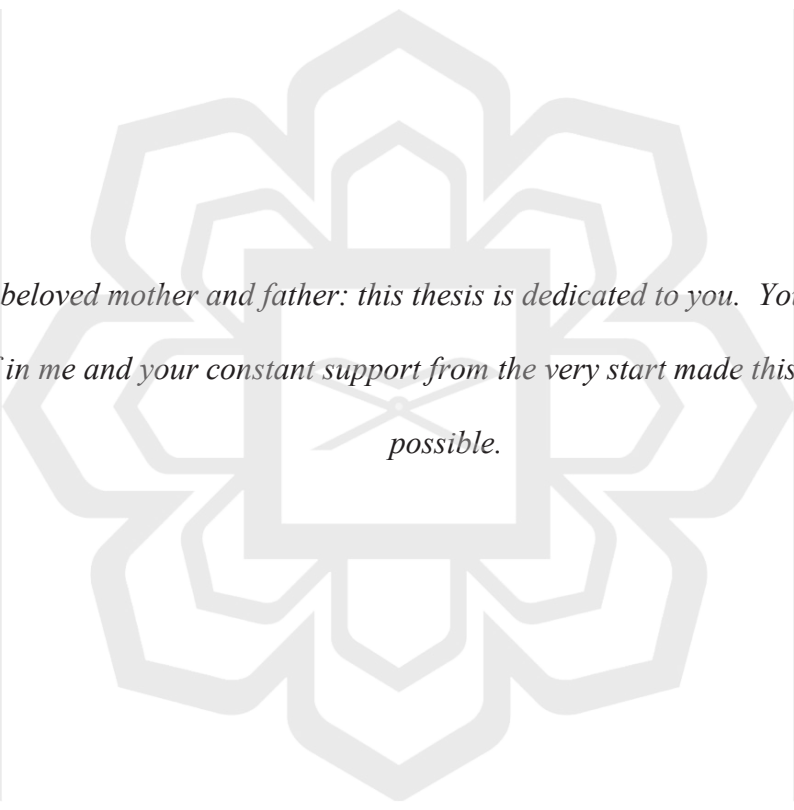
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To my beloved mother and father: this thesis is dedicated to you. Your unwavering belief in me and your constant support from the very start made this achievement possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration.....	vi
Copyright Page.....	vii
Dedication	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
List of Tables	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	3
1.3 Research Questions.....	4
1.4 Research Objectives.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.6 Scope of the Study	5
1.7 Research Methodology	6
1.8 Literature Review	8
CHAPTER TWO: GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND THE ETHICAL IMPERATIVE	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 The Definition of Generative Artificial Intelligence	20
2.2.1 Brief Introduction to Artificial Intelligence	20
2.2.2 Introduction to Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)	21
2.2.3 Brief Overview of Generative Artificial Intelligence Application (ChatGPT).....	22
2.3 The Impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPT) In the Academic Field.....	23
2.3.1 The Benefits of ChatGPT.....	23
2.3.2 The Ethical Challenges of ChatGPT for Academic Integrity	25
2.3.2.1 Factual Errors of ChatGPT and Its ‘Hallucination’ Results	25
2.3.2.2 Over-Reliance on ChatGPT	26
2.3.2.3 Loss of Critical Thinking Skills.....	26
2.3.2.4 Loss of Academic Integrity	27
2.4 Conclusion	30
CHAPTER THREE: AL-GHAZALI’S VIEWS OF INTENTION.....	31
3.1 Introduction	32
3.2 Al-Ghazali’s Background of His Spiritual Journey	32
3.3 The Position of Intention in the Human Body and Soul.....	32
3.4 Al-Ghazali’s Views of Intention.....	37
3.4.1 Introduction of Intention	37

3.4.2 Knowledge As a Precondition for Intention	40
3.4.2.1 Worldly Knowledge	41
3.4.2.2 Spiritual Knowledge	42
3.4.3 Knowledge and Intention from Western Philosophy Perspectives	45
3.5 Relation Between Intention and Action.....	48
3.5.1 Good Intentions.....	50
3.5.2 Innocent Intention	55
3.5.3 Bad Intentions	59
3.6 Synthesis: An Analytical Framework for Al-Ghazali's Views of Intention.....	64
3.6.1 Integration of al-Ghazali's Framework into the Interview Design.....	66
3.7 Conclusion	67
CHAPTER FOUR: THE APPLICATION OF AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS OF INTENTION IN ENHANCING THE INTEGRITY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (GenAI), ChatGPT	69
4.1 Introduction.....	69
4.2 Exploring the Applicability of Al-Ghazali's Views of Intention to Student Integrity in the Use of ChatGPT	71
4.2.1 Students' Awareness of ChatGPT	71
4.2.2 Students' Self-Knowledge	75
4.2.3 Findings.....	79
4.3 The Impact of Al-Ghazali's Views of Intention in Enhancing Students' Academic Integrity in the Usage of Generative AI, ChatGPT	81
4.3.1 Lecturers' Perspectives on the Use of ChatGPT Among University Students.....	81
4.3.2 The Perceived Relevance of Integrating Al-Ghazali's Views in Enhancing Students' Academic Integrity.....	85
4.3.3 Lecturers' Recommendations for Applying the Views of Al-Ghazali in Academic Settings.....	90
4.4 Conclusion	95
CONCLUSION	98
Introduction.....	98
Summary.....	98
Main Findings.....	98
Recommendations.....	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY	103
APPENDICES	113
Appendix A: Sample of Interview Consent Form for Students	113
Appendix B: Sample Interview Consent Form for Lecturers	114
Appendix C: Interview Questions for Students and Lecturers	115
Appendix D: List of Interview Respondents	120

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Explanation of Al-Ghazali's Intention Framework Components	65
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Islam is a religion with a strong emphasis on ethics. The Islamic worldview and its ethical guidelines must be adhered to in all aspects of human life and activities. This principle remains applicable to institutions such as modern technology as well. The absence of religious sensibility in the realm of rapidly advancing technology is the root cause of many dilemmas prevalent today. Within Islam, intentions are regarded with great importance, serving as the foundation of religious practice and all other aspects of life¹. Muslims are encouraged to be mindful of their intentions in all their actions and to strive towards performing good deeds with pure intentions, as it is considered the starting point of any action. While discussions on intention from a legal standpoint are more prevalent, its ethical implications are equally crucial, as intention plays a fundamental role in determining the outcome of one action.

Artificial Intelligence has been an integral part of our daily lives and activities for over a decade. The development of Generative AI represents a significant advancement in the field of Artificial Intelligence. Recently, the latest technology to be introduced in the transmission of information is ChatGPT, which has been widely used in educational settings. The chatbot became the world's fastest-adopted online tool, with over 1 million users within 5 days, and that mainly includes students². ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot that uses natural language processing to create humanlike conversational dialogue. The language model can respond to questions and compose various written content, including articles, social media posts, essays, code, and emails.

Certainly, the development of Generative AI undeniably introduces significant convenience in the education realm, particularly for students who benefit from personalised learning through this platform. However, challenges arise when it is

¹ Arenawati Sehat Omar and Zalina Mohd Desa, 'The Role of Intention (Niyyah) In Islamic Work Ethics', *Proceedings Borneo Islamic International Conference eISSN 2948-5045* 14 (November 2023): 82–85.

² Amanda Hetler, 'What Is ChatGPT?', Western North Carolina Conference, 12 September 2023, <https://www.wnccumc.org/resourcedetail/what-is-chatgpt-17622055>.

employed irresponsibly, leading to numerous ethical issues. This is particularly evident in the utilisation of ChatGPT, where the platform is misused for purposes such as plagiarism, cheating, academic dishonesty, and other practices that compromise student integrity. Due to ChatGPT's ability to generate prompt responses, educators express concerns that using it will decrease students' abilities to brainstorm and think critically and will promote plagiarism and cheating³. Hence, resulting in a decrease in academic integrity.

A few studies have been made in an attempt to solve this problem, such as giving training awareness to both students and teachers, educating students about the risks of relying on AI-based technologies, and addressing ethical dilemmas⁴. While these resolutions are undoubtedly valuable, the question arises regarding their sustainability in the face of the rapidly changing and evolving field of AI. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the crucial role of religious morality in addressing this contemporary issue by exploring the views of intention from al-Ghazali's perspective in his book "*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*" and its relevance in maintaining students' integrity in their utilisation of generative AI.

Intention is the pillar of worship, the essence, and foundation of action. The most sacred acts are spoiled because of the mixed intentions behind them, while the simplest acts gain value on account of the purely good intentions behind them⁵. An in-depth discussion of intention can be referred to from the work of al-Ghazali's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, where he dedicated a section specifically to discuss *Niyyah* in The Book of Intention, Sincerity, and Truthfulness (*Kitāb al-Niyyah, wa'l-Ikhlāṣ wa'l-Ṣidq*). Al-Ghazali wrote this book in response to the political and social conditions of his time; nevertheless, his ideas and perspectives remain relevant in addressing the contemporary challenges we face today.

³ Chris Westfall, 'Educators Battle Plagiarism As 89% Of Students Admit to Using OpenAI's ChatGPT for Homework', Forbes, accessed 14 October 2025, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chriswestfall/2023/01/28/educators-battle-plagiarism-as-89-of-students-admit-to-using-open-ais-chatgpt-for-homework/>.

⁴ Juan Dempere et al., '(The Impact of ChatGPT on Higher Education', *Frontiers in Education*, 8 September 2023, 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2023.1206936>.

⁵ Muhsin Qara'ati, *The Radiance of the Secrets of Prayer*, trans. Mansoor Limba (ABWA Publishing and Printing Center, n.d.), 12, accessed 14 October 2025, <https://al-islam.org/radiance-secrets-prayer-muhsin-qaraati>.

The significance of al-Ghazali's "*Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*" in Islamic ethics is profound, as it has had a substantial impact on the development of Islamic thought and ethical perspectives. This book was written when he was experiencing and analysing the political and social conditions of the people and government during his time in the error of the Abbasids era⁶. This influential work addresses various aspects of ethics and moral development, emphasizing the importance of integrity, truthfulness, and the establishment of good character traits within individuals. If al-Ghazali's exploration of intention is carefully applied to contemporary issues, it can offer enduring solutions to the intellectual, mechanical, and technical challenges confronting Muslim nations.

When examining the significance of intention within an educational environment, the intention approach by students plays a vital role in determining their sincerity throughout their learning journey. The authenticity and clarity of their intentions directly influence the authenticity and clarity of the methods employed in the learning process. This underscores the crucial role of intention in preventing students from misusing ChatGPT inappropriately, thereby averting issues related to cheating and ethical concerns. Both the acts of teaching and learning are considered *Amānah* from Allah, and they should be done with a sincere intention. Hence, incorporating intention as outlined by al-Ghazali into the utilisation of generative AI will be able to strengthen students' academic integrity and ultimately contribute to the improvement of educational quality.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Most developments in science and technology are pioneered and established by excellent research⁷. However, ethical and moral considerations are frequently neglected in engaging with this modern technology. According to Islamic ontology, human immorality is identified as the fundamental cause of all social, economic, political, and environmental issues⁸. Hence, the only way to resolve all the issues that arise in our

⁶ Badruttamam, 'Analisa Kitab Ihya' Ulumuddin Perspektif Pemikiran Islam', *Spiritualita* 6, no. 2 (2022): 98–108, <https://doi.org/10.30762/spiritualita.v6i2.808>.

⁷ Latifah Amin et al., 'Islamic Ethics in Governing Modern Biotechnology in Malaysia', *Proceedings of the 8th WSEAS International Conference on Education and Educational Technology*, 2009, 282–89.

⁸ Shafiullah Jan and Mehmet Asutay, *A Model for Islamic Development: An Approach in Islamic Moral Economy*, 26 July 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788116732>.

society is by altering human ethics following the divine guidance outlined in the Quran and Hadith⁹.

When dealing with the ethical issues experienced by students in the usage of generative AI, the relevance of intention should be addressed to enhance academic integrity. The thoughts of the prominent scholar, al-Ghazali, who delved into the idea of intention, can be a valuable reference in addressing this modern issue. Several solutions have been proposed to address this ethical dilemma, but thus far, there has been no perspective from Islamic ethics focusing on the thoughts of prominent Islamic scholars. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the relevance of intention, as discussed in Al-Ghazali's *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* on upholding students' integrity when using generative AI, specifically ChatGPT, focusing on university students in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research will seek to cover the following research questions because of the issue mentioned above.

1. What is the understanding of the concept of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education and its benefits, challenges, and ethical imperatives?
2. What are al-Ghazali's views of intention in moral philosophy?
3. What is the relevance of al-Ghazali's views of intention in enhancing the integrity of university students in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, in their usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)?

⁹ Mansoureh Ebrahimi and Kamaruzaman Yusoff, 'Islamic Identity, Ethical Principles and Human Values', *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 6, no. 1 (2017): 325, <https://doi.org/10.26417/ejms.v6i1.p325-336>.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following objectives will be pursued in this research.

1. To explore the understanding of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education on its benefits, challenges, and ethical imperatives.
2. To analyse al-Ghazali's views of intention from the perspectives of moral philosophy.
3. To explore the relevance of al-Ghazali's views of intention on the academic integrity of university students in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, in their utilisation of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) for learning pursuits.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study resides in exploring the continuance value of classical Islamic thought regarding current issues by pointing out how much religious ethics is still applicable to various life domains, specifically when engaging with modern technology. This paper also explores al-Ghazali's concept of intention and its applicability in enhancing academic integrity among students when using Generative AI for their educational endeavours. With an acknowledgement that refraining from using such technology in today's rapidly advancing world is impractical, and avoiding technologies would merely put us at a disadvantage. Hence, this study aims to contribute to the formulation of policies and guidelines in the educational realm within the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI) while adhering to Islamic ethics and the thoughts of the renowned Islamic scholar, al-Ghazali.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

As the title of the proposal suggests, this study focuses on applying the role of intention outlined by Al-Ghazali from his work, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, and its implications in maintaining students' integrity in utilizing Generative AI, particularly among university students in the state of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. It centres on interpreting Al-Ghazali's understanding of intention into a theoretical framework and applying it in the

utilisation of Generative AI, specifically ChatGPT, to address the decrease of academic integrity among university students when using ChatGPT. It also explores the perspectives of students and lecturers to get more insights into the effectiveness of al-Ghazali's teaching of intention in tackling the academic integrity issue.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will employ a qualitative study, and the research methodologies used are library research and field research interviews. It attempts to collect data from the available resources, particularly in the local Malaysian university libraries, online data, and official documents. The instruments used to collect data for this research were through a series of consecutive structured interviews with 5 lecturers and 5 students in universities in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, that have a connection with the focus of this research. An interview method is one of the most important qualitative approaches to data collection¹⁰. The means of interviews enables the researcher to obtain detailed and complex information that allows for a comprehensive picture of the experiences, views, and demeanour of the respondents¹¹. Interviews come in three different forms, i.e., structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. In this study, a structured interview shall be employed, which is the scheduling of questions whereby the researcher will ask each respondent the same questions in a similar manner. This is also referred to as a standardised interview, in which the questions are set in advance and are similar in wording and sequence. This approach aims to ensure that responses can be alternated and combined to align with the research aims.

The questions of the interview were designed from a theoretical framework that was made based on al-Ghazali's views of intention. The interview was first held with five student respondents from different universities in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. This study believes that the respondents' varied academic backgrounds will greatly aid this study in exploring the diverse applications of ChatGPT, as students in different fields utilize generative AI in distinct ways aligned with their specific disciplines. Therefore, the first

¹⁰ Sandy Q. Qu and John Dumay, 'The Qualitative Research Interview', *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management* 8, no. 3 (2011): 238–64, <https://doi.org/10.1108/11766091111162070>.

¹¹ Shazia Jamshed, 'Qualitative Research Method-Interviewing and Observation', *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy* 5, no. 4 (2014): 87, <https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-0105.141942>.

respondent, who was interviewed, is a student in Civil Engineering from MARA Technology University, Sabah Branch, second and third respondents are students in Biomedical Science, University Malaysia Sabah. The fourth respondent is a student of Foundation Science from University Malaysia Sabah, and the last respondent is a student of Islamic Education from MARA Technology University, Sabah Branch.

For lecturers' respondents, five lecturers from different academic backgrounds were also interviewed. The study believes that each of these lecturers will be able to provide different perspectives that could assist the application of al-Ghazali's views of intention into the use of ChatGPT and ultimately, enhancing university students' academic integrity. The first respondent is a lecturer from the Usuluddin Department of the University of Malaysia Sabah, who will represent the Islamic scholarly perspectives. The second respondent is a lecturer of Education, also from the University of Malaysia Sabah, who could offer expertise on pedagogical and developmental perspectives. The third and fourth respondents are from the Civil Engineering department of Kota Kinabalu Polytechnic. Lastly, respondent five is a lecturer of Mechanical Engineering from University Malaysia Sabah. Civil and Mechanical Engineering educators represent applied, problem-solving fields where precision, safety, and professional accountability are paramount.

The interview questions for students and lecturers were designed differently with different objectives. For students, the researcher diagnoses the presence and quality of their intention, which is derived from al-Ghazali's theoretical framework, and identifies how it manifests in their reasoning and reported behaviours in the use of ChatGPT. While lecturers' insights serve to validate the diagnostic framework externally, ground it in practical institutional challenges, and also explore their personal experiences when dealing with the use of ChatGPT by students under their supervision. Through this interview, the researcher gathered data that could help in reaching the study objective, which is the importance of applying views of intention per al-Ghazali's teaching, that could benefit the students in enhancing their academic integrity throughout their learning journey. All participants gave informed consent before their interviews; a copy of the consent form is given in Appendix A-B, and the set of interview questions for both students and lecturers respondents is in Appendix C. It is also to be noted that his study uses ChatGPT as a key case study within the wider

landscape of Generative AI, as ChatGPT is known as the first GenAI that is widely used in academic settings and is more common within universities students.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses some of the most important concepts that will be relevant to the research objective. The chapter has three major sections. The first part explores the philosophical position of Al-Ghazali and his ideas regarding moral conduct. The second examines the classical Islamic discourse of intention on ethics. The third one explores the opportunities and ethical threats of Generative AI in higher education, as well as the existing discussion of the topic in terms of academic integrity. By critically mapping these converging lines of inquiry, this chapter clarifies the theoretical gap that this study addresses, which is the absence of a principled diagnostic framework, grounded in Al-Ghazali's ethics, that enhances the ethical foundation of university students in the use of GenAI, specifically ChatGPT.

The first useful study discussing intention is “*Fenomenologi Niat: Antara al-Ghazali Dan al-Sayuthi*” (The Phenomenology of Intentions between al-Ghazali and al-Sayuthi) by Mujiburrahman¹². This study explores the Islamic understanding of intention and its importance in the religious life of Muslims in two ways, through the works of Al-Ghazali and al-Sayuthi. Al-Sayuthi treats intention as a reaction to *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). He describes intention as the will towards an act to receive the pleasure of Allah as well as to receive his command. Al-Sayuthi does not comment on the sincerity but writes about the legal decisions of the intention, unlike al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali, however, presented a more detailed perspective of intention. He classifies human activity into three, namely obedience, disobedience, and neutrality, and highlights the importance of intention in the process of gauging the morality of an activity. Al-Ghazali also emphasises the power of intention: a good intention can raise a neutral act to an obedient act, and vice versa. Nevertheless, even though there is this difference, both views on intentions suggest that Muslims, being believers, are in quest

¹² Mujiburrahman Mujiburrahman, ‘Fenomenologi Niat: Antara al-Ghazali Dan al-Sayuthi’, *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, ahead of print, December 2011, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v1i2.20>.

to consecrate their speech and deeds based on their intentions, in this regard, which is one of the main rules of the Muslim faith.

Yet another work on the concept of intention, discussing al-Ghazali's thought with an alternate viewpoint, is *Modelling the Idea of Intention of al-Ghazali and Comparative Review with the Modern Theory of Planned Behaviour* by Ridzuan bin Masri, Layla Ahmed Salem AlMashjari, Mohd Faizal Yusof, Siti Haryani bt Mat Yusoff and Nur Zulaikha Bt Mohamed¹³. Based on this study, the contrast between al-Ghazali's notion of intention and TPB is in the factors determining intentions. Al-Ghazali emphasises knowledge as the main factor affecting intention, while TPB highlights perceived behavioural control as a primary predictor. A further aspect of al-Ghazali's treatment of intention is not merely cognitive but also religious and spiritual. In contrast, TPB is more inclined towards individual motivation and decision-making. But the two theories do not ignore the role of intentions in determining an individual's behaviour. The two sources above are quite useful for offering a detailed discussion of the understanding of intention across spiritual, historical, and psychological perspectives. These works, however, provided no debate on the current issues this study seeks to investigate, namely, how intention can be used to help students, with the help of Generative AI, to facilitate academic integrity.

Another related study is the article, *Elements of Integrity within Muslim Individuals According to the Thought of Al-Ghazali* by Mohd Hasrul Shuhari, Mohd Fauzi Hamat, Mohd Sani bin Ismail, Yusrina Jaffar, Mohd Fadhil Mustafa and Mohd Shaifulbahri Bin Abdullah¹⁴. It is also connected to this study as it addresses key elements necessary to make an individual embody perfect integrity as a Muslim from the perspectives of al-Ghazali. This work emphasises the importance of being an individual with integrity, which is defined as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary¹⁵ Integrity refers to truthfulness, righteousness, sincerity, incorruptibility, and wholeness. Academic

¹³ Ridzuan Masri et al., 'Modelling the Idea of Intention of Al-Ghazali and Comparative Review with Modern Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).', *Journal of Namibian Studies* Vol 33 (January 2023): 2696.

¹⁴ Mohd Hasrul Shuhari et al., 'Elements of Integrity within Muslim Individuals According to the Thought of Al-Ghazali', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 8, no. 10 (2018): Pages 270-278, <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v8-i10/4732>.

¹⁵ Merriam-Webster.Com Dictionary, s.v. "Integrity," accessed 14 October 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integrity>.

integrity in the context of this paper means a commitment to six fundamental values, including honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage¹⁶. Nonetheless, this study falls short in addressing the significant role of intention in the education realm. To facilitate student integrity, the need to emphasise the significance of having clear intentions in the academic life of the student must be pointed out. Misusing Generative AI platforms not only reflects the lack of sincerity in students' ways of utilisation but also constitutes a form of corruption, potentially leading to academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, and ethical issues in their educational pursuits. Hence, to enhance their academic integrity, students need first to develop aspects of integrity. According to al-Ghazali, such behaviour is the element of *al-Sidq* (truthfulness), *al-Amānah* (performing trusts), and *al-Mas'ūliyyah* (responsibility) that are needed as a Muslim.

The other analytical work that can be referred to by another scholar to gain more insight into intention is by Abdullah Draz on his work entitled, *Dustūr al-Akhlāq fī'l-Qur'ān*, translated by Danielle Robinson and Rebecca Masterton as, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*¹⁷. This book explores the moral teachings and principles found within the Qur'an and provides a valuable resource for understanding the ethical framework of Islam, as well as the discussion on intention in chapter four. Draz underlines that it is the intention behind an action that predetermines its moral value, and the good intention can help to change an otherwise morally neutral action into a morally good action. In his opinion, Islamic ethics has various kinds of intentions, such as innocent intention, good intention, mixed intention, and bad intention. Innocent intention is characterised by its purity, free from any hidden motives, reflecting a sincere desire to perform good deeds and please God. Good intentions, while still pure, may be driven by a desire for personal gain or recognition. Nevertheless, the primary motivation remains centred on doing good and seeking God's pleasure. Mixed intention involves a combination of both virtuous and questionable motives. For example, a person can be involved in volunteering to assist someone but still wants to be appreciated or rewarded. Although the act is regarded as a virtue, the presence of mixed motives can undermine the morality of the act. The bad intention is characterised by the wish to do something harmful or do

¹⁶ Damian Okaibedi Eke, 'ChatGPT and the Rise of Generative AI: Threat to Academic Integrity?', *Journal of Responsible Technology* 13 (April 2023): 100060, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrt.2023.100060>.

¹⁷ Muḥammad 'Abdallah Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, trans. Danielle Robinson and Rebecca Masterton, London Qu'ran Studies Series 3 (Tauris, 2008).

immoral things. It is considered a sin, and it may lead to adverse outcomes. Thus, this helps in understanding the classification intentions of the student when using Generative AI for their educational purposes. This book serves as an insightful classical thought of Islam that is still relevant to be used for contemporary issues.

Another useful publication by the renowned Sheikh al-Zarnuji is entitled “*Ta’līm al-Muta’allim Ṭarīqat al-Ta’allum*” or also known as “*Instruction of the Students: The Method of Learning*,” translated by G.E. Von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel¹⁸. This book was composed to straighten the manners in achieving knowledge, and it has three main elements of discussion, which are the foundation of learning, modes of learning, and principles of learning. In the context of this study, Zarnuji emphasises the role of intention in the process of learning. According to him, intention serves as the foundation of every action, including an aspiration of learning. A good and sincere purpose would have a significant influence on the life of a person and would transform the simplest act into something meaningful for the afterlife. As an example, a learner is expected to have a desire to discover knowledge with the aim of gaining the pleasure of Allah, and it must not be solely for getting worldly pleasures but also include considerations for the afterlife and the well-being of the community. Consequently, with the correct intention, the approach adopted by learners in acquiring knowledge will naturally be righteous and truthful. A secondary work entitled “*Niat Dalam Mencari Ilmu*” (*Intention in Seeking Knowledge*)¹⁹ by Izzuddin Musthafa, Ateng Rohendi, Mada Sumringah Sari, Cucu Komariah and Nadia Kurnia Fauziah, which employed the book by Zarnuji as its primary source, also serves as a good remark in understanding the intention in the context of learning; however, neither book touched the main contemporary issues that this study is aiming to explore, which is the functions of intention in university students’ utilisation of Generative AI in their learning pursuits.

When mentioning Generative AI, the best-known platform in the field is ChatGPT. Despite the fact that it has only emerged last November 2022, there are already numerous sources with references related to it, and one of them is the article

¹⁸ Burhan al-Din Zarnuji, *Instruction of the Student: The Method of Learning*, 2nd edn, trans. Gustave Edmund Grunebaum and Theodora Mead Abel (Starlatch Press, n.d.), accessed 14 October 2025, https://books.google.com/books/about/Instruction_of_the_Student.html?id=YdyHPwAACAAJ.

¹⁹ Izzuddin Musthafa et al., ‘Niat Dalam Mencari Ilmu (Studi Dalam Kitab Ta’līm al-Muta’allim Ṭarīqat al-Ta’allum Karya al-Zarnuji)’, *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research* 4, no. 1 (2024): 576–87, <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i1.7939>.

titled *Use of ChatGPT in Academia: Academic Integrity Hangs in the Balance* by Saeed A. Bin-Nashwan, Mouad Sadallah and Mohamed Bouteraa²⁰. The study aims to gain insight into the motivations behind academics and researchers adopting ChatGPT in their practice, and how their academic integrity determines their adoption attitude toward ChatGPT. The study found that academic integrity plays a moderating role in shaping the usage of ChatGPT in academia. It was observed that the higher the academic integrity among academics, the lower their usage of ChatGPT in their work. This indicates that the higher the academic integrity, the less those individuals are expected to use ChatGPT in academic practices. The main aspects that predetermine the adoption behaviour of ChatGPT among researchers are the time-saving opportunity that this platform provides, academic self-esteem, academic self-efficacy, and perceived stress, as it is regarded as a tool that can be used in coping with stress and workload pressure. Nevertheless, there may be certain ethical concerns regarding the use of this platform, which disputes the quality of academic integrity that it generates. Hence, this work has proposed that sensitisation programs should be organised by the relevant bodies to create rules for ethically utilising AI chatbots in academic and research purposes. It also underscored the need to educate academic staff and researchers about the limitations of ChatGPT and the necessity for explicit research ethics around authorship regarding AI language models in writing. This research proves useful as it provides a balanced overview of the strengths and weaknesses of ChatGPT, offering a way for researchers to moderate their use. However, the advice it offered is mostly oriented to technical issues, which ultimately reflect the need for an in-depth study that elaborates on the incorporation of Islamic ethics and values, particularly the initial intention of using ChatGPT, which lacks discussion in this paper.

The article that is closest to this research study is one titled *Determinants of Intention to Use ChatGPT for Educational Purposes: Findings from PLS-SEM and fsQCA* by Behzad Foroughi, Senali Madugoda Gunaratnege, Mohammad Iranmanesh, Ahmad Khanfar, Morteza Ghobakhloo, Nagaletchimee Annamalai and Bitu Naghmeh

²⁰ Saeed Awadh Bin-Nashwan et al., 'Use of ChatGPT in Academia: Academic Integrity Hangs in the Balance', *Technology in Society* 75 (November 2023): 102370, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2023.102370>.

Abbaspour²¹. This study aims to understand the factors influencing students' intentions to use ChatGPT for educational purposes, which involved 406 Malaysian students. This study found that various factors define intention to use ChatGPT in learning activities by students, and it is also remarkable that personal innovativeness and accuracy of information can lead to negative mediators between the students and ChatGPT, which could prevent the intention of the students to use ChatGPT in learning activities. Personal innovativeness is the inquisitiveness, willingness to be complex, and to explore new achievements of a person. This implies that students who have low innovation might be less inclined to use ChatGPT. The next factor is the information accuracy, which is the accuracy of the information provided by ChatGPT, and students have a lower likelihood of using ChatGPT when they consider their information to be inaccurate. Although the work offers thorough sources regarding the main influential issue among the students on the intention to use ChatGPT, the study itself does not go deeper into the very subject of the intention, especially in the philosophical and spiritual sense, which is the target of our research.

An excellent study that is worth mentioning entitled, “برنامج تربوي قائم على التأصيل ” (An Educational Program Based on Islamic Rooting to Develop Moral Awareness Among Al-Azhar University Students to Confront the Risks of Artificial Intelligence) by Khalafani and Al-Matwalli²². The authors developed their study around a comprehensive framework that merges Western moral awareness models with Islamic ethics. They further rooted the concept of moral awareness in Islamic sources, emphasizing that Islamic civilization is fundamentally ethical in its aims and practices. Hence, affirming that the Islamic ethical framework for AI must be derived from three foundational sources, which are *'aqidah*, *Sharia*, and *akhlāq*. The study also discussed the benefits of using ChatGPT in education, noting that when applied correctly, it can improve efficiency and reduce costs, automate conversations, create answers, and support independent learning. Therefore, they propose that the fundamental values that

²¹ Behzad Foroughi et al., ‘Determinants of Intention to Use ChatGPT for Educational Purposes: Findings from PLS-SEM and fsQCA’, *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, 1 September 2024, world, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10447318.2023.2226495>.

²² Muhammad 'Abd Al-Nabi Ahmad Al-Matwalli and Muhammad Muhammad 'Ala 'Ali Khalafani, “برنامج تربوي قائم على التأصيل الإسلامي لتنمية الوعي الأخلاقي لدى طلاب جامعة الأزهر لمواجهة مخاطر الذكاء الاصطناعي”, *مجلة كلية التربية بالمنصورة*, 2024, https://maed.journals.ekb.eg/article_441325_ae9dabbed900ec351ccf3f6aa9b3652f.pdf.

should be upheld in the use of AI, particularly ChatGPT, include God-consciousness (*taqwā*), human dignity, privacy, truthfulness, transparency, justice, fairness, responsibility, and accountability. However, while these values are stated, the authors fail to mention the crucial role of intention behind these values, which the current study aims to address.

A paper by Thi Thuy An Ngo, *The Perception by University Students of the Use of ChatGPT in Education*²³, is another helpful piece of work concerning ChatGPT. The research was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. A questionnaire was distributed to 200 students via online survey, and to ensure the questionnaire's reliability, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 30 responses. The research determined a general positive attitude towards the use of ChatGPT in learning among the students, but they also suffered various hiccups, including failure to evaluate the quality and reliability of sources, source referencing, and technological dependence. Improving the reliability of ChatGPT results by checking them against credible sources, applying ChatGPT as a reference source or consultant tool, providing ChatGPT use guidelines, and encouraging academic honesty among students are just some of the potential solutions proposed by the study. The paper is a good asset in the analysis of the attitude of students towards ChatGPT. The other article that similarly presents a discussion similar to this paper is, “*A Friend or A Foe - Determining Factors Contributed to the Use of ChatGPT among University Students*” by Wang Yifan, Yang Mengmeng and Muhd Khaizer Omar²⁴. This study provided the benefits and also the potential drawbacks of using ChatGPT, one valuable input from this study is, it discovers that the frequency of using ChatGPT for learning is consistent among students with diverse academic backgrounds. Hence, it is necessary to tie the purpose of the usage of ChatGPT by students to more general spiritual values. For example, students may set the intention to seek knowledge not just for academic achievement but as a means of personal growth, contributing positively to society, and fulfilling a sense of purpose in line with Islamic beliefs. At that, students are likely to develop a conscious

²³ Thi Thuy An Ngo, ‘The Perception by University Students of the Use of ChatGPT in Education’, *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)* 18, no. 17 (2023): 4–19, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v18i17.39019>.

²⁴ Wang Yifan et al., “‘A Friend or A Foe’ Determining Factors Contributed to the Use of ChatGPT among University Students’, *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 12, no. 2 (2023): Pages 2184-2201, <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i2/17400>.

attitude towards the application of ChatGPT and be ethical in its utilisation. Hence, the two studies lack the inclusion of Islamic ethical values, which is crucial, especially in the realm of education.

When it comes to the application of ChatGPT in the educational context, it is clear that it is a problem that implies the engagement of both students and teachers. With a population of one-third of students being detected from a survey using ChatGPT for their academic tasks during the 2022-2023 academic year, a question arose on the role of teachers regarding this matter. An article by Yi Lin, Yunzhu Long and Lingbin Zhou, on “*The Impact of ChatGPT on University Teacher-Student Interactions*”²⁵ discusses the potential benefits and drawbacks of using ChatGPT, an AI language model, in teacher-student communication. Although it could provide convenience and resources, it could also complicate the teacher-student communication, undermine the emotional bond between teachers and students, and bring about the problem of distrust between them. Therefore, it is important to establish an effective evaluation mechanism and strengthen interaction and communication between teachers and students to avoid ChatGPT replacing the role of the teacher. A study has shown that intention plays a crucial role in learning outcomes. Students who have a sincere and strong intention to learn are more likely to engage in deep learning strategies²⁶. Therefore, in this case, educators come into place to nurture the intention to learn among students and motivate students to have meaningful learning objectives. This means that one should get to know how intention plays a part in learning since, according to Islam, everything is considered *‘ibādah* (worship), and it is necessary to make intention before performing any act of worship²⁷.

The other valuable source of reference on Generative AI in education and its connection can be found in a study by Cecilia Ka Yuk Chan, titled “*A Comprehensive AI Policy Education Framework in University Teaching and Learning*.”²⁸ The research

²⁵ Yi Lin et al., ‘The Impact of ChatGPT on University Teacher-Student Interactions’, *Proceedings of the International Conference on Global Politics and Socio-Humanities* (2023): 197–204, <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/24/20230703>.

²⁶ Badran Benlahcene, ‘The Moral Value System in The Qur’an: An Analysis of Draz’s Contribution’, *İdrak Dini Araştırmalar Dergisi* Vol 3, no. 1 (2023): 58–84.

²⁷ Zarnuji, *Instruction of the Student: The Method of Learning*.

²⁸ Cecilia Chan, ‘A Comprehensive AI Policy Education Framework for University Teaching and Learning’, *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 20 (July 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00408-3>.

gathered information from students and educators across various disciplines in Hong Kong universities to present an all-encompassing education framework of AI policies. The frameworks that are suggested by the study include, among others, the training of students and teachers on how best to use and integrate the generative AI technologies into their teaching and learning processes, incorporating AI technologies as supplementary tools to assist teachers and students, rather than as replacements for human interaction, and developing policies and guidelines related to the ethical use and how to mitigate risks of the technologies. These curricular models are sound principles used in learning. But the research does not do a thorough analysis of the long-term viability of these structures, particularly in regard to the continuous development of AI. Therefore, this is where the implementation of Islamic ethics that define the use of Generative AI by students comes in. This paper intends to use intentionality as a concept in the teachings of al-Ghazali and apply it to the interaction of students with the Generative AI that will further guarantee the integrity of students in using this platform.

In the topic of this study, several studies have been conducted on the views of al-Ghazali on intention and the application of ChatGPT by students. Nonetheless, the two works remain distinct, since there is no research that can be found to prove any linkage between the two so far. Hence, this research is needed to explore al-Ghazali's perspective in depth on the role of intention within an educational context. It will endeavour to examine the applicability of al-Ghazali's perception of intention in the integrity of using ChatGPT. It also aims to explore the implications of al-Ghazali's teachings of intention on students' academic integrity in the utilisation of ChatGPT in their learning pursuits. Therefore, it is expected that this research will provide a thorough comprehension of these aspects, ultimately accomplishing the objectives of improving academic integrity in alignment with the principles outlined in Islam, and to demonstrate the applicability of the application of classical Islamic thought of one of the recognised Islamic scholars, al-Ghazali, in the resolution of a contemporary problem.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND THE ETHICAL IMPERATIVE.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of artificial intelligence (AI) is growing significantly nowadays. Alan Turing, who is considered to be the father of AI, was the first to introduce the idea of AI. The theory of computation, along with the Turing Test proposed by Turing in 1950, was proposed to identify whether a machine can behave in an intelligent way that cannot be easily distinguished from the behaviour of a human being. The desire to make machines similar to human intelligence has been a dream of humans. This was not simply to copy human behaviour, but to work on making machines with multi-faceted and richer behavioural presentations¹. These machines were made with high expectations and exalted intelligence. Although AI has been improving and evolving extremely fast, the artificially intelligent system has not yet met the exorbitantly high expectations set concerning its abilities. In the years 1967 to 1970, AI experienced a stagnant phase, and it recovered again in the 1980s, as part of the large-scale projects and applied problem-solving.

To this day, AI has developed with exceptional dexterity, which has led to the development of Machine Learning (ML), a subdivision of AI. ML applies algorithms to analyse big data, gain knowledge, and make sound decisions. The more data these algorithms operate on, the better the result is, and the more successful and precise models they will produce. Nevertheless, AI is still not capable of simulating human behaviour completely. AI is devoid of emotional enhancement, consciousness, and moralistic reasoning, the constituents of human beings. Although it is possible to make AI simulate emotional reactions when using text, the AI lacks the experience and emotional insight that people need in order to be truly empathetic. Here, as an example, it may be possible to analyse and understand emotional cues with the help of complex

¹ Saeideh Sayari et al., 'Image of God and Image of Human Being: A Philosophical Investigation of the God-Human and Human-Machine Relationships', *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 8, no. 3 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2019-0015>.

algorithms, but AI does not have the experience and emotional background that could allow it to feel empathy². Also, AI has no ability to think morally as people do, and this choice is the consequence of a complicated combination of cultural, social, and personal aspects³. This highlights the intrinsic shortcomings of AI in comprehending and negotiating morality, which is the key to human communication and social operation.

In this larger context, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) as a potent tool has already been introduced, which exploits the capabilities of Machine Learning to autonomously create content through prompting in natural language. Compared to simple data curation, GenAI can generate totally new content based on the existing data, and it provides the unparalleled level of creativity. ChatGPT, in turn, is one of the intelligent systems falling under GenAI, and they have the ability to respond in detail to the instructions given by the user. It has been used in different ways such as machine translating multilingual messages, writing stories, debugging some codes and participating in an extended dialogue.

GenAI, like any other technology holding AI under its umbrella, is a two-sided sword despite its radical potential, and education and research are no exceptions in this scenario. Although it can ensure the sources are well integrated to come up with coherent responses, it tends to be inaccurate, and this poses a question on whether it can be considered a reliable learning instrument. A recent study emphasises the need to improve how university students engage with AI, from philosophical discussions to practical applications, ensuring they use technologies like ChatGPT both confidently and responsibly in their future careers⁴.

The most important concept used to edge out the battle of the use of AI is intention, which has profound implications for the ethical use of these technologies. Technologically mediated action is based on intention, as are all human actions. In

² Yukun Zhao et al., 'Risk and Prosocial Behavioural Cues Elicit Human-like Response Patterns from AI Chatbots', *Scientific Reports* 14, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-55949-y>.

³ Camilo M. Signorelli and Xerxes D. Arsiwalla, 'Moral Dilemmas for Artificial Intelligence: A Position Paper on an Application of Compositional Quantum Cognition', in *Quantum Interaction*, vol. 11690, ed. Bob Coecke and Ariane Lambert-Mogiliansky, Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Springer International Publishing, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35895-2_9.

⁴ Cristina Almaraz-López et al., 'Comparative Study of the Attitudes and Perceptions of University Students in Business Administration and Management and in Education toward Artificial Intelligence', *Education Sciences* 13, no. 6 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13060609>.

philosophy, intention does not entail only the final state of an action but the inner mental and moral driving forces of human behaviour. It is believed to be even more essential than the actions themselves since it determines behaviour and regulates actions.

Within that scope, the proposed study presupposes the investigation of how the notion of intention can be applied in terms of using Generative AI, in particular, instruments such as ChatGPT, among students at the university level. Investigating the philosophy of the intention as proposed by al-Ghazali, this paper aims to comprehend how balancing the employment of GenAI with the moral prescription of intention can raise academic integrity and credibility. Al-Ghazali, one of the most renowned Islamic philosophers, regarded intention as one of the key factors of human action. He thought that the moral value of any action is the purity of the intention of the actor, regardless of the results or consequences. In contrast to other philosophical approaches that can put more emphasis on outer deeds or outcomes, the approach of al-Ghazali puts more emphasis on the inner moral position and spiritual will as the central element of ethical conduct. This view presents a distinctive outline of handling any ethical issues that may be implied by the application of GenAI in educational institutions.

Al-Ghazali has a greater holistic and spiritual approach than other intellectuals, who one might consider when ethical implications of emerging technologies, such as AI, are concerned, such as Immanuel Kant, who focused on duty and moral law. This study intends to inform by introducing his theory of intention to the application of Generative AI as a way of ensuring that students use these tools in a manner that is more ethical, responsible, and morally acceptable, whether in accordance with both the principles of academic integrity and *Sharia*.

The chapter will start with full coverage of the concept of Artificial Intelligence, its advantages, issues, and its uses in education, and then will explore the service this intent provides in developing responsible use of AI.

2.2 THE DEFINITION OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

2.2.1 Brief Introduction to Artificial Intelligence

Although they are not always obvious, various spheres of our everyday life are based on the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Indicatively, smartphone facial recognition technology is adopted with the use of AI, which unlocks mobile phones by comparing facial scans against stored data. Likewise, our social media feeds are customised according to what we like through an AI algorithm. The AIs used in chatbots such as ChatGPT and Perplexity in particular relevance to this study. Such applications can carry out various functions, providing practical advantages in the educational sphere, in particular to students at the university. The Encyclopaedia Britannica describes Artificial Intelligence as the capacity of a digital computer, or a robot that is under computer control, to undertake cognisant tasks that entail intelligent work. This definition is rather generalised and does not elaborate on the nature of tasks or intellectual processes that AI can accomplish. The other definition, as provided by the United Nations, is that AI is the process of machines simulating intelligent human behaviour. This can be done by involving a number of cognitive activities, which could include sensing, processing oral language, reasoning, learning, making a choice, and expressing an aptitude to manipulate objects accordingly. This characteristic task description takes us partly closer to the definition of what AI is. This definition, however, and all other definitions, nevertheless, possess their limitations as AI, after all, remains a mere imitation or simulation thereof, namely, human intelligence.

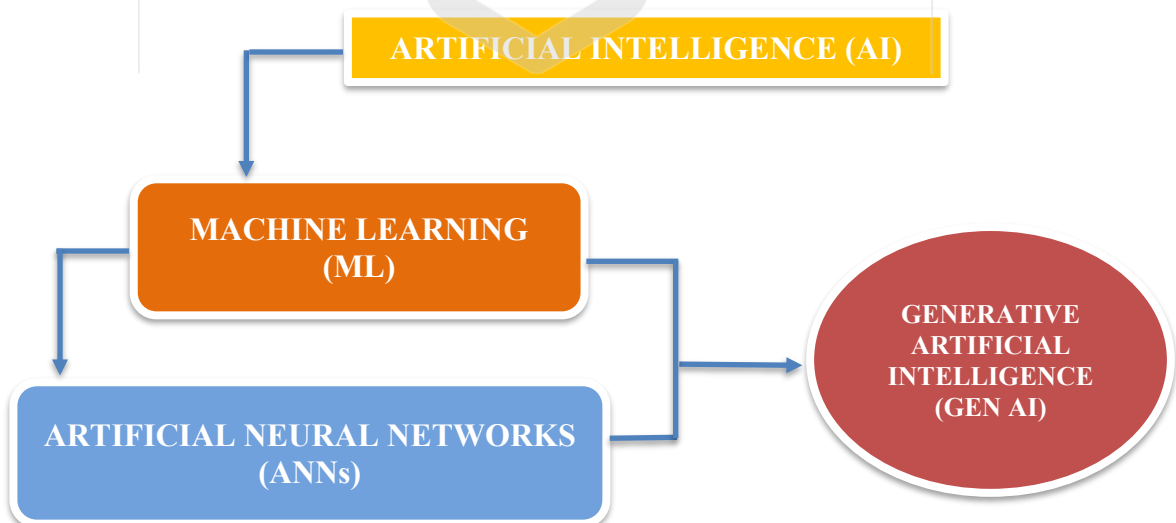
Indeed, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a good asset in multiple domains and is useful in aspects of our lives, including healthcare, transport, entertainment, media, the food and beverage sector, and even work and education. The vision of AI was once reserved for TVs and the internet, and now it has undergone changes and can be found in all spheres of our lives. The evolution of AI has experienced both an upsurge and a degradation since it began in the year 1950. Three stages of AI development have been documented. The current phase is the third wave, where AI is considered a partner to humans, rather than merely a tool for carrying out activities⁵.

⁵ Niklas Humble and Peter Mozelius, 'The Threat, Hype, and Promise of Artificial Intelligence in Education', *Discover Artificial Intelligence* 2, no. 1 (2022): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44163-022-00039-z>.

2.2.2 Introduction to Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

The remarkable development of Artificial Intelligence in the education field is particularly evident through the evolution of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). GenAI is a type of AI that creates images, text, videos, and other media in response to input prompts. It is trained on data collected from webpages, social media conversations, and other online sources. GenAI generates content by statistically analyzing the distribution of words and identifying common patterns to replicate them. While it can produce new content, GenAI cannot generate new ideas or solutions to real-world problems because it lacks an understanding of real-world objects or the social relations that underpin language.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is a subset of Machine Learning (ML), which in turn is a subset of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Machine Learning focuses on developing computer algorithms that improve automatically through experience and by utilising data. This allows computers to learn from data and make decisions or predictions without explicit programming. Another subset of ML is Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs), which are inspired by the structure and functioning of the human brain. For instance, facial recognition technology in smartphones and other applications is powered by Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs). Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) are two of the four techniques used in Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). The other two techniques are Text Generative AI and Image Generative AI.



Despite its earlier development, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) gained widespread recognition only with the introduction of ChatGPT, the first user-friendly GenAI tool made widely available to the public. Following ChatGPT, several other GenAI applications emerged, offering significant benefits in the academic field by providing unlimited access to researchers and students worldwide. Notable examples include Perplexity, a conversational search engine that answers queries using natural language predictive text and sources from the web, and Notion AI, an AI-powered text generator and editor integrated into the Notion app, which enhances user experience by efficiently generating and editing text within the platform, and many more such applications continue to emerge.

2.2.3 Brief Overview of Generative Artificial Intelligence Application (ChatGPT)

ChatGPT, a powerful AI chatbot that was built by OpenAI, a non-profit organisation, was initially launched as a prototype on 30 November 2022 and became available to the public on 30 January 2023⁶. According to the data compiled by UBS, ChatGPT is on track to surpass 100 million monthly active users in just two months after its launch, which would make it the fastest-growing consumer application in history⁷. In March 2023, OpenAI launched GPT-4 to ChatGPT Plus subscribers, making ChatGPT much more powerful. This novel model has an advantage in dealing with complicated tasks and creates more precise information, has fewer hallucinations, can respond less to sensitive requests, and produces prohibited content⁸. However, the free edition of ChatGPT is also better in some ways. It has been in existence longer, is free to use and it has enough capabilities that many tasks can be performed with, especially when being used by a student.

In January 2023, Microsoft achieved a major breakthrough in the history of ChatGPT, stating that the company planned to work in cooperation with OpenAI, which

⁶ Konstantinos I. Roumeliotis and Nikolaos D. Tselikas, 'ChatGPT and Open-AI Models: A Preliminary Review', *Future Internet* 15, no. 6 (2023): 2, <https://doi.org/10.3390/fi15060192>.

⁷ Garfinkle, 'ChatGPT's on Track to Surpass 100 Million Monthly Users Faster than TikTok or Instagram: UBS', Yahoo Finance, 2 February 2023, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/chatgpt-on-track-to-surpass-100-million-users-faster-than-tiktok-or-instagram-ubs-214423357.html>.

⁸ Partha Pratim Ray, 'ChatGPT: A Comprehensive Review on Background, Applications, Key Challenges, Bias, Ethics, Limitations, and Future Scope', *Internet of Things and Cyber-Physical Systems* 3 (2023): 121–54, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iotcps.2023.04.003>.

developed ChatGPT. It is a multipurpose chatbot that is being integrated into a few search engines and deployed across significant collections of productivity services (including Microsoft Word and Excel), as well as additional places of educational application⁹. The company stated that it will introduce an AI Co-pilot capability, which will be used to help users with editing, summarizing, creating, and comparing documents. This type of integration implies that one can now use the capabilities of ChatGPT within Microsoft applications without necessarily having to go to the ChatGPT site.

2.3 THE IMPACT OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (CHATGPT) IN THE ACADEMIC FIELD

2.3.1 The Benefits of ChatGPT

Since it is a very influential tool with a lot of users, especially students, it is reasonable to consider the potential and advantages of using it. As statistics have shown, students and young adults are a big percentage of the user base of ChatGPT, who often use the tool to do their assignments and work. This chapter will explore the benefits of ChatGPT in the academic sector, especially for university students.

ChatGPT is an intelligent chatbot that can respond to prompts with detailed responses to instructions provided in prompts. It knows many instructions, both written and pictorial, of human beings and generates answers based on interactive communication. The given language model is the most popular in content generation and can also complete other tasks, detecting photos, matching, translating, rewriting, and those that need an excellent understanding of the intent or visual comprehension, such as sorting outputs to lists and captioning a picture¹⁰. The performance at the level of a human can be so close to talking to a peer that when discussing ChatGPT, it is possible to say it performs almost as well as discussing the topic with another human

⁹ Samantha Murphy Kelly, 'Microsoft Is Bringing ChatGPT Technology to Word, Excel and Outlook | CNN Business', CNN, 16 March 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/16/tech/openai-gpt-microsoft-365>.

¹⁰ Walid Hariri, 'Unlocking the Potential of ChatGPT: A Comprehensive Exploration of Its Applications, Advantages, Limitations, and Future Directions in Natural Language Processing', *Badji Mokhtar University*, April 2024, <https://arxiv.org/html/2304.02017v10#S5>.

being and involves making suggestions about ways to enhance the situation and rather similarly had to admit its errors.

Thus, ChatGPT is a perfect online learning assistant for students with such opportunities. Its ability to create content helps the students brainstorm about research and assignments. When used in the proper context, the potential of ChatGPT can exceed expectations and provide additional advantages to its users. ChatGPT can also be used by students as a personal tutor to receive feedback and answers regarding their own studies. ChatGPT is one of the resources that help students, considering it is versatile and has unrestricted access to data in different educational areas. Several researchers have embarked on the investigation of ChatGPT and its vast functions. As an example, a University of Georgia professor organised research, during which ChatGPT was tested to help come up with ideas and write an academic paper entitled Artificial Intelligence for Education. According to the professor, the paper only needed slight editing and restructuring by him¹¹. This shows that this new AI tool has great potential to assist researchers in their brainstorming of ideas on how to compose research papers.

Nonetheless, one should remember that the content provided by ChatGPT should not be trusted without a second opinion. Although it may help individuals create valuable text and apparently viable output, not all of them are that simple. Sometimes the prompt can be repeated several times before they reach the desired output. ChatGPT is simple to use with a high level of accessibility, but a high level of sophistication and dependability cannot be obtained without human knowledge. Hence, UNESCO has provided measures for provoking GenAI. These involve the use of everyday, easy-to-understand language and giving examples to exemplify the required reply or structure¹². Also, context plays a vital role in coming up with relevant and meaningful completions. It is of the essence to refine and repeat where and when necessary, through experimentation with different alternatives and, above all, be ethical by ensuring that prompts do not lead to inappropriate, biased, and harmful completions.

¹¹ Xiaoming Zhai, 'ChatGPT User Experience: Implications for Education', *SSRN Electronic Journal*, ahead of print, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4312418>.

¹² Fengchun Miao, *Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research*, with Stefania Giannini and Wayne Holmes (UNESCO, 2023).

2.3.2 The Ethical Challenges of ChatGPT for Academic Integrity

As in the case of any other technology, ChatGPT has advantages and disadvantages. Although it contains an interesting selection of fast and diverse answers, there are certain implicit restrictions to it. Its developer, OpenAI, admits that this is true, claiming that ChatGPT's writing sometimes sounds believable and sometimes gives incorrect or nonsensical responses¹³. The present paper is going to examine these issues more specifically and illuminate the reasons why using ChatGPT results in some challenges among students of the university.

2.3.2.1 Factual Errors of ChatGPT and Its 'Hallucination' Results

Although ChatGPT is able to unify several sources and come up with fluent responses, it is often characterised by one disadvantage: the responses it offers are often full of errors. This problem may be explained by the nature of ChatGPT to produce information that is fictitious, which is referred to as data hallucination¹⁴. The hallucination is due to the inaccuracy and noise of the training data in its system. ChatGPT technology, namely Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) cited above, tends to be referred to as black boxes, whose mechanisms behind their functionality are usually kept secret, which means that they cannot be inspected¹⁵. Consequently, this means that ANNs are opaque and do not have an explanation of any sort, and it is also not certain how their results were arrived at. This is a weakness in the transparency of ChatGPT, as it is prone to producing false or misleading information, as the system is not transparent. Another fact that OpenAI accepts is that ChatGPT is more prone to hallucinations.

ChatGPT is still not a completely reliable tool (it hallucinates facts and commits logic errors). One should exercise great caution when relying on the outputs of language models, especially in high-stakes situations, and the specific protocol (e.g., human review, grounding with more context, avoiding high-stakes applications) should be

¹³ OpenAI, 'Introducing ChatGPT', OpenAI, 13 March 2024, <https://openai.com/index/chatgpt/>.

¹⁴ Tianyu Wu et al., 'A Brief Overview of ChatGPT: The History, Status Quo and Potential Future Development', *IEEE/CAA Journal of Automatica Sinica* 10, no. 5 (2023): 1122–36, <https://doi.org/10.1109/JAS.2023.123618>.

¹⁵ Miao, *Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research*, 16.

chosen based on the demands of a particular use case¹⁶. This is something to be willingly taken into account as evidence and advice to be very careful with ChatGPT. Although the content that has been generated might sound credible, there are usually mistakes that could go unnoticed unless the user has good knowledge of the matter at hand.

2.3.2.2 Over-Reliance on ChatGPT

It is understandable that chatbots like ChatGPT, with their impressive functionality and a broad range of knowledge, end up being used regularly by students. The proportionality of the use of ChatGPT was measured in a survey conducted on students in the United Kingdom, relating to their university subjects¹⁷. At the top of the list were students belonging to Digital Law; almost three-quarters (72%) of them reported using ChatGPT in their studies. Right behind, 68% of students in Psychology, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and English can also confirm using ChatGPT for academic work. Even though the gap between the first and second groups is minimal, it is evident that ChatGPT is used extensively and is significantly utilised by students in brainstorming ideas and writing assignments, not to mention the fact that they use it to prepare for their exams.

2.3.2.3 Loss of Critical Thinking Skills

Study shows that due to ChatGPT's numerous functions and reliability, there is a reduction in students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are both essential in their learning process¹⁸. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary¹⁹ Critical thinking is the process or act of thinking critically (with prudence in applying reason and doubting assumptions) so as to solve problems, to evaluate

¹⁶ Desiree Cranfield et al., 'Using ChatGPT to Investigate Trends in Digital Storytelling and Knowledge Sharing in Higher Education', July 2023, 4217–25, <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2023.1119>.

¹⁷ Matt Williams, *32% of University Students Admit to Using ChatGPT Weekly - MVPro Media*, News, 31 October 2023, <https://mvpromedia.com/32-of-university-students-admit-to-using-chatgpt-weekly/>.

¹⁸ Muhammad Dedad Fajarsodiq Akastangga et al., 'The Impact of ChatGPT on the Critical Thinking Ability of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Students', *MATRIX: Jurnal Manajemen Teknologi Dan Informatika* 13, no. 3 (2023): 157–65, <https://doi.org/10.31940/matrix.v13i3.157-165>.

¹⁹ *Merriam-Webster.Com Dictionary*, s.v. "Critical Thinking," 11 October 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/critical+thinking>.

information, to uncover biases, and so forth. In this definition, critical thinking has been underlined to mean having doubts and justifying information by appraising the information based on solid evidence and facts. The other view is that the ability to think critically implies that one is in a position to think actively and sustainably. It entails making good in-depth investigations by means of thinking and reflection processes to come up with sound, accurate, and impactful conclusions. ChatGPT should be used as a tool to support learning, rather than a replacement for traditional methods of learning and critical thinking. During the process of using ChatGPT, students are advised to be critical and investigate the sources, analyzing their credibility. The loss of critical thinking skills implies the loss of academic integrity since critical thinking involves academic integrity. Without the ability to develop critical thinking skills, students will tend to commit academic vices and interfere with the values of honesty, fairness, and responsibility on which academic integrity is founded.

2.3.2.4 Loss of Academic Integrity

This brings in another negative scenario of ChatGPT that is a risk to the academic honesty of the students. Academic and educational integrity is based on the principles of honesty, fairness, responsibility, trust, respect, and courage²⁰. Upholding academic integrity is important to ensure that these principles are observed during the process of doing a research or academic work. The first principle of integrity is honesty, and honesty is a fundamental characteristic that Muslims should embody. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was known for being truthful and honest even before his prophethood. Honesty is the trait of telling the truth and acting righteously. It can also be defined as saying or doing things without alteration²¹. Due to students losing critical thinking skills and heavily relying on ChatGPT, there is now a situation where students are using ChatGPT for cheating and plagiarism. ChatGPT's ability to generate multiple outputs enables students to, for example, produce an essay and even generate several

²⁰ Andrés Mejía and Maria Fernanda Garcés-Flórez, 'What Do We Mean by Academic Integrity?', *International Journal for Educational Integrity* 21, no. 1 (2025): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-024-00176-1>.

²¹ Munawar Rahmat and M. Wildan Yahya, 'How to Improve the Honesty of Students in Indonesia? Sufism-Based Islamic Education Model as An Alternative', *International Journal of Education and Practice* 9, no. 1 (2021): 80–92, <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.61.2021.91.80.92>.

versions to select the best one, without actually contributing their own ideas to the assignment they are supposed to complete themselves. This is undeniably a form of cheating, which undermines the educational process and devalues genuine academic achievements.

The generative AI models, and especially the ChatGPT, are developed based on data mass, such as text, sounds, code, and images. This information is usually stolen over the internet against the will of the owner, and as a result, this would result in intellectual property infringement, which amounts to plagiarism. The responses provided by ChatGPT are automatic, and it is hard to check where the data comes from. It is always possible that, on requesting them to provide references, they can excessively reference the work of other individuals²². This is one of the major shortcomings of ChatGPT that scholars need to know. It does not only tend to cause factual mistakes but also sometimes result in the issue of plagiarism or infringements. In fact, they have frequently been called so-called stochastic parrots because, like a parrot, they repeat language patterns in the information they have been trained on (the internet), beginning with random patterns, and do not even know what they are saying, similar to how a parrot mimics sounds without comprehending what it is saying²³.

The deterioration of the relationship between students and educators is one of the consequences of the defeat of academic integrity that is often disregarded. In Islamic religion, the association between a student and a teacher is considered as sacrosanct and is based on mutual respect, faith and commitment to learning. Scholars have extensively written on this concept with major contributors to this concept being the Islamic modern scholar, al-Ghazali, who in his book, *Kitāb al- 'Ilm* (The Book of Knowledge) examined this concept in detail. Al-Ghazali touches on the adab (comportment) of a student and a teacher in this work. The duty the student has toward the other student, as detailed by al-Ghazali, is as follows: the student must not disdain knowledge, but according to al-Ghazali, must not consider himself to be any greater than the teacher²⁴.

²² Tianyu Wu et al., 'A Brief Overview of ChatGPT: The History, Status Quo and Potential Future Development', *IEEE/CAA Journal of Automatica Sinica* 10, no. 5 (2023): 1130, <https://doi.org/10.1109/JAS.2023.123618>.

²³ Miao, *Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research*, 15–16.

²⁴ al-Ghazali, *The Book Of Knowledge*, trans. Nabih Amin Faris (Islamic Book Service, 1962), 122, <https://www.ghazali.org/books/knowledge.pdf>.

Based on this quotation, al-Ghazali is warning students not to be arrogant when pursuing knowledge because arrogance is the exact opposite of being humble. Moral characters must include humility, which can be shown by the manifestations of modesty, empathy, recognizing and respecting the other person to a deeper level, admitting and accepting our own limitations²⁵. Hence, by being humble, the students develop a willingness to learn, and they are therefore better exposed to the teachings of their teachers. Secondly, the phrase "nor exalt himself over the teacher" highlights the importance of respecting the authority and expertise of the teacher. The students are expected to stay in a mode of submission and openness, whereby they acknowledge the teacher as their guide and mentor through their education process. Teacher-student interaction is extremely critical, even in education itself. This communication involves activities in classrooms, homework, and communication after lessons. Nevertheless, as ChatGPT became more popular, researchers note that it has made the interaction with students more complicated and has formed the emotional bond between an instructor and their learners²⁶.

Each of the above-mentioned concerns can be regarded as ethical issues related to the application of ChatGPT. The main ethical issues regarding the use of ChatGPT in education are plagiarism and cheating²⁷. ChatGPT allows creating original text, which means that students can use it to create writing work, but not with proper citing and knowledge of the text. Another ethical issue is the effect that the use of ChatGPT will have on the relationship between the student and the teacher²⁸. In the case where students rely on ChatGPT too much, it may end up taking the place of human teachers and diminishing the significance of student-teacher interaction. Although it may be a

²⁵ John H. Harvey and Brian G. Pauwels, 'Modesty, Humility, Character Strength, and Positive Psychology', *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 23, no. 5 (2004): 620–23, <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.23.5.620.50753>.

²⁶ Yi Lin et al., 'The Impact of ChatGPT on University Teacher-Student Interactions', *Proceedings of the International Conference on Global Politics and Socio-Humanities* (2023): 201, <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/24/20230703>.

²⁷ Adeeb M. Jarrah et al., 'Using ChatGPT in Academic Writing Is (Not) a Form of Plagiarism: What Does the Literature Say?', *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies* 13, no. 4 (2023): e202346, <https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcm/13572>.

²⁸ Jaeho Jeon et al., 'Beyond ChatGPT: A Conceptual Framework and Systematic Review of Speech-Recognition Chatbots for Language Learning', *Computers & Education* 206 (December 2023): 104898, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2023.104898>.

good source and can also be a helpful tool, ChatGPT and other generative AI applications cannot be regarded as a replacement for a professional teacher.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The current manifestations of the use of Generative AI (GenAI) apps are only starting to manifest themselves, and their consequences regarding education have not been fully explored. Nevertheless, it should not be neglected that their value and usefulness should still be assessed in spite of the fact that researchers and scholars keep on discovering their downsides. Not using them cannot be a solution, but it is upon the professionals in the education sector to change and identify proper means of dealing with these intelligent AI chatbots.

ChatGPT is a relatively new program, but it has already become a matter of substantial research that aims to regulate its application in the academic sphere regarding its ethical concerns. Nevertheless, with the continuous fierce development of Generative Artificial Intelligence, the concern of the sustainability of the suggested solutions arises. This study attempts to take these issues into consideration in a new way, or a perspective that has not been thoroughly examined: the human behaviour perspective, beginning with the human soul.

The major teachings regarding the betterment of human actions are contained in the teachings of al-Ghazali that the betterment of the soul results in the betterment of human actions²⁹. With the use of this principle on the usage of GenAI, we will be able to lead students in the direction of a more responsible and deliberate application of such technologies. This is not only a way of addressing moral and educational values but also a lasting solution to the use of AI in education. Exploring and incorporating al-Ghazali's teaching of intention into students' utilisation of ChatGPT could be the holistic solution that has not been explored yet in the field of GenAI.

²⁹ Imam Abi Hamid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4 vols (*Lajnat Nashr al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah*, 1937), 3:1349-1350, <http://archive.org/details/Ihya1937>.

CHAPTER THREE

AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS OF INTENTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Being one of the most prominent classical Islamic philosophers, al-Ghazali based the idea of intention on the centre of ethical action. He argued that a sincere intention is not an impulsive urge, but a deliberate condition developed through a certain underlying knowledge. This chapter examines his views that ethical behaviour can only be realised when the action is preceded by the right intention, which is itself subjected to the need to possess necessary knowledge.

The study believes that the application of classical Islamic ethical principles to modern technological dilemmas can provide a sustainable solution to the problem of Generative AI in the education realm. Al-Ghazali does not just propose a holistic approach to academic integrity but also addresses the core principles governing all ethical human conduct. Al-Ghazali is a leading 11th-century philosopher whose work remains a source of philosophical discussions, which makes him a valuable source for the present inquiry. Therefore, this study engages his views from multiple perspectives, spiritual, ethical, and pedagogical, to construct a robust analytical lens for examining the role of intention in the age of GenAI.

Consequently, this classical framework provides a critical lens for examining a distinctly modern problem. Whereas modern debate on AI ethics is usually about policy, or detection, or digital literacy, al-Ghazali takes us to the earlier, deeper layer, cultivation of the ethical agent preceding the act, which is intention itself. Through this chapter, thus, his comprehensive perspectives on intention will be analysed, and this framework will be applied to the application of Generative AI, specifically ChatGPT, as a means of resolving the problem of academic integrity among university students.

3.2 AL-GHAZALI'S BACKGROUND OF HIS SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Abu Hamid Ibn Muhammad al-Tusi al-Shafi al-Ghazali, commonly known as al-Ghazali, was a prominent contemporary Islamic scholar honored with various titles, the most famous being “*Hujjat al-Islām*” (Proof of Islam). Born in 1058 CE (450 AH) in Tabran, a town in the district of Tous in Khurasan (modern-day Iran), al-Ghazali moved to Nishapur, a renowned centre of learning in the Muslim world. There, he studied under Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni, the greatest scholar of that time¹. With this understanding of the soul, we can now begin to explore how intention arises within it.

This work stands as a product of his deep personal crisis, spiritual transformation, and ultimate reconciliation between outward religious practice and inner spiritual truth. During his tenure in Baghdad, al-Ghazali observed that the faith of various societal classes had weakened, religious observance lacked spirituality, and erroneous philosophies were widespread. He believed the overall condition of his time was corrupt and stagnant, with these problems affecting all levels of society, from the lay people to the elite, including jurists, theologians, philosophers, and mystics. Al-Ghazali noted that this serious "sickness" had become so pervasive that "the doctors have fallen ill, and mankind has reached the verge of destruction."

Al-Ghazali recognised the need to reform Muslim society, identifying the root causes of its problems. He categorised the various sects and movements of his time into four main groups: the theologians (*mutakallimīn*), the philosophers, and the Sufis. All of whom he referred to as “seekers after truth.”² Upon investigating these groups, he observed their good deeds and adherence to religious law but found gaps, imbalances, and a lack of spiritual elements among them. He noticed an imbalance between reason and spirituality, or between the outer and inner aspects of religious observance³. For instance, mystics focused too much on spirituality, neglecting reason, while

¹ Muhammad Hozien, ‘Al-Ghazali’s Turning Point: On the Writings on His Personal Crisis’, paper presented at Middle East Studies Association (MESA), 2001, <https://www.ghazali.org/articles/crisis-old.htm>.

² Charles Francis Horne, *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, vol. 6 (Parke New York, 2017), <https://archive.org/details/sacredbooksearly02hornuoft>.

³ Mohd Rosmizi Bin Abd Rahman and Salih Yucel, ‘The Mujaddid of His Age: Al-Ghazali and His Inner Spiritual Journey’, *UMRAN - International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies* (EISSN: 2289-8204) 3, no. 2 (2016): 4, <https://doi.org/10.11113/umran2016.3n2.56>.

philosophers relied heavily on reason, ignoring spirituality. Recognizing that these imbalances were at the core of societal problems, he also realised that he himself was part of the issue. This resulted in a period of intense inner crisis for al-Ghazali. Some believe that this crisis can be categorised into two aspects: his personal crisis and his epistemological crisis⁴. The personal crisis involved his internal struggle between remaining in his comfortable worldly affairs and seeking the truth to address the societal imbalances he observed.

With the help of God's mercy, al-Ghazali decided to retire from his teaching position in Baghdad in 1095 CE and devoted himself to Sufism. His motivation was to address the imbalance between reason and spirituality and between the outward and inward observance of religious life in Muslim society, alongside his primary desire to achieve closeness (*taqarrub*) to God. The development of al-Ghazali's thought and spiritual journey can be divided into three main periods. The first stage was before his retirement in Baghdad, during which he was primarily a jurist and theologian. The second stage began when he entered seclusion for 11 years (1095-1106 CE), during which he underwent a radical transformation, retired from his position, and became a personal Sufi.

After this period of seclusion, the third stage of his journey began. By then, al-Ghazali was convinced he had found the answers to his quest and the solutions to the socio-religious issues of his time. He realised he should no longer remain in seclusion but rather share his insights with society to help reform its stagnant conditions. Persuaded by his friends, he returned to his teaching career in 1106 CE at the Nizamiyyah college in Nishapur, believing himself to be the Mujaddid (reviver or Islamic reformer) of the 5th century AH. During and after his seclusion, al-Ghazali completed his most influential work, "*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*" (The Revival of the Religious Sciences). This book, and others he authored, were widely accepted as authoritative in the field, second only to the Qur'an and Hadith. "*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*" reflects an enlightened mind aligned with the Qur'an, a heart purified through *dhikr* (remembrance of God), and a soul elevated by sincerity. Although al-Ghazali wrote this work to advance understanding in worship, ethics, morality, behaviour, purification of the soul, and spiritually destructive acts and conditions for the people of his time, his

⁴ Hozien, "Al-Ghazali's Turning Point."

work remains relevant throughout history. His comprehensive approach addresses various classes of people, incorporating his personal experiences and interpretations from sources beyond Qur'anic verses and authentic Prophetic traditions (*al-hadith al-sahih*). His works, particularly *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, have significantly influenced both the Muslim and Western worlds, establishing him as a pivotal figure in Islamic history⁵ and were recognised as an unquestioned authority in the field, second only to the Quran and Hadith⁶.

3.3 THE POSITION OF INTENTION IN THE HUMAN BODY AND SOUL

Human beings are composed of an outward form, body, and an inward entity known as the "*nafs*" or soul⁷. Al-Ghazali describes the soul's function in his work, "*كيمياء السعادة*" (The Alchemy of Happiness) that man has among his members two souls: an animal soul and a spiritual soul⁸. The animal soul is connected with the body's physical, vital functions. It is said to originate in the heart, where it spreads its "subtle vapor" throughout the rest of the body. This is the spirit that performs all the sensory motion, and gives vision to the eye, hearing to the ear, and power of action to every member. The spiritual soul, meanwhile, is undivided from above and of a higher angelic kind. It is a means by which humans become connected to the divine and come to know God. Unlike the animal soul, it is not confined to the body. The spiritual soul, for its part, was created to seek to love and know God (which it can do through the functions of the animal soul) and survives even after the body (and hence the animal soul) dies.

Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn al-Ghazali talks about the very concept in different imagery, where he described it as possessing two armies, one that is visible to the external eye and is composed of physical organs like hands, feet, eyes, etc., while the other is visible only to the internal eye, which deals with thoughts, intentions, and spiritual abilities⁹.

⁵ Frank Griffel, 'Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology:', *American Journal of Islam and Society* 27, no. 4 (2010): 111–14, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v27i4.1295>.

⁶ Abd Rahman and Yucel, 'The Mujaddid of His Age: Al-Ghazali and His Inner Spiritual Journey', 9.

⁷ Homayun Shahpesand, 'The "Nafs" (Self), as Outlined by Early Philosophers and Sufi Mystics of Afghanistan and Iran', *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 18, no. 1 (2020): 81, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v18i1.3436>.

⁸ Imam Abi Ḥamid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. Claude (London, J. Murray, 1910), 52, <http://archive.org/details/alchemyofhappine00algh>.

⁹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 3:1344.

The external characteristic of the soul is the animal soul, and its internal feature is its spiritual soul. Based on these various analogies, al-Ghazali presents the spiritual soul as controlling and leading the body with respect to its spiritual destiny. The bodily faculties (whether called the animal soul or the visible army) are instruments to be employed by the rational soul for its higher end of seeking after Deity in knowledge and love. He has also considered the term spirit (*rūḥ*), heart (*qalb*), and mind (*'aql*) to have a derivative meaning, in close relationship to the soul¹⁰.

Drawing a comparative lens with al-Ghazali's views, Aristotle considers the human soul as tripartite, comprising the vegetative soul (responsible for nutrition and reproduction), the animal soul (which has the abilities of sensory perception and movement), and the human, or rational, soul. Like al-Ghazali, Aristotle believes that the rational soul is immortal and does not perish with the body. He views the body as the instrument (or organ) of the soul. Along the same line, Thomas Aquinas defines the soul as the determining principle that forms the foundation of all life phenomena¹¹. This view resonates strongly with the understanding central to al-Ghazali's view. For both, the soul is what organises life and power faculties like will. Another similar perspective is echoed by Descartes, who argued that the mind and body are separate due to their different essences¹². Descartes described the mind as intangible, unextended, and metaphysically distinct from the body. The mind is capable of thinking, willing, judging, and perceiving. In a letter to Marin Mersenne, Descartes wrote, "You argue that if the nature of man is solely to think, then he has no will. I do not see that this follows; for willing, understanding, imagining, sensing, and so on are just different ways of thinking, and all belong to the soul."¹³ Similarly, in Farsi Dari literature, the *nafs* or soul is understood as the force that sustains life in the body, and it is also defined as a non-physical substance that represents one's identity or the essence of a person or thing. Additionally, it can be translated as a person, body, corpus, blood, or intention¹⁴.

¹⁰ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 3:1343-1344.

¹¹ Hodayun Shahpesand, 'The "Nafs" (Self), as Outlined by Early Philosophers and Sufi Mystics of Afghanistan and Iran', *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 18, no. 1 (2020): 77, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v18i1.3436>.

¹² Jonathan. Westphal, *The Mind-Body Problem* (The MIT Press, 2016), <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/6/monograph/book/48159>.

¹³ John Haldane and Philosophy Documentation Center, 'Anscombe and Geach on Mind and Soul', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 90, no. 2 (2016): 7, <https://doi.org/10.5840/acpq20165387>.

¹⁴ Shahpesand, 'The "Nafs" (Self), as Outlined by Early Philosophers and Sufi Mystics of Afghanistan and Iran', 2020, 79.

Hence, these various philosophical views from both Islamic and Western philosophers simultaneously agree that the soul, in addition to being the source of life, can also be understood as the source of moral decision-making and inner motivation, where intention takes shape.

It is the soul that elevates man to his position as a supreme creation, and through it, he can approach his Creator. But when the soul sets its affections on other than God, it separates itself from Him. The knowledge of self is the root of knowledge of God. To the extent that, if a person does not know their own soul, they cannot truly know God¹⁵. The knowledge of God and the act of worship are medicines for the soul, while ignorance and sin are poisons for it¹⁶. In order for the soul to reach its divine potential, the coordination of these faculties (physical and spiritual) must be guided by knowledge and intention¹⁷. The soul directs the body through its power, using faculties such as reason and will, so that one may make moral choices and be able to practice spiritual practices. For the same reason that the soul affects one's body, the state of the body may also have an impact on the state of the soul. This happens when the rational component of the soul is able to contemplate and decide between various courses of action and thus form intentions. This process is determined by the moral and spiritual state of the soul, and can be transformed and refined through prayer, meditation, and righteous behaviour. This means that a well-nurtured soul would tend to create intentions that lead to virtuous actions, whereas a corrupted soul would intentionally create intentions that lead to immoral acts¹⁸. Having gained this insight into the soul, we are now in a position to investigate how intention evolves within the soul.

Allah the Almighty has ingrained into human beings the natural faculties of desire, inclination, and will¹⁹. A key element of this is intention, which transforms that desire and inclination into purposeful activity. Intention is the conscious choice that links what one desires and leans towards with the actions they end up choosing. It is intention that gives human action its significance and direction; what the action means,

¹⁵ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 3:1342.

¹⁶ al-Ghazali, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. Claud Field (London, J. Murray, 1910), 51, <https://archive.org/details/alchemyofhappine00algh>.

¹⁷ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 3:1345-1346.

¹⁸ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 3:1257-1260.

¹⁹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2690.

in the moral and spiritual sense. In the field of human morality, intention is stressed to determine the quality of an act. The moral of an action is not only to be judged by its results, but also depends much on the purpose or intention behind it.

The significance of intention also features prominently in Islamic doctrine. One of the hadiths most-quoted in this context is that narrated by Amir al-Mu'minin (Leader of the Believers), Abu Hafs 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him): “Actions are according to intentions, and everyone will get what was intended. Whoever migrates with the intention of Allah and His Messenger, the migration will be for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. And whoever migrates for worldly gain or to marry a woman, then his migration will be for the sake of whatever he migrated for.”²⁰ This hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari*, The Book of Oaths and Vows, on the chapter “The Intention In Taking Oaths”, hadith number 6689, brought into focus the perception that it is the intention behind an action that will actually matter, which serves as a determinant in the moral worth and the reward of an action. Therefore, since the intention is often referred to in Islamic literature, such as the Quran and hadith, and is often addressed under a legal perspective, this paper seeks to examine the philosophical view of the intention, especially of one of the great Islamic philosophers, al-Ghazali. The paper argues that the philosophy of al-Ghazali has a useful and applicable application in discussing modern challenges posed by Generative AI. His views on intention will be explored in greater detail in the following discussion.

3.4 AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS OF INTENTION

3.4.1 Introduction of Intention

To fully understand al-Ghazali's approach in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, particularly regarding intention, it's important to recognise the reasons for his seclusion. Al-Ghazali's method underscores the imbalance between the outer and inner aspects of human existence, with intention being a key part of the inner dimension of the soul. This inner aspect plays a crucial role in guiding human morality.

²⁰ Muḥammad Ibn-Isma'il al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*: trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Darussalam, 1997), vol. 8, كتاب الأيمان والنذور (*Kitāb al-Aymān wa al-Nudhūr*), باب النية في الأيمان (*Bāb al-Niyyah fī al-Aymān*), Ḥadīth no. 6689.

Al-Ghazali's discussion of intention could be explored mainly from his most infamous work, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, in volume four: The Book of Constructive Virtues (*Rub' al-munjiyāt*), in chapter seven, Intention, Sincerity and Truthfulness (*Kitāb al-Niyyah, wa'l-Ikhlāṣ wa'l-Ṣidq*). Al-Ghazali's exploration of intention, however, extends beyond this work. He returns to the concept repeatedly in his other writings. Intention is not an isolated concept; it is shaped by both preceding and subsequent factors. Al-Ghazali defined intention as a state and quality of the heart encompassed by two essential elements: knowledge and action. He posits that intention cannot precede knowledge, as one cannot intend to do something without first being aware of it²¹. However, intention alone is insufficient to carry out an action; power or strength to execute the action is also required. Therefore, according to al-Ghazali, three elements are necessary for a person to execute an action: knowledge, intention, and strength. Knowledge comes first, followed by will and strength, which then lead to action, as shown in the diagram below:



Without knowledge of a thing, a man does not intend to have that thing. Without will or intention, there is no movement of physical organs to do that thing. So, action is the fruit of will, and will is the fruit of knowledge.²²

According to al-Ghazali, will is influenced by what aligns with a person's goals or desires. When someone's heart or mind is inclined towards something, it's because it seems to match their immediate or recent purpose. For a person to have personal goals and desires, they must first understand and know what they want to act on. For example, if someone cannot see or recognise food, they cannot develop a desire for it or acquire it. Similarly, if someone does not see fire, they cannot avoid it. God has endowed humans with desire, inclination, and will. However, these alone are insufficient; achieving a goal also requires power, strength, and the ability to act. Therefore, God

²¹ al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2689.

²² al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2689.

created humans' physical capabilities and bodily limbs to enable them to pursue and accomplish their goals and desires²³.

There is also a sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that supports this view, from *Sahih al-Bukhari*, The Book of Faith, on the chapter "The Superiority of that Person Who Leaves All Doubtful (Unclear) Things for the Sake of His Religion", hadith number 50, On the authority of Abu 'Abdullah al-Nu'man bin Bashir (RA) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say: "...there is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart."²⁴ One who finds humility in his soul, his bodily limbs will also assume a humble attitude. This verse demonstrates the close relationship between the soul and the body. The soul, representing our inner aspects of agency, is embodied in our intentions or will. Conversely, the body, reflecting the external aspects of human action, manifests these intentions through concrete actions. The connection between intention and action is intrinsic, in a way that when one has an intention, it is not just merely waiting for action, but within it contains the potential to execute the action. Worth noting also is the work by Abdullah Draz in *The Moral World of the Quran*, who shares the same view as al-Ghazali.

To will is actually to move oneself in a centrifugal movement that leaves the idea and directs itself towards the action. Volition is the orientation of the ideal towards the real; and it is along this trajectory from the inside to the outside, from conscience to experience, that the moral deed is found. It is not a static state, a solitary act of worship enclosed within the sanctuary of the heart; it is a living force, a movement of expansion that has its point of departure at the center, and its point of arrival on the outside. Thus, not only does intention call for action and wait to be followed by it, but it contains it in the form of a seed, if not in a nascent state.²⁵

Therefore, in the context of this study, intention operates as the mediator between will and action. It is the particular object that determines one's will towards a certain action. Intention is more than desire to act; it's a focus on specific intentions and outcomes. This demonstrates the superimposition of intention over action since one's

²³ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:11.

²⁴ al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, كتاب الإيمان (*Kitāb al-Īmān*), باب فضلي من استبصر لدينيه (*Bāb Faḍli man istabrā'a li-dīnihi*), Ḥadīth no.52.

²⁵ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 187.

intentions ultimately change and control that person's actions. Al-Ghazali also believed intention to be more important and influential than action²⁶. He reasoned that an action with a good intention will result in a valuable action, while an action without intention results in a valueless action.

According to al-Ghazali, the intention can be stimulated by different kinds of motives²⁷. First, when a single motive is adequate in itself to produce the action. For instance, when a man is attacked by a wild beast, he will be driven away of his own accord simply through the desire to avoid so great a peril. Secondly, if someone has many motives and they are independent and sufficient individually for the act, or interdependent. For example, if a man is asked for money by a poor relative, he might give it to him because of either reason alone: the fact that the relative is poor, or his relation to the man asking. The third case is two indistinguishable motives, a primary motive and its accessory. Here, neither the reason on its own would be enough to cause one to act, but together they drive the person to act. Thus, there may be multiple motives where one alone is sufficient to initiate the action, while the others serve as supporting or assisting influences. However, the most important element for one to have motives and form the right intention is the knowledge they possess. The definition of 'knowledge' here is not limited to mere factual knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge that guides action in the light of spiritual and moral truths, which will be explored thoroughly in the following discussion.

3.4.2 Knowledge as a Precondition for Intention

Al-Ghazali once mentioned that knowledge precedes action and intention, and no one can desire to do something without possessing knowledge concerning that action. Will and action are based fundamentally on knowledge, which forms the basis of decision and action. It is an attribute of Allah SWT, with all knowledge ultimately originating from Him, and it is the nature of man to pursue knowledge of Him²⁸. It is through the

²⁶ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2692.

²⁷ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2690-2691.

²⁸ M. Kamal Hassan, 'Islam and Knowledge', Text of lecture, January 2022, 1, https://centre.iiu.edu.my/centris/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2025/03/MKH_UNICORE-2-ISLAM-KNOWLEDGE.docx-1.pdf.

knowledge of God that man is dignified. Knowledge is what leads him to realise his creator, himself, his duty towards God, the reason why he was created, and how he can comprehend himself as well as the world around him. Without knowledge, man would not know how to know anything, not to mention that he would not be able to know how to achieve true happiness.

Al-Ghazali defined two kinds of knowledge. The first kind of knowledge is natural knowledge, which involves fundamental and universal laws, the knowledge of what is possible and what is impossible, like knowing that one cannot be in two places at the same time. The second one is the acquired knowledge that is achieved via experience and reflection. Acquired knowledge is further classified into two categories: worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge²⁹. This knowledge entails deep involvement in the reality of things and being transformed existentially, which alters and develops the knower. It is a profoundly personal experience, as one cannot remain unaffected by the transformative power of knowledge. True knowledge does not just bring wisdom; it also leads to the path of virtue and spiritual satisfaction. The second type of knowledge, known as ‘acquired knowledge,’ is what will be discussed thoroughly in this study.

3.4.2.1 Worldly Knowledge

Based on the perception of al-Ghazali, worldly knowledge is one among the conditions required to form the right intention, which in turn will result in a person possessing a morally and spiritually consistent act. This knowledge may also be referred to as human knowledge, which is obtained through the means of intellect, sensory perception and experience and can be utilised in the process of comprehending the physical world³⁰. The concept of worldly knowledge in the framework of the current work implies not only the necessary expertise and technological skills but also the knowledge of the operation of General Artificial Intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT). It is upon this knowledge

²⁹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 1356.

³⁰ Aminullah Poya, ‘Al-Ghazali’s Theory of Real Knowledge: An Exploration of Knowledge Integration in Islamic Epistemology through Contemporary Perspectives’, *International Journal Of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (IJHES)* Vol. 3 No. 2 (October 2023): 620, <https://doi.org/10.55227/ijhess.v3i2.627>.

that people will be able to navigate and cope with such complex systems and govern effective behaviour in their practical affairs. However, al-Ghazali cautions that if pursued for worldly understanding or benefit alone, this knowledge remains insufficient and may even be deemed blameworthy, as it fails to draw the individual closer to God. Therefore, the ultimate value of practical knowledge is realised only when it is subordinated to and illuminated by spiritual knowledge and ethical considerations. When aligned with the higher objective of divine proximity, worldly capabilities can contribute positively to personal development and societal well-being, ensuring that both intention and action are morally and spiritually aligned, which leads to the next type of knowledge from ‘acquired knowledge’, spiritual knowledge.

3.4.2.2 Spiritual Knowledge

Al-Ghazali primarily discussed the concept of intention in the spiritual sense, with the main point that the main purpose of human intention is to worship God. Every action should be carried out with the sole aim of worshipping Him, with the ultimate purpose of getting a relish of the sight of God³¹. In order to achieve this objective, a person must initially develop a love for God, and this necessitates having knowledge of Him. This wisdom is developed with the constant reminder of God in every action and thought, and by constantly performing good deeds and acts of worship. Additionally, in his work, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, al-Ghazali has emphasised that in order to know God, one must first understand oneself, as human existence and attributes are gifts from God. He asserted that a person who does not know themselves cannot truly know God, and one who does not love and appreciate their own nature will be ignorant of love for God, for without God, humanity would have neither existence nor attributes³². Thus, the study will first explore the definition of self-knowledge stated by al-Ghazali that will ultimately lead oneself towards the possession of Knowledge of God.

³¹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2692.

³² al-Ghazali, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, 103.

1. KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

The concept of self-knowledge, as explained by al-Ghazali, is a complex and deep term of knowing the nature of the self, one's motivations, and one's relationship with the divine. Trying and learning to know God as closely as possible is the process of self-knowledge, and it starts with cleansing the soul and constant remembrance of Allah, so that in the end, one will be capable of seeing God with one's heart³³. Al-Ghazali insists that in order to attain true happiness and fulfilment, self-knowledge is paramount as it helps human beings to discover not only their inborn nature, but also God and the divine purpose behind their existence. This realisation is not only an intellectual but a transformative journey, which results in spiritual enlightenment and ethical life.

In his work, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, he does not present self-knowledge as a rigidly structured process; however, this study interprets and organises his insights into three thematic stages for analytical clarity. He starts by emphasizing the recognition of the nature and character of self, which is the first stage where a person gains awareness of their wants, desires, motivations, and ethical implications of their action. This stage fosters a higher and self-reflective awareness that grounds more ethically informed actions. The second stage is where he stressed the moral, emotional, and spiritual harmony one must have with their own principles. Here, individuals consciously align their intentions and actions with ethical and spiritual values, allowing their inner moral compass to lead them. At this stage, actions become more deliberate, intentional, ethically aligned, and shaped by the motivation and awareness developed in the first stage. Lastly, the third stage, where it all leads to a reflection on God, it's when self-awareness deepens into a much more expansive awareness of the divine, knowledge of God. This stage promotes the spiritual consciousness that integrates self-knowledge with divine love and alignment with God's teachings. It is the definition of self-knowledge, understood as the realisation that Allah is the Ultimate Being.

³³ Muhammad Nafi et al., 'The Concept of Ma'rifat al-Nafs and Self Knowledge: Comparative Study of the Thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Sigmund Freud', *JOUSIP: Journal of Sufism and Psychotherapy* 2, no. 2 (2022): 126, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jousip.v2i2.6728>.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Divine consciousness is the conscious striving to bring one's inner intention and outward action into accordance with the will of God. It means for one to remain vigilant in all thoughts, words, and deeds, that everything, ultimately, is being done to seek divine pleasure. It is not just a matter of religious rituals, but rather of a comprehensive spiritual and ethical reflection of everyday life that takes on a devotional character when it is accomplished with a heart sincerely directed toward God. However, this divine awareness can easily be obstructed by an excessive preoccupation with worldly matters, personal greed, and other temptations. Crucially, if this awareness of God is absent, an individual lacks the ultimate compass for their actions, which can lead to unethical or morally wrong conduct. According to this framework, any action performed with an intention aimed at anything other than divine pleasure falls into the category of a misdeed, as it is spiritually misaligned. Hence, one has to consistently perform every action with the intention of worshipping God and maintain a constant remembrance of Him. By avoiding any distractions from worldly affairs and engaging in virtuous deeds, one can reach a level of God-awareness. Al-Ghazali compared the soul to a vessel, suggesting that just as air cannot enter a vessel filled with water, divine knowledge cannot enter a soul preoccupied with distractions or sins³⁴. Thus, this high level of human perfection can only be perfectly achieved when one has fully possessed the 'acquired knowledge' stated by al-Ghazali.

Al-Ghazali posits that through the acquisition of both worldly knowledge and self-knowledge, the latter of which leads to divine awareness, an individual ensures that their intentions are consistently aligned, thereby resulting in actions that are both morally sound and spiritually upright. The path to happiness begins with knowledge and action, and the path to morality lies in the unity of knowledge³⁵.

³⁴ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2692.

³⁵ Bima Raffly Fachrezzi et al., 'Reflection of Al-Ghazali's Business Ethics for Tax Consultants', *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Finance Research* 5, no. 2 (2023): 155, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jiafr.2023.5.2.16068>.

3.4.3 Knowledge and Intention from Western Philosophy Perspectives

While al-Ghazali's epistemology is rooted in spiritual and metaphysical dimensions, contemporary Western philosophers such as Elizabeth Anscombe offer a more secular, action-oriented view of knowledge in relation to intention. According to Anscombe, for an action to be considered intentional, the agent must know what they are doing. This type of knowledge is distinct from other kinds of self-knowledge because it involves both mental and external awareness³⁶. Anscombe defined intentional action as "when an agent knows and is aware of what they are doing and the reasons for their action (what is causing it) without needing to directly observe and sense the action." She called this Practical Knowledge, which is also known as Non-observational Knowledge³⁷. It is a highly researched topic in the philosophy of action and has faced both skepticism and support from some philosophers.

According to Anscombe, an agent's knowledge is practical because it is "the cause of what it understands" unlike 'speculative' knowledge, which 'is derived from the objects known.'³⁸ This notion implies that an agent's knowledge plays a causal role in their actions, shaping and guiding their intentional behaviours. This contrasts with Donald Davidson's causal theory, where knowledge is seen as being caused by actions rather than causing them³⁹. While some claim that 'practical knowledge' is merely another way to explain causal theory, Anscombe argues that there is a fundamental difference between the two.

Some philosophers also critique Anscombe's theory of practical knowledge, which posits that it requires no observation or inference, asserting instead that some form of perception, whether inferential or indirect, is involved in all empirical knowledge. Since agents' knowledge is also empirical knowledge, they contend that perception, and therefore observation, is necessary. This stance directly challenges Anscombe's theory of non-observational knowledge. These philosophers question the capability of agents to know their actions without looking at whether their intentions

³⁶ Kneer, 'Success and Knowledge in Action: Saving Anscombe's Account of Intentionality', in *Context Dependence in Language, Action, and Cognition* (De Gruyter, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110702286-009>.

³⁷ Jeff Speaks, *A Guide to Anscombe's Intention*, 1-3, 8 September 2008, 8.

³⁸ Kneer, 'Success and Knowledge in Action', 140.

³⁹ Sarah K. Paul, 'Deviant Formal Causation', *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 5, no. 3 (2017): 4, <https://doi.org/10.26556/jesp.v5i3.55>.

have been fulfilled in action, given that some actions depend not only on the agents themselves but also on the cooperation of external circumstances. What is the source of such knowledge, without observation?

Anscombe believes that the sense of action of modern thought is insufficient to its reliance on the "contemplative model of knowledge," which prioritises contemplation and observation⁴⁰. She argued that this model does not reflect the peculiarity of the knowledge of the agent by arguing that while contemplative knowledge tries to fit the world, the agent's knowledge aims to make the world fit the knowledge. Put differently, the action is defined by the knowledge on the part of the agent. It is not founded on perception or inference, does not arise out of knowledge acquired by senses that can be described separately (i.e., sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch), nor does it arise out of indirect knowledge acquired through inference based on observation⁴¹. It is the proactive perception of what one is doing as he or she does it, in which it serves the purpose of the intrinsic relationship between intentions and actions in the domain of human agency.

In continuation of Anscombe's thoughts, Richard Moran continues on the connection between practical knowledge and practical reasoning. He is in agreement with the points of Anscombe on practical knowledge and explores further with Anscombe's remark that "the notion of 'practical knowledge' can only be understood if we first understand 'practical reasoning.'" Moran interprets practical knowledge as understanding the reasons for acting, asserting that practical knowledge is not derived from observing an agent's action or its consequences, but is a direct result of the agent's engagement in practical reasoning⁴². It is this process of reasoning that leads to the formation of intentions, which give the agent knowledge of the actions he is going to do even before the actions are carried out. Moran sees practical knowledge as inherently linked to the agent's reasons for acting, essential for performing intentional actions. Without practical knowledge, agents would not act based on specific reasons. Actions would lack the intentional, purposeful character that practical knowledge provides.

⁴⁰ Anne Newstead, 'Interpreting Anscombe's Intention 32ff', *Journal of Philosophical Research* 34 (2009): 158, https://www.academia.edu/188284/Interpreting_Anscombes_Intention_32ff.

⁴¹ Guxing Chen, 'On the Non-Observational Character of Practical Knowledge', *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 12, no. 03 (2024): 2, <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2024.123001>.

⁴² Newstead, 'Interpreting Anscombe's Intention 32ff', 165.

However, it is to be noted that Moran does not entirely agree that Anscombe's non-observational knowledge is unproblematic and clear.

Intriguingly, while Moran shares a nearly similar view with Anscombe, he suggests that practical knowledge can be viewed as practical reasoning. Unlike Anscombe, who defines it as the non-observational knowledge that is the cause of the action it understands, Moran gives that perspective a little twist: Practical reasoning is the dynamic, first-person process of an agent actively justifying their action to themselves, which simultaneously constitutes both their intention and their knowledge of what they are doing. Every human being possesses a basic understanding of 'reason' from birth. This focus on the agent's internal reasoning aligns, to a certain extent, with perspectives found in Islamic thought, particularly in the writings of al-Faruqi. Al-Faruqi asserts that Allah (SWT) has endowed humanity with reason as a tool to understand the world, fulfil needs, and manage responsibilities as a vicegerent. However, al-Ghazali takes this understanding even further. While he acknowledged the importance of reason, he believed that it alone is insufficient. Reason achieves its true balance when guided by Divine Revelation, which provides the ultimate purpose of existence. As al-Faruqi explained, Divine Revelation "guides man toward understanding the aims of a righteous life, defining responsibilities, and grasping its components. It illuminates, despite human limitations, metaphysical concepts, universal relationships, and the complexities of human and social interactions."⁴³ Al-Ghazali insists that only through reason can one attain a deeper understanding of Divine Revelation, as reason acts as the 'mediator' between faith and comprehension. By gaining this understanding of God and His Revelation, one can discover the true path to morality, which, in turn, enhances one's intentions and actions⁴⁴. This understanding becomes the key to moral clarity and intention, ultimately shaping human actions in alignment with divine purpose.

In summary, although Anscombe's and al-Ghazali's approaches to the role of knowledge before intention differ significantly, as explored in this discussion, they each offer unique perspectives. Anscombe examines this concept from the angle of human

⁴³ 'AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, ed., *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*, 2nd ed., rev.expanded, Islamization of Knowledge Series, no. 1 (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989), 51–52.

⁴⁴ Fachrezzi et al., 'Reflection of Al-Ghazali's Business Ethics for Tax Consultants', 155.

agency, while al-Ghazali approaches it from the standpoint of Divine knowledge. As mentioned in the previous discussion, Al-Ghazali distinguishes between two types of knowledge: natural and acquired, in which acquired can be categorised into two types: worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge. Anscombe's notion of practical knowledge bears resemblance to al-Ghazali's idea of "natural knowledge," as both are seen as innate to human nature. While al-Ghazali regards this form of knowledge as a divine gift that directs the soul toward spiritual fulfilment, Anscombe interprets it within a secular framework, focusing on its role in shaping deliberate human action. Ultimately, by contrasting it with the non-observational 'practical knowledge' of Anscombe and Moran, this analysis affirms the distinct validity of al-Ghazali's framework, which posits that acquired, truth-oriented knowledge is the essential precondition for forming a sincere intention.

3.5 RELATION BETWEEN INTENTION AND ACTION

Human beings are distinguished from other forms of life by attributes such as consciousness and the ability to reason and act autonomously⁴⁵. Each individual exists as a separate entity with unique characteristics, which means that their inner mental states and actions also vary. Recognizing this diversity, al-Ghazali categorised actions based on their underlying intentions into three distinct types: sinful actions, pious actions, and permissible actions⁴⁶. Aligning with the hadith by *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Zakat, chapter "The Sin of One Who Withholds Zakat." Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying:

...The horses are of three kinds. They are a source of reward to a person, they are a covering to a person, and they are a burden to a person. As for those which bring reward is that a person would get reward who rears them for the sake of Allah and trains them for Him, and nothing disappears in their stomachs, but Allah would record for him a good deed. And if they were to graze in the meadow, they would eat nothing, but Allah would record for him a reward. And if they were to drink water

⁴⁵ Joanne R. Duffy, *Quality Caring in Nursing and Health Systems: Implications for Clinicians, Educators, and Leaders*, 2nd edn (Springer Publishing Company, 2013), 978-0-8261-1015-2, <https://doi.org/10.1891/9780826110152>.

⁴⁶ al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2695-2702.

from the canal, with every drop that, would disappear in their stomachs there would be reward (for the owner) ...⁴⁷

From this hadith, the act of caring for and training horses can be either pious or sinful, depending on the intention. It is pious if done in the service of God and sinful if done out of vanity or for aggression against believers. Between these two actions, the Prophet justly places the person who cares for horses to meet their own needs while still fulfilling their strict duties as a permissible action that will neither earn reward nor punishment but will simply be 'safe.'⁴⁸ Nevertheless, this action can become highly virtuous if done with good intentions, and turn sinful if done with bad intentions.

These actions of human beings are determined by their intentions, but intention itself is not something that can be consciously controlled or directed by human beings⁴⁹. Individuals have no control over the direction their intentions follow, although they can be influenced by factors such as knowledge, tendencies, and personal codes of conduct⁵⁰. For instance, a person may be inclined to perform good deeds and acts of worship because they understand that their happiness in the hereafter depends on them⁵¹. Therefore, it is important to have knowledge, as it contributes to the growth of good intentions, as described earlier.

Such differences of intention affect the quality of human actions, resulting in some being perceived as good deeds, others as futile, and some as lacking any moral value, neither good nor bad. While intention is hidden and known only to Allah (SWT), the actions that stem from it are visible⁵². An act can only be judged as morally good when the intention behind it is good, and even a seemingly good action can be considered sinful if it's motivated by an evil intention. This points out the fact that intention is more important and holds greater power in any human act than the deed itself. As the heart is the king of the body and the body parts are soldiers of the king, so if the king has goodness with himself, then likewise his soldiers will have goodness,

⁴⁷ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayrī, *Sahih Muslim: English Translation of Sahih Muslim*, 1st ed, trans. Nasiruddin Khattab (Darussalam, 2007), كتاب الزكاة (*Kitāb al-Zakāh*), باب إثم مانع الركاة (*Bāb Ithm māni' al-Zakāh*), *Hadith no.* 987.

⁴⁸ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 231.

⁴⁹ al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2692.

⁵⁰ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 200.

⁵¹ al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2693.

⁵² al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2693.

and if he is corrupt, then they likewise are corrupted, and so the intention is the actions of the king⁵³.

In other examples offered by al-Ghazali, the act of placing one's forehead on the ground in prayer is meaningless if it lacks the underlying sense of humility in the heart. Similarly, he explains that touching the head of an orphan carries no significance if it is done without sincere compassion in the heart⁵⁴. To gain a clearer understanding of the three categories of actions, good, bad, and permissible (neither rewarded nor punished) as defined by al-Ghazali, it is essential to explore the underlying intentions that give these actions moral weight. This subtopic aims to examine these types of intentions in greater detail.

3.5.1 Good Intentions

Al-Ghazali defines the first category of actions related to intention as pious actions. He asserts that there exists a singular and unwavering path of virtue channeled through intention, specifically the intention to perform actions for the sake of pleasing God. When an action is performed in alignment with God's command (out of duty), it is deemed good and virtuous. Similarly, if an action aligns solely with God's mercy (through His permission), it is considered acceptable. However, any intention that strays beyond this singular, straight path of virtue is regarded as leading to sinful actions⁵⁵.

Al-Ghazali emphasises that the purity of intention is paramount; only those actions driven by a sincere desire to fulfill God's will or seek His mercy can be deemed pious and righteous. He also notes that when multiple intentions are present, including the intention to please God, the rewards are multiplied. For instance, when a person sits in a mosque with several intentions, they might hope to behold God's presence, wait for the next prayer, keep their bodily organs from sinful acts, concentrate all their thoughts on Allah, and engage in the remembrance of Allah. Each of these intentions enhances the overall piety and virtue of the action⁵⁶.

⁵³ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:1349-1350.

⁵⁴ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2694.

⁵⁵ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 229.

⁵⁶ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2698.

In the scenario of daily tasks, however, for example, a farmer who works with the intention towards both doing what he must do to fulfill his duty to God on one hand, and to feed his family on the other, the intentions can be both objective (pleasing God) and subjective (personal desires, either legitimate or illegitimate)⁵⁷. In this case, the complexity of intention and duty becomes evident. The tension between divine intentions and human desires is a central theme in Islamic ethical discourse, representing the ongoing struggle individuals face in balancing spiritual aspirations with worldly inclinations⁵⁸. Draz identifies intention and duty, in which the duty is further divided into two instances: personal duty (the internal actions, including the duty to God) and social duty (the external actions, ensuring the well-being of others)⁵⁹. Nevertheless, the theory proves to be weak as there are personal duties involved in external actions, such as working for a living, and some social duties involve internal actions, such as loving your neighbor. Therefore, intention and duty are inseparable, whereby intention is a necessary requirement for the moral legitimacy of duty performance, either spiritually or bodily. Revisiting the question, in dealing with the case where one has multiple purposes behind his actions, both objective and subjective purposes, how can the morality of his actions be assessed in relation to his intentions?

From the perspective of some strict Muslim moralists⁶⁰, one's duty is to control desires, follow rules, and desire nothing other than to serve God. To them, "to devote some effort to satisfying human nature is already to establish a god other than God." According to this rule, there is no middle ground between good and evil motives; when thoughts are not centred on God, they are considered against Him. With regards to the case of the farmer, his thoughts while working will be considered contrary to God if they are not centred on God.

However, moderate thinkers disagree with the strict Muslim moralists who assert that any thought or desire not focused on God puts man against Him. Abu Bakr al-Baqillani, among them, labeled these strict moralists as heretics. He questions

⁵⁷ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 228.

⁵⁸ Edy Sismarwoto, 'Islamic Ethical Value of Customary Basis of Marriage Proposal Application in Indonesia', *Indian Journal of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology* 14, no. 3 (2020): 1879–82, <https://doi.org/10.37506/ijfimt.v14i3.10692>.

⁵⁹ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 189.

⁶⁰ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 217.

whether it is practical or even humanly possible to completely detach man from human nature. He argues, which was quoted and approved by al-Ghazali⁶¹, Al-Baqillani questioned, "They wanted to protect believers from worshipping self-interest," but by assuming humans could achieve such perfection, they were committing the very sin they aimed to avoid, as only God possesses such perfection⁶².

This raises the question of whether any person could genuinely have no concern for their own well-being and disregard any consequences or outcomes of their actions. According to Aristotle⁶³, 'every man naturally wills happiness; and from this natural willing are caused all other willing, since whatever a man wills, he wills on account of the end.' He refers to this doctrine as eudaimonism, which is the view that happiness and human flourishing are the highest ends of life⁶⁴. A Christian philosopher and theologian, Saint Anselm of Canterbury, introduced a theory that there are two basic affections of the will, affection for advantage and affection for justice⁶⁵. The affection for advantage represents the human inclination toward self-interest and personal benefit. It compels people to do things they think will benefit them, either materially, socially, or psychologically. Anselm was aware that this love is a human aspect of motivation, as it is a wish to be personally satisfied and happy. Affection for justice embodies the moral and ethical dimensions of human will. It compels individuals to act in accordance with what is right and just, often prioritising fairness, duty, and the welfare of others over personal gain. This love aligns with the broader moral responsibilities people hold towards God and other human beings. Self-interest should be pursued only insofar as it is compatible with the pursuit of justice⁶⁶. Anselm further contended that justice was the higher virtue, in every respect preferable and to be pursued in all ways possible. Whoever wills what is in agreement with the affections of justice, that man alone is truly happy⁶⁷. For as Kant says, man's duty comes from

⁶¹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2934.

⁶² Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 217.

⁶³ John E. Hare, 'Divine Command', *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 2013, <https://philpapers.org/rec/HARDC>.

⁶⁴ 'Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "eudaemonism,"' *Merriam-Webster.Com Dictionary*, accessed 14 October 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eudaemonism>.

⁶⁵ Gregory B. Sadler, 'Saint Anselm on Anger, The Will, and Virtue', 20 September 2024, <https://gregorybsadler.substack.com/p/saint-anselm-on-anger-the-will-and>.

⁶⁶ Hare, 'Divine Command', 188–90.

⁶⁷ Jasper Hopkins and Philosophy Documentation Center, 'Anselm on Freedom and the Will: A Discussion of G. Stanley Kane's Interpretation of Anselm', *Philosophy Research Archives* 9 (1983): 471–93, <https://doi.org/10.5840/pr198398>.

obeying the commandment of God, for it is God who combines the will to fulfill his own purposes with happiness.

Islam encourages Muslims to fulfill their obligations and commitments. In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Supporting the family, on the chapter “The Superiority of Providing for One's Family”, Hadith number 5351, Narrated Abu Mas'ud Al-Ansari: The Prophet said, "When a Muslim spends something on his family intending to receive Allah's reward, it is regarded as Sadaqa for him."⁶⁸ Additionally, another Hadith from the same book in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, on chapter “The Obligatory to Spend for One's Wife and Household”, hadith number 5355, narrated by Abu Huraira, states, "The best alms is that which is given when one is rich, and a giving hand is better than a taking one, and you should start first to support your dependents."⁶⁹ Finally, from *Sahih al-Bukhari*, also from the same book, on the chapter “A Man's Serving His Family.” hadith number 5363, Narrated Al-Aswad bin Yazid: I asked 'Aisha, "What did the Prophet use to do at home?" She said, "He used to work for his family, and when he heard the Adhan (call for the prayer), he would go out."⁷⁰ These teachings underline that Allah and the Prophet himself love those who feed their families, and moreover, those who toil to support their families with the view of getting a reward by satisfying God. Every action, even the pursuit of worldly gains, should be carried out with good intentions, which can only reside in the hearts of those who possess knowledge. As previously discussed in this study, the nature of intention aligns with one's motives. If someone realises that their motive in carrying out an action lacks piety, they should refrain from doing it, as their intention will also lack piety, and intention shapes the action. These very actions will be questioned on the Day of Judgement.

This is why al-Ghazali ends up reiterating that everything ought to be performed with clear intention. Before acting or choosing inaction, one must thoroughly understand the intention behind it, considering both the worldly benefits and the

⁶⁸ al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, كتاب النفقات (*Kitāb al-Nafaqāt*), باب فَضْلِ النَّفَقَةِ عَلَى الْأَهْلِ (*Bāb Faḍl al-Nafaqah 'alā al-Ahl*), Ḥadīth no. 5351.

⁶⁹ al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, كتاب النفقات (*Kitāb al-Nafaqāt*), باب وَجُوبِ النَّفَقَةِ عَلَى الْأَهْلِ وَالْعِيَالِ (*Bāb Wujūb al-Nafaqah 'alā al-Ahl wa al-'Iyāl*), Ḥadīth no. 5355.

⁷⁰ al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, كتاب النفقات (*Kitāb al-Nafaqāt*), باب خِدْمَةِ الرَّجُلِ فِي أَهْلِهِ (*Bāb Khidmat al-Rajul fī Ahlihī*), Ḥadīth no. 5363.

potential losses in the hereafter. Even abstaining from an action requires the right intention, as not doing something is itself an act that should be guided by true intention.

“So, if you are one of those determination and intelligence, and not of the deceived, then, consider yourself, and account it tightly, before it would be tightened on you, and watch your states minutely, and neither move nor keep quiet unless you know well what you intend by your motion or quietness, and what you get thereby from this world and what would you lose from the hereafter, and by which thing the world becomes preponderant to the hereafter. If you know well that there is no motive other than religion, put your determination and what has occurred to your mind to practice, by permission of Allah Almighty, otherwise, abstain from doing it. On the other hand, watch your heart in your abstention, for not to do a thing is regarded an act in itself, which also needs a true intention”⁷¹

The true intention here refers to sincere intention. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur’an, “Except Your servants among them, sincere and purified (by Your grace).” (15:40). A servant can only escape the influence of Satan by being sincere in their worship of Allah (SWT). Ma’ruf Al-Karkhi would often rebuke himself, saying, “O myself! Be sincere (in your worship to Allah), perchance you would get rid (of Satan).”⁷² Sincerity means being pure and stainless; if it is mixed with anything else, it ceases to be pure⁷³. Any deed done for a purpose other than the sake of God, no matter how small or large, taints that purity, making it insincere.

Thus, for a person with multiple intentions in their actions, the true moral value lies in the intention to act for the sake of God. People are often preoccupied with their own desires and worldly concerns, making it rare for any of their deeds or acts of worship to be entirely free from such distractions. This is why it is said, “Whoever has even a single moment in their life where they are sincerely devoted to the Countenance of Allah Almighty has indeed been saved.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2702-2703.

⁷² al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2711.

⁷³ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2713-2714.

⁷⁴ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2714.

This is because the rarest, most difficult, and highest of all good intentions is the one that regards the glory of God as deserving of the utmost obedience. If someone has two motives behind their actions: one to show off and the other to worship God, and the desire to show off is stronger than the intention to worship, the deeds will be fruitless, harmful, and lead to punishment. However, if the intention to worship God is stronger, the action is deserving of reward and is morally righteous⁷⁵. As Allah (SWT) says: “Then shall anyone who has done an atom’s weight of good see it, and anyone who has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it.” (99:7-8)

3.5.2 Innocent Intention

Al-Ghazali defined innocent intention as an intention that is directed toward permissible or lawful actions⁷⁶. It is considered innocent when it aims for legitimate goals while avoiding ignoble ones. Such an intention does not strive for the nobility of selfless devotion but instead settles for a middle ground, guided by a lawful interest permitted by Islamic law. While these actions are legally acceptable, they hold no value in terms of Islamic teachings, offering neither reward nor punishment, and are viewed as imperfect⁷⁷. However, with a small improvement, such as purifying one's intention to act as an act of worship to God, these actions could become among the most rewarding acts of worship. If one chooses to remain in the middle ground, it is a significant loss, as it may not result in punishment in the hereafter, but it will diminish one's bliss in the hereafter.

Similar to al-Ghazali's views, Draz argued that for an intention to be considered innocent, two conditions must be met: first, the goals, and second, the means⁷⁸. Both the goals and the means must be legally permissible according to moral, legal, and Sharia law. Al-Ghazali posits that the individual must ensure that their actions are not motivated by a desire for something forbidden or to have any hidden inclination⁷⁹. If

⁷⁵ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2721.

⁷⁶ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2700-2701.

⁷⁷ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur’an*, 218.

⁷⁸ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur’an*, 219.

⁷⁹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2703.

either condition is not met, the intention or action is no longer considered innocent but becomes sinful.

In the case of the farmer who's working but his intention for working does not reach the nobility of selfless devotion to God but rather settles for a middle ground, being guided by a legitimate interest that is legal by law, such as working solely to feed himself, these actions are legally acceptable but hold no value in Islamic teachings and are considered an imperfection. If someone works merely for personal gain and financial security, it aligns with basic human desires but lacks higher moral significance. As narrated in *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, The book of Jihad, on the chapter of "The One Who Fights Seeking Reward And Fame", hadith number 3140, Abu 'Umamah Al-Bahili said: "A man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: 'What do you think of a man who fights seeking reward and fame - what will he have?' The Messenger of Allah said: 'He will not have anything.' He repeated it three times, and the Prophet (SAW) said to him: 'He will not have anything.' Then he said: 'Allah does not accept any deed, except that which is purely for Him, and seeking His Face.'"⁸⁰ In this case, the individual's intention behind the action is simply to perform it without any desire for human praise or unlawful motives. Such an action neither merits praise nor is considered sinful.

This leads to a question that has sparked significant debate among Muslim moralists⁸¹. From the previous discussion, actions or virtues performed to gain worldly benefits, such as rewards or praise from others, are deemed impure and sinful. But then would it be equally wrong had the exact action or virtue be done with the hope of being rewarded by God, or were it done in the hope of being punished? It is undeniable that human beings were intended to serve God with a heart of purity. Focusing on the outcomes, whether pleasant or unpleasant, can shift one's motivation towards self-interest. However, hope and fear are not inherently negative; they are integral to the human experience⁸². Hope and fear, as the two elements, are important in forming attitudes and behaviours when directed to God as the ultimate goal and can be

⁸⁰ Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb Nasa'i et al., *Sunan Al-Nasā'ī: English Translation of Sunan An-Nasā'ī*, 1st ed (Darussalam, 2007) vol. 1, كتاب الجهاد (*Kitāb al-Jihād*), باب مَنْ غَزَا يَلْتَمِسُ الْأَجْرَ وَالذِّكْرَ (*Bāb man ghazā yaltamis al-ajr wa al-dhikr*), Hadith no. 3140.

⁸¹ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 220.

⁸² Khwala Almulla and Mohsin Khan Abbasi, 'The Concept of Hope in Islamic Traditional Ideology: A Discussion on Imam Al-Ghazali's Thoughts', *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 11 (2024): 1092, <https://doi.org/10.61707/86ktk557>.

considered a “praiseworthy” attribute⁸³. Unlike the fear and hope directed towards people, which can lead to hypocrisy and cowardice, fear and hope directed towards God inspire genuine drive and dedication. Hope is a valuable quality because it serves as a source of motivation. It drives individuals to strive toward their goals and persevere, even in difficult situations. The state of despair, conversely, is harmful and counterproductive; it puts energy and focus away from productive effort. Fear, contrary to being the opposite of hope, complements it. Fear can be a powerful motivator, just as hope is, by instilling a sense of awe and urgency⁸⁴. While hope encourages us to pursue our aspirations, fear can drive us to act with caution and vigilance⁸⁵. Al-Ghazali emphasised in his Book of Fear and Hope that if both attributes are balanced together, it can enhance one’s commitment to spiritual and moral endeavors.

Hence, between the intention that is completely pure and deserving of praise and reward, and the intention that is impure and condemned as sinful, there exists a relative, moderate purity that neither merits praise nor blame⁸⁶. This concept is supported by the Quran, as Allah says, “Surely those who have believed, emigrated, and struggled in the Way of Allah—they can hope for Allah’s mercy. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (2:218). This verse demonstrates that every individual has a legitimate right to hope for Allah's mercy. But Allah (SWT) grants this right primarily to those who sincerely seek His mercy⁸⁷. This verse shows that each person has a valid right of hope for the mercy of Allah. But Allah (SWT) grants this right primarily to those who sincerely seek His mercy⁸⁸. Consequently, whereas obedience as a result of fear of punishment and expectation of rewards is obviously less noble than the obedience performed by pure intention, as noted by Draz in his work, al-Ghazali wrote that this is still permissible and is similar to the faith of basic believers with a simple understanding⁸⁹. It is important to recognise that merely settling for this middle ground, when a greater reward can be achieved through sincere and pure intention, constitutes

⁸³ Fatemeh Bahmani et al., ‘The Concepts of Hope and Fear in the Islamic Thought: Implications for Spiritual Health’, *Journal of Religion and Health* 57, no. 1 (2018): 57–71, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-016-0336-2>.

⁸⁴ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2495.

⁸⁵ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2485.

⁸⁶ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur’an*, 221.

⁸⁷ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2485-2486.

⁸⁸ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2485-2486.

⁸⁹ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur’an*, 224.

a significant loss. One should always strive to seek Allah's pleasure through genuine and pure intention.

Upholding pure intention in actions for the sake of God yields numerous benefits: internal clarity, enhanced performance of duty, and, for those who act with a focus on results, such as a farmer who intended on working solely to feed his family, it invites mental anguish caused by anticipating specific outcomes and the potential regret and distress of unknown results. Consequently, in any activity that is geared towards the achievement of personal interests like working to provide for a family or studying for exams, it must be performed with the intent of doing that action as a worship to God the Creator. One should not do it simply because it is an obligation, routine, or even tradition, but one should delve into one's conscience and sincerely question why this duty should be performed, identifying the specific motives that drive them to act. This ensures that the action is not carried out due to external pressure, natural inclination, or habit, but in accordance with divine law that calls us to act in a certain way⁹⁰. By abiding by this good faith that comes with sincere intention, even if the personal goals are not achieved, one will find peace in knowing that their effort was made for the sake of Allah. Islam does not dismiss self-interest; rather, it encourages a person to adopt a self-interested approach with the aim of maximizing their well-being and equity. Such intentions are exactly commendable when steered by these principles. Islam also provides a spiritual framework that aligns material pursuits and personal desires with individuals' spiritual and personal goals⁹¹. Through the combination of these elements, Islam ensures that they will not interfere, but on the contrary, will help one another, which will lead to a balanced life and provide the base for the enhancement of the true human welfare and fulfillment.

⁹⁰ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 209.

⁹¹ Ibnomer Mohamed Sharfuddin, 'Toward An Islamic Administrative Theory', *American Journal of Islam and Society* 4, no. 2 (1987): 238, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v4i2.2859>.

3.5.3 Bad Intentions

Al-Ghazali differentiates between morals and manners⁹². Morality is the inner drive and inclination, as well as the disposition that influences a person's behaviour. They are not the performance of good or bad acts, nor even the capacity to do them; they are rather those inward principles which prompt a man to act or refrain from action. On the contrary, outward behaviours and actions are known as manners, which are a result of these inner morals. They represent the outer reflection of internal personality. In *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, al-Ghazali justifies that deeds that result in good actions, as per the Islamic law and reason, are deemed as good manners. Conversely, deeds resulting in unacceptable actions are deemed bad manners. In his opinion, good manners are perceived as “removing all bad habits that Islamic legislation has detailed.” Hence, when one has committed sin in his actions or deeds where he portrays sinful conduct, he is not showing good manners, which means that his conduct is not morally right. This suggests that their inner expressions or intentions are flawed as well. Al-Ghazali also emphasised that the case of a sinful action that is done with good intentions does not make the act virtuous or right. It is still considered morally wrong and goes against what God commands.

To elaborate further, Draz's work substantiates and extends Al-Ghazali's theoretical stance. Draz examined this issue with two questions: Can a morally good action, if done with bad intentions, still be considered morally good? And can a morally bad action, if done with good intentions, be considered morally good? ⁹³ To address the first question, if someone performs an action that is ethically right and aligns with legal and Islamic principles but with bad intentions, Muslim moralists argue that it is still considered morally wrong due to the intention, even if the action is legally permissible. Such actions are ethically blameworthy. In *Sahih Muslim, The Book of Virtue, Enjoining Good Manners, and Joining of the Ties of Kinship*, chapter “The Prohibition Of Wronging, Forsaking, Or Despising A Muslim And The Inviolability Of His Blood, Honor And Wealth”, hadith number 2564, The Prophet (SAW) said, “Verily Allah does

⁹² Mohammed Hassan Al-Awamreh, ‘Al-Imam Al-Ghazali's View of Moral Education: Its Purposes and Pillars’, *US-China Education Review B* 6, no. 5 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.17265/2161-6248/2016.05.004>.

⁹³ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 195.

not look to your bodies nor to your faces, but He looks to your hearts.”⁹⁴ Hence, it can be understood that for an action to be morally and religiously good, intention and action should be considered in their entirety. They should not be viewed as purely internal or purely external but as an interaction between the two, which must embrace both simultaneously. For the second question, it is not enough for a good intention alone to define moral goodness; the action must also comply with moral law, the established societal laws (legal law), and most importantly, Shari’a law. However, simply abiding by these laws does not define good morality without good intentions. As Kant says, “It might very well ensure legality, but never morality.”

Thus, in Islam, both the action and the intention must be pure for an outcome to be justified. If either is flawed, it is not acceptable. Islam demands that both the intention and the means of action be pure. As the Prophet not only said, “(The value of) an action depends on the intention behind it. A man will be rewarded only for what he intended.”⁹⁵ In Sahih Muslim, on The Book on Government, chapter “The Words of the Prophets: ‘Deeds are but with intentions’ which Includes Fighting and other Deeds”, hadith number 1907. He also said, in another narration in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, The Book of Judicial Decisions, on the chapter “Rejection of Wrong Rulings and of Newly-Invented Matters” hadith number 1718, “He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf (Islam), that is to be rejected.”⁹⁶ If someone knowingly uses sinful means to achieve a goal, they are acting in ignorance despite their awareness, and this ignorance is itself a sin. As Sahl at-Tustari, quoted by al-Ghazali, said, “No sin by which Allah Almighty has ever been disobeyed is more severe than ignorance,” and the only thing worse than ignorance is ignorance of one's own ignorance⁹⁷.

Besides that, similar to al-Ghazali’s views but with different perspectives, Draz also argues that bad intentions can be categorised into several types: the intention to

⁹⁴ Muslim, *Sahih Muslim: English Translation of Sahih Muslim*, كتاب البر والصلة والآداب (Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah wa al-Ādāb), باب تحریم ظلم المسلم وخذلته واختقاره ودمه وعرضه وماله (Bāb Taḥrīm ṭulm al-Muslim wa khadhliḥi wa iḥtiqāriḥi wa damīhi wa ‘irdiḥi wa mālihi), Ḥadith no. 2564.

⁹⁵ Muslim, *Sahih Muslim: English Translation of Sahih Muslim*, كتاب الإمارة (Kitāb al-Imārah), باب قَوْلِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّةِ" وَأَنَّهُ يَدْخُلُ فِيهِ الْغَرُورُ وَغَيْرُهُ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ (Bāb Qawliḥi ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam "Innamā al-a‘māl bi al-niyyah" wa annahu yadkhulu fīhi al-ghazwu wa ghayruhu min al-a‘māl), Ḥadith no. 1907.

⁹⁶ Muslim, *Sahih Muslim: English Translation of Sahih Muslim*, كتاب الأقضية (Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah), باب نَقْضِ الْأَحْكَامِ الْبَاطِلَةِ وَرَدِّ مُخْتَلَاتِ الْأُمُورِ (Bāb Naqḍ al-Aḥkām al-Bāṭilah wa Radd Muḥdathāt al-Umūr), Ḥadith no. 1718.

⁹⁷ al-Ghazali, *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2696.

cause harm, the intention to shirk one's duty, the intention to gain illicit profit, and the intention to show off (ostentation)⁹⁸. Regardless of whether the means used are legal, each of these intentions is still considered morally wrong and deserving of punishment, as the moral value of an action is judged primarily by the underlying motivation or intention, rather than its outward compliance. Consider the case of a farmer who works with the intention of feeding his family, knowing that fulfilling this duty will please God. This represents the purest form of intention. However, if his intention shifts toward using his earnings to purchase something illegal and haram, like alcohol or gambling, then, despite his occupation being lawful, his actions are deemed sinful and morally wrong. In another instance, someone may appear to be law-abiding, maintaining a pious appearance and a facade of righteousness, while secretly harboring malicious intentions. By manipulating the law and using their outward piety to achieve selfish goals, they exemplify what Draz describes as the most hideous attitude toward any law⁹⁹. The Quran refers to this as making a mockery of Allah's words. Allah says in the Holy Quran,

Such are the limits ordained by Allah; whoever transgresses the limits ordained by Allah has wronged himself¹⁰⁰.

Maududi writes, commenting on this Quran injunction, Islam possesses a distinctive criterion of good and evil, its own source of moral law, and its own sanctions and motivation, and through them, it enforces the well-known and generally recognised moral virtues in all spheres of life after fitting them into a balanced and comprehensive scheme¹⁰¹. Therefore, this consensus among aligned thinkers significantly reinforces and validates al-Ghazali's views. It is our obligation to follow the laws prescribed to us in order to live a life in harmony with the divine will. By adhering to these boundaries set by Allah, we align our intentions and actions with a moral framework that guides us toward the greater good and ultimate happiness, both in this life and the hereafter. Upholding the moral virtues prescribed by Islam not only protects our own souls but also promotes the flourishing of a just and balanced society, where the principles of

⁹⁸ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 229–35.

⁹⁹ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 230.

¹⁰⁰ Abdur-Rahman Nasir As-Sa'di, *Tafseer As-Sa'di Juz' 28-30*, vol. 10, ed. Huda Khattab, trans. Nasiruddin Al-Khattab, *International Islamic Publishing House*, (2018): 135, <https://www.kalamullah.com/Books/Tafseer-As-Sadi-Volume-10-Juz-28-30.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ Sharfuddin, 'Toward an Islamic Administrative Theory', 235.

good and evil are clearly understood and upheld. However, even the best law is rendered ineffective without the goodwill of the people to whom it applies. The most harmful way to sabotage a law is not by openly resisting it but by neglecting to put it into practice¹⁰². Hence, it is important to be true in every one of our intentions and actions to the laws that have been prescribed to us, the moral law, legal law, and most importantly, Shari'a law. In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, The Book of Good Manners and Form, chapter "O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and be with those who are true." hadith number 6094, the Prophet (SAW) said: "Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fajur (i.e., wickedness, evil-doing), and Al-Fajur (wickedness) leads to the (Hell) Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar."¹⁰³ Narrated on the authority of Muhammad Ibn Ali Al-Kinani, quoted by al-Ghazali, "We have found that the religion of Allah Almighty is based on three principles: Truth, truthfulness, and justice. Truth pertains to organs and parts of the body, justice to hearts, truthfulness to the mind."

Al-Ghazali categorised truthfulness into six types: truthfulness in speech, intention and will, determination, fulfilling determination, action, and achieving all religious stations. Truthfulness in speech involves always telling the truth in news and narrations, whether about past events, future predictions, or fulfilling promises. It means ensuring that what you say reflects reality accurately and is not misleading. The most straightforward form of truthfulness is to speak clearly and directly, without altering or misrepresenting facts. If you describe things accurately and avoid distortion, you are being truthful. However, there are situations where indirect communication or allusion might be necessary, such as making peace between conflicting parties or protecting sensitive information. In these cases, the intention behind the speech should be to serve the greater good or align with ethical or religious guidelines. The essence of truthfulness lies in the intention and purpose behind the speech, rather than its literal accuracy. If the intention is to adhere to truth for the sake of Allah and align with religious principles,

¹⁰² Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 230.

¹⁰³ al-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 8, كتاب الأدب (*Kitāb al-Adab*), باب قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: {يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ} وَمَا يُنْهَى عَنِ الْكَذِبِ (Bāb Qawl Allāh Ta'ālā: "Yā ayyuhā alladhīna āmanū ittaqū Allāh wa kūnū ma'a al-ṣādiqīn" wa mā yunhā'an al-kadhib), Ḥadīth no. 6094.

one can still be considered truthful even if the speech is not fully transparent, as long as it serves a valid purpose¹⁰⁴.

The second type of truthfulness is in intention and will. This form emphasises that all actions, whether active or passive, should be motivated solely by the desire to please Allah. It reflects the need for pure, sincere intentions, free from personal gain or worldly benefits, and involves harmonizing one's desires with worshipping God¹⁰⁵. The next type is truthfulness in determination. This refers to having a sincere and unwavering commitment to act according to one's promises or goals¹⁰⁶. It means having a strong resolve without hesitation, reluctance, or personal inclinations that might undermine commitment. The fourth type is truthfulness in fulfilling determination. This involves translating one's resolve into actual deeds and overcoming obstacles or desires that may weaken one's determination¹⁰⁷. As Allah (SWT) states: "Among the believers are men who have proven true to what they pledged to Allah..." (33:23). This underscores that while intention is crucial, action is also essential for achieving moral perfection. True perfection is attained when good intentions are translated into actions, resulting in multiplied rewards¹⁰⁸.

The fifth type of truthfulness is truthfulness in deeds. This form of truthfulness involves ensuring that one's external actions accurately reflect the true state of one's inner self. It means striving to align one's outward behaviours with one's internal feelings and intentions, rather than allowing them to conflict. Truthfulness in deeds requires that one's internal state be consistent with one's outward actions. If someone's external behaviour is intentionally misleading, such as acting piously to impress others while their internal intentions are insincere, it is considered hypocrisy. On the other hand, if there is an unintentional discrepancy between one's internal state and external actions, it reflects a lack of truthfulness¹⁰⁹. To truly embody this type of truthfulness, one must aim for sincerity in both private and public aspects of life, striving for the internal self to be as righteous as, or better than, the external appearance. This concept

¹⁰⁴ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2728.

¹⁰⁵ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2730.

¹⁰⁶ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2730.

¹⁰⁷ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2731.

¹⁰⁸ Draz, *The Moral World of The Qur'an*, 197.

¹⁰⁹ al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 4:2733.

is reflected in the sayings of the Prophet (SAW), from *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, The Book of Supplication, chapter “The Supplication: “O Allah Make My Secret Better Than My Apparent Condition””, hadith number 3586, who taught Umar al-Khattab, saying: “O Allah, make my secret better than my apparent condition, and make my apparent condition righteous...”¹¹⁰ which emphasises the importance of internal sincerity and external integrity.

The sixth type of truthfulness is truthfulness in the spiritual stations of religion, which is considered the highest and most esteemed form of truthfulness. This involves a deep and sincere engagement with various spiritual states such as fear, hope, honor, asceticism, contentment, reliance on Allah, and love for Him. These spiritual stations have their own beginnings, progressions, and ultimate realities. To be truly truthful in these stations means to fully realise and embody their ultimate truths. This requires not only recognizing these states but deeply living them out in one’s faith and actions. Achieving the ultimate understanding of these spiritual stations is extremely difficult due to their infinite nature. Each person’s level of truthfulness in these areas varies according to their strengths and weaknesses. The degrees of truthfulness are endless; someone who is truthful across all these six categories is seen as a true affirmer and lover of truth. Conversely, if a person is only truthful in one particular area, they are considered truthful only in relation to that specific aspect.

3.6 SYNTHESIS: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR AL-GHAZALI’S VIEWS OF INTENTION

Thus, from the thorough discussion on al-Ghazali's views of intention, this study has synthesised its principles into the analytical framework presented below. This framework serves a dual purpose: first, to provide a structured means for understanding this ethical theory, and second, to be used as a tool to evaluate the relevance of integrating these views in order to enhance the usage of Generative AI among university students. It will directly guide the analysis of the interview data with students and lecturers in Chapter 4.

¹¹⁰ Muḥammad ibn ‘Isa Tirmidhi, *English Translation of Jami‘ At-Tirmidhi*, 1st ed, trans. Abu Khalil (Darussalam, 2007), vol. 6, كتاب الدعوات (*Kitāb al-Da‘awāt*), علانيي، "اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ سِرِّي خَيْرًا مِنْ عَلَانِيَتِي، (Bāb mā jā‘a fī du‘ā’): "Allāhumma ij‘al sirrī khayran min ‘alāniyatī")", Ḥadīth no. 3586.

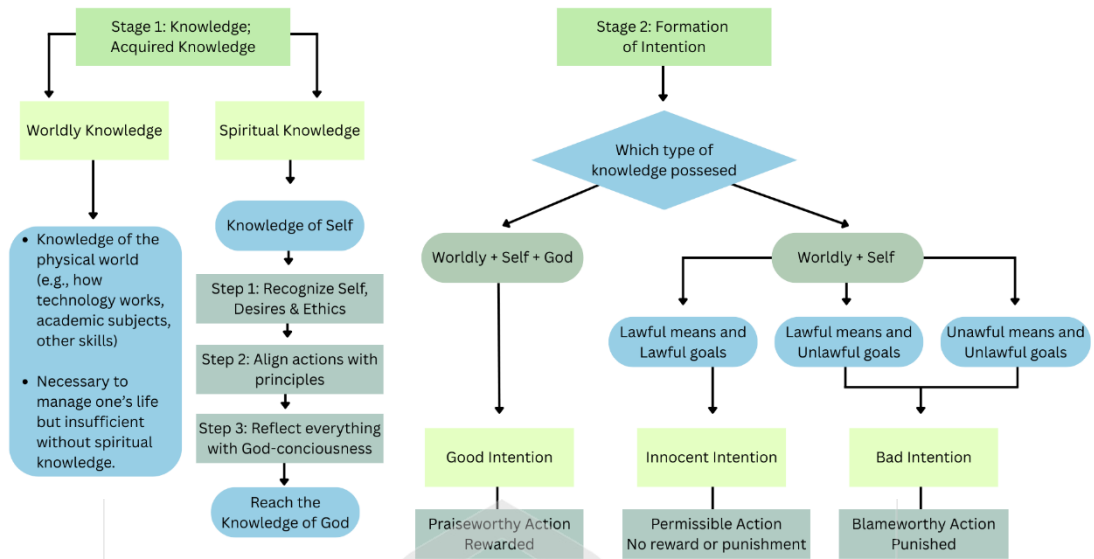


Table 3.1 Explanation of Al-Ghazali's Intention Framework Components

Component	Definition & Role in the Framework
Foundation: Knowledge	The prerequisite for any intention. The type and depth of knowledge determine the quality of the intention that can be formed.
Worldly Knowledge	Understanding of the temporal, physical world (e.g., the functions and limitations of Generative AI). Necessary but insufficient for an ethical and spiritually aligned action.
Spiritual Knowledge	The key to forming a sound intention comprises two parts:
Knowledge of Self	A deep self-awareness of one's desires and motivations, allowing for ethical self-regulation.
Knowledge of God	The culmination, where actions are performed sincerely for God, provides the highest moral anchor but can only be reached if one fully possesses the three stages of Knowledge of Self.

Formation: Intention	The moral driver of an action, classified by the knowledge that formed it:
Good Intention	Formed with Worldly + Self + God Knowledge. It is sincere, God-conscious, and leads to praiseworthy action.
Bad Intention	Formed when knowledge is used consciously for a deceptive or harmful purpose. It is blameworthy.
Innocent Intention	Formed with Worldly Knowledge for a lawful, neutral goal. It is permissible but holds no moral value.

3.6.1 Integration of al-Ghazali's Framework into the Interview Design

This subsection aims to describe how the theoretical framework based on al-Ghazali's views, specifically the first stage of the framework concerning knowledge, was operationalised systematically into the structured interview protocols for students and lecturers' respondents. The general principle applied to the translation was the one established by al-Ghazali, that is, if ethical intention is predicated on knowledge, then evaluating a student's capacity for ethical ChatGPT use requires first assessing their possession of the requisite knowledge. This reasoning guided the whole interview design, establishing different but parallel protocols between both student and lecturer respondents.

For students, the framework was operationalised as a three-tier diagnostic protocol. The interview questions were structured in a way that each question was matched to one category of knowledge being studied, creating a direct mapping of theory to instrument. The interview questions of both students and lecturers' respondents can be found in Appendix B. To evaluate the first section of knowledge, Worldly Knowledge, questions 1-3 were designed to explore the instrumental knowledge that the students had of ChatGPT, including its abilities, limitations, and academic concerns. Next, the second section, Knowledge of Self, is discussed through the questions of personal goal-setting and ethical conflict, which were designed in questions 4-5. Lastly, on Knowledge of God, which can only be gained when one has

successfully acquired the 3 stages of knowledge of Self, that can be viewed from the framework, questions 6-8 explore how students relate the use of ChatGPT with their spiritual values and their embodiment of God-consciousness. With this incorporation of framework in the interview questions, the researchers can determine whether or not the students possess or are able to possess the knowledge required to enable them to have an ethical intention that potentially resulting to a more appropriate use of ChatGPT.

Next, for lecturers, the framework was used to inform a two-phase exploratory protocol that transitioned from observation to an evaluatory perspective. Phase One of the interviews, which consists of questions 1-3, was designed to assess lecturers' general observations of the role and effects of ChatGPT in the educational field, and explore their firsthand experiences in managing its common use among the students under their supervision. Moving to phase two, which consists of questions 4-11, where al-Ghazali's theoretical framework of intention is being proposed to the lecturers. In this phase, these systematic questions were analysed: (a) perceived relevance of knowledge-intention-action chain (question 4), (b) the need of each type of knowledge (questions 5-7), (c) the observation of the knowledge usage of students (question 8), and (d) the practical suggestions on how this chain could be implemented in pedagogy and policy (questions 9-11).

Therefore, the instruments of the interview were designed as direct methodological analogies to the theoretical framework. The student interview questions reflect its evaluative design, which diagnoses the knowledge possession. While the lecturer's interview questions embody its applicative discourse, evaluating the relevance of the framework and proposing its implementation.

3.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of intention, introduced by al-Ghazali, reveals its profound significance in determining the moral and spiritual value of human actions. The insights presented by al-Ghazali bring out the light of intention as the driving factor that can make human actions in line with the seeking of ultimate knowledge about God, as well as ethical integrity. In his view, intention is not an abstract; it is the very essence that

breathes life into action, transforming it from a mere physical movement to a morally significant deed.

Men's actions are determined by their intentions, with knowledge as the basis for the intention. Without this base, intention becomes aimless, and action becomes devoid of true purpose. Al-Ghazali's perspective emphasises that in order for an action to be truly ethical, it must arise from the wellspring of genuine intention to strive towards harmony with divine will and align with the highest moral principles. Human excellence is derived from the relentless pursuit of self-improvement. Al-Ghazali's teachings remind us that this path, guided by pure and informed intentions, is not merely a means to an end but the embodiment of moral and spiritual fulfillment. The pursuit of ethical integrity, therefore, is an ongoing process where each step taken with sincere intention brings man closer to the divine truth and ultimate purpose.

In the contemporary world, when the consequences of the actions are often valued above the motives behind them, al-Ghazali's teachings provide a distinctive reminder that it is the righteousness of the intentions that matters in the end, regardless of how ethical the performing actions themselves are. This principle extends beyond religious practice, touching every aspect of human existence where intention and action intersect. Whether in personal conduct, social responsibility, or the ethical application of technology, the alignment of intention with the necessary knowledge serves as the fundamental basis for maintaining ethical conduct and spiritual soundness. Thus, the study of intention as articulated by al-Ghazali provides a crucial reminder of the intrinsic connection between the inner state of the soul and the outward manifestations of behaviour. By understanding and nurturing pure intentions, and possessing the knowledge of the physical world, knowledge of the self, and ultimately knowledge of God, al-Ghazali believes that one can transcend the superficialities of action, achieving a higher state of moral and spiritual fulfillment.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE APPLICATION OF AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS OF INTENTION IN ENHANCING THE INTEGRITY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (GenAI), ChatGPT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Al-Ghazali's thorough discussion on intention as the foundation of ethical behaviour offers a valuable framework for guiding students' interactions with ChatGPT. The nature of intention in Islamic doctrines is to make sure that any activity that is taken is carried out with purity and the intention of attaining moral and ethical consequences. The primary advantage of the ChatGPT application in the educational setting should be to facilitate and enhance the process of learning for students. From previous discussions, various benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT among university students have been identified and substantiated by research¹. Although the problems linked to ChatGPT have been noted, they should not hinder the adoption of this intelligent AI assistant. Several frameworks have been proposed to solve these problems, yet their practical performance is inadequate to offer solutions that are sustainable and long-term². Taking into consideration the rapid development of these Generative AI platforms, there is a need to closely observe the progress of these GenAI platforms and offer a sustainable solution to effectively address the challenges they present. This chapter will therefore aim to discuss the position of the modern philosopher al-Ghazali, especially his views on intention and how it can be used to boost academic honesty and advance responsible application of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in the education system. By addressing the issue from the perspective of human morality, this approach seeks to offer a more enduring solution. This study believes that recognizing the role of human morality in shaping individual decisions and ethical frameworks will lead to a more effective approach in navigating the complex challenges of the modern world.

¹ Ahmed M. Hasanein and Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, 'Drivers and Consequences of ChatGPT Use in Higher Education: Key Stakeholder Perspectives', *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education* 13, no. 11 (2023): 2612, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe13110181>.

² Erich Prem, 'From Ethical AI Frameworks to Tools: A Review of Approaches', *AI and Ethics* 3, no. 3 (2023): 711, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-023-00258-9>.

Al-Ghazali held that forming a proper intention is grounded in knowledge, particularly divine knowledge. But in order to attain this divine knowledge, one must first understand oneself, specifically the nature of one's soul and one's inclination. This self-awareness is crucial as it enables them to cultivate a deeper connection with God, guiding them toward actions that are ethically and spiritually aligned. Through self-awareness, one can cultivate virtuous attributes, as humans were created in the form of God³ and are viewed as microcosmic reflections of the macrocosmic divine attributes⁴. This suggests that while humans may not fully embody these attributes, they have the inherent potential to manifest them through their intentions and actions.

Possessing knowledge of both God and oneself, allows individuals to sense God's presence, which is crucial for daily activities, such as in the context of this study, students' use of ChatGPT in their learning. When students are aware and understand that God sees and observes all their actions and even their intentions, they are more likely to approach their use of ChatGPT with greater care and ethical consideration. Thus, students should acquire an understanding of the ethical implications of their actions from a moral and Islamic law perspective first, before intending to use ChatGPT. It is also essential that the students understand what ChatGPT can do and what it cannot do, just as it is important for them to have clarity on their personal educational goals and to understand that the purpose of using AI in education is to support and deepen their understanding of subjects, rather than merely completing assignments. Although ChatGPT is capable of producing information and helping with tasks, it may not always provide accurate or reliable answers. It is with this knowledge and awareness that the students will be better equipped to form the right intentions, leading to more effective and truthful use of ChatGPT. Intention plays an important role in directing and molding one's behaviour. An example is that when students rely on ChatGPT with a goal of enhancing their comprehension of a topic, it has a higher chance of making the content generated more critical. This practice enhances their learning experience and creates an academic integrity culture. Al-Ghazali's teachings suggest that even the most ordinary acts with the appropriate intention can transform into acts of worship and righteousness.

³ Sayari et al., 'Image of God and Image of Human Being: A Philosophical Investigation of the God-Human and Human-Machine Relationships', 172.

⁴ Imran H. Khan Suddahazai, 'Examining the Concept of Educational Leadership from the Classical Islamic Worldview', *Khazanah Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 1 (2023): 34, <https://doi.org/10.15575/kp.v5i1.25283>.

Similarly, using ChatGPT with sincere educational intentions can transform it into a tool for genuine intellectual growth. Conversely, if a student's intention in using ChatGPT is not to enhance their understanding of the subject matter or to engage genuinely with the learning process but to complete assignments with minimal effort and cheating, this action, though permissible, is still morally wrong and violates principles of academic integrity. Such actions are considered blameworthy and contrary to the teachings of Islam⁵.

Based on this discussion, it is evident that the role of intention is very critical towards improving how ChatGPT is used among university students. This paper seeks to establish this through conducting interviews with teachers and students to understand their perception regarding the applicability of the views of al-Ghazali on the intention to improve academic integrity in using generative AI platforms, particularly ChatGPT. The qualitative nature of these interviews will contribute to the reliability and quality of the study, as they provide in-depth insights and evidence to support the research objectives. By exploring these perspectives, the study seeks to understand how intention, guided by ethical and Islamic principles, can improve the educational experience and uphold academic standards in the context of using AI tools.

4.2 EXPLORING THE APPLICABILITY OF AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS OF INTENTION TO STUDENT INTEGRITY IN THE USE OF CHATGPT

4.2.1 Students' Awareness of ChatGPT

The interview began with a few questions identifying the level of students' awareness of the capabilities and limitations of ChatGPT, which is the main component of worldly knowledge from stage 1 of al-Ghazali's analytical framework⁶. The respondents were university students from various disciplines, including Civil Engineering, Science, Biomedical Science, and Islamic Education, across several universities in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The purpose of gathering data on the students' awareness of ChatGPT is connected to the theoretical framework proposed by al-Ghazali, particularly his emphasis on the role of knowledge in forming the right intention. According to al-

⁵ Sa'idu Isa, 'An Appraisal of Examination Malpractice in the Perspectives of Islamic Thought', *Ilorin Journal of Education (IJE)* Vol 44 (2024): 20–21.

⁶ See al-Ghazali's analytical framework, p. 63.

Ghazali, there are three types of acquired knowledge essential to enhancing one's intentions, and the awareness of ChatGPT's capabilities and limitations falls under the first type, worldly knowledge. For students, being aware of both the advantages and challenges posed by ChatGPT is crucial, as this awareness influences their intentions and shapes how they choose to utilise the platform.

In examining students' understanding of ChatGPT, as well as their awareness of its limitations and benefits, the responses indicate a subtle awareness of both the strengths and weaknesses of this widely discussed generative AI tool. The data gathered shows that most of the student respondents have simultaneously agreed that ChatGPT is highly valuable in their learning journey. Upon being asked to elaborate on the usefulness of this platform, varied answers were captured, showing diverse study practices and academic requirements for each respondent. For instance, Respondent 1 said that he mostly organised and summarised his lecture notes using ChatGPT, and that this has saved him a lot of time as compared to manually writing the lecture notes⁷. Then, Respondent 2 highlights the practicality of ChatGPT in delivering fast responses, particularly at times when one has to meet strict academic deadlines⁸. This is echoed by Respondent 3, who used ChatGPT for a quick explanation, noting that the responses from ChatGPT are “always spot on.”⁹ Then, Respondent 4, who referred to ChatGPT as an additional academic tool, especially useful when he needs help in simplifying complex or abstract issues to a simpler level¹⁰, and Respondent 5, who admitted that she occasionally used ChatGPT more frequently than she originally intended, due to its convenience¹¹.

This aspect demonstrates the tool's potential in facilitating rapid learning, a feature that many students found especially convenient when they needed immediate or timely responses. Undeniably, ChatGPT has gained a strong presence in the academic setting. The ability of the tool to provide speedy responses and accessible information in a variety of subjects, along with its support for multiple languages, significantly enhances its versatility. Nevertheless, as with any technological innovation, ChatGPT

⁷ Respondent 1, 7 August 2024.

⁸ Respondent 2, 15 August 2024.

⁹ Respondent 3, 15 August 2024.

¹⁰ Respondent 4, 18 August 2024.

¹¹ Respondent 5, 22 August 2024.

possesses both advantages and limitations, and recognizing the duality of this tool is essential, as it encourages a more informed and productive approach to its use. This study, however, seeks to highlight more on the students' awareness of the limitations inherent in ChatGPT, as understanding the negative outcomes associated with technology is crucial for finding effective solutions to the challenges it presents. When students are aware of the potential risks and drawbacks in their utilisation of ChatGPT, it can lead to more thoughtful and effective engagement with the tool.

The results gathered from the interview indicated that the student respondents exhibited a general understanding of the limitations of ChatGPT during their utilisation of this generative AI in their learning journey. Starting from the awareness of Respondent 1, who stated that ChatGPT has no ability to interpret or express emotional undertones¹². He provided an example, highlighting that, unlike the human data gathering process, ChatGPT can portray a sensitive topic, i.e., boycott, in a biased way and potentially overlook certain important aspects due to its inability to convey emotional and empathetic context. He presented a scenario in which a group of individuals was queried about their likelihood of consuming a boycotted product. Human-collected data would yield opposition due to the boycott, whereas data obtained from ChatGPT would produce a more neutral response, resulting in a contextually deficient outcome. This observation aligns with academic concerns over the shortcomings of AI in understanding complex human experiences and ethical considerations in using technology for nuanced decision-making. Supporting this perspective, Respondent 2 expressed a similar concern, stating that she perceives ChatGPT as a tool that occasionally provides outdated information and lacks the ability to apply personal judgment¹³. In addition, all respondents acknowledged ChatGPT's tendency to provide inaccurate information. As Respondent 3 stated, "I know that ChatGPT can provide useful information, but it can also give incorrect answers."¹⁴ She recalled an experience in which ChatGPT provided a reference that was inaccurately attributed to the wrong author, noting the tool's occasional unreliability in sourcing academic information. This particular issue has been a cause of concern in the academic world, not only due to its inaccuracy in citing sources when prompted, but also because

¹² Respondent 1, 7 August 2024.

¹³ Respondent 2, 15 August 2024.

¹⁴ Respondent 3, 15 August 2024.

it often fails to cite any sources at all, which affects the process of verifying the authenticity of the information provided and undermines the proper attribution of credit to the original authors¹⁵. Respondent 4 shared another interesting experience, where he used ChatGPT to answer a specific question but found that the response did not align with the information in his lecture notes¹⁶. He then chose to rely on the lecturer's notes instead, believing that ChatGPT could be inaccurate. In a similar instance, Respondent 5 also received a different answer from ChatGPT when she questioned about a matter to which she was already aware of the correct responses¹⁷.

This shared recognition of ChatGPT's limitations suggests a foundational level of awareness among the respondents. The theme of inaccuracy was consistently mentioned, reflecting a common concern about the reliability of AI-generated content in academic settings. Nevertheless, though each of them recognised a certain drawback, the depth and nuance of their awareness vary. For instance, Respondent 1, a civil engineering student, had a more critical and comprehensive understanding of the limitations of ChatGPT¹⁸. His example on ChatGPT's approach in handling sensitive topics that involve strong emotions, such as the boycott scenario, reflects a deeper awareness of how the absence of human emotion and context in AI-generated responses can lead to ethically or culturally inappropriate interpretations. He went beyond the technical inaccuracies and pointed out the inability of the tool to capture the emotional and ethical dimensions. While other respondents also display a critical awareness of ChatGPT functionality, they are focused more on the technical weaknesses of this platform. For example, Respondents 2 and 3 demonstrated a more practical type of awareness, showing a cautious and responsible approach in using the platform by actively verifying the information gathered from the tool. In contrast, Respondents 4 and 5 demonstrated a more reactive type of awareness. Their recognition of errors occurred only after they noticed inconsistencies between ChatGPT's responses and their preexisting knowledge, suggesting their lack of critical engagement with this GenAI tool.

¹⁵ Mafarhanatul Akmal Ahmad Kamal and Mohd Fadhli Shah Khaidzir, 'Publish or Perish: The Impact of ChatGPT on Future Academics', *Arab World English Journal* 1, no. 1 (2024): 322, <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/ChatGPT.22>.

¹⁶ Respondent 4, 18 August 2024.

¹⁷ Respondent 5, 22 August 2024.

¹⁸ Respondent 1, 7 August 2024.

The interview revealed a spectrum of awareness among the student respondents, varying from critical and proactive to reactive and surface-level. Some students critically evaluated ChatGPT and verified its responses, while others recognised its limitations only after encountering inconsistencies. However, in line with al-Ghazali's framework, knowledge of the platform by itself is not enough to determine the behaviour of how students use ChatGPT; while it is crucial, it does not solely dictate a responsible behaviour. As al-Ghazali posits, one must first have the necessary knowledge before pursuing any intention. Therefore, understanding ChatGPT's capabilities is essential, as it shapes students' perceptions of how to use the tool appropriately. Yet another critical form of knowledge that influences ethical behaviour, from the framework of al-Ghazali's intention, is self-knowledge or self-awareness. Self-awareness is crucial since it adds genuine significance to actions; it is the active understanding of one's choices while performing them. This self-awareness acts as the fundamental link between intentions and actions within the context of human agency. It's the knowledge that leads one towards a more in-depth understanding of Divine awareness.

4.2.2 Students' Self-Knowledge

In the previous discussion, this study analysed students' knowledge and awareness of ChatGPT's limitations from a technical perspective, such as its inaccuracy and outdated information. Here, the interview shifts to identifying students' ethical awareness in their use of ChatGPT. To evaluate this ethical awareness, the study applies the three-stage framework to analyse students' self-knowledge. This corresponds to the second type of 'Acquired Knowledge' in al-Ghazali's framework: spiritual knowledge¹⁹. Spiritual knowledge comprises two components: self-knowledge and knowledge of God. The dimension of self-knowledge is further composed of three sequential stages, representing a gradual progression from self-awareness toward knowledge of God. This subtopic will explore students' awareness and development within these three stages of self-knowledge.

¹⁹ See al-Ghazali's analytical framework, p. 63.

In the first stage, based on the previous discussions, some students have demonstrated an awareness of the potential risks and limitations of their over-reliance on AI for academic support. They recognise that while ChatGPT can be a valuable tool, excessive dependence on it could hinder their learning and critical thinking. In addition, this stage also reflects students' possession of personal goals when using the platform. Data indicates that each respondent reported having specific goals when asked about their use of ChatGPT. This demonstrates both their awareness of the ethical implications and their sense of responsibility in engaging with the GenAI platform during their learning journey.

Next stage, in determining students' possession of self-knowledge, the study examines how their initial intention before using the tool and the outcomes of their engagement reflect efforts to uphold academic integrity, particularly through values such as honesty and responsibility. Respondent 1 shared his commitment to approaching ChatGPT critically by first clarifying his intentions to ensure his usage remains ethical and by consistently cross-checking the answers provided²⁰. Respondent 2 offered another noteworthy perspective, explaining that being mindful of her intentions helped her to use ChatGPT more ethically²¹. Such intentional approaches reflect a stronger commitment to responsible and ethical use of AI. Such intentional approaches from these two respondents reflect a strong dedication to their commitment to a responsible and ethical use of AI. Nonetheless, not all students demonstrated this awareness. Some continued to rely on the tool recklessly, despite knowing that ChatGPT can generate misleading or unreliable information. This tendency toward over-reliance appeared as a recurring theme. As Respondent 3 admitted, "I tend to copy the full answers provided by ChatGPT without changing them, as I think the answers are satisfactory and sufficient."²² Similar attitudes were echoed by the remaining respondents, who acknowledged an uncritical and ethically questionable dependence on the platform. When asked about the reasons behind their complete reliance on ChatGPT, multiple external factors were identified. Along with the easy accessibility of ChatGPT, the tight deadlines and the overwhelming amount of work were also often cited as the primary causes that made students tend to simply copy-paste answers written by this

²⁰ Respondent 1, 7 August 2024.

²¹ Respondent 2, 15 August 2024.

²² Respondent 3, 15 August 2024.

widely used GenAI tool, despite being fully aware of the ethical issues involved in such behaviour. Thus, in this context, only two of the five respondents demonstrated possession of self-knowledge by aligning their intentions and actions with their principles and values. The remaining respondents, however, exhibited a lack of such awareness, influenced by various external factors. This suggests that external pressures can sometimes overshadow ethical considerations, leading students to rationalise potentially unethical behaviour as a response to urgent academic demands. The findings also indicate that students tend to prioritise short-term benefits, such as completing assignments quickly, over the long-term advantages of using ChatGPT responsibly to enhance academic integrity and learning quality.

Lastly, the third stage is contemplation of God, where self-knowledge reaches its highest point as it moves beyond mere ethical awareness and becomes spiritual awareness. At this stage, a person not only comes to an understanding of the self and the values but also becomes aware that true knowledge ends in the awareness of God. Although the findings from the previous stage indicate that most respondents have not fully attained even the second stage of self-knowledge, this study nonetheless explored their commitment to using ChatGPT in ways that reflect not only ethical considerations but also their religious values and spiritual responsibilities. This indicates a subconscious effort, although incomplete, to relate their application of AI to a broader spiritual consciousness.

Respondent 1 articulated this by reminding himself that his academic endeavour is part of his *Amānah* as a Muslim; he stated in the interview, “I always remind myself that everything we do, even studying, is part of our *Amānah* as Muslims.”²³ Then, Respondent 2 shared her conflict between the ease of using ChatGPT and simply copying and pasting answers with little to no re-writing, and the effort of using it honestly in ways aligned with academic integrity²⁴. She further confessed that, in some cases, she has to realign her intentions and remind herself to be more sincere in her studies. Echoing this sentiment, Respondent 3 also shared her experience of struggle, “There are times when I’m tired or stressed, and it feels so tempting to just take the shortcut, but later I feel a bit guilty because it does not match what I say I believe.”²⁵

²³ Respondent 1, 7 August 2024.

²⁴ Respondent 2, 15 August 2024.

²⁵ Respondent 3, 15 August 2024.

What she referred to here are the principles of *Amānah* and honesty in learning, which she strives to uphold when engaging with ChatGPT. Moving on to the next respondent, Respondent 4, when being asked, he has defined God-consciousness more directly, describing it as a reminder that Allah is always watching²⁶. Although earlier findings showed that he occasionally used ChatGPT unethically, he still emphasised the necessity of having God-centred awareness in every action. Lastly, Respondent 5, similar to Respondent 4, had previously admitted to an over-reliance on ChatGPT in their learning journey. Despite this, she showed an effort to incorporate the principles and values of contemplation of God into her usage of the tool, stating, “My goal is to use ChatGPT with sincerity, aligning it with my Islamic values. I want it to support my learning, not replace my effort.”²⁷ Findings suggest that, while these respondents have demonstrated their intention to utilise the capabilities of ChatGPT in ways that align with the third stage of self-knowledge, external factors such as time constraints, deadlines, and convenience often disrupted their efforts to engage with Generative AI in a manner that truly honours their faith and pleases God.

The purpose of this subtopic is to identify whether the respondents have successfully embodied al-Ghazali’s concept of self-knowledge. According to him, when a person internalises the three stages of self-knowledge, they attain the knowledge of God, characterised by pure and untainted submission to Him²⁸. This purity entails freeing oneself from the influence of personal desires, external pressures, and societal expectations, ensuring that ethical decisions are not swayed by praise, criticism, or social status. This internal knowledge is vital for navigating life's complexities, enabling individuals to make decisions aligned with their true selves and divine will. The importance of self-knowledge in al-Ghazali's philosophy extends beyond individual well-being; it plays a crucial role in fostering ethical behaviour and social harmony. By understanding oneself, individuals are better equipped to engage with others compassionately and justly. In this way, self-knowledge forms the foundation for both personal integrity and communal responsibility.

²⁶ Respondent 4, 18 August 2024.

²⁷ Respondent 5, 22 August 2024.

²⁸ Jarman Arroisi et al., ‘Pursuit of Spiritual Happiness: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali on The Theory of Human Nature’, *Progresiva: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 02 (2023): 296–97, <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v12i02.29265>.

In the context of this study, when students achieve such self-knowledge, which leads to spiritual awareness and ultimately knowledge of God, it influences their intention in utilising the convenience of ChatGPT. This would make their usage of the tool purely sincere, aimed at learning as an act of worship and a means of pleasing Allah rather than being shaped by external pressures or academic demands. However, the findings reveal that some are still struggling to intricately align their intentions and actions toward a consistent God-centred outcome, while others are still having difficulty grasping the meaning of God-centred action. This, therefore, implies that although the respondents may have incorporated elements of the earlier stages of self-knowledge, al-Ghazali's vision that true self-knowledge is inseparable from awareness of God has not yet been fully embodied in their practices.

4.2.3 Findings

Based on the analysis using the three-stage framework derived from al-Ghazali's concept, students demonstrated varying levels of self-knowledge when engaging with ChatGPT. In the first stage, which involves the recognition of the nature and character of the self, the data indicates that all respondents exhibit a foundational level of awareness. Each student articulated clear objectives for utilising ChatGPT and demonstrated an awareness of the potential risks associated with over-reliance on the AI. This shows a degree of self-reflective consciousness regarding their actions and the ethical implications involved, which fulfilled the basic requirements of this first stage. However, when examining the second stage, the alignment of intentions and actions with ethical principles, the findings appear to be more divided. The data shows that only two out of the five respondents, namely Respondent 1 and Respondent 2, demonstrated a consistent effort to maintain this balance. Their practices of clarifying intentions, cross-checking information, and being mindful of their usage reflect a deliberate commitment to academic integrity. In contrast, the remaining respondents demonstrated a noticeable disparity between their awareness and their actions. Despite being aware of the ethical implications and the importance of academic integrity, they admitted to copying and pasting answers directly from ChatGPT, primarily citing external pressures like tight deadlines and a heavy workload as the cause. This suggests that for these students, self-knowledge at this stage is fragile and easily overshadowed

by immediate academic demands, preventing them from acting in accordance with their values.

Moving to the third and highest stage, the contemplation of God, the findings reveal that while this level of spiritual awareness is not yet fully realised or operational, its foundational presence can be identified. The study aimed to determine the awareness of this stage, despite the respondents not having completely engaged with the prior stage. The data suggests that most respondents showed a genuine desire to align their AI usage with their religious values and connect their actions to higher principles. Respondents expressed this through a sense of *Amānah* (responsibility), a feeling of guilt when taking shortcuts, and a conscious reminder that Allah is always watching. For instance, Respondent 1 defines his studies as an *Amānah* for him as a Muslim,²⁹ while Respondent 3 expressed guilt when her actions did not match her values³⁰. Respondent 5 explicitly stated a goal to align ChatGPT use with Islamic values³¹. Yet, these intentions were consistently reported to be disrupted by the same external factors that compromised their ethical stance. Therefore, while the aspiration for God-centred action is present, it is not yet a prevailing force that consistently governs their use of technology.

In conclusion, while the seeds of self-knowledge are present, the findings indicate that students have not yet fully embodied al-Ghazali's integrated concept. Their journey remains fragmented, and their ethical resolve is easily compromised by external demands. This emphasises the crucial need to develop a profound and more resilient self-awareness. Hence, this study posits that integrating al-Ghazali's teachings on intention is pivotal for improving students' ethical use of generative AI. By strengthening their understanding of AI's limitations, its associated ethical principles, and their own self and God-consciousness, students could navigate these challenges more effectively. This comprehensive understanding would empower them to form the right intention, a fundamental element of al-Ghazali's framework, thus incorporating a more consistent ethical approach into both their academic and personal lives. For al-Ghazali, intention serves as the spiritual force that determines the moral value of an

²⁹ Respondent 1, 7 August 2024.

³⁰ Respondent 3, 15 August 2024.

³¹ Respondent 5, 22 August 2024.

action; without a sincere and rightly directed intention, even outwardly correct actions lack spiritual value and ethical strength. For students, forming the right intention is not merely beneficial but essential. It provides the moral compass necessary to navigate the ethical dilemmas concerning the use of generative AI, such as the temptation to compromise academic integrity for convenience. A clear, morally grounded intention allows students to align their actions with both personal values and Islamic principles, ensuring that their utilisation of AI enhances rather than hinders their academic and personal growth. Therefore, this study concludes that refining students' intention through this framework is critical for bridging the gap between ethical awareness and ethical action, ultimately enhancing academic integrity among university students.

To further address these ethical challenges comprehensively, it is crucial to consider the perspectives of lecturers. Their insights provide valuable guidance and solutions, contextualizing the ethical issues students face while offering strategies for incorporating al-Ghazali's framework into academic settings.

4.3 THE IMPACT OF AL-GHAZALI'S VIEWS OF INTENTION IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN THE USAGE OF GENERATIVE AI, ChatGPT

4.3.1 Lecturers' Perspectives on the Use of ChatGPT Among University Students

This subtopic presents insights gathered from interviews with five lecturers across various academic departments at higher education institutions in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The primary objective of these interviews was to explore educators' perspectives on integrating al-Ghazali's theory of intention into Malaysia's higher education landscape in order to enhance the usage of Generative AI platforms among university students. Specifically, the study examines whether al-Ghazali's philosophical framework could serve as a means to foster academic integrity among these students, particularly in their use of ChatGPT in their learning pursuits. In addition to assessing the potential ethical impact of this integration from the lecturers, the study also aims to identify practical strategies for embedding al-Ghazali's concept of intention within university settings. By doing so, it seeks to highlight the relevance of Islamic philosophical thought in addressing contemporary ethical challenges, particularly those arising from the widespread adoption of AI in academia.

Lecturers' perspectives are particularly valuable in this discussion, as their direct experience in evaluating student work and monitoring AI usage provides critical insights into the ethical implications of these tools. Their views help assess whether al-Ghazali's philosophy can be effectively applied to promote responsible AI usage and uphold academic integrity. Ultimately, this section explores whether al-Ghazali's teachings offer a timeless ethical framework for navigating modern technological dilemmas in education.

The interviews first explored lecturers' general perceptions of ChatGPT, establishing a baseline for understanding its role in higher education. The responses revealed a spectrum of views, unanimously acknowledging the tool's benefits while expressing serious and multifaceted concerns about its misuse.

The results showed that most of the lecturers have simultaneously acknowledged the advantages of ChatGPT for students' learning. As Respondent 1, a lecturer from the Department of Islamic Studies, noted that using ChatGPT helps students save a significant amount of time and energy, as they are no longer required to physically locate materials in libraries³². Coming with the same sentiment, Respondent 2, a lecturer of the Education Department, revealed he had personally noticed a rise in the use of ChatGPT by students and understood the benefits it provided to them³³. Likewise, Respondent 3, a lecturer from the Engineering Department, added that ChatGPT has enabled her students to retrieve information fast and effectively, eliminating the necessity to do it through several sources³⁴. She further noted that it helps simplify the learning process because it generalises information and makes it easier to digest, which may prove useful compared to more traditional search engines. A similar agreement was found in the responses of Respondent 4, lecturer of the Education Department,³⁵ and Respondent 5, lecturer of Engineering Department,³⁶ who suggested that every lecturer respondent had acknowledged the benefits of ChatGPT in the academic field.

³² Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

³³ Respondent 2, 15 September 2024.

³⁴ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

³⁵ Respondent 4, 20 September 2024.

³⁶ Respondent 5, 12 September 2024.

Nonetheless, this potential positive recognition was balanced out with some quite serious and significant concerns. When these respondents were asked to elaborate on the weaknesses they have observed, the results indicate that certain sentiments were repeatedly raised, which can be categorised into three categories: the decline of students' effort, the decline of students' critical thinking skills, and the gap between students' real understanding and AI output.

1. The Decline of Students' Effort

One of the main issues was that ChatGPT promotes intellectual laziness and a loss of serious academic interaction. Respondent 1 revealed that students tend to get lazy and underestimate the efforts required to complete their assignments and thus resorted to copying and pasting answers directly copied from ChatGPT without verification. He argued this leads to limited learning experience, whereby students miss out on deeper forms of learning, such as *talaqqī* (a learning method that involves two-way communication between teachers and students) and *ta'ammuq* (an in-depth learning method). Though he previously conceded that the tool is efficient in saving students' time, he simply affirmed that the real research method, where one goes to the library to engage in some intense hands-on research, has much more academic value than relying solely on AI prompts³⁷.

2. The Decline in Students' Critical Thinking Skills

The loss of effort had resulted directly in the loss of critical thinking skills among these students. The lecturers simultaneously shared their concern that the students' behaviour of over-relying on ChatGPT has negatively impacted the long-term development of basic academic skills among them. Respondent 2 explicitly stated the risk that "*students may become overly reliant on these tools, leading to a decline in critical thinking and analytical skills.*"³⁸ This opinion was further reinforced by Respondent 3, who noticed that students are increasingly becoming unable to break down or analyse complex problems and produce individual analyses of them without the assistance of the

³⁷ Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

³⁸ Respondent 2, 15 September 2024.

Artificial Intelligence platforms³⁹. Similarly, Respondent 4, a lecturer of the Education Department, also shared her concern about the lack of critical thinking skills among her students⁴⁰.

3. Gap Between Students' Real Understanding and AI Output

The other downside of this GenAI platform is the obvious gap and disconnection between the answers provided by ChatGPT and the students' own understanding of that material. This shortcoming was pointed out by Respondent 5, who witnessed some of her students having the critical thinking skills of a sixth-grade level despite their technological savvy. In her opinion, this is an immediate result of their "lack of foundational knowledge because of their over-reliance on technology," which prevents them from truly grasping the content generated for them⁴¹. She outlined this by pointing out that such dependence may result in a mismatch between output-level quality and the actual capacities of the student's workforce, with an example of a student who has written a well-composed paper but failed to discuss or defend the ideas from the very same paper during a presentation.

Hence, the lecturers' perspectives revealed that the downside of blind AI adoption creates a domino effect, with one disadvantage directly leading to the next. It begins with the decline in students' effort, where the ease of ChatGPT causes the students to become intellectually complacent and reluctant to engage in academic effort. This absence of engagement then leads to the loss of critical skills, as students lose the ability to practice critical analysis, questioning, and building knowledge on their own. This course of action inevitably results in a fundamental gap between students' real understanding and the AI's output, producing a false sense of competence where submitted work is no longer indicative of the student's performance. The whole chain represents a severe compromise of academic integrity and a shift away from the genuine purpose and meaning of learning.

Despite these significant concerns, the lecturers unanimously agreed that prohibiting Generative AI usage is not a viable solution. Respondent 1 emphasised this by stating that ChatGPT cannot be dismissed as the sole cause of academic dishonesty,

³⁹ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁴⁰ Respondent 4, 20 September 2024.

⁴¹ Respondent 5, 12 September 2024.

given that students have always found ways to cheat academically; thus, singling out AI would be irrational. He asserts, “Any resource that makes learning easier and more efficient will definitely be used by students.”⁴² This point of view was further expanded by other respondents. Respondent 3, for instance, emphasised that the core issue is not with the technology, but with how it is used⁴³. Alongside this, Respondent 5 also gave a definitive stance on the impracticality of banning the AI, saying that it’s impossible to ban ChatGPT because of how widely it is being used right now⁴⁴. These insights point to a fundamental agreement that AI tools have now firmly become a permanent constituent of the academic landscape. Their possible contribution to the improvement of learning is admittedly real; however, this study contends that such potential can only be achieved when students uphold ethical responsibility and act with mindful intention, altogether preserving the deep intellectual engagement essential for the students’ academic growth and the maintenance of their academic integrity.

Thus, this underlines the importance of intentional and ethical engagement in the usage of GenAI to ensure that technology serves as a means for intellectual growth instead of a threat to academic integrity. This study is optimistic that, through the process of integrating al-Ghazali’s views of intention into academic discourse, higher education institutions will become better prepared to navigate ethical dilemmas posed by GenAI in the academic field.

4.3.2 The Perceived Relevance of Integrating Al-Ghazali’s Views in Enhancing Students’ Academic Integrity

Building on the previous discussion, it is evident that most lecturers acknowledge the dual nature of ChatGPT, with a strong emphasis on its negative impact on university students’ academic integrity. In response to this concern, the study has gathered lecturers’ opinions on the relevance of integrating al-Ghazali’s views of intention as a potential solution to the challenges posed by the use of generative AI among university students.

⁴² Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

⁴³ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁴⁴ Respondent 5, 12 September 2024.

Al-Ghazali's theory highlights that when an individual acts with a sincere and pure intention, the outcome of their actions, rooted in that intention, will be positive. To explore whether the lecturers believe that incorporating al-Ghazali's views in the usage of GenAI is the solution for academic dishonesty, the interview questions were designed to first provide a thorough explanation of the intention framework. The objective was to assess whether lecturers agreed that incorporating this theory could enhance the ethical use of GenAI among students.

The interview started by exploring the lecturer's perspectives regarding the two foundational elements of al-Ghazali's views of intention: first, the relationship between one's inner state, soul, and their actions; second, the knowledge required to form a sincere intention.

1. The Role of the Soul in Intention

According to al-Ghazali, every action is determined by the intention, which originates from the soul, which is the inner state of a human being. A pure and righteous inner state leads to pure and righteous outward actions. The interview aimed at soliciting the views of the lecturers on this fundamental principle to determine their alignment with al-Ghazali's views. Respondent 1 upheld this doctrine as he indicated that he believed that when the soul of a person is good, then the deed of the body will be good too. However, he warned that it does not work the other way around, as one's external behaviour does not always represent their inner state⁴⁵. Respondent 2 concurred with this view and added that, in the context of this study, when students have a good soul, based on sincerity and ethical consciousness, he believed that these students will have a higher ability to utilise the convenience of GenAI platforms in ways that align with their values⁴⁶. This fundamental value is unanimously supported by the other lecturers. Respondent 4 confirmed the direct connection of the inner spiritual state and the outer ethical action, and also affirmed the same, emphasizing that the purification of the soul is a prerequisite for any genuine form of academic integrity⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

⁴⁶ Respondent 2, 15 September 2024.

⁴⁷ Respondent 4, 20 September 2024.

Another similar but slightly different point of view was offered by Respondent 3, who brought a critical refinement to the discussion and pointed out the necessity of context and outer knowledge. He reasoned that a good intention, though required, is not the only factor to determine whether an action is ethically sound; it must also be right in its particular context. He gave an example to explain his point; a person could cook in an office with the truly good intent to share food with their colleague⁴⁸. But when such an act is in breach of the clearly stated office policy against cooking, then the act may still be ethically problematic, not in the sense that the intention is impure, but in the sense that the person has not taken their action in accordance with the external regulations and communal norms. The insight proposed by Respondent 3 is essential because it fully aligns with al-Ghazali's framework, implying that ethical behaviour is not only dependent on having a pure soul but also a discerning awareness of one's surrounding factors and the knowledge of applicable rules. Thus, genuine intention should be guided by internal purity and necessary knowledge to result in truly ethical behaviour. This thoughtful perspective naturally leads to the next foundational element of al-Ghazali's framework: that a sincere and ethically aligned intention can only be formed with the necessary knowledge.

2. The Foundational Role of Knowledge in Forming Sincere Intention

The interview further examined lecturers' perspectives concerning al-Ghazali's assertion that sincere intention is predicated upon three categories of knowledge: worldly knowledge (knowledge of the tool and its function), self-knowledge, and knowledge of God (God-consciousness) that can be referred from al-Ghazali's analytical framework⁴⁹. Lecturers were questioned whether having these types of knowledge is mandatory in order for students to be able to interact with AI in an ethical manner. The results showed that all respondents agreed on the importance of these three types of knowledge.

- Worldly Knowledge: Understanding ChatGPT's Dual Nature

⁴⁸ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁴⁹ See al-Ghazali's analytical framework, p. 63.

Building upon the previous example shared by Respondent 3, where a good intention in the wrong context may lead to a wrong outcome, this example brings this study to the next discussion on the necessity of worldly knowledge. Respondent 3 stressed that "students should be informed about both the capabilities and limitations of GenAI," arguing that without understanding its weaknesses, it may be employed improperly⁵⁰. This was supported by Respondent 4, who highlighted that awareness of the limitations of ChatGPT also aids in ensuring that students remain within the ethical framework and that the tool is not abused to achieve other unintended outcomes⁵¹. This gained understanding of the dual nature of this tool that acts as a prerequisite in assisting students to be more aware of their purpose, since it provides students with a greater awareness of what this GenAI can bring them to.

- Self-Knowledge as the Foundation for Ethical Action

The second type of knowledge is knowledge of self-awareness, which is noted as essential in guiding ethical use. Respondent 4 elaborated that this starts when students set a goal before their engagement with the GenAI platform⁵². According to her, when the students have a purpose or goal in mind prior to using ChatGPT, they are less likely to overuse or misuse it as their engagement is guided by intentionality rather than overreliance or self-benefiting purposes. In al-Ghazali's framework, this goal represents the will or desire that came before intention. Respondent 2 further expounded on the connection between knowledge and intention, whereby, when students gain knowledge of ethical considerations and consequences of their deeds, they can form genuine intentions that can direct their actions towards a more ethically aligned behaviour⁵³. Such conscious response is controlled by self-control, which Respondent 4 emphasised as a practical expression of self-awareness that can guide students to act in accordance with their values. Finally, this self-awareness helps students to intentionally align their actions and goals to their values, developing an internal sense of morality that helps

⁵⁰ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁵¹ Respondent 4, 20 September 2024.

⁵² Respondent 4, 20 September 2024.

⁵³ Respondent 2, 15 September 2024.

them navigate the academic path and not be pressured into committing short-term misdeeds that exploit their academic integrity.

- **Knowledge of God: Divine Accountability as an Ethical Foundation**

The last and deepest form of knowledge is the knowledge of God or God-consciousness (*taqwā*), which was determined by lecturers as one of the strongest methods of motivation toward ethical conduct. This was supported by Respondent 2, who said that he believes the principle of knowledge of God is necessary⁵⁴. When students are conscious of the fact that God knows what they are doing, they will behave in a more ethical manner, knowing they will be held accountable for every intention or action they perform. Similarly, Respondent 4 stated that she fully concurs with this view, noting that instilling in students an awareness that "God sees everything" can serve as a powerful deterrent against misconduct⁵⁵. This principle emphasises that ethical failures in the application of AI are not only a breach of academic principles but also spiritual values. When this awareness is internalised, the students are counselled to behave responsibly even when they may be tempted to abuse AI, knowing that their intentions and behaviour will be accountable to God. As previously discussed regarding al-Ghazali's theory on the knowledge of God, this knowledge is developed through the continuous remembrance of God in all actions and thoughts, as well as through engagement in good deeds and acts of worship. However, this process can be hindered by excessive attachment to worldly matters, greed, and personal temptations. Within the framework of this study, these are exhibited by students' academically dishonest engagement with ChatGPT, such as plagiarism, direct copy-paste without cross-checking, excessive dependency, and other fraudulent practices. If the students consistently engage in acts of worship and maintain mindfulness of God, their souls will be purified, and their physical actions will be guided away from unethical behaviour that undermines their academic integrity. This is due to the profound connection between the students' inner spiritual state and their outward actions. Thus, all of the lecturers have agreed on the importance of possessing knowledge of God. They believe

⁵⁴ Respondent 2, 15 September 2024.

⁵⁵ Respondent 4, 20 September 2024.

that internalising this knowledge guides students toward more ethical and truthful use of generative AI.

Based on the interview responses and the explanation of al-Ghazali's theory to the lecturers, there was a strong consensus on the importance of all three types of knowledge in cultivating a pure and sincere intention. By acquiring knowledge of the tool, fostering self-awareness, and having awareness of God's presence, students are encouraged to critically reflect on the consequences of their actions, especially in academic contexts where AI tools are utilised. It is also noted that, despite students demonstrating a good understanding of the three types of knowledge, the data revealed a significant contradiction between their theoretical awareness and practical behaviour. The lecturers have shown that, while many students claim to possess the necessary knowledge, their actions often contradict their stated intentions. This suggests a gap between understanding the theory and applying it in practice. Although students are aware of ethical principles, they may still misuse ChatGPT due to external pressures such as time constraints and accessibility. Lecturers acknowledged these challenges and expressed concerns about the difficulty of encouraging students to use generative AI ethically. Hence, this study believes that additional external measures are required to effectively implement al-Ghazali's theory of intention in university settings, ensuring that students can align their theoretical knowledge with ethical academic practices.

4.3.3 Lecturers' Recommendations for Applying the View of Al-Ghazali in Academic Settings

The lecturers expressed strong support for the integration of al-Ghazali's theory of intention to foster ethical Generative AI practices among university students. But they simultaneously emphasised that external, structural conditions are essential for the theory to be put into effective practice in academic space. The central challenge identified is the inherent difficulty in measuring the internal state of sincere intention required for its ethical use, as the theory is founded upon a morality that is not directly observable or quantifiable. The lecturers accordingly recommended that, alongside the internal development of ethics, there should be some external mechanisms which serve as reinforcement and measurement of conformity.

This view was substantiated by the respondents. Respondent 1 argued that intention originates from one's *akhlāq* (moral value), and *akhlāq* is something that is immeasurable⁵⁶. Respondent 3 echoed this, noting that the diversity of human disposition means students will internalise ethical principles unevenly, complicating consistent adherence. He agreed that the theory was relevant but argued that its efficacy depends on its integration with explicit rules and education. Similarly, Respondent 5 emphasised that teaching morality is not enough without practical application and reinforcement⁵⁷. These views in unison suggest that such external frameworks can serve as tangible benchmarks for evaluating the cultivation of the internal moral values that al-Ghazali's theory serves to promote.

Thus, ethical behaviour requires reciprocity between an internal awareness and external support to ensure compliance. This aligns with a Kantian perspective, which holds that moral behaviour cannot be based only on individual intent but must be governed by an adherence to universal moral rules designed to discipline human conduct⁵⁸. This underscores that while personal understanding is vital, structured guidance is necessary for aligning actions with ethical standards and communal values. Furthermore, from this deontological viewpoint, actions hold moral significance when they are motivated by duty rather than emotional impulse or a concern for the consequences.

The primary objective of integrating al-Ghazali's theory with such external measures is to ensure that the cultivation of right intention remains central. This involves fostering a sincere intention grounded in the three essential types of knowledge previously discussed: knowledge of the tool (Generative AI), knowledge of self, and knowledge of God. While numerous existing frameworks address AI ethics, they predominantly overlook the spiritual and internal dimension of intention that forms the moral foundation for ethical conduct. Al-Ghazali contends that an individual with a profound understanding of their intentions, rooted in this knowledge, is more likely to act ethically by comprehending the broader implications of their actions. The study thus

⁵⁶ Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

⁵⁷ Respondent 5, 12 September 2024.

⁵⁸ David Misselbrook, 'Duty, Kant, and Deontology', *British Journal of General Practice* 63, no. 609 (2013): 211–211, <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp13X665422>.

identifies the following recommendations from the lecturers, as derived from the data collected from the interview.

- University's Guidelines and Framework for AI Usage

One main suggestion, being suggested by Respondent 1 and supported by Respondent 3, is for the university to establish a comprehensive AI governance structure, comprising both a high-level framework and detailed implementation guidelines⁵⁹. According to Respondent 1, the foundational framework should be a visionary document, officially endorsed by the university, which articulates core ethical values⁶⁰. It is within this document that values derived from al-Ghazali's concept of intention, such as transparency, accountability, and critical engagement, can be integrated. The framework must also clearly define its scope and applicability for students and staff to establish firm policy boundaries.

Similarly, Respondent 3 added that such a framework would need to be translated through practical guidelines, which translate its principles into actionable policies⁶¹. These guidelines could include, for instance, 1) a responsible AI "playbook" for students and 2) university-recommended methods for citing AI-generated content, which have already been implemented at universities in Malaysia. The establishment of this governance structure is posited as the essential first step, providing the foundational reference point for all subsequent ethical AI measures and serving as a key mechanism for integrating al-Ghazali's framework into the academic environment.

- University's AI Curriculum and Course Integration

This particular suggestion was commonly proposed among the participants. Respondent 4, to begin with, recommended a university course on AI that integrates the teachings of al-Ghazali⁶². She elaborated that such a course should address the fundamental definition of AI, its impact on daily life, and the ethical guidelines necessary for

⁵⁹ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁶⁰ Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

⁶¹ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁶² Respondent 4, 20 September 2024.

navigating this new technology. Echoing this sentiment, Respondent 5 expressed a strong view on this, advocating for making an Artificial Intelligence course mandatory within the General Studies Subject, or known as the *Mata Pelajaran Umum* (MPU), the compulsory general studies curriculum for all undergraduates⁶³. She suggested that the course's development be guided by al-Ghazali's framework of intention, alongside other relevant scholarly thought. She also emphasised that such integration would demonstrate the enduring relevance of Islamic scholarship in addressing contemporary, evolving issues like AI.

- University's AI Usage Policy and Regulations

This approach, establishing clear rules and regulations for AI use, is already a standard practice at academic institutions around the world. To ensure that internal moral teachings are implemented effectively and fairly across the entire student body, they must be supported by consistent external enforcement. Enforcing clear consequences for violations ensures that ethical principles are not merely theoretical but have tangible weight. Respondent 1 exemplified this, suggesting that institutions should implement specific consequences or punishments for unethical AI use⁶⁴. He asserted that this, with the combination of consistent teachings of al-Ghazali's framework of intention, would instil a greater sense of caution and responsibility in students, thereby making the overarching goal of ethical internalisation more effective.

- Organising Workshops, Discussions & Case Studies as the University's AI Training and Development Program

Respondent 2 passionately advocated for this recommendation, proposing that practical workshops, engaging discussions, and case studies focused on applying al-Ghazali's framework would significantly enhance student comprehension⁶⁵. He emphasised that these sessions should cover a thorough discussion on the framework, such as the importance of sincere intention, the necessity of the three forms of knowledge, a

⁶³ Respondent 5, 12 September 2024.

⁶⁴ Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

⁶⁵ Respondent 2, 15 September 2024.

discussion on the real-world implications of AI tools, practical strategies for operationalizing al-Ghazali's framework to guide responsible AI utilisation, and other relevant topics.

To implement this, Respondent 2 suggested that the university's main board should proactively encourage existing student representative societies, relevant organisations, and related academic departments to organise these programs. The consistent offering of such initiatives would, over time, continually highlight the importance of ethical AI issues and normalise the application of al-Ghazali's teachings for the entire student body. Echoing the practicality of this approach, Respondent 3, who previously recommended creating an AI university course, stated that if creating a new syllabus is deemed too difficult or time-consuming, launching university-wide public workshops represents a viable and immediate first step, underscoring that any coordinated effort is valuable⁶⁶.

- Educator's Role in Guiding AI Usage

A final, critical recommendation underscores the consistent role of educators in integrating al-Ghazali's teachings into students' use of Generative AI. Respondent 1 emphasised the lecturer's duty to continually reinforce the values of honesty, integrity, and the sincere pursuit of knowledge⁶⁷. Similarly, Respondent 3 argued that lecturers should promote self-awareness by encouraging students to reflect on their underlying motivations for using tools like ChatGPT, guiding them to view AI as an instrument for intellectual growth rather than exploitation⁶⁸. Similarly, Respondent 5 highlighted the responsibility of lecturers to cultivate independent critical thinking⁶⁹. This involves reminding students to interrogate AI-generated content, connect it to their own learning, and maintain a clear understanding of ethical boundaries. Crucially, Respondent 5 stressed the need to ground this practice in the three essential forms of knowledge: an understanding of the tool's capabilities and limitations (Knowledge of the Tool), self-awareness of one's own learning objectives (Knowledge of Self), and a consciousness

⁶⁶ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁶⁷ Respondent 1, 9 September 2024.

⁶⁸ Respondent 3, 18 September 2024.

⁶⁹ Respondent 5, 12 September 2024.

of the broader ethical purpose of education (Knowledge of God). It is argued that with this foundational understanding, students can transition from being passive consumers of technology to becoming meaningfully engaged, ethical agents in their use of AI.

Hence, based on interviews with five lecturers, practical recommendations for integrating al-Ghazali's theory into university settings have been gathered. These recommendations emphasise the importance of structured, external mechanisms alongside the cultivation of sincere internal intentions. While undeniably, al-Ghazali's ethical framework is capable of guiding students into ethical use of AI, it must be reinforced with institutional policies and accountability systems to ensure ethical AI usage. Such measures would ensure that students engage with AI responsibly while adhering to academic integrity standards. Thus, integrating al-Ghazali's theory into academic contexts requires more than just fostering ethical awareness; it necessitates a robust educational structure that supports students in managing external challenges while using Generative AI tools. This comprehensive approach ensures that students are not only educated on ethical behaviour but also provided with the necessary frameworks to implement it effectively.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the exploration of integrating al-Ghazali's theory of intention into the academic setting to promote ethical use of generative AI, specifically ChatGPT, reveals a promising yet complex approach to addressing the challenges faced by university students. It is clear that his theory, with its focus on the internal dimensions of ethical behaviour, provides a strong foundation for enhancing academic integrity. As he argued, knowledge precedes intention, which implies that a proper understanding of ethical principles must come before one can act with genuine moral intent. This aligns with current approaches in moral philosophy, which emphasise the role of awareness and education in ethical decision-making. Nevertheless, integrating these principles into the broader academic environment requires more than just theoretical instruction. Practical applications, including institutional policies, ethical coursework, and reflective practices, are crucial in ensuring that students are supported in aligning their intentions with their actions.

Thus, while al-Ghazali's framework offers profound insights into cultivating ethical behaviour, lecturers emphasise the need for a balanced approach, one that combines the internal cultivation of ethical intention with external structures of accountability. By creating a supportive academic environment that fosters both personal moral development and external guidance, universities can empower students to use generative AI in ways that align with academic integrity and ethical values. This holistic approach, integrating both internal and external factors, offers a sustainable pathway to encouraging responsible AI usage in higher education. As ethical frameworks must be both deeply internalised and externally supported in order to be effectively applied in real-world scenarios, particularly when it comes to emerging technologies like AI⁷⁰.

The response from the students highlights that there is a significant gap between students' understanding of the framework of intention by al-Ghazali and their practice in integrating the framework in their use of GenAI. It can be seen from their response on the ways of their utilisation of ChatGPT, which can be seen as unethical when faced with external pressure, such as time constraints and academic stress. These outside pressures have regularly influenced students' motivation and intention when using GenAI in their studies. Next, on the lecturers' responses, they have simultaneously agreed that fostering students' awareness of their intentions, in line with al-Ghazali's teachings, can potentially lead to more responsible engagement with AI tools. By grounding the use of generative AI in a deeper awareness of one's intentions and moral responsibility, students could be better equipped to navigate the ethical complexities of using such technologies. This is particularly important given the rapid development and widespread use of generative AI in educational contexts, where tools like ChatGPT can be seen as both a resource and a potential ethical minefield. Yet, the difficulty lies in translating this internal knowledge into consistent action, as external pressures often influence students' behaviours in ways that undermine their good intentions, and the difficulty in measuring students' intentions and their moral values.

Accordingly, these lecturers have emphasised the need for a balanced approach, one that combines the internal cultivation of ethical intention with external structures of

⁷⁰ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 36.

accountability. By creating a supportive academic environment that fosters both personal moral development and external guidance, universities can empower students to use generative AI in ways that align with academic integrity and ethical values. This holistic approach, integrating both internal and external factors, offers a sustainable pathway to encouraging responsible AI usage in higher education. In sum, the integration of al-Ghazali's teachings into the contemporary academic landscape holds great promise for promoting ethical AI use. However, as with any complex ethical challenge, it requires a multifaceted approach that not only nurtures individual intention but also creates supportive systems that guide and reinforce these ethical values in practice.



CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The study has explored al-Ghazali's views of intention from multiple of his works, with the main focus on the book, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. By exploring his view, this study believes that the thorough concept of intention by al-Ghazali could enhance the widely common ethical issue in the utilisation of GenAI among university students. This chapter provides a summary of the research and the main findings from the analysis of this thesis. This chapter also includes several recommendations for future research.

SUMMARY

This study conducts an in-depth analysis of al-Ghazali's philosophy of intention and its potential to enhance academic integrity in the age of Generative AI among Malaysian university students. Employing a qualitative approach that combines library research on philosophical sources with field interviews of five students and five lecturers from higher education institutions in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, the research investigates how al-Ghazali's teachings could address the ethical misuse of platforms like ChatGPT.

MAIN FINDINGS

This thesis has addressed three research questions: (1) What is the understanding of the concept of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education and its benefits, challenges, and ethical imperatives? (2) What are al-Ghazali's views of intention in moral philosophy? (3) What is the relevance of al-Ghazali's views of intention in enhancing the integrity of university students in the usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)?

Through a comprehensive exploration, the study has demonstrated that intention plays a pivotal role in shaping human behaviour. It acts as an internal force, originating from the soul, which guides actions through faculties such as reason and will. A well-nourished soul generates intentions that lead to virtuous behaviour, while a corrupted soul may prompt immoral actions. Intention, therefore, is not just about having a desire

or fulfilling a requirement but is deeply tied to the moral and spiritual quality of human actions. Every action is preceded by an intention, and the evaluation of an action often depends on the sincerity and purity of the initial intention.

Al-Ghazali's views on intention in moral philosophy highlight its centrality in determining the moral value of actions. He differentiates between pure, innocent, and bad intentions, asserting that actions are not morally valuable unless accompanied by sincere, God-centred intentions. Innocent intentions, while lawful, lack spiritual merit unless refined to seek God's pleasure. In contrast, bad intentions, even when tied to otherwise lawful actions, are morally corrupt and can render actions sinful. Al-Ghazali underscores that both intention and action must align with Islamic law and moral principles, with true virtue arising when one's intentions are pure, free from selfish desires, and focused on pleasing Allah. Thus, intention is not simply a psychological state but a spiritual and moral force that shapes a person's ethical conduct.

His views on intention are highly relevant in enhancing the integrity of university students in the use of GenAI. His framework emphasises the importance of sincere and mindful intentions in guiding ethical behaviour. By cultivating the three forms of knowledge essential to forming right intention, worldly knowledge (understanding GenAI's functions and limits), self-knowledge (preventing over-reliance and ensuring the tool enhances learning), and knowledge of God (fostering a sense of divine accountability), students can align their use of platforms like ChatGPT with core ethical principles.

Al-Ghazali's teachings provide a holistic framework for moral clarity and ethical decision-making, which is crucial in maintaining academic integrity in an age where generative AI introduces numerous challenges and potential for misuse. In the usage of generative AI, intention plays a crucial role in determining how students engage with AI tools. If students use AI with sincere academic intentions such as enhancing understanding, refining critical thinking, and supporting ethical research, the technology can be a valuable asset in education. However, if students approach AI with dishonest intentions, such as plagiarism or academic misconduct, the technology will undermine both their intellectual growth and the integrity of academic institutions. Therefore, this study proposes a framework based on al-Ghazali's profound concept of

intention. This framework guided the design of the interview protocol for both student and lecturer respondents.

Data collected from student interviews reveal that despite students' understanding of the functionality of ChatGPT and their awareness of ethical AI use, results show a significant gap with their actual behaviour when using it. Most of the students acknowledged the importance of integrity in using generative AI but admitted to over-relying on tools like ChatGPT, often compromising academic standards due to external pressures such as time constraints. This inconsistency indicates that while students are aware of ethical principles, they lack the deeper self-awareness needed to apply these principles effectively in real-life situations.

The research then proceeded to gather lecturer perspectives. Following an explanation of the framework, they unanimously concurred that integrating al-Ghazali's concept of intention would be an effective measure to address the issue of students' misuse of GenAI. The lecturers affirmed that al-Ghazali's framework, particularly its emphasis on the knowledge preceding intention, could guide students in aligning their AI use with ethical values. However, they also unanimously concurred that this framework alone is insufficient for integration into student AI practices, as its efficacy is rooted in personal morality, presenting a challenge due to its inherently unmeasurable nature. Consequently, they proposed several complementary recommendations, including integrating al-Ghazali's framework into official university AI guidelines, developing a dedicated course based on its principles, and organising related workshops and discussions for students.

Therefore, this study concludes that integrating al-Ghazali's concept of intention holds significant potential for improving the ethical use of generative AI among university students. However, the findings also indicate that integration alone is insufficient. For effective implementation, this philosophical framework must be supported by complementary strategies, platforms, or institutional measures. Future research should, therefore, focus on developing and evaluating practical methods for operationalizing al-Ghazali's views within academic environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aims to offer critical recommendations for achieving its research objectives based on its findings. The findings suggest that it is crucial to incorporate al-Ghazali's views of intention into the academic curriculum to improve students' ethical understanding of generative AI usage. Building upon the practical suggestions identified by lecturers in Chapter 4, this section aims to consolidate these findings and situate them within a wider theoretical and practical context. This involves evaluating their feasibility and outlining the necessary steps for future application.

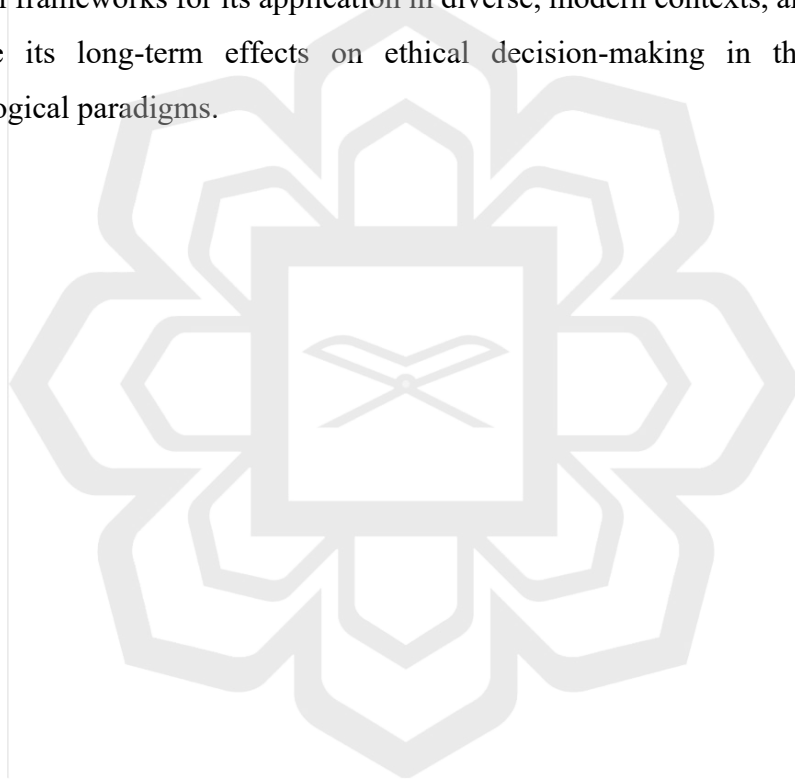
A common suggestion from lecturers was to make a course on al-Ghazali's framework mandatory. While this is a good long-term goal, creating and implementing such a course across all universities would be a time-consuming process. Given how quickly Artificial Intelligence is developing, a faster solution is needed. Therefore, this study recommends starting with more flexible options such as workshops and discussion forums. These sessions can utilise real-world case studies to explore how AI impacts academic integrity, providing students with a dynamic platform to engage with ethical concepts. This approach not only offers a timely intervention but also allows for the development of best practices that could eventually inform a full-scale curriculum.

Another critical recommendation that has not been mentioned but is equally important is to implement ongoing faculty development programs that focus on the ethical challenges posed by AI and the application of al-Ghazali's philosophy of intention. Not only students, but lecturers also need to be equipped with the tools and understanding of how to discuss and incorporate the concept of intention within their teaching practices. These programs should provide lecturers with resources on how to foster a culture of ethical AI usage in the classroom, guiding students in the application of intention when using AI tools for academic purposes. Faculty members should be trained not only in the theoretical aspects of intention but also in practical methods for ensuring that students understand the real-world implications of their actions with generative AI.

Finally, the concept of intention, as illuminated by al-Ghazali's teachings, should be recognised as a universal ethical foundation, extending far beyond the specific challenges of GenAI. Al-Ghazali positions intention not as a mere thought or desire, but

as the very bedrock of every human action, encompassing and defining its moral character. To cultivate a deeply rooted ethical consciousness, discussions on intention must be integrated across all aspects of life and learning, not confined to technology ethics. By making intention a central theme in education, students can develop a consistent moral compass, prompting them to critically reflect on the purpose and consequences of all their actions.

However, for this holistic integration to be realised and its full impact understood, significantly more research is essential. Future studies are needed to develop effective pedagogical methods for teaching the concept of intention, to create practical frameworks for its application in diverse, modern contexts, and to empirically measure its long-term effects on ethical decision-making in the face of new technological paradigms.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
بونسبني الإسلام بنسبنا بالعلم
Garden of Knowledge and Virtue

LEADING THE WAY
KHALIFAH - AMANAH - IGHRA' - RAHMATAN LIL-ALAMIN
LEADING THE WORLD

INTERNATIONAL MULTI-AWARD WINNING
INSTITUTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

CONSENT FORM

This consent letter is important for the respondent as you agree to the conditions of your participation and are aware of your involvement in this research.

Researcher's name: Najah Haziqah Binti Amin
Organization: Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
Address: AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia, 53100, Selangor
Tel: 016-2320213
Email: najahamin@gmail.com

Agreement on taking part as the respondent in the research project:
This study aims to identify university students' experiences using ChatGPT and explore whether integrating Al-Ghazali's teachings on intention can enhance their usage of ChatGPT and promote academic integrity. You are required to answer a few interview questions that are related to this study.

1. Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw or stop participating in this study at any time.
2. The respondents' information will be confidential, anonymous, and private.
3. All the data and information gathered will be collected for this research purpose only.
4. You consent to this interview session being audio recorded. The recordings will be used solely for research purposes and will remain confidential.

As the respondent, you can decide whether to participate in this study. It is recommended that the respondent read and understand the information above to avoid any inconvenience. Hence, the signature below signifies that you voluntarily agreed to be the respondent in this study.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Participant's signature: _____
Name: _____
Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____
Name: Najah Haziqah Binti Amin
Date: _____

Supervisor's signature: _____
Name: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Amilah Bt. Awang Abd. Rahman @ Jusoh



APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM FOR LECTURERS

 الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA بوتنيوسلي: إلهاد، إبتدأ، إجتيا، مللستيا Garden of Knowledge and Virtue	LEADING THE WAY KHALIFAH • AMĀNAH • IQRA' • RAHMATAN UL'ĀLAMIN LEADING THE WORLD INTERNATIONAL MULTI-AWARD WINNING INSTITUTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY
CONSENT FORM	
This consent letter is important for the respondent as you agree to the conditions of your participation and are aware of your involvement in this research.	
Researcher's name: Najah Haziqah Binti Amin	
Organization: Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences	
Address: AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia, 53100, Selangor	
Tel: 016-2320213	
Email: najahamin@gmail.com	
<u>Agreement on taking part as the respondent in the research project:</u>	
This study aims to identify lecturers' opinions on integrating Al-Ghazali's concept of intention to enhance the usage of Generative AI among university students. You are required to answer a few interview questions that are related to this study.	
1. Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw or stop participating in this study at any time. 2. The respondents' information will be confidential, anonymous, and private. 3. All the data and information gathered will be collected for this research purpose only. 4. You consent to this interview session being audio recorded. The recordings will be used solely for research purposes and will remain confidential.	
As the respondent, you can decide whether to participate in this study. It is recommended that the respondent read and understand the information above to avoid any inconvenience. Hence, the signature below signifies that you voluntarily agreed to be the respondent in this study.	
Thank you for your participation in this study.	
Participant's signature:	Researcher's signature:
.....	
Name:	Name: Najah Haziqah Binti Amin
Date:	Date:
Supervisor's signature:	
.....	
Name: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Amilah Bt. Awang Abd. Rahman @ Jusoh	



APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS AND LECTURERS

TOPICS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
4.2 Exploring the applicability of al-Ghazali's view of intention to student integrity in the use of ChatGPT. *Students' Interview Questions*	- Worldly Knowledge (Student's understanding of ChatGPT) 1. From your study experiences when using ChatGPT, what can it do to help with your academic work? 2. What are some things you believe ChatGPT cannot do reliably for your studies? 2. What positive outcomes have you experienced or expect from using ChatGPT? 3. What concerns or negative effects do you associate with using ChatGPT for learning? - Knowledge of Self (Students' ethical awareness in their use of ChatGPT) 4. When using ChatGPT, do you have set out your personal goals in the utilisation of it? On purpose, and what do you want to achieve by using ChatGPT? 4. How do you ensure your use of ChatGPT is aligned with your personal ethical principles? And are there any rules you follow for yourself?

	5. Have you ever felt a conflict between your desire to use ChatGPT and your sense of academic integrity? Please describe. - Knowledge of God (Students' possession of God-consciousness in their use of ChatGPT) 6. Beyond academic rules, do any religious or spiritual values guide you in how you choose to utilise ChatGPT? 7. Do you consider how your use of GenAI in your studies to be part of your spiritual responsibilities? 8. How might the awareness of God knows your intention influence your use of ChatGPT?
4.3 Applying al-Ghazali's Views of intention to Enhance Students' Academic Integrity in the Usage of Generative AI, ChatGPT. *Lecturer's Interview Questions*	Part 1: Lecturers' perceptions of ChatGPT in the Education field. 1. Are you familiar with the capabilities and limitations of ChatGPT? 2. From your personal experiences, what are the potential benefits of students using ChatGPT in their learning journey? 3. Also, from your personal experiences, what are the primary risks or negative impacts you have observed or anticipate regarding its use?

	Part 2: Exploring Al-Ghazali's Framework as a Potential Solution. According to al-Ghazali's framework of intention, there are mainly two foundational elements. First is the relationship between one's inner state, soul, and their actions. According to al-Ghazali, every action is determined by the intention, which originates from the soul, which is the inner state of a human being. A pure and righteous inner state leads to pure and righteous outward actions. Second is the knowledge required to form a sincere intention. Al-Ghazali believes that sincere intention is predicated upon three categories of knowledge: worldly knowledge (knowledge of the tool and its function), self-knowledge, and knowledge of God (God-consciousness). In the context of this study, when students embody these three forms of knowledge, their use of ChatGPT becomes ethically grounded and more deeply aligned with moral and spiritual principles. 4. How relevant do you see this connection between soul and action and its implications in students' use of ChatGPT? 5. Based on the first type of knowledge, worldly knowledge. How important is it for students to have a clear, accurate
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	understanding of what ChatGPT can and cannot do in order to use it ethically? 6. Second, self-knowledge, awareness of one's own motives and ethics. How crucial is it for students to be aware of their own intentions, desires, and personal ethical boundaries when deciding to use AI? 7. Third, knowledge of God, or God-consciousness. How significant is it for students to connect their AI use to higher values or a sense of spiritual responsibility for their actions to be truly ethical? 8. In your observation, do you think students under your supervision actually possess and apply these types of knowledge when they use ChatGPT in their learning endeavours? 9. Given the concerns we've discussed, do you think a framework like al-Ghazali's focus on ethical intention and the knowledge that shapes it could serve as a meaningful solution to the misuse of ChatGPT among university students? 10. If this framework were to be applied, what practical steps or changes would you recommend at the university level to make it effective? 10. Last but not least, in your view, what is the role or responsibility of a lecturer in
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	guiding students to use AI tools like ChatGPT with ethical intention? 11. Looking ahead, what do you foresee as the potential benefits and challenges in integrating al-Ghazali's teachings on intention in the usage of GenAI among university students
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APPENDIX D: LIST OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Student Respondents

No	Name	Course/Major	Univeristy
1	Mohd Irham	Civil Engineering	UiTM, Sabah Branch
2	Nurul Sakinah	Biomedical Science	University Malaysia Sabah (UMS)
3	Nur Diana	Biomedical Science	University Malaysia Sabah (UMS)
4	Muhammad Aiman	Foundation Science	University Malaysia Sabah (UMS)
5	Auni Zakirah	Islamic Education	UiTM, Sabah Branch

Lecturer Respondents

No	Name	Faculty	Univeristy
1	Issraq Ramli	Usuluddin	University Malaysia Sabah (UMS)
2	Khairuddin Abdullah	Education	University Malaysia Sabah (UMS)
3	Asyraf Rahim	Civil Engineering	Kota Kinabalu Polytechnic
4	Syafika Azwa	Civil Engineering	University Malaysia Sabah (UMS)
5	Nurul Shuhadat	Mechanical Engineering	Kota Kinabalu Polytechnic