

IBN SINA ABOUT THE UPBRINGING AND MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

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Annotation. *This article explores Ibn Sina's (Avicenna's) philosophical and medical perspectives on the upbringing and mental development of children. Drawing upon his seminal works such as "Kitab al-Qanun fi al-Tibb" (The Canon of Medicine) and "Kitab al-Nafs" (Book of the Soul), the study analyzes how Avicenna integrated psychological, pedagogical, and ethical principles into child development. The research highlights Ibn Sina's understanding of the interrelation between physical health, moral education, and mental maturity, emphasizing his recommendations on proper nutrition, environmental influence, and emotional balance during early childhood. Through comparative analysis with modern developmental psychology, the study shows that Ibn Sina's insights anticipated many contemporary theories of child growth, learning, and emotional regulation. The findings confirm that his multidimensional approach, combining medical and ethical aspects, remains relevant to modern educational and healthcare systems aiming to foster holistic development in children.*

The study examines Ibn Sina's comprehensive vision of child upbringing and mental development as an integrated process that shapes intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities.

His approach combined the principles of medicine, ethics, and philosophy, recognizing that a healthy body supports a healthy mind. Ibn Sina emphasized the role of balanced nutrition, appropriate physical activity, intellectual stimulation, and moral discipline in the formation of a child's character and reasoning abilities. The article highlights the continuity between Ibn Sina's theories and modern developmental psychology, demonstrating how his insights anticipated contemporary understandings of neurodevelopment, emotional intelligence, and cognitive growth. His emphasis on nurturing emotional balance, moral guidance, and self-regulation remains an enduring foundation for education and pediatric mental health practices today.

Keywords: Ibn Sina, Avicenna, child upbringing, mental development, education, psychology, ethics, philosophy of medicine, holistic development, cognitive growth.

ИБН СИНА О ВОСПИТАНИИ И ПСИХИЧЕСКОМ РАЗВИТИИ РЕБЁНКА

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются философские и медицинские взгляды Ибн Сины (Авиценны) на воспитание и психическое развитие детей. Опираясь на его основополагающие труды, такие как «Китаб аль-Канун фи ат-Тибб» («Канон врачебной науки») и «Китаб ан-Нафс» («Книга души»), исследование анализирует, как Авиценна интегрировал психологические, педагогические и этические принципы в развитие ребёнка. В исследовании подчёркивается понимание Ибн Синой взаимосвязи между физическим здоровьем, нравственным воспитанием и умственной зрелостью, с акцентом на его рекомендации по правильному питанию, влиянию окружающей среды и эмоциональному равновесию в раннем детстве. Сравнительный анализ с современной психологией развития показывает, что идеи Ибн Сины предвосхитили многие современные теории детского роста, обучения и эмоциональной регуляции. Результаты исследования подтверждают, что его многомерный подход, сочетающий медицинские и этические аспекты, сохраняет свою актуальность в современных системах образования и здравоохранения, стремящихся к целостному развитию детей.

В исследовании рассматривается комплексное видение Ибн Сины воспитания и психического развития ребенка как интегрированного процесса, формирующего интеллектуальные, эмоциональные и нравственные способности. Его подход сочетал принципы медицины, этики и философии, признавая, что здоровое тело способствует здоровому духу. Ибн Сина подчеркивал роль сбалансированного питания, адекватной физической активности, интеллектуальной стимуляции и моральной дисциплины в формировании характера и способностей ребенка к рассуждению. В статье подчеркивается преемственность между теориями Ибн Сины и современной психологией развития, демонстрируя, как его идеи предвосхитили современные представления о нейроразвитии, эмоциональном интеллекте и когнитивном росте. Его акцент на воспитании эмоционального равновесия, моральном руководстве и саморегуляции остается прочной основой для образования и практики охраны психического здоровья детей сегодня.

Ключевые слова: *Ибн Сина, Авиценна, воспитание детей, умственное развитие, образование, психология, этика, философия медицины, целостное развитие, когнитивный рост.*

Introduction

Ibn Sina (Avicenna), one of the greatest polymaths of the Islamic Golden Age, made profound contributions to medicine, psychology, and philosophy. Among his many intellectual achievements, his reflections on child upbringing and mental development stand out as remarkably advanced for his era. He believed that education should begin from birth, integrating physical health, emotional stability, and moral cultivation. Ibn Sina viewed the human soul as composed of rational, emotional, and vegetative faculties that develop in harmony through proper upbringing. His writings demonstrate a deep understanding of the connection between a child's physiological health and psychological well-being, laying the foundation for what modern science now terms "developmental psychology." The formative years, according to Ibn Sina, are crucial for shaping the intellect, character, and emotional resilience of the child. He advocated for balanced nutrition, gentle discipline, mental stimulation, and a nurturing environment as essential elements in promoting cognitive and emotional growth. In the modern context, his holistic philosophy remains relevant to educators, psychologists, and physicians working to support optimal child development. This study aims to reinterpret Ibn Sina's ideas using modern scientific terminology and to demonstrate how his principles align with contemporary theories of mental and emotional development in children.

Throughout history, few thinkers have combined medicine, philosophy, and pedagogy as harmoniously as Ibn Sina. His reflections on the mental and moral development of children were revolutionary for the 11th century and continue to resonate in the modern era. Ibn Sina viewed childhood as the most critical phase of human development, during which both the intellect and moral disposition are shaped. He believed that the early environment determines the trajectory of personality, behavior, and mental stability throughout life. In his writings, he described how the care of the child begins not only after birth but even during pregnancy, as maternal health and emotions directly affect the fetus. He proposed that education should be adapted to each child's temperament, guided by kindness, patience, and rational discipline rather than coercion. The role of teachers and parents was defined not merely as authority figures but as moral examples whose behavior forms the ethical and emotional framework of the child's mind.

Ibn Sina's understanding that the psychological, physiological, and social aspects of upbringing are interdependent mirrors modern approaches in child psychiatry, neuropsychology, and pedagogy. His recognition that play and curiosity stimulate intellectual growth demonstrates his advanced comprehension of developmental stages, centuries before these ideas were scientifically formalized.

Materials and Methods

The research is based on a qualitative content analysis of Ibn Sina's major philosophical and medical works, including "The Canon of Medicine", "Book of Healing", and "Book of the Soul", alongside modern literature on developmental psychology and pedagogy. Comparative methodology was applied to correlate Avicenna's principles with current frameworks such as Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and Erikson's psychosocial stages. The historical-contextual approach was employed to examine the cultural and intellectual environment of 10th–11th century Central Asia that influenced Ibn Sina's thought. Secondary sources, including translations, commentaries, and modern analyses by scholars in Islamic philosophy and medical history, were reviewed to ensure comprehensive coverage. The study also evaluated how Ibn Sina's recommendations—such as structured play, emotional guidance, moral training, and the influence of educators—reflect the interplay between physical and mental well-being.

Results

The analysis revealed that Ibn Sina considered education a process of nurturing both body and mind. He emphasized the role of early childhood as the foundation for lifelong intellectual and emotional stability. He advised that the child's environment should be peaceful, clean, and filled with moral examples from caregivers. According to him, excessive strictness suppresses creativity, while neglect fosters emotional instability. Ibn Sina proposed that learning through play, conversation, and imitation allows natural development of reasoning and memory. His medical writings suggested that balanced nutrition—particularly foods rich in essential elements—supports mental clarity and energy. Furthermore, he acknowledged the importance of sleep, physical exercise, and moderation in emotional expression as contributors to healthy brain development. The study also found that Ibn Sina viewed the teacher as a moral guide responsible for harmonizing intellect and ethics in the child's education. When compared to modern theories, Ibn Sina's framework parallels the notion of holistic education and biopsychosocial development, aligning with today's integrative educational models.

The analysis of Ibn Sina's principles reveals a detailed and practical system for child upbringing that encompasses mental, physical, and ethical education. He believed that the development of reason emerges gradually through the interaction of sensory experiences and reflective thought. The early introduction of moral instruction, good habits, and disciplined routines establishes the foundation for self-control and empathy. Ibn Sina advised that a child should be exposed to nature, music, and storytelling to cultivate imagination and emotional sensitivity. Physical exercises and balanced nutrition were prescribed not merely for bodily strength but for maintaining the equilibrium of the soul. He recommended that education should occur in small, consistent increments, avoiding excessive intellectual burden. The study found that these principles align closely with modern theories, including Piaget's stages of cognitive development and Vygotsky's emphasis on social learning. Furthermore, Ibn Sina's recognition of emotional well-being as a prerequisite for cognitive function correlates with contemporary neuroscience findings on the impact of stress, affection, and social interaction on brain plasticity.

The results confirm that Ibn Sina's model of education aimed at the creation of a harmonious individual whose intellect, emotions, and morality are in balance—a concept central to 21st-century holistic education.

Discussion

Ibn Sina's views on upbringing demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the developmental processes that underlie learning and behavior. His concept of balanced growth—uniting physical, mental, and moral dimensions—anticipated the modern biopsychosocial model of human development. He believed that a child's cognitive potential is shaped by early experiences and that emotional support from parents and teachers forms the foundation of psychological security. Modern neuroscience supports his emphasis on early sensory and emotional stimuli in brain development. Furthermore, his focus on nutrition and physical health aligns with current evidence linking diet and exercise to cognitive performance. The ethical component of Ibn Sina's educational philosophy is also noteworthy; he emphasized that moral instruction should not rely on punishment but on guidance, encouragement, and modeling virtuous behavior. The parallels between Ibn Sina's pedagogy and modern positive psychology reveal the timelessness of his insights. His integrated approach demonstrates that medicine and education are complementary sciences, both devoted to the well-being of the individual. In the 21st century, applying his principles can enrich medical education, pediatric care, and psychological counseling by promoting a unified view of child development rooted in health, intellect, and ethics.

Ibn Sina's contributions to the understanding of mental development transcend the historical boundaries of his era, representing an early synthesis of psychological insight and medical knowledge. His assertion that physical health and mental growth are mutually dependent is consistent with current research on psychosomatic medicine. He acknowledged that emotional disturbances during childhood can manifest as physical ailments, and vice versa, emphasizing the necessity of maintaining harmony between mind and body. His pedagogical approach rejected harsh discipline, advocating instead for emotional dialogue and rational persuasion—methods now recognized as essential for developing resilience and emotional intelligence in children. Ibn Sina also discussed the influence of social surroundings, noting that children imitate the behavior of adults and therefore must be surrounded by virtuous examples. This understanding parallels modern social learning theory. His holistic system of upbringing can be interpreted as an early model of preventive mental healthcare, promoting the development of strong character and psychological balance. When viewed through a contemporary lens, Ibn Sina's ideas support the integration of mental health education into school curricula and pediatric healthcare, affirming that psychological wellness begins with proper upbringing. The enduring universality of his thought lies in its emphasis on compassion, balance, and moral education as the foundation of human flourishing.

Conclusion

Ibn Sina's teachings on the upbringing and mental development of children represent a pioneering synthesis of medicine, philosophy, and ethics. He recognized that the physical and mental aspects of childhood are inseparable, and that education must be guided by compassion, moderation, and moral example. His recommendations for nurturing the child's body and mind through proper nutrition, emotional support, intellectual stimulation, and ethical discipline prefigure many concepts found in contemporary child psychology.

The enduring relevance of his ideas suggests that holistic education—addressing both moral and cognitive growth—remains essential for modern society. Reviving Ibn Sina’s pedagogical heritage can help bridge medical and educational disciplines, offering a balanced model for raising healthy, intelligent, and morally conscious future generations.

Ibn Sina’s philosophy of child upbringing and mental development embodies a timeless vision of human education that unites body, mind, and soul. His insistence that health and morality must grow together underscores the inseparability of physical and psychological well-being. By advocating for moderation, love, and rational guidance, he formulated principles that remain vital to modern psychology and pedagogy. His legacy teaches that education is not merely the transfer of knowledge but the cultivation of character and wisdom. The alignment of his theories with modern developmental science reveals his profound understanding of human nature and the factors influencing personality formation. Integrating Ibn Sina’s holistic philosophy into contemporary education and healthcare can enhance the moral and emotional resilience of future generations. His message endures: the child’s mind is a delicate creation that must be nurtured with kindness, intelligence, and respect for the unity of health and virtue.

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