

Qur'an, Education, and Challenges Arising from Technological Transformations

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received 24 October 2024 Received in revised from 15 November 2024 Accepted 30 December 2024 Published online 28 January 2025</p> <p>Keywords: Qur'an, Technology, Education, Situation, Piety, Wisdom</p>	<p>The contemporary world is undergoing unprecedented technological transformations that have profoundly reshaped human identity. The emergence of cyberspace and digital media has rendered many traditional educational paradigms increasingly ineffective. At the heart of these challenges especially for religious education lie two fundamental issues: the ontological challenge of forming a “fluid and fragmented identity,” and the epistemological challenge of the “erosion of educators’ authority and legitimacy.” These two concerns form the basis from which many other educational difficulties arise. Philosophies of education have responded to this situation through diverse and often contradictory approaches, which can broadly be classified into four categories: (1) acceptance of fluidity and decentering; (2) emphasis on individual choice and critical rationality; (3) return to tradition and reinforcement of authority; and (4) pursuit of sustainable and dynamic identity formation supported by networked authority. This article seeks to engage these challenges without either rejecting technology outright or submitting passively to its redefinition of the educational process. Employing a deductive approach, it develops a philosophical framework for human development and positioning based on key Qur’anic concepts. The notions of Shakila (structure), ‘Ubdiyyah (servitude), Tawhīd (divine unity), and Qist (justice) serve as elements for articulating the educational goal, while Taqwa (piety), Dhikr (remembrance), and Hidāyah (guidance) clarify the process. Within this framework, education is defined as “a process of interaction between educator and learner aimed at understanding and refining the learner’s existential condition.” Finally, the study derives a set of operational principles and methods for active engagement. Among the most significant are: active reminding, situational piety, and narrative identity formation to address the challenge of fluid identity; and wisdom-based authority formation, Tawhīd-oriented critical rationality, and consultative legitimacy to counter epistemological challenges. Together, these principles outline a framework for transforming the contemporary technological lifeworld into a space for the practice of servitude and the realization of divine vicegerency. The essential prerequisite for adherence to these principles is the moral cultivation of the child, aimed at strengthening and directing the will.</p>
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Introduction

The contemporary world is undergoing an unprecedented transformation—one that has reshaped not only the tools of human life but also the very fabric of social existence and human identity itself. At the heart of this transformation lies a technological revolution which, through the rise of cyberspace and digital media, has established entirely new conditions and contexts for the human lifeworld¹. These developments have introduced profound challenges to education in general, and to religious education in particular, rendering many traditional models and strategies if not wholly obsolete largely ineffective.

The essence of these challenges lies in the emergence of a *fluid and fragmented identity*. Within the traditional educational paradigm, identity formation was a gradual, linear, and normatively structured process that unfolded within the stable institutions of family, school, and local community, under the guidance of authoritative figures such as parents, teachers, and religious leaders.² The result of this process was the development of a relatively coherent and enduring sense of self, grounded in socially accepted values and moral frameworks.

In contrast, contemporary technological environments have disrupted this paradigm at its very foundation. Today, individuals no longer inhabit a single, coherent world but rather navigate a constellation of parallel and often conflicting realities. Social networks, gaming platforms, and online communities enable individuals to sustain multiple “virtual selves” simultaneously, each molded by the particular norms and expectations of its environment. This leads to the emergence of a fluid, fragmented, and situational identity—one that privileges novelty, visibility, and instant validation over depth, stability, and continuity³. Within such a context, the project of religious education whose ultimate goal is the cultivation of a faith-based structure and an integrated monotheistic identity faces a critical question: how can a person be guided toward sustained religious commitment amidst an ocean of competing identity options?

This transformation in the dynamics of identity formation gives rise to a second, equally significant challenge: the *reconfiguration of educational authority and legitimacy*. When individuals gain immediate access to vast, competing sources of information, ideologies, and interpretations, the traditional monopoly of educators—parents, teachers, and religious leaders

¹ Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000); Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

² Elli P. Schachter and Yisrael Rich, “Identity Education: A Conceptual Framework for Educational Practice,” *Educational Psychologist* 46, no. 4 (2011): 222–238.; David J. Eggebeen and Jason Dew, “The Role of Religion in Adolescence for Family Formation in Young Adulthood,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71, no. 3 (2009): 108–121 & Zrinka Pintar, “Traditional Paradigm and Progressivism of Contemporary Paradigm in Early and Preschool Education,” *Journal for Pedagogic Theory and Practice* 69, no. 1 (2020): 191–207.

³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*; Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991). & Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

inevitably erode¹. Authority is no longer derived from institutional position but must now be established through rhetorical competence, dialogical engagement, and the capacity to persuade within an increasingly crowded “ideological marketplace.” Consequently, the religious educator is transformed from a transmitter of established tradition into one voice among many—competing for attention, trust, and moral influence.

These two key challenges, in turn, give rise to additional educational difficulties: diminished capacity for focus and depth essential for serious education; weakening of the virtue of patience in favor of instant gratification; erosion of privacy, which is necessary for self-knowledge and moral development; and cultural invasion coupled with value relativism².

Some studies have addressed the challenge of “deconstruction,” which pertains to both the ontological and epistemological dimensions of the contemporary educational situation. According to this perspective, binary oppositions such as near/far, desirable/undesirable, permissible/forbidden, and private/public lose their meaningful contrasts.³ This dissolution of boundaries is particularly significant because religious and moral education seeks to delineate limits and institutionalize values.

The issue discussed above is closely related to the focus of the present article. However, this study seeks, in greater detail and based on a conceptual clarification of the nature of education, to provide a set of principles and practical recommendations for addressing both the ontological challenge (fluid identity) and the epistemological challenge (collapse of authority). The aim is to enable learners not only to protect themselves but also to actively and effectively participate within the new technological lifeworld.

1. Perspectives and Approaches

In response to the ontological challenge of “fluid identity” and the epistemological challenge of “the collapse of authority,” philosophies of education have offered diverse, and sometimes contradictory, responses, which can be broadly categorized into four approaches:

1.1 Postmodern and Deconstructivist Approaches: Acceptance of Fluidity and Decentering

These approaches, rooted in the ideas of philosophers such as Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard, do not perceive the aforementioned challenge as a “problem” but rather as an “opportunity” for liberation from the dominance of grand narratives and absolute authorities.⁴

¹ Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 777–795, <https://doi.org/10.1086/448181>. & Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*

² Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*; Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

³ Khosrow Bagheri, *A Reconsideration of Islamic Education*. Vol. 2. Tehran: Madreseh Publications, 2023. P. 59.

⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).; David J. Eggebeen and Jason Dew, “The Role of Religion in Adolescence for Family Formation in Young Adulthood,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71, no. 3 (2009): 108–121.; Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power

These perspectives embrace the death of the unitary and stable subject in the context of fluid identity. According to them, identity is fluid, fragmented, constructed, and performative. The goal of education is to help individuals discover, create, and freely navigate among these changing identities, rather than imposing a fixed identity. Education should prepare individuals for life in conditions of uncertainty and multiplicity.

From this standpoint, the “collapse of authority” is considered an achievement. Lyotard, for example, advocates “belief in the death of grand narratives.” No single source whether religion or traditional science has an exclusive right to articulate the truth. Education should teach individuals the skill of critiquing power (Foucault) so that they can examine competing claims and make informed choices. The role of the educator is not that of an authoritative figure but rather a facilitator of dialogue among various narratives.

This approach ultimately leads to absolute relativism and skepticism and is in direct conflict with the foundations of Islamic education, which are grounded in the existence of a fixed truth (Allah) and a definite ultimate goal (closeness to God).

1.2 Liberal and Progressive Approaches: Emphasis on Individual Choice and Critical Rationality

This perspective, associated with John Dewey and the liberal educational tradition, seeks to reconcile the fluidity of the contemporary world with the need for education by emphasizing individual choice and critical rationality.¹

Regarding the ontological challenge, this approach views identity as a project that the individual constructs over a lifetime through experience and experimentation. Education should provide a rich environment in which individuals can democratically and autonomously shape their identity in response to various choices. The ultimate goal is the cultivation of autonomous individuals.

Concerning the epistemological challenge, proponents argue that authority is not imposed from above but emerges through the processes of critical rationality and free dialogue among individuals. Truth is not pre-given but is formed through inquiry and discussion. The educator acts as a democratic guide, assisting the learner to think independently and make decisions.

Although this approach emphasizes rationality, it positions religion as merely “one choice” among many, on an equal footing with other ideologies. It resists recognizing religion as a “transcendent truth” that should serve as the standard against which all other matters are measured.

Conservative and Traditionalist Approaches: Return to Tradition and Reinforcement of Authority

¹ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916). & Gert Biesta, *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

This perspective, which emerges as a reaction to the instability of postmodernism, seeks to reconstruct authority and a stable identity through a return to tradition and foundational texts.¹

This approach views fluid identity as a pathology and a form of degeneration. Its remedy lies in a return to roots, authentic collective identities (national, religious), and the reinforcement of grand narratives. The aim of education is to transmit cultural and religious heritage to the new generation and to shape a coherent and stable identity based on that tradition.

This perspective explicitly seeks the revival of traditional authority, sacred texts, and the institutions associated with them (such as religious clergy). Education should be based on the transmission of knowledge from an authoritative source to the learner and avoid relativism.

Although this approach seemingly aligns with the objectives of religious education, it carries the risk of intellectual rigidity, reducing religion to mere formal rituals, and failing to address or counter contemporary challenges. It may lead to the formation of individuals who either isolate themselves from the modern world or experience intense internal conflicts.

1.4 Integrative Approach

One common approach in the literature, given the diversity of perspectives, is the integrative approach. In other words, it seeks to offer a balanced response without falling into the traps of relativism or fundamentalism.

This approach acknowledges that contemporary conditions do not permit a return to closed, traditional identities. At the same time, it rejects absolute fluidity. Its goal is to help individuals construct an identity that is both coherent and dynamic—an identity with a stable central core (such as foundational religious beliefs) while being enriched and matured through critical engagement with other cultures.²

This perspective seeks to redefine authority based on critical rationality and dialogue. Authority is achieved not through imposition but through rational and ethical persuasion. Educators must be able to explain not only religious knowledge but also the rationale for commitment to religion and its superiority within a space of critical dialogue and in language accessible to the new generation. Authority here is grounded in reason and ethics, not merely in status or position.

Although the integrative-critical approach appears to have greater potential to provide responses that are simultaneously authentic (faithful to religious foundations) and effective (applicable in the contemporary world), many integrative strategies, despite aiming for coherence, suffer from eclecticism and lack of internal consistency. This raises the question of whether an approach derived from Islamic and Qur'anic sources can offer a novel framework to meet the needs of the present era, avoiding both the reductionism of postmodernism and the

¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

² Bagheri. *A Reconsideration of Islamic Education*. P. 61.

rigidity of traditionalism. In this article, we will demonstrate that an Islamic response can be structured around concepts such as a “stable yet dynamic monotheistic identity” and “rational authority based on wisdom and religious texts.”

2. Qur'anic-Philosophical Definition and Elucidation of Education

In a general sense, education refers to a set of processes aimed at producing relatively stable changes in the learner. However, this description does not constitute a definition, as education is a normative concept, and each school of thought defines “desirable education” according to its philosophical, psychological, and sociological foundations. Defining education thus entails specifying the desirable relatively stable changes (objectives) and the potential processes that can lead to these objectives.

From an Islamic perspective, education is not merely a psychological or social process for literacy, knowledge acquisition, cultural transmission, or socialization; rather, it is considered a “necessary condition for human existence and persistence,” as the purpose of relatively stable changes is the development of the learner’s higher being and existential structure.¹

In this section of the article, relying on a network of Qur’anic concepts and their philosophical elaboration, we explicate the process and objectives of education, setting the stage for the subsequent section, which will demonstrate how this conceptualization can address the ontological challenge of “fluid identity” and the epistemological challenge of “collapse of authority.”

Elucidation of the Aim of Education Based on the Network of Concepts: ‘Servitude’ (‘Ubudiyyah), ‘Constitution’ (Shākilah), ‘Tawhid’, ‘Justice’ (Qist), and ‘Dar al-Salam’

The aims of education from an Islamic perspective cannot be reduced to the usual fragmented or isolated categories. Rather, these goals represent different levels and manifestations of a single truth, interacting within an evolutionary, spiral pattern. For a simple yet insightful depiction, attention to the purpose of human life and the network of concepts related to the aim of creation proves highly instructive. In Qur’anic analysis, one way to understand education is to examine concepts that point toward the ultimate purpose of human existence.

The concept of ‘Ubudiyyah (servitude) appears in the verse: “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me”², and has been referenced by philosophers of education.³ However, this concept alone does not fully explain the aim of education from an Islamic perspective, because in its general sense, ‘ubudiyyah can also encompass non-human beings or

¹ Jamileh, Alamolhoda, *Islamic Theory of Education*. (Tehran: Imam Sadiq University Press and Research Organization for Education Planning, 2014). P. 262.

² Quran 51:56

³ Khosrow Bagheri, *A Reconsideration of Islamic Education*. Vol. 1. (Tehran: Madreseh Publications, 2024). P.82.

non-believers¹. In the context of desirable life and educational goals, the servitude in question is voluntary and deliberate, arising from proper fulfillment of responsibility and duty, and is contrasted with rebellion. Humans, who may rebel out of a sense of self-sufficiency, are reminded in the verse: “No! Indeed, mankind transgresses, because he sees himself self-sufficient”². In contrast, by recognizing their dependence on God, humans bow before Him and engage in worship.

To further clarify this point, attention must be paid to the existential structure of humans according to the Quran, in order to provide a proper account of the desirable life as the aim of education and the means to achieve it. According to the Quran, humans possess a *Shākilah* (constitution or enduring structure): “Say, each works according to his constitution”³. The *Shākilah* represents the stable and enduring aspect of the self that shapes the ultimate identity of the human being. It develops gradually through knowledge, inclinations, and behaviors.⁴ Although identity and *Shākilah* are existential and seemingly individual, their development is heavily dependent on society, and the distinction between social and individual dimensions should be understood as conceptual rather than absolute. In other words, stable change in the learner’s identity is shaped across the various arenas of life.⁵

From an Islamic perspective, the question arises: how can the *Shākilah* ensure the ultimate purpose of life, and what goal should education pursue? The central motto of Islam is the declaration: “La ilaha illa Allah”. In the verse: “Allah bears witness that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those endowed with knowledge, maintaining justice. There is no deity except Him, the Almighty, the Wise”⁶, a strong connection is established between testimony to Tawhid, possessing knowledge, and upholding justice.

The first aim of Islamic education is to cultivate a ‘monotheistic constitution’ (*Shākilah Tawhidiya*). In this identity, all components of an individual’s personality—beliefs, emotions, actions, and traits—are organized around the axis of Tawhid, forming a coherent whole. This aim is realized in five ascending stages⁷:

1. **Cognitive Stage (Theoretical Tawhid):** Knowledge of God as Creator, Sustainer, and Watchful over all aspects of life.
2. **Affective Stage (Islam and Faith):** A heartfelt and emotional turning toward God and internal acceptance of the truth of religion.

¹ Mohammad Hossein Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*. (Qom: Jame ‘e Modarresin Hawzah, 1996). vol. 9: 71-72.

² Quran 96:6-7

³ Quran 17:84

⁴ Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an*. vol. 2: 105-210; Makarem Shirazi, Naser. *Tafsir-e Nemuneh*. Vol. 2. (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 2021). P. 160-170

⁵ Alamolhoda, *Islamic Theory of Education*. P. 388

⁶ Quran 3:18

⁷ Alamolhoda, *Islamic Theory of Education*

3. **Behavioral Stage (Practical Tawhid):** Manifestation of faith in speech and action, including worship and transactions.
4. **Habituation Stage (Moral Virtues):** Consolidation of righteous deeds to the extent that they become stable and enduring traits of the self (e.g., honesty, piety, justice).
5. **Identity Stage (Shākilah):** Realization of the individual's existential entirety as a "righteous servant" or "monotheist," which represents the ultimate outcome of the educational process.

The second aim is the establishment of a healthy society (Dar al-Salam) through the maintenance of justice (Qist). This is both an objective in itself and a means to better actualize 'Ubudiyyah and Tawhid in society. The Quran refers to the ideal society as: "*And Allah invites to the Home of Peace*"¹.

A healthy society is one whose social unity is grounded in the ontological unity of its members, secured through the moral cultivation of individual². Such a society, in turn, supports the education of monotheistic individuals, creating a spiral relationship that strengthens both the individual and the community. In this society, relationships are based on divine authority (Wilayah) rather than rigid social contracts or tribal kinship. Key features include:

- **Justice-centeredness:** Assigning everything its rightful place. "*Indeed, Allah commands justice and benevolence*"³
- **Social Affection:** Bonds among members are based on love, brotherhood, and compassion, not self-interest. "*Indeed, the believers are brothers*"⁴
- **Rejection of Tyranny:** Hierarchical exploitation and human domination are repudiated. "*And do not follow allies other than Him*"⁵
- **Altruism and Forgiveness:** Collective benefit and divine satisfaction take precedence over individual gain.
- **Enabling Piety:** Social contexts are organized to facilitate righteous deeds and avoidance of sin.

Islamic education prepares individuals to live in such a society, while educated individuals play a central role in creating and sustaining it. Hence, a healthy society is both an aim of education and the necessary context for achieving the individual's educational objectives.

Ultimate Goal: Al-Hayat al-Tayyibah and Proximity to God

These objectives lead to the ultimate aim, referred to in the Quran as al-Hayat al-Tayyibah (the good and wholesome life): "*Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer we will surely grant them a good life*"⁶. Al-Hayat al-Tayyibah is a pure, wholesome

¹ Quran 10:25

² Meghdad Yaljan, *Ethical Education in Islam* (Qom: Research Institute of Hawzah & University, 2016). P. 36-48.

³ Quran 16:90

⁴ Quran 49:10

⁵ Quran 7:3

⁶ Quran 16:97

life encompassing all aspects of human existence. This life is characterized by tranquility, meaning, dignity, and eternal satisfaction, granted to humans through faith and righteous action. It is the direct result of proximity to God and the attainment of ‘Ubudiyyah, which is the ultimate purpose of human creation.

Thus, the ultimate goal of Islamic education is to assist humans in achieving al-Hayat al-Tayyibah through the cultivation of piety (Taqwa) and remembrance (Dhikr) within the framework of a healthy, just society

Elucidation of Educational Processes Based on the Network of Concepts: Taqwa (Piety), Dhikr (Remembrance), and Guidance (Hidayah)

The next issue concerns clarifying the concepts that can explicate the notion of the educational process. In many Islamic educational texts, these concepts have also been used to explain the aim of education, since processes serve as means to achieve the goals.

The Qur’anic verse: “O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous”¹ establishes that Taqwa (piety) is a prerequisite for servitude, as it creates the groundwork for attaining Falah—success, salvation, and eternal well-being. The term Taqwa derives from the root waqāyah, meaning “to protect or safeguard something from harm” (Ragheb Isfahani, entry: Waqāyah). Thus, Taqwa can be defined as “protection of the self from existential dangers and threats”² While Taqwa is sometimes mentioned as a goal, this protection also pertains to the processual aspect of effective education.

This continuous protection relies on three epistemological prerequisites:

1. Recognition of threatening factors and hazardous contexts
2. Knowledge of methods and means to prevent or mitigate danger
3. Awareness of risky situations and avoidance of negligence.³

Accordingly, Taqwa is not merely a moral virtue; it constitutes a psychological state grounded in both cognition and attention. This duality of knowledge and mindfulness forms the foundation of Islamic educational philosophy.

While part of education focuses on identifying threats and strategies to counter them, the core and distinctive element of Islamic education is cultivating awareness of threatening situations and remembrance (Dhikr) of them. It is here that the concept of Dhikr becomes central in elucidating the nature of Islamic education⁴. The Quran establishes an inseparable link between Taqwa and Dhikr:

- “Indeed, those who fear Allah—when an impulse from Satan touches them, they remember, and then they are seeing”⁵

¹ Quran 2:21

² Bagheri, *A Reconsideration of Islamic Education*. P. 76

³ Alamolhoda, *Islamic Theory of Education*, p. 272

⁴ Ibid. p. 273

⁵ Quran 7:201

- “Take what We have given you with might, and remember what is therein, that you may be mindful”¹
- “But as a reminder, perhaps they may become righteous”²

These verses indicate that Taqwa leads to Dhikr, and Dhikr, in turn, facilitates Taqwa. The Quran even refers to itself as Dhikr: “And We have sent down to you the Reminder [Dhikr] that you may clarify for mankind”³, and the Prophet is described as a Mudhakkir (one who reminds): “So remind, for you are only a reminder”⁴. This demonstrates that remembrance and mindfulness constitute the core of the Prophet’s mission and the Quranic text.

Dhikr is not mere repetition of words; rather, it entails full attention to the uniquely human situation and awareness of the elements within that context that exert influence. In the Quran, what is to be remembered encompasses anything that reminds humans of their relationship with God from divine blessings⁵ and signs in creation⁶, to stories of past peoples⁷ and the punishment of the Hereafter⁸.

Education, as the primary mission of the Prophets, occupies a position beyond a mere social institution. The Quran presents guidance (Hidayah) as the foundation for establishing and reforming society: “We said, ‘Descend from it, all of you. Then when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance there will be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve’”⁹. Education serves as a prelude to the realization of this guidance. Guidance, as the ultimate aim of education, reflects a process undertaken alongside the learner, indicating the educator’s role in directing the educational journey¹⁰.

By integrating these three concepts Taqwa, Dhikr, and Guidance—the educational process from a Qur’anic perspective can be understood as a continuous and comprehensive process in which the educator guides the learner to navigate the path of knowledge regarding existentially beneficial and harmful factors (Hidayah), fosters ongoing mindfulness and remembrance of the human existential condition before God (Dhikr), and thereby assists the learner in protecting against dangers and focusing on life-giving sources (Taqwa).

¹ Quran 2:63

² Quran 6:69

³ Quran 16:44

⁴ Quran 88:8

⁵ Quran 7:69

⁶ Quran 50:6

⁷ Quran 54:15

⁸ Quran 73:17

⁹ Quran 2:38

¹⁰ Bagheri, *A Reconsideration of Islamic Education*. P. 76

2-1. Philosophical Elucidation of Education: Education as the Process of Understanding and Correcting One's Position

In *Mulla Sadra's* Transcendent Philosophy, according to the principle of *Tashakhkhush* (individuation), what is real and external are particular entities, each instantiating the general concept of "human." Sadra asserts:

The criterion of individuation is existence itself, because the essence of man, in addition to quantity, quality, time, place, condition, and millions of other attributes, remains universal, not distinct. Individuation occurs through the exit from universality—i.e., becoming particular—and only through actual existence can an individual become distinct from others¹

Based on the principle of *Unity*, this individuation in the external world entails a relational linkage with other existents. Thus, individuation, while emphasizing the distinctiveness of an entity, simultaneously points to its unique position within the world.

From this standpoint, human identity and individuation can be understood as "position", reflecting perceptual (cognitive) and affective (emotional and volitional) connections to objects and the surrounding world. In other words, it is precisely one's position that constitutes individuation². Human existence and position, however, are not static; humans possess a fluid identity³ and an intrinsic desire for existential growth and escape from nonexistence⁴, stemming from self-awareness and free will⁵. Humans alone have conscious knowledge of their existence and can intentionally direct their existential trajectory, even if this awareness initially occurs unconsciously or semi-consciously⁶.

On this anthropological basis, human identity is a volitional existence, shaped through reciprocal interaction with others⁷. Since both educator and learner possess agency, education becomes an interactive process through which the learner becomes aware of life-giving and life-diminishing factors, and subsequently corrects their position accordingly.

The human existential position serves as the boundary between the perishable natural world and the eternal immaterial realm. It is simultaneously threatening—due to exposure to

¹Morteza Motahhari. *Education in Islam*. Tehran: Sadra Publications, 2021

²Ashouri, Mahdi, & Jamileh Alamhadi. *Growth Theory as the Philosophy of Psychology*. (Tehran: SAMT, 2023). p. 96-97

³Ashouri & Alamolhoda. *Growth Theory as the Philosophy of Psychology*. P.46

⁴Mahmoud Noudari, *Islamic Approach to Stages of Religious Development*. (Qom: Research Institute of Hawzah and University and Farhangian University, 2021) p. 64.

⁵Alamolhoda, *Islamic Theory of Education*

⁶Yaljan, *Ethical Education in Islam*, p. 47

⁷Noudari. *Islamic Approach to Stages of Religious Development*.

nonexistence and decay—and opportunistic, offering the potential to attain higher and more stable levels of being¹.

Anything that disrupts this upward trajectory, causing neglect of God or leading to nonexistence, meaninglessness, sin, or moral decay, is considered a life-diminishing factor. Conversely, anything that enhances human existence, draws one closer to God, increases true knowledge, strengthens ethical virtues, or fosters tranquility and meaningfulness is a life-giving factor. Worship, beneficial knowledge, justice, benevolence, and any righteous act performed with sincere intention constitute life-giving factors.

Thus, education is a process that assists humans in:

1. **Understanding their existential position**
2. **Identifying life-diminishing and life-giving factors** within themselves and their environment
3. **Using free will** to correct this position by enhancing life-giving factors and mitigating life-diminishing ones

While the inclination toward existential growth and aversion to nonexistence is universal, the determination of life-giving and life-diminishing factors varies across philosophical or theological schools. Qur'anic analysis of procedural elements and goals demonstrates the path and aim proposed by Islamic education.

In light of the above, Islamic education adopts a holistic and comprehensive approach, unlike reductionist models. It views education as an existential process that begins with guidance from a competent educator to protect against existential harms, continues through cultivation of awareness and remembrance, manifests in the reformation of the individual and society, and ultimately leads to proximity to God and attainment of al-Hayat al-Tayyibah (the good life)

3. Strengthening and Allocating Will: A Prerequisite for Active Engagement with Challenges

The question arises: What unique capacity and effectiveness does a comprehensive framework provide for analyzing and addressing the complexities and challenges of today's ever-changing world, especially rapid technological transformations? How can this framework be employed to mitigate the challenges posed by fragmented identity and the collapse of authority?

In the following two sections, the article addresses the principles that must be observed to ensure that the technological lifeworld itself becomes a domain for practicing Tawhid (Divine Unity) and justice. However, active engagement requires a prerequisite: the strengthening of the learner's will and the origin of their desires. In brief, this corresponds to moral education of the child, though not just any form of moral education. Rather, the focus must be on strengthening the child's ethical will².

¹ Alamolhoda, *Islamic Theory of Education*

² Morteza Motahhari, *Education in Islam*. (Tehran: Sadra Publications, 2021), P.203

This discussion is closely linked to the child's emotional development and their understanding of values, which is briefly outlined here¹. The attention to and persistence of human identity and position depends both on situational factors and on the faculties and potentials of the soul. Moreover, the presence and continuity of the self at any level depend on freedom from matters pertaining to other levels. It is precisely this liberation from certain matters and attention to others that shapes a key dimension of the soul, commonly recognized as will.

The gradual formation of will means that the child, through recognition and classification of matters according to their desirability, progressively develops a desire for possession and a tendency toward proximity or distance regarding them. As these desires intensify, the child gradually forms a will to act upon or a will to approach the objects of desire. With increased knowledge and emotional reinforcement, this will to act or to approach is further strengthened. Hence, the allocation of will, and even the determination of its intensity, is conditioned upon the child's emotionalized understanding.

The formation or allocation of will entails choice and liberation, and often requires multiple acts of attachment and detachment; for this reason, will and volition are associated with freedom. Gradual allocation of human will, in terms of subject, is achieved through epistemic processes, either via direct experience or mediated through language. This type of understanding includes not only observation and the perception of pleasure or pain but also the recognition of meaning and value of various objects and events.

Thus, the allocation of will, conditioned on comprehension, valuation, and classification of matters by importance, occurs in at least two stages:

1. First stage: The will to act emerges from the generality; the child gradually refrains from attempting to control everything and allocates their will toward matters that are pleasurable or relieve discomfort.
2. Second stage: The child's will becomes directed toward one or more specific items among similar or competing matters. Clearly, the more similarities exist, the harder the choice, and the greater the knowledge and experience required to act upon the selected objects.

The allocation of will depends on selective attention, which itself depends on stimuli and innate potentials. There is a correlation between intensification of desire for one object and the reduction of motivation or desire for other similar objects. Therefore, the will to act or the will to approach is always contingent on the absence of will toward other options. This shows that allocating will involves both freedom to choose one thing and freedom from others, and this concept of freedom is a precondition for exercising will to act or to approach.

A detailed discussion on institutionalizing values and nurturing a child's volition requires a separate article; here, it suffices to note that educational models, including religious education, that fail to strengthen the child's will and properly direct their desires toward ethical values will

¹ Ashouri & Alamolhoda. *Growth Theory as the Philosophy of Psychology*. P. 142- 150.

inevitably collapse when facing technological transformations, leading either to submission or isolation.

Subsequently, principles and recommendations are presented, aimed at transforming the technological lifeworld into a domain for practicing Taqwa (piety) and Dhikr (remembrance). Three key components are suggested for addressing the challenge of deconstruction: rationality, piety of presence, and selection, evaluation, and rejection¹. Given the detailed discussion of the challenge in its ontological and epistemological dimensions, these principles are elaborated in greater depth.

4. Principles of Education for Transitioning from Fragmented, Fluid Identity to a Stable but Dynamic Tawhidi Identity

Overcoming the challenges of fluid and fragmented identity cannot rely solely on moral prescriptions. It requires adherence to operational principles that enable active rather than passive engagement with identity challenges in the digital era. This constitutes the central focus of Islamic education. Based on the preceding foundations, the following principles can be proposed for designing educational processes:

4.1. Principle of “Active Remembrance” Instead of “Passive Prohibition”

Instead of focusing on mere filtering or prohibition—which often yields counterproductive results—the educational system should emphasize empowering learners to “remind themselves” in digital environments. This principle is derived from the central concept of Dhikr (remembrance). In accordance with this principle, practical measures can be implemented, such as:

- **Teaching “Tawhidi Digital Literacy”**: The ability to read and analyze digital content from the perspective of Tawhid (Divine Unity). For example: What image of “power” does this video game convey? Does it centralize power in humans, or remind players of human weakness and God’s absolute power? How does this social network relate to envy, ostentation, and pride—existence-eroding factors?
- **Designing practical tools and applications** that create educational pauses rather than mere prohibition. For instance, reminders for adhkar (divine invocations) through messaging apps, or motivational prompts about the purpose of online activity.

4-2. Principle of “Contextual Piety” Instead of Template Piety

Piety cannot be presented as a fixed set of instructions, independent of context. Education must enable the learner to identify existence-eroding and existence-enhancing factors in emerging and ambiguous technological situations, and make ethical decisions accordingly. Practical applications of this principle include:

- **Ethical Case Studies**: Analyze contemporary technological issues—AI, big data, privacy, virtual identity—with the key question: *In this specific situation, how is piety manifested?*

¹ Bagheri, *A Reconsideration of Islamic Education*. P. 72- 79.

- **Situational Self-Assessment Exercises:** Ask learners to evaluate the impact of any generalizable digital activity on their inner state (calmness/anxiety, humility/pride, contentment/envy) and use it as a criterion to determine whether the activity is existence-enhancing or existence-eroding.

4-3. Principle of “Narrative Identity Formation” versus Consumer Identity

Identity in digital spaces is often consumer-oriented and algorithmically constructed. Education should help individuals see themselves as the authors of their own life narrative, centered around being a servant of God (Abdullah). This principle aligns with the concept of Shakila (core structure of identity). Practical measures include:

- **Encouraging content creation with a divine narrative perspective:** Instead of passive consumption, adolescents can be asked to produce digital narratives about a pilgrimage, charitable act, or discovery of a divine sign in nature (e.g., blogs, short videos, podcasts).
- **Revisiting the “Grand Narrative” of the Qur’an:** Analyze stories of the prophets as models for confronting identity and technological challenges in their eras (e.g., Prophet Ibrahim’s confrontation with the idols of his time).

4-4. Principle of “Tawhidi Community Building” in Digital Spaces

If digital environments shape identity, education must actively foster virtual communities characterized by Tawhidi social affection, countering individualistic isolation or affiliation with destructive groups. This principle draws on the concepts of Dar al-Salam (peaceful society) and social affection. Practical applications include:

- **Creating virtual groups and platforms around spiritual and scientific activities:** e.g., online Qur’anic study circles, online charitable project groups, committed scientific networks.
- **Clarifying “etiquette for digital interactions”** based on Islamic values: How to maintain **modesty, respect, and Ihsan** online? This serves as practical training to strengthen Tawhidi identity in new digital spaces.

4-5. Principle of “Reformative Creativity” Instead of Technological Passivity

Rather than being mere consumers of technology, learners should be trained to become agents of change and reform within technological contexts. This principle is based on the concept of divine vicegerency (Khilafah) on earth. Practical applications include:

- **Teaching programming and app development** aimed at solving social problems and promoting values (e.g., apps for endowments, charity, interactive religious education).
- **Ethically-Oriented Technological Entrepreneurship Projects:** Encourage youth to develop startups that, in addition to revenue models, have a **reformative mission**.

5. Principle of “Wisdom-Based Authority Formation”

In the anarchic technological space, it is insufficient to merely deny competing authorities. Instead, a new authority rooted in rationality intertwined with divine wisdom must be constructed to respond to fundamental human questions. Practical applications include:

- **Wisdom-Oriented Reinterpretation of Religious Texts:** Provide rational and wisdom-based interpretations of Qur’anic verses and Hadiths capable of addressing complex technological inquiries (e.g., the relationship between divine power and technological power).
- **Establishing Wisdom-Centered Reference Institutions:** Create scientific-religious platforms using contemporary language and interactive methods to address the intellectual doubts of the digital generation, such as Digital Wisdom Academies.
- **Producing Deep Content:** Develop podcasts, articles, and video clips that engage in **in-depth analysis** based on Islamic knowledge rather than superficial treatment.

5-1. Principle of “Tawhidi Critical Rationality”

Education should strengthen learners’ ability to critically evaluate all epistemic authorities (religious and secular) based on the principles of divine wisdom. Practical applications include:

- **Teaching Critical Authority Literacy:** Methods to identify hidden assumptions, ideological biases, and epistemic limitations of any source.
- **Wisdom-Based Comparative Exercises:** Compare responses to fundamental questions, e.g., the purpose of life, across Islam, materialist philosophies, and emergent spiritualities, using rational and wisdom-based criteria.
- **Designing Wisdom-Based Evaluation Frameworks:** Criteria for assessing the credibility of authorities, based on internal consistency, alignment with human nature, explanatory power, and provision of life meaning.

5-2. Principle of “Consultative Authority” Instead of Authoritative Command

In the era of declining traditional coercive authority, new authority should be dialogical, reasoned, and participatory. Practical applications include:

- **Collective Wisdom-Based Consultation:** Form discussion circles (even virtually) on complex issues with the instructor as a wise guide, not an absolute authority.
- **Transforming the Instructor into a “Facilitator of Reasoning”:** Shift the role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator of the learner’s discovery process.
- **Designing Wisdom-Based Q&A Systems:** Create intelligent systems that guide users through progressive questioning rather than providing definitive answers.

5-3. Principle of “Networked Authority Formation”

Rather than relying on a single authority, a network of interconnected and compatible authorities should be established, forming a wisdom ecosystem. Practical applications include:

- **Creating a Network of Wisdom Resources:** Connect learners to a range of credible sources (scholars, philosophers, scientists, committed artists) that collectively complete the wisdom puzzle.
- **Developing Knowledge Integration Platforms:** Systems that integrate contemporary knowledge with religious wisdom (e.g., combining psychology with Islamic ethical concepts).
- **Strengthening Peer Wisdom Authority:** Form peer groups guided by an instructor to collaboratively learn and engage in rational deliberation.

5-4. Principle of “Epistemic Transparency”

New authority must be based on full transparency in sources, methods, and epistemic limitations to establish rational trust. Practical applications include:

- **Teaching Transparency Literacy:** Train learners to assess the clarity of sources in presenting evidence and reasoning.
- **Modeling Transparency by the Instructor:** Instructors explicitly share sources, reasoning, and areas of uncertainty.
- **Creating Traceable Reasoning Authorities:** Produce content that allows users to trace the chain of reasoning back to fundamental principles.

5-5. Principle of “Return to Guided Inner Authority”

Ultimately, education should strengthen inner authority grounded in reason and innate disposition (fitrah), operating under divinely guided principles. Practical applications include:

- **Practicing Rational Self-Authority:** Teach decision-making skills based on reasoning and fundamental values, rather than mere imitation.
- **Strengthening Inner Discrimination:** Cultivate the ability to discern right from wrong based on fitrah through repeated practice in various contexts.
- **Creating Internal Monitoring Systems:** Teach continuous self-assessment methods based on rational and Sharia-based criteria.

These principles collectively aim to create a wisdom-based authority ecosystem, transitioning from coercion to reasoning, rote instruction to reflective thought, passivity to rational agency, and from single authority to a network of epistemic sources. In this model, authority does not vanish; it becomes plural, transparent, rational, and ultimately serves to strengthen inner authority guided by divine wisdom. This represents the transition from the binary of traditional authority or authority collapse to rational authority rooted in divine wisdom, preserving both relevance to contemporary conditions and the authenticity of Islamic epistemic tradition.

Conclusion

As discussed, contemporary technological developments pose two fundamental challenges to education:

1. The ontological challenge of fluid identity, which leaves individuals adrift in a sea of shifting and sometimes conflicting possibilities.
2. The epistemological challenge of authority collapse, which has eroded the traditional authority of knowledge sources, confronting humans with a multitude of unreliable and often contradictory references.

In response to these challenges, various approaches have emerged, ranging from isolation and rejection of technology to submission and passivity before it.

This article moves beyond these ineffective dichotomies and, relying on Qur'anic principles and Islamic philosophy, offers a constructive framework. Accordingly, Islamic education is a process that, through continuous "remembrance" (dhikr) and the cultivation of "situational piety," empowers humans to identify both "existence-enhancing" and "existence-diminishing" factors in the new technological realm, and, guided by rational insight, to pursue closeness to God and the attainment of al-Hayat al-Tayyibah (the good and virtuous life). The ultimate goal of this process is the formation of a faith-based structure (shakilah imaniyah) and a stable yet dynamic Tawhidi identity, alongside active participation in building a healthy society (Dar al-Salam).

For active engagement, practical principles were proposed:

- For the identity challenge, principles such as "active remembrance," "narrative-based identity formation," and "Tawhidi community-building" emphasize fostering self-awareness and new attachments.
- For the authority challenge, principles like "wisdom-based authority formation," "Tawhidi critical rationality," and "consultative authority" enable the transition from traditional coercive authority to a transparent, rational, and dialogue-based authority.

Overall, these principles aim to revitalize the educational ecosystem, transforming technology into a new domain for practicing servitude (ubudiyah) and realizing divine vicegerency

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