

Moral Reasoning Theory: Between Kohlberg's and al-Ghazali's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the moral theory in al-Ghazali's classic Islamic compared Kohlberg's theory of moral level. The method used is the document analysis method with references to al-Ghazali works 'Ihya' Ulum al-Din's and articles related to Kohlberg's theory. The results show that there are similarities in the theory of moral level developed by al-Ghazali with Kohlberg, although there are also have differences. The level of moral reasoning classified by Kohlberg are divided into three which are pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional which have similarities to al-Ghazali's moral classifications of the 'awam, the khawas, and the khawas al-khawas. The difference is that Kohlberg's moral level is purely cognitive in its focus on moral reasoning, whereas al-Ghazali's moral level is on moral reasoning as well as behaviour.

Keywords: *moral reasoning, Kohlberg's moral level, al-Ghazali's moral level*

The study of conventional psychology states that morality is an attitude or way of acting that is measured by the positive and negative aspects of behaviour. The good and the bad are based on the acceptance of a society. In the study of Islamic psychology, moral matters are studied in the context of *akhlaq*, a moral concept in Islam. The basis for measuring good and bad morals is based on the Quran and Hadith (Sham 2013). *Akhlaq* or moral can be taught, guided, and shaped. This is what is called moral or *akhlaq* education. A society of high morality members has a tendency to create harmonious order, a sense of order, a mutual comfort and security.

The moral dimension consists of three domains: behaviour (acting), attitude (emotion or feeling) and reason (thinking). As Hoffman (2000) explains, there are at least three ideal psychological theories that study moral formation: social-learning theory, cognitive developmental theory, and emotional-motivational development theory. Social-Learning theory studies moral formation by taking moral behaviour as its object. The method of moral formation according to this theory is practiced by the practice of moral behaviour accompanied by reward, punishment and imitation. Cognitive developmental theory examines one's moral development from his moral reasoning. Moral formation is possible when aspects of reasoning are also developed, such as perspective-taking, reciprocity, cognitive dis-equilibrium, progressive construction, and co-construction. Emotional-Motivational development theory has the view that developing effective morals is by developing emotional aspects such as empathy, sympathy and caring.

The first theory takes moral action or moral behaviour as its object of study, the second theory draws on the object of moral-reason or moral-cognition, and the third theory focuses on

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the mission in the field of moral-feeling or moral affect. These three moral theories are consistent with the division of moral studies (characters) according to Lickona (2005), who call them moral including realities knowing, feeling and behaviour. Rest (1992) adds, however, that morality is viewed in three part:; behaviour, affections, and cognition. Thus, the moral domain also follows the theory, namely, the cognitive or reasoning domain, the affective or emotional domain, and the domain of behaviour or action. Moral education should be aimed at shaping the students' moral reasoning and thus having a high level of moral reasoning. Moral education is expected to change learners' level of moral reasoning from lower to higher levels. Harman, et. al. (2010) state that educators should be able to form new moral beliefs and new intentions in an effort to increase learners' moral reasoning, leaving previous beliefs corrected and revised by their educational processes.

This study will examine Kohlberg's concept of moral stage, especially in the field of moral reasoning, to be compared with the concept of moral stage (akhlaq) in al-Ghazali's perspective. Kohlberg is a moral education expert who has a major influence on the beginning of the twenty-first century, his work in developmental psychology and education was consigned mostly to historical textboxes (Reed 2016), while al-Ghazali is the most influential scholar, philosopher, theologian, legal expert, religious reformer and mystic in the history of Islam (Alavi 2007).

The Concept of Moral Reasoning

Approach of cognitive-developmental towards moral education according to Kohlberg gave rise to a concept known as moral reasoning. It is the ability to understand the rational (logic) of what is good and bad, right and wrong, with the ability to recognize the implications and consequences of the behaviour of the selected option. A person who has good moral reasoning, their judgment used in choosing a behaviour is not only because his choice is profitable or enjoyable for him, but the consideration for choosing that behaviour is based on principles embodied in moral and religious values. The element of maturity in thinking about the moral reason that underlies this behaviour is called moral reasoning.

In the view of this theory of cognitive morality, the question of morality is viewed from the perspective of the inner self, that is, trying to understand how the individual views the world, what his concerns are, and what his actions may be. Of course, this view is different from behaviourism in that its moral approach seeks to discover the regularity of human behaviour from an external perspective, in relation to behaviour that can be observed objectively in the environment (Rest 1979). Suffice it to say, cognitivism seeks to understand an individual's moral development from what he or she thinks (his or her reasoning point of view), whereas behaviourism seeks to understand an individual's moral development from what he or she does on a regular or ongoing basis. Therefore, for cognitive theory, moral development is done by enhancing one's moral reasoning, rather than by behaviourism. Jean Piaget, a practitioner of cognitive theory, also discusses moral development. According to him, children face two stages in moral development, the first of which occurs at the age of four to seven years of age called moral realism. At this point reasoning they consider morality to be something that actually refers to what they see. Secondly, moral development occurs in adolescence. Their perception and reasoning are better than children, in that they regard morality as a social bond consisting of moral autonomy (personal rights), moral realism and moral response (Syah 1995).

Moral reasoning is defined as the process of reasoning used to form new moral beliefs and values to be chosen as the true or best beliefs (Harman et. al. 2010). Moral reasoning is also interpreted as a person's point of view that is used as a reference to moral judgment (Stapleton 2013). This individual's moral point of view serves as the basis for assessing the badness of an action. There is often a different judgment on an action, sometimes some consider it wrong, it is not entirely wrong, and some may even consider it right. These rating differences occur due to differences in viewpoints.

Moral reasoning judgments, then, entail prescriptive judgments of right and good applied to social situations (Kohlberg 1986). Therefore, moral reasoning is based on specific features of

thought processes throughout different stages of development, and reflects the individual's interpretation of rules, principles (i.e. justice) in conflict situations. One's reasons for moral action when choosing from various competing alternatives in a given situation reflect an overall mental structure, which arises through interactions between the individual and his or her environment (Zeidler & Keefer 2003).

Briefly, the definition of moral reasoning is the application of general reasoning to moral questions, which are consciously, deliberately, and accompanied by effort (Saunders 2015). More complexly, the definition of moral reasoning is a mental activity undertaken to make a moral assessment of its consistency with other moral commitments. This commitment is to one or more moral principles in certain cases of moral judgment. This second definition refers to Paxton & Greene (2010), which states: "Moral reasoning has been defined as conscious mental activity through which one evaluates a moral judgment for its (in) consistency with other moral commitments, where these commitments are to one or more moral principles and (in some cases) particular moral judgments."

The ability of moral reasoning has to do with moral maturity. The higher the level of a person's moral reasoning, the more mature a person's moral behaviour is. Although pre-conventional is level-low moral, he has met the criteria of morality, no longer pre moral. The challenge of moral or moral learning is how to increase the student's moral reasoning to a higher level. It is in line with what cognitive theory suggests, that the chosen moral learning program should enhance students' capacity for good reasoning and assessment skills (Rest 1979).

The next question is how to change one's moral reasoning from pre-conventional to conventional or post-conventional. In this regard, Kohlberg has tested the validity of the cognitive theory of the (cognitive) reasoning process, which is disequilibrium. Kohlberg's research has shown that a person's moral reasoning can be enhanced by moral learning capable of bringing about disequilibrium (Newton 1978).

Kohlberg's Moral Reasoning Levels

Kohlberg divides the level of moral reasoning into three levels; pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. Pre-conventional is a moral reasoning whereby a person at this level chooses to act or act on the assumption that his choice produces physical enjoyment or enjoyment. While Conventional levels are characterized by responses to attitudes and behaviours based on the consideration that these are rules or rules. The Post-conventional level is attained by a person who acts on the basis of universal values or principles that have become a part of his or her life (Kohlberg & Hersch 1977).

Kohlberg further describes the three levels of moral reasoning into six stages, each of which consists of two stages. Pre-conventional consist of: (i) the punishment and obedience orientation, (ii) the instrumental relative orientation. Conventional consists of (i) the interpersonal concordance or good boy-nice girl orientation, (ii) the law and order orientation. Post-conventional consists of (i) the social contract or legalistic orientation, (ii) the universal ethical principle orientation (Kohlberg & Hersch 1977). The stages that Kohlberg refers to are the mental state of a person when choosing an action. Mental state is the reason or reason in the mind of a person used to choose an action. These reasons or considerations may change from one-sided reasons to one-sided reasons or considerations. These stages of moral development are described by Kohlberg as follows:

1. *The Punishment and Obedience Orientation*: A person at this stage chooses an attitude or action based on a desire to avoid punishment or for obedience to someone in authority. At this stage, the good and bad of the action are determined by the physical consequences that would be experienced if they did not take the action that they perceived to be good.
2. *The Instrumental Relative Orientation*: Consideration chooses a particular attitude or action for the sake of enjoyment or contentment. An action is considered good or right

when it can give satisfaction to oneself and sometimes to others. Sometimes it entices others to pleasure. Often the principle *marketplace* is part of his behaviour, for example "he hit me then I hit him too, he gave me drinks so I gave him food."

3. *The Interpersonal Concordance or Good Boy-Nice Girl Orientation*: Someone who is at this stage has characteristics when choosing an action based on the purpose of being called a good person. It acts according to the expectations of its social environment, be it family, community or nationality. Good or bad measurement of an action is a good thing in the eyes of others.
4. *The Law and Order Orientation*: The actions of a person at this stage are based on the thought of maintaining a social order and obeying the law or rules. For someone at this stage, good behaviour is about fulfilling their obligations, obeying their leaders, obeying the law and keeping the community safe.
5. *The Social Contract or Legalistic Orientation*: At this stage one has the reason that right actions are actions that society considers to be the result of an agreement. He recognizes that individual truth is relative and that it takes effort to reach a collective consensus on what is considered right. He also recognizes that the law can be changed by mutual consent. Therefore, he is of the view that if the law or law obstructs humanity, then the law or law may be change.
6. *The Universal Ethical Principle Orientation*: The moral reasoning that one possesses at this stage is the realization that the right course of action is in accordance with universal conscience and principles. For example, equality of degrees of humanity, respect for human dignity and justice for all.

In relation to the theory of moral oppression, Kohlberg not only pursued Piaget's theory, but also modified what was pioneered by John Dewey as illustrated in Table 2 below (Kohlberg 2000). Dewey's theory of morality was first conceived by dividing the moral gap into three levels: *pre-moral* as a level of behaviour driven by the desire to fulfill biological and social aspirations, *conventional* used to refer to the level of behaviour based on the measurement of group values with the intention of being accepted as part of from the group, and *autonomous* as an attribute of behaviour that is based on one's own thinking after assessing what is considered good or bad. Subsequently, Piaget modified Dewey's moral compass by changing the second (step *conventional*) to *heteronomous*. It was Kohlberg's last time to modify the term morale more consistently using terms *conventional* by adding *pre* to first level and *post* to third level.

Table 1: Developmental of Moral Reasoning Theory

Dewey	Piaget	Kohlberg
<i>Pre-moral</i> <i>Conventional</i> <i>Autonomous</i>	<i>Pre-Moral</i> <i>Heteronomous</i> <i>Autonomous</i>	<i>Pre-Conventional</i> <i>Conventional</i> <i>Post-Conventional</i>
Theoretical	Actualization	Validation + 6 Stage

Source:(Kohlberg 2000)

According to Kohlberg, Dewey offered the theory of moral abstinence as a theoretical study, then modified and applied by Piaget in the research and education framework. Furthermore, Kohlberg complements scientific and scientific validation of these stages. He describes three levels of moral gaps into six stages of moral gaps (Kohlberg 2000). Kohlberg also tested and applied the theory more broadly, through formal and non-formal education programs, so that the theory was used in moral formation. Among the programs of moral education used to promote moral reasoning are the discussion of moral dilemmas in learning and the creation of a democratic school environment to foster a fair standard for all schoolchildren known as just community programs (D'alessandro 2015). The success of testing and application of moral

learning based on *cognitive-developmental theory* further strengthens this position in moral education.

Al-Ghazali's Moral Reasoning Level

Al-Ghazali (n.d.) offers three levels of morality: *`awam*, *khawas*, and *khawas al-khawas*. It is the basis of one's judgment in choosing an action that determines his moral standards. For example, a person who performs a prayer may find his purpose or reason. People who pray with the intention of avoiding the punishment of hell can be categorized as the lowest (*`awam*). Higher than that (*khawas*) is a person who prays but in a God-fearing orientation and hopes for the blessings of Allah. While the orientation or reason that can be grouped at the highest level (*khawas al-khawas*) is if one performs the prayer out of love for Allah.

In order to reinforce the statement that in the moral sense there is a concept of morality, here are some examples of moral reasoning in the practice of worship or behaviour that follow the level of moral discipline (*`awam*, *khawas* and *khawasul khawas*):

1. Fasting (*shaum*): for *`awam*, he fasts by refraining from abstaining from fasting such as eating and drinking. A person in the *khawas* refrain from behaviours that break the fast as the level of public and added to refrain from things that can reduce the reward of fasting as did evil eye, hand and heart. People who are at the level of *khawasul khawas* do what the *`awam* do and prevent themselves from doing things that are worthless (Ghazali, n.d.-b).
2. Repentance (*taubat*): for individual in public (*awam*) level repentance means regret and promised not to sin ever committed. For the *khawas* repentance is regret and promised not negligent of the remembrance of God in every breath and of course had to first prevent yourself committing sins (Asmaran 2002). The public repentance for fear of the punishment of Allah, while the *khawas* ashamed to repent because God.
3. *Zuhud*: deviating behaviour or abandoning worldly pleasures can also be grouped into three. For the public, the soul is away from the world with the purpose of avoiding the afterlife. Individual level of *khawas* be ascetic in order to expect a reward of the Hereafter, and individual level of *khawas khawas*, be ascetic behaviour simply because the love of God, not because of fear of punishment or hope of heaven (Tualeka 2012).

Nawawi (n.d.) distinguishes the various behaviours of one's worship, in which public worship is called worship, the worship of *khawas* is referred to as *`ubudiyah* and the worship of the *khawas al-khawas* is known as *`ubudah*. This assessment is intended to show the difference in the quality of worship performed by people with different levels of moral or moral reasoning. Moral abstraction in addition to the use of the concept of *`awam*, *khawas*, *khawasul khawas*, can also utilize the dimensions of Islamic teaching consisting of *`aqidah*, *sharia*, morality or *Iman*, *Islam*, *Ihsan*. These levels can refer to the theoretical concepts of moral reasoning in the science of sufism (*`awam*, *khawas*, *khawasul khawas*) and combine with conventional, conventional and post-conventional. Thus, the use of a cognitive approach in, is one of its foundations in moral science, namely the existence of moral stage theory that is consistent with Kohlberg's moral reasoning.

The Congruence of the Kohlberg and al-Ghazali Moral Reasoning Levels

The concept of al-Ghazali and the moral scholars in Islam above can be considered to be similar to Kohlberg's moral reasoning in several aspects.

1. Al-Ghazali's moral thinking and Kohlberg's thinking on morality examine the aspect of reasoning or rationale behind the behaviour. Al-Ghazali, for example, examining the deeds of a Muslim is seen from his reason as being afraid of torment of hell, or hoping for a reward in heaven,

or simply because of his love for Allah Almighty. Both al-Ghazali and Kohlberg assess a person's level of moral reasoning by referring to reasons or motivations in making a decision.

2. Al-Ghazali and Kohlberg have the same assumptions about the grasp of individual moral reasoning. Kohlberg (2007) divided the level of moral reasoning into three categories; pre-conventional for the first stage, conventional for the second stage and post-conventional for the third stage. Similarly al-Ghazali divides the moral code into three levels: public (*`awam*) for the first, *khawas* for the second tier, and *khawas al-khawas* for the third tier (al-Ghazali, n.d.-b). Al-Ghazali does not break his three moral standards, whereas Kohlberg divides the three moral standards into six stages, which makes it easy to compile indicators of these levels so that measurement instruments can be made and can be used to find out one's moral level.

3. The use of basic independence of moral reasoning in determining the level of moral reasoning. Kohlberg uses the terms heteronomous and autonomous borrowed from Piaget, while al-Ghazali uses the terms *taqlid* and *ijtihad* which are often used in *fiqh*. Kohlberg who follows Piaget's theory, that one's moral thinking can be distinguished from *heteronomy* and *autonomy*, concludes that the third level (post-conventional) is an autonomous level of moral reasoning (Kohlberg 1995), which means that the first (preconventional) and second (conventional) levels are still heteronomous. In his description of the levels or stages of faith, al-Ghazali uses the term *taqlid* to explain the stage of *`awam's* iman (faith). It is characterized by *taqlid* (al-Ghazali, nd-a). *Taqlid* is part of it without understanding it deeply. *Taqlid* which according to the author is based on heteronomy, is also used in the field of morality, not only in *fiqh*. Whereas the *al-khawas khawas* have independent in determining the actions (their independent actions are called *ijtihad*, while those who are independent in making decisions are called *mujtahid*).

4. The highest levels of moral reasoning (Kohlberg's post-conventional and al-Ghazali's *al-khawas*), are both considered to have a higher position than the rule of law. For Kohlberg, people who act with reason or motive to always obey the law are classified as heteronomous, meaning that the person is still bound by an authority outside himself. Whereas in real life, sometimes the law is contrary to the principles of humanity and justice. Therefore, Kohlberg considers that people who have the highest moral reasoning (post-conventional) are those who hold to universal principles, although sometimes ignoring or exceeding the law (Kohlberg 1995). This basic thinking is justified in the logic or philosophy of law. Laws were made initially to realize living records that were in harmony with universal principles such as justice, equality and humanity. However, along with social change, sometimes the law is precisely contrary to the principles on which it is formulated. Therefore, what must be held is the principle is not a relative tool.

Al-Ghazali also accepts the concept that noble principles or values which must be prioritized need to be in harmony with aspects of *fiqh* (jurisprudence or law). It is justified to leave the law of *fiqh* in order to save five principles (*mabadi al-khams*) (life, property, mind, race and religion). Morals can go beyond *fiqh* (law). If it is not called leaving the law of *fiqh* it can be considered to replace one law of *fiqh* with another *fiqh*, where the last law of *fiqh* is considered more in accordance with the principal values of Islamic teachings. In the perspective of *fiqh*, *talfiq* is permissible, moving from a legal opinion formulated by a school of law to another legal opinion from a *mahzab* that is different from the reasons or motives justified by the shari'a. Although there are similarities between al-Ghazali's moral depravity theory and Kohlberg, there are also many differences between the two.

1. In terms or naming, Kohlberg's moral level starts with a lower moral level than al-Ghazali, meaning that al-Ghazali starts with the stage of *`awam* or conventional, whereas Kohlberg starts with a pre-conventional or pre-*`awam* level. In Arabic, the ordinary meaning of *`awam* is society in general and in English can be equated with conventional, not pre-conventional. Although there are misalignments in the use of the terms, the moral levels referred to the first level between

Kohlberg and al-Ghazali have something in common. What is meant by the conventional by Kohlberg is the same as what is meant by the stage of *`awam* by al-Ghazali. The terms are not parallel but by definition or meaning have similarities. For example, the pre-conventional meaning is aimed at the moral level which is based on fulfilment to get pleasure or avoid punishment in Kohlberg's thought, commensurate with the lay meaning explained by al-Ghazali as worship behaviour aimed at getting to heaven or avoiding the torments of hell. So pre-conventional can be considered as common with the layman, although the equivalence of the terms in language should be the same as conventional.

A significant difference is that Kohlberg considers that the conventional is a pre moral level because most decisions are made based on self-interest and material considerations (Kohlberg 1995). As for al-Ghazali, motivation or reason for doing at this level is validated or considered good behaviour (part of Islamic teachings), so it is not considered to be pre moral. For example, fasting with motivation so that he does not get the punishment of hell and get the pleasure of heaven is justified and not wrong based on Islamic teachings. Why is it different? According to the author there are two assumptions: First, moral measurements used between al-Ghazali and Kohlberg are different, al-Ghazali bases moral measurements on religious values, while Kohlberg is based on rational ethical values. Moral foundation or good or bad actions according to Kohlberg is determined by ethics (moral rationality) which tends to be progressive, while al-Ghazali is based on moral religion which tends to be static. Al-Ghazali's moral thinking is more related to worship behaviour, while Kohlberg's moral thinking is more related to social behaviour. Besides that, moral in Kohlberg's thought is relative because it originates from the ethics of rationalism, whereas in al-Ghazali's view morality is absolute because it comes from the value of God. Therefore, the moral values carried by al-Ghazali tend to be theocentric, while the moral values carried by Kohlberg tend to be anthropocentric. Second, cultural differences and times become the cause of moral measurement which prevailed in the time of al-Ghazali to decrease in level or status as human civilization and change of time, even though at that time the moral measurement was still considered noble. As is known, al-Ghazali lived in the 7th century while Kohlberg was in the 20th century.

2. The concept of moral perceptions of al-Ghazali (*`awam*, *khawas*, and *khawas al- khawas*) not only encompasses moral reasoning but at the same time encompasses moral behaviour, as indicated at the level in fasting behaviour. In Kohlberg's view and other cognitive moral theories, the same behaviour has different values or levels due to reasons in deciding the choice of moral behaviour. Al-Ghazali is also the case, but in addition to having the same perspective as Kohlberg, al-Ghazali commented that in the same case different behaviours can be chosen and each of these behaviours has different values and levels, some are low and some are low high, but the high or low value of the behaviour is not caused by the underlying reasons but the behaviour does have its own level.

3. In Kohlberg's view, the level of moral reasoning depends on one's age. Kohlberg states that the stage is pre-conventional owned by children aged four to ten years (Kohlberg 2007). As for children over the age, they have moved from the moral reasoning stage pre-conventional. In contrast to Kohlberg, al-Ghazali does not give an age limit related to the stage of moral reasoning of a person, because sometimes someone who is an adult is often still at the lowest stage which is lay.

4. The method of education in improving moral reasoning according to Kohlberg is cognitive, while al-Ghazali' concept is mixed, sometimes behaviouristic, sometimes psychoanalytic. Kohlberg expressed his disapproval of the theory of behaviourism and psycho-analysis with his expression: "Behaviour theorist has said that virtue is behaviour acquired according to their favour-rite general principles of learning. Freudians have claimed that virtue is superego-identification with parent generated by a proper balance of love and authority in family relations" (Kohlberg, 2007).

Al-Ghazali also believes that moral can change by means of habituation that is trying hard to leave bad traits and deeds, while practicing little by little (*riyadah*) practicing good qualities and deeds so that they become habits. Al-Ghazali exemplifies the cultivation of benevolent nature, someone who knows that the benevolent nature is noble character and wants to have that quality, then he must try to give his wealth to others even with a heavy heart at first, then familiarize yourself with the practice so that it becomes character (al-Ghazali, n.d.-a). This second method can be called in harmony with the view of the theory of behaviourism. So, the approach to moral formation of al-Ghazali is not consistent in following the level of moral reasoning that is the cognitive approach. This is due to al-Ghazali's moral level not only reasoning but also behavioural perversion. Al-Ghazali holds to the principle that that morals or morals may change and may be shaped in the direction of goodness. In other words, it is dynamic and not static at the same stage or level at any time.

However, there are some differences among them. First, the term or designation of Kohlberg's moral level starts with a lower moral level than al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali starts with the level of *'awam* which has the same meaning as conventional, while Kohlberg starts with the pre-conventional level which can be called pre-*'awam*. Both Kohlberg's moral divisions are purely cognitive, namely moral reasoning, while al-Ghazali's moral divisions are cognitive (moral reasoning) as well as behaviouristic. Third, Kohlberg gave the minimum age limit for a person to reach the highest stage while al-Ghazali made no restrictions. Fourth, the moral education method according to Kohlberg is cognitive, whereas al-Ghazali tends to be mixed, sometimes using a cognitive, behaviouristic and psychoanalytic approach.

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