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Original Research

A Criterion-Based Inquiry into the Discovery of Novel Stages of Social Education in Sūrah Ṭāhā

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ABSTRACT

SUBJECT & OBJECTIVES: The stages of social education in the Holy Qur'an have often been analyzed on the basis of linear variables such as age. However, social education is a multidimensional construct that also encompasses class structures and levels of socialization. The present study aims to discover and comprehensively reinterpret the stages and criteria of social education in Sūrah Ṭāhā in order to propose a systematic and multidimensional model of the process of religious socialization.

METHOD & FINDING: This study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on Qur'anic studies and sociology, and employs qualitative content analysis together with contextual analysis of the verses of the blessed Sūrah Ṭāhā. The educational propositions and narratives of the surah—particularly the grand narrative of Prophet Moses—are analyzed on the basis of the reciprocal relations among the dimensions of education. The findings indicate that Sūrah Ṭāhā presents social education within the framework of a three-dimensional structural model, rather than necessarily as successive linear stages. These dimensions are the developmental-age dimension, namely the transition from affective, family-centered education to social responsibility; the dimension of class-based exigencies, namely the differentiation of educational patterns of agency across various levels of power structures and the masses; and the dimension of socialization dynamics, namely the stages ranging from the internalization of values to collective law-abidance. These three dimensions are organically interrelated and determine the position of the educatee within the context of social relations.

CONCLUSION: In contrast to traditional studies that have offered one-dimensional descriptions of developmental stages, Sūrah Ṭāhā presents a comprehensive model in which social education is a dynamic process influenced by the structural context of society and the class position of the educatee. The originality of this study lies in presenting an indigenous analytical framework that demonstrates how revelatory guidance redefines the agency of the educatee in confrontation with diverse social classes and the stages of active socialization.

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Introduction

Education, as one of the existential ends of human beings and among the pillars that sustain collective life, is regarded as a fundamental indicator for evaluating the degree of growth and transformation in any society. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the educational process depends upon an accurate understanding of the requirements, differences, and characteristics governing the various stages of the educatee's development. In other words, the realization of educational objectives becomes possible only when the educator's interventional measures correspond to the cognitive, psychological, and social capacities of the educatee in each developmental period. This is because premature intervention leads to the waste of resources, while delayed intervention results in the loss of transformative opportunities (Debesse, 1995, p. 12). Therefore, the precise explanation of the "stages of education" and the identification of the indicators and characteristics of each stage are among the undeniable necessities of educational research.

Within the domain of Islamic education, due to its fundamental differences from Western schools of thought in terms of foundations, objectives, and ontology, the extraction of educational models and components directly from revelatory sources—the Holy Quran and the Sunnah—is a methodological necessity. One of the existing challenges in the literature of Islamic education is reductionism in defining the "stages of education." In most written works, these stages have been classified merely on the basis of one-dimensional variables such as the chronological age of educatees. Yet age is only one characteristic of the educatee, and a comprehensive developmental model must also include other structural components such as social position, power structure, and the dynamics of socialization.

This holistic view of the existential dimensions of the human being can clearly be traced and extracted from the educational programs of the prophets and the revelatory guidance of the Holy Quran. Given the breadth of this field, the present study has selected the blessed Sūrah Ṭāhā as its field of inquiry. By portraying the process of monotheistic invitation and education within the grand narrative of Prophet Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh, the magicians, and the Children of Israel, this surah offers a unique model of the stages of social education and its communicative dynamics.

Despite the significance of this subject, previous studies have mostly either confined themselves to presenting generalities of social education in the Quran or have merely examined the educational methods of Sūrah Ṭāhā without considering multidimensional developmental models. This has resulted in a theoretical gap in explaining the structural relations among the developmental, class-based, and socialization dimensions within this surah. The present study has been organized with the aim of filling this scientific gap.

The main objective of this study is to discover, reinterpret, and present a multidimensional conceptual model of the stages of social education based on the contextual analysis of the verses of Sūrah Ṭāhā. In pursuit of this objective, the study seeks to answer the following questions within its analytical structure:

What are the stages and dimensions of development in social education according to the contextual structure of the verses of Sūrah Ṭāhā, and how are they interconnected? What

indicators and criteria does Sūrah Ṭāhā provide for distinguishing the stages of social education in terms of developmental-age dimensions, class-based exigencies, and levels of socialization? What new practical and theoretical implications does the structural model extracted from Sūrah Ṭāhā have for designing a system of social education in contemporary Islamic society?

Conceptual Framework

A systematic analysis of the stages of social education in Sūrah Ṭāhā requires the formulation of a coherent conceptual framework that explains the relations among three key variables: social education, socialization, and stages of developmental growth.

1. The Conceptual Link between Social Education and Socialization

Social education within the Islamic paradigm is a teleological and agency-centered process whose objective is to provide the appropriate conditions for the flourishing of innate capacities and the internalization of transcendent values, so that the individual may realize active and effective agency within the context of society (Bagheri, 2010, p. 105). In modern sociological literature, this concept is closely related to the term "socialization," a process through which the individual learns the norms, roles, and skills necessary for constructive participation in the social structure (Giddens & Sutton, 2021, p. 312).

However, this study presupposes a fundamental distinction between the two concepts. While socialization in classical theories is mainly focused on passive adaptation to existing norms (Grusec & Hastings, 2015, p. 8), social education, based on the Quranic worldview, emphasizes selective guidance, critical rationality, and ethical commitment. Therefore, in this study, social education is not merely adaptation to existing social realities; rather, it is an active process of elevating interactive behaviors based on revelatory values.

2. Educational Stages as a Moderating Variable

The realization of social education is not a linear and uniform process; rather, it is subject to the "stages of growth and education." Educational stages are distinct and successive periods of human biological, cognitive, and psychological development, in each of which the educatee possesses a particular psychological, perceptual, and behavioral structure (Debesse, 1995, p. 8).

The alignment of these stages with theories of cognitive development, such as Piaget's, and moral development, such as Kohlberg's, indicates that the effectiveness of educational interventions depends on the correspondence of objectives and methods with the cognitive and affective characteristics of the educatee at each stage (Piaget, 1952, p. 122; Kohlberg, 1981, p. 47).

3. The Analytical Framework of Sūrah Ṭāhā

Sūrah Ṭāhā, as the analytical field of this study, is a revelatory document that depicts the process of religious socialization and social education within the context of a grand narrative—the story of Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh and the guidance of the Children of Israel—as well as within the framework of revelatory guidance addressed to the Prophet of Islam. The analytical framework of this study assumes that Sūrah Ṭāhā formulates the stages of social education not merely on the basis of chronological age, but according to "levels of epistemic-social development."

These include: individual encounter with revelation, formation of the initial nucleus of the educational family, agency in confrontation with the structure of power, and finally, the guidance of social masses.

This staged approach provides a multidimensional framework in which the stages of social education are redefined in accordance with the increasing complexity of the educatee's social relations and the enhancement of his cognitive capacities.

Literature Review

A systematic explanation of the stages of social education requires a critical examination of the research background in two major domains: first, classical developmental and sociological theories in Western literature; and second, contemporary studies in the field of social education with a focus on Islamic texts and Sūrah Ṭāhā. A critical evaluation of these two domains reveals the existing methodological and substantive gap and substantiates the necessity of the present study.

1. A Critical Examination of Classical Theories of Development and Socialization

In the fields of developmental psychology and sociology, numerous attempts have been made to formulate the stages of growth and link them with socialization. Piaget, through his theory of cognitive development, explains the development of the mind in four stages, ranging from the sensorimotor stage to the formal operational stage, and demonstrates that the child's social perception is entirely dependent on his cognitive structure at each stage (Piaget, 1952, p. 140). Nevertheless, the major limitation of Piaget's theory lies in the fact that he considers cognitive development to be a predominantly biological-internal process and does not sufficiently attend to the role of guided educational interventions and value orientations in determining the stages of social education.

In the domain of moral development, Kohlberg analyzes the process of internalizing norms by proposing the three levels of pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional morality (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 89). Although Kohlberg's model provides an appropriate tool for analyzing moral judgment, it overlooks the dynamics of power structures and social classes in the educational process due to its excessive focus on abstract and individualistic rationality.

On the other hand, Erikson, in his theory of psychosocial development, takes a step further by linking psychological development to social crises across eight stages (Erikson, 1963, p. 251). Nevertheless, Erikson's model is still founded upon chronological age and biological development and lacks multiple dimensions such as class structures and active agency in confrontation with systems of power.

In addition to developmental theories, recent sociological studies have emphasized changes in the instruments of socialization. For instance, Turkle demonstrates how digital media and virtual spaces have redefined traditional patterns of interaction and socialization (Turkle, 2011, p. 74). Although such studies highlight contemporary challenges of social identity, due to their descriptive nature, they are unable to offer a prescriptive and coherent model based on an educational teleology.

2. Analytical Evaluation of Islamic and Quranic Studies with Emphasis on Sūrah Ṭāhā

- General Studies of Social Education in the Quran

Works such as Social Education in the Quran (Khavari, 2013, p. 54) have addressed the principles, methods, and general foundations of social education. The weakness of this type of research lies in its generalization and lack of focus on a specific surah, which prevents the discovery of organic relations among the verses and the attainment of a coherent staged model.

- Specialized Studies on Sūrah Ṭāhā

In this category, studies have mostly been one-dimensional and have neglected the issue of educational stages. Works such as Educational and Guiding Discussions on the First 50 Verses of Sūrah Ṭāhā (Bagheri, 2011, p. 112) have merely extracted educational methods and lack a structural view of the entire surah and its formative stages.

In the thesis Educational Methods in Sūrah Ṭāhā (Jafar, 2015), the researcher has attempted to extract ethical principles and educational methods. However, his focus has been on applied and descriptive aspects, and he has failed to present a conceptual framework capable of explaining the multiple criteria of the stages of social education, including age, power structure, and socialization.

Furthermore, comparative studies such as the article An Examination of the Doctrinal and Educational Teachings of Sūrah Ṭāhā (Tayyebi & Mohammadi, 2019, p. 45) have merely compared exegetical views, namely Al-Mizan and Fi Zilal al-Qura'n, and have not adopted an independent approach to educational modeling.

3. Meta-Analysis of the Literature and Research Gap

The outcome of the critical examination of the research background shows that Western developmental psychology theories have mainly defined the stages of growth in a one-dimensional manner based on chronological age. Conversely, domestic Quranic studies have analyzed the issue of social education without sufficient attention to its developmental and structural dimensions, or merely within the framework of scattered and descriptive methods.

The existing scientific gap is the absence of a multidimensional conceptual model capable of formulating the stages of social education not merely based on chronological age, but according to multiple criteria—epistemic development, power structure, and levels of socialization—within the context of Quranic grand narratives. The present study seeks to fill this theoretical gap by conducting a systematic contextual analysis of the verses of Sūrah Ṭāhā and by presenting the aforementioned conceptual model.

Three Dimensions of the Social Education Model in Sūrah Ṭāhā

1. Situational-Age Development (Transition from Family-Centered Affective Education to Social Responsibility)

A systematic analysis of the educational biography of Prophet Moses in the blessed Sūrah Ṭāhā demonstrates that this surah, contrary to conventional approaches in developmental psychology and the philosophy of education—which formulate the stages of education in a linear, successive manner based purely on chronological age—represents "age development" within a situational and teleological framework. In this approach, age

does not possess intrinsic validity in and of itself; rather, it serves as a context for the formation of the educatee's agency, cognitive-moral capacity, and missionary commitment in response to the divine call. Instead of providing chronological details, Sūrah Ṭāhā emphasizes three developmental phases, each indicating a qualitative shift in the social relations of the educatee.

1.1. The Stage of Genesis and Affective Grounding (Childhood under the Light of Care and Infusion of Love)

The Holy Quran begins its reinterpretation of the growth process of Prophet Moses from his infancy and childhood, a period in which the physical survival and psychological development of the educatee are situated within the most hazardous socio-political context (the tyrannical rule of Pharaoh): "Put him in the casket, and cast it into the river. Then the river will cast it on the bank, and he shall be picked up by an enemy of Mine and an enemy of his.*" And I made you endearing, and that you might be reared under My [watchful] eyes. When your sister walked along and said, 'Shall I direct you to one who will take care of him?' So We returned you to your mother, that her eye might be comforted and she might not grieve"* (Quran, 20:39–40).

Contemplation of the key phrases of these verses, including "And I made you endearing" (divine infusion of love) and "that you might be reared under My [watchful] eyes" (being built before and under divine supervision), shows that in this phase, social education is achieved not through formal education or external duties, but through the channels of securing psychological safety, affective responsiveness, and restoring the familial bond (returning to the mother's embrace).

In classical developmental psychology, Erikson (1963) argues that the consolidation of a healthy identity depends on resolving the crisis of "trust versus mistrust" in the first years of childhood, presenting a safe and responsive environment as the essential condition for the formation of this trust (Erikson, 2006, p. 22). Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the significance of social interactions within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the supportive role of the social scaffold [the family] (Vygotsky, 2005, p. 56).

Nonetheless, the innovation of the model in Sūrah Ṭāhā lies in the fact that it formulates this affective security and familial bond beyond a mere socio-biological need, serving instead as a trans-historical ground for agency-building education. Within this structure, the interaction of material factors (the chest, the river, the enemy's palace) and metaphysical factors (inspiration to the mother, infused love) creates a space in which the young educatee, despite being present in the core of Pharaonic power, remains immune to being assimilated into its socio-cultural structure. This indicates that the developmental dimension of childhood in the Qur'an is the ground for the formation of a resilient and educable personality destined for grand social missions in the future.

1.2. The Stage of Moral Awakening and Existential Trials (The Period of Preparation and Transition)

The second developmental phase in Sūrah Ṭāhā is linked to a serious behavioral and moral crisis: *"And you killed a soul, but We delivered you from anxiety and tried you with [many] trials"* (Quran, 20:40).

The use of the word fitnah (trial/tribulation) in the form of the emphatic absolute object futunan (with [many] trials) indicates a process of melting, testing, and existential purification

(Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 2011, Vol. 14, p. 172). This event (the unintentional killing of the Coptic man in the course of defending an oppressed Israelite) and its subsequent consequences (inner anxiety, condemnation to death, and forced migration) transform Moses from a passive observer into an agent actively engaged in structural issues and social justice.

In psychological explanations, Kohlberg (1981) defines moral development as the process of transition from pre-conventional morality (fear of punishment) to conventional and then post-conventional morality [internalized principles of justice] (Kohlberg, 2009, p. 47). In psychosocial developmental theory, this period is also the time for the consolidation of identity versus role confusion (Erikson, 2006, p. 119).

A critical engagement with these theories reveals that Sūrah Ṭāhā, unlike Kohlberg's analyses, which view moral development merely as a cognitive process based on hypothetical dilemmas, explains the moral development and social awakening of the educatee within the context of real-life confrontation with oppression, the experience of exile, and bearing the consequences of social agency. Here, gham (anxiety) and fitnah (trial) function as workshops; these experiences enhance the cognitive capacity and psychological resilience of the educatee, enabling him to comprehend the boundary between individual agency and divine planning. This phase represents the transition from the stage of affective preservation to the stage of active self-awareness.

1.3. The Stage of Epistemic Maturity and Stabilization of the Social MissionYouth and Functional Maturity

The third phase of this developmental dimension refers to Moses' presence in Midian and his ordained return: *"Then you stayed for several years among the people of Midian. Then you turned up as ordained, O Moses! And I chose you for Myself"* (Quran, 20:40–41).

The phrase "Then you turned up as ordained" indicates that this extended ten-year period in Midian—which involved apprenticeship, family formation, shepherding, and distance from the tumult of power in Egypt—was not an accidental course of events. Rather, it had been designed according to a precise "educational measure and geometry" so that the educatee could attain the highest level of cognitive, moral, and practical maturity (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, 2012, p. 88). The unparalleled expression "I chose you for Myself" demonstrates the culmination of this educational process: a point at which human agency becomes fully aligned with God's legislative and guiding will.

In his explanation of cognitive development, Piaget (1952) regards the stage of "formal operations" as the highest level of mental development, at which the individual becomes capable of abstract thinking, hypothesis formation, and the systematic resolution of complex problems (Piaget, 2007, p. 46).

By contrast, in the developmental model of Sūrah Ṭāhā, the educatee's final maturity—which occurs within the period of youth and functional maturity—is not limited to abstract cognitive abilities. Rather, it includes endowment with knowledge, wisdom, expansiveness of the heart, and complete preparedness for leading the process of social reform. At this stage, education rises from the individual and familial level to the domain of political deconstruction and the reconstruction of collective identity.

Figure 1. Comparative Examination of the Developmental-Age Dimension in Sūrah Ṭāhā and Classical Developmental Theories

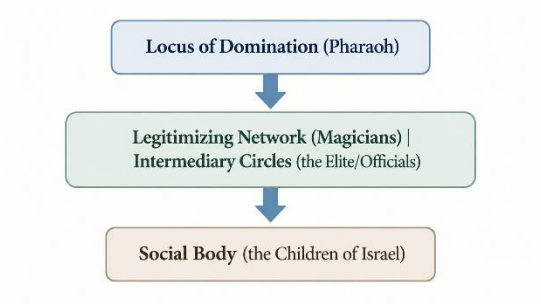
Comparative Indicator	Classical Developmental Psychology Approach (Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg)	Developmental-Age Approach in Surah Taha
Basis of staging	Chronological age, biological development, The educatee's position within the context of and the development of the individual's cognitive and psychological structures.	The educatee's position within the context of divine guidance, social mission, and the degree of moral agency.
Role of the social environment	An external factor that facilitates or obstructs the individual's natural development.	A structural context—consisting of power and family—in which the educatee is actively redefined through interaction with revelation.
Goal of development	Adaptation to reality, attainment of abstract thinking, and the achievement of psychological equilibrium (Piaget, 1952, p. 122).	Realization of servitude to God, reform of the power structure, guidance of society, and fulfillment of the divine mission (*istiṣnā'*).
Mode of transition	A linear, sequential, and partly deterministic transition from one stage to the next.	A situational and nonlinear transition influenced by existential trials (*fitan*) and educational predestination or divine determination (*qadar*).

As Figure 1 demonstrates, Sūrah Ṭāhā transforms traditional descriptions of age-based development into a structural and functional analysis. Within this model, age-related stages function merely as temporal frameworks within which the dynamics of socialization and power relations—the second and third dimensions of the conceptual model—unfold and acquire meaning.

2. Class-Based Exigencies and Levels of Educational Engagement in Sūrah Ṭāhā: A Contextual Analysis of the Power Structure and Fields of Educational Engagement

One of the fundamental criticisms directed at educational research in the field of Qur'anic studies concerns either the imposition of modern class structures, whether Weberian or Marxist, upon the revelatory text or the reduction of the surah's social interactions to a uniform chronological trajectory. In Sūrah Ṭāhā, social class is reinterpreted not as a rigid economic category or an age-based hierarchy, but as an educational field of engagement. These fields are distinguished according to the positions occupied by actors within the network of power, the distribution of symbolic capital, and the degree of their agency in reproducing or transforming the status quo.

Rather than depicting a static class pyramid, Sūrah Ṭāhā presents a dynamic structure of educational engagement in which the mode of thought, instruments of persuasion, and method of guidance vary in accordance with the audience's structural position. This model comprises three principal levels of engagement, namely the locus of domination, the legitimizing network, and the social body, together with an intermediary layer consisting of the middle circles of authority. These levels are stated in the figure below:



2.1. Engagement with the Locus of Domination: The Structure of Transgression and the Strategy of Gentle Speech

Within the contextual structure of Sūrah Ṭāhā, confronting Pharaoh constitutes the first operational step in Moses' social mission: *"Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed"* (Quran, 20:24).

2.1.1. Exegetical and Lexical Analysis

ʿAllamah Tabataba'i explains in Al-Mizan that gentle speech does not mean compromising the truth. Rather, it denotes adopting a mode of argumentation through which the audience's affective faculties are engaged, and the psychological barrier produced by arrogance and self-exaltation is dismantled (Tabataba'i, 2011, Vol. 14, p. 160). The term laʿalla (so that [perhaps]) indicates that education is founded upon free choice and rejects structural determinism. Even Pharaoh, as the locus of transgression, is not excluded from the initial scope of guidance or from the educational completion of proof.

2.1.2. Connection with Contemporary Theories

This approach may be compared with Habermas's theory of communicative action. Where the 'system' has dominated the 'lifeworld' and distorted communication, the divinely appointed prophet, through the use of a language oriented toward mutual understanding—gentle speech—rather than the language of coercion, seeks to preserve the possibility of rational and emancipatory dialogue. Nevertheless, unlike Habermas, whose theory relies upon autonomous rationality, the basis of admonition in Sūrah Ṭāhā is the primordial disposition toward divine unity and reverential fear of God: *"so that he may take heed or become fearful"* (Quran, 20:44).

2.2. Engagement with the Legitimizing Network: The Magicians and the Deconstruction of the System of Persuasion

The confrontation with the magicians constitutes a turning point in the reconstruction of public perception in Sūrah Ṭāhā. Within this context, the magicians are not independent celebrities; rather, they are "technicians of persuasion" and agents responsible for reproducing the ruling ideology who, through the deployment of "magic," hold the consciousness of the masses captive:

"And suddenly, through their magic, their ropes and staffs appeared to him as though they were moving swiftly" (Quran, 20:66).

The verb yukhayyalu (it appeared or it was made to seem) signifies intervention in and manipulation of society's perceptual and sensory system. Here, magic performs a function extending far beyond mere entertainment; it serves as an instrument for naturalizing the unequal Pharaonic order.

2.2.1. Exegetical and Lexical Analysis

The staging of the confrontation on the Day of Adornment is of particular significance*: "He said, 'Your tryst shall be the Day of Adornment, and let the people be assembled in early forenoon"* (Quran, 20:59).

The selection of the time at which daylight is fully manifest—ḍuḥā, or the forenoon—and the day of a national celebration—the Day of Adornment—indicates the necessity of transparency in the public sphere within social education. By transforming this confrontation into a public event, Moses exposes the mechanism of deception in the presence of all members of society. Moses' casting down of his staff and its swallowing of the magicians' fabrications—"it will swallow up what they have produced"—symbolizes the deconstruction of the system's fabricated mental idols.

2.2.2. Connection with Contemporary Theories

This process corresponds precisely to Antonio Gramsci's concept of "hegemony" and the function of organic intellectuals. The magicians are the cultural agents of Pharaoh's hegemony, whose task is to secure the masses'

consent and heartfelt acceptance of domination. Moses' action on the Day of Adornment consisted in breaking this fabricated consent through the presentation of "objective truth." The magicians' sudden transformation and prostration—*"Then the magicians fell down in prostration. They said, 'We have believed in the Lord of Aaron and Moses"* (Quran, 20:70)— indicates the reorientation of symbolic capital and the complete collapse of Pharaoh's cultural hegemony at a particular historical moment.

2.3. Engagement with the Social Body: Banī Isrā'īl and the Historical Trauma of Despotism

The social body in Sūrah Ṭāhā—the Children of Israel—is a community that, as a result of years of servitude and oppression, has suffered from "social trauma" and lost its independent identity and agency. Their repeated lapses and their refuge in the golden calf reflect this profound identity-based traumatization: *"Then he produced for them a calf—a [lifeless] body with a low—and they said, 'This is your god and the god of Moses, so he forgot!"* (Quran, 20:88).

2.3.1. Exegetical and Lexical Analysis

The verb nasiya (he forgot) here indicates the forgetting of the covenant, the truth of monotheism, and the return to the behavioral patterns of the period of exploitation. Having precisely recognized the sensory cravings and the structural weakness in the thinking of a people who had been subjugated for many years, the Samaritan fashioned a physical statue that produced a sound resembling the lowing of a cow: "a calf—a mere body that had a lowing sound." This calf satisfied the Children of Israel's desire for a "tangible and accessible god."

Moses' reaction upon His return: *"He said, 'O Aaron! What kept you, when you saw them going astray, from following me? Did you disobey my command?"* (Quran, 20:92–93).

This verse demonstrates the extraordinary sensitivity of divine leadership to society's doctrinal deviation. As a first step, he dealt severely with the Samaritan and burned his creation, casting it into the sea, to display the emptiness of that fabricated deity.

2.3.2. Connection with Contemporary Theories

This lapse, and the need to reconstruct identity, can be analyzed through Frantz Fanon's "psychology of colonization." Fanon argues that decolonization does not conclude with the colonized population's physical liberation; rather, the mind of the colonized individual continues for years to reproduce the images, values, and gods of the colonizer. Despite their physical liberation, the Children of Israel carried with them the mentality of servitude. Accordingly, social education at this stage becomes a process of collective psychotherapy and monotheistic re-education, which must gradually revive the monotheistic identity within the social body.

2.4. The Intermediate Circles of Authority: The Mediating Network for the Distribution of Domination

To avoid imposing unrelated terminology, Sūrah Ṭāhā portrays the group of agents not as an independent sociological class, but as a mediating network of authority. This group consists of the executors of Pharaoh's commands and the transmitters of intimidation to the social body.

Following the magicians' conversion, Pharaoh's dialogue reveals this network: *"He*

said, 'Did you believe in him before I should permit you? Surely, I will cut off your hands and feet from opposite sides" (Quran, 20:71)

This structure presupposes the existence of an administrative-police mechanism for implementing horrifying punishments. Moses' educational engagement with this segment of the ruling system was aimed at creating a rupture in the effectiveness of the instruments of repression. By neutralizing Pharaoh's threats through the magicians' faith-based resistance, the prophet demonstrated the inefficacy of the intermediary system of intimidation.

Figure 2. Multidimensional Matrix of the Levels of Educational Engagement in Sūrah Ṭāhā

3. The Dynamics of Socialization in Sūrah Ṭāhā: From Divine Formation to Normative Protection

The third dimension in the model of social education derived from Sūrah Ṭāhā concerns the process of socialization. However, socialization in this surah by no means signifies reducing the human being to a passive recipient of dominant norms. On the contrary, the narrative and guiding structure of Sūrah Ṭāhā reveals a process through which the human being, within the context of divine lordship, lived experience, social responsibility, and confrontation with collective deviation, gradually becomes a norm-oriented, mission-conscious agent endowed with the capacity to safeguard values.

From this perspective, socialization in Sūrah Ṭāhā should be understood as a form of guided socialization: a process whose goal is not the absorption of the individual into the existing order, but the formation of a personality capable of maintaining an effective presence within society while also resisting and vigilantly confronting transgression, corruption, and deviation.

This formulation enters into dialogue with several classical and contemporary theories of education and socialization, but it is not subsumed by them. For example, Durkheim regarded socialization as the process of transmitting the collective conscience and consolidating the moral cohesion of society, emphasizing the role of education in the continuation of the social order (Durkheim, 1956, pp. 71–79). In Sūrah Ṭāhā, however, the issue is not merely the reproduction of the social order, because the culmination of social education in this surah is not conformity to the dominant order, but resistance to Pharaoh and sensitivity toward the internal, collective deviation of the Children of Israel.

Accordingly, Qur'anic socialization, although it begins with internalization, does not end in subjugation. Rather, it culminates in critical agency, normative discernment, and reformative action. More precisely, Sūrah Ṭāhā redefines socialization within the horizon of cultivating a guided agent—an agent who is not merely the product of the social structure, but is shaped through divine lordship and bears responsibility for the moral destiny of society.

From the standpoint of exegetical methodology, this interpretation is based on the premise that the Qur'anic narratives in Sūrah Ṭāhā are neither neutral historical reports nor mere accounts of past events. As ʿAllamah

Ṭabāṭabāʾī demonstrates in his discussion of the contextual structure of the verses, the arrangement of the narrative passages in the Qur'an follows the guiding purpose of the text, and meaning must be sought in the relationship between the components of the context and the surah's overarching objective (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 150–159). Ayatollah Javadi Amoli likewise emphasizes the selective and guidance-oriented nature of Qur'anic narratives, demonstrating that each part of the narrative has been highlighted in accordance with the educational and guiding purpose of the surah (Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 480–495).

Consequently, the life of Moses in this surah may be read as a sequential logic of social education: a logic that begins with existential security, passes through social experience, reaches prophetic agency, and attains its relative completion in normative protection.

3.1. The First Level: Existential Security and Affective Formation: From Divine Love to a Secure Identity

The first level of socialization in Sūrah Ṭāhā begins with the provision of existential security and the formation of the affective foundation of personality. Entry into the social world without the support of trust, tranquility, and a sense of being protected may lead, instead of development, to anxiety, passivity, or assimilation. This meaning can be clearly inferred from the verse: "Put him in the casket, and cast it into the river. Then the river will cast it on the bank, and he shall be picked up by an enemy of Mine and an enemy of his. *"And I made you endearing, and that you might be reared under My [watchful] eyes"* (Quran, 20:39).

From a semantic perspective, the expression al-qaytu (I cast) goes beyond the mere granting or conferral of affection and signifies a kind of penetrating and effective bestowal. It is as though God places a form of acceptance, attractiveness, and protective covering within Moses' very being, enabling him to remain within the sphere of divine preservation and education in an environment saturated with threat, violence, and Pharaonic surveillance.

In Tafsīr Tasnīm, this love is understood in connection with God's particular lordship over Moses . In this sense, the bestowed popularity and affection constitute part of the process of preserving and educating him for the fulfillment of his future mission, rather than merely representing a transitory emotional attribute (Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 480–485). The same meaning can be pursued in Al-Mīzān through its emphasis on God's particular providential management in the formation of Moses' personality (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 150–153). Ibn ʿĀshūr also regards the expression ʿalā ʿaynī (under My eye) as a metonym for complete preservation, supervision, and care; that is, an educational process in which the development of personality is not abandoned within the enclosure of neglect, but is placed under direct supervision and protection (Ibn ʿĀshūr, 1984, Vol. 16, pp. 255–258).

The expression "and that you might be reared under My [watchful] eyes" is even more significant from an educational perspective. In Arabic, the term ṣunʿ denotes precise, gradual, purposeful, and goal-oriented formation. Accordingly, the verse indicates that, within the logic of Sūrah Ṭāhā, education is not a natural or spontaneous occurrence; rather, it is a guided and teleological process (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 150–153; Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 480–485).

If this implication is explained in dialogue with the literature of educational sciences, it

may be said that this stage corresponds, in broad terms, to what developmental psychology refers to as the formation of basic trust. The difference, however, is that in the Qur'an, this trust is not merely a psychological construct; rather, it acquires meaning within the horizon of divine lordship. Erikson demonstrates that basic trust constitutes the primary foundation of psychosocial health and the prerequisite for healthy interaction with the world (Erikson, 1963, pp. 247–254). Bowlby likewise maintains that secure attachment provides the basis for exploration, emotional regulation, and the development of independence in subsequent stages of growth (Bowlby, 1969, pp. 224–233). Nevertheless, Sūrah Ṭāhā does not confine this foundation solely to the mother–child relationship; rather, it understands it as the concrete manifestation of divine providential governance within the context of human relationships.

The same logic is completed in the verse: *"When your sister walked up [to Pharaoh's palace] saying, 'Shall I show you someone who will take care of him?' Then We restored you to your mother, that she might be comforted and not grieve"* (Quran, 20:40).

Moses' return to his mother is not merely a biological or protective solution; rather, it constitutes part of the affective architecture of his education. The mother's tranquility, the removal of grief, and the child's return to the secure familial environment demonstrate that, within the Qur'anic logic, healthy affective life is one of the foundations of socialization, not a marginal or secondary matter.

In the book *Tafsīr Tasnīm*, this return is analyzed as part of God's educational providence for completing the affective and psychological dimension of Moses' development (Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 485–489). Consequently, Sūrah Ṭāhā conveys the principle that socialization, before beginning with rules, roles, and collective expectations, begins with the internalization of security, love, and a sense of being protected. Without this secure nucleus, the individual's social presence is easily exposed to failure, absorption, or disintegration.

3.2. The Second Level: Experiential Socialization and Capacity Maturity: Lived Experience and Reaching the Appointed Measure

The second level in this model is the stage wherein the individual, endowed with basic security, steps out of the protected environment and constructs their social and agentic capacity within the context of real life. This meaning is highly extractable from the verse:

"Then you stayed for several years among the people of Midian. Then you turned up as ordained, O Moses!" (Quran, 20:40).

The verb *labithta* does not denote mere residence; rather, it implies a time-bound endurance, a fruitful lingering, and a prolonged presence. The addition of *sinīn* (years) intensifies this implication, demonstrating that Midian in Sūrah Ṭāhā is not simply a place of exile or a transient stop, but a field of experience and maturation. In *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, Ṭabarsī regards the residency in Midian as a prelude to the completion of Moses' human and social experiences (Ṭabarsī, 1993, Vol. 7, pp. 43–45). Within this space, Moses distances himself from the margins of Pharaonic power and enters into relations where labor, family, commitment, responsibility, and livelihood construct the personality from within. In other words, Midian in this surah is not a geography, but an educational situation.

The focal section of the verse is the expression "then you turned up as ordained". The particle thumma (thereafter/then) does not merely convey a temporal gap; it signifies a meaningful delay and educational sequence. This means that the mission arrives only after a necessary interval of experience and genesis has been traversed. ʿAllamah Ṭabāṭabāʾī understands ʿalā qadar (as ordained) as reaching the appropriate measure, time, and capacity to bear the mission (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 153–155). In Tafsīr Tasnīm, this expression likewise points to the link between qadar and the development of Moses' existential capacity; that is, the individual must reach a certain "measure" through experience, trial, and social existence to become worthy of the mission (Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 485–489).

Theoretically, this section of Sūrah Ṭāhā is remarkably consonant with traditions in the philosophy of education that view experience as the locus of learning and growth. John Dewey, in the book Experience and Education, states that what makes growth possible is not the mere occurrence of experience, but the quality of the experience and its continuity with subsequent growth (Dewey, 1938, pp. 25–39). On the other hand, Vygotsky explains development within the context of social mediation and interaction with the cultural environment, demonstrating that higher human capacities are not formed in individual isolation but are constructed within the context of social relations (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 79–91). Nevertheless, Sūrah Ṭāhā does not interpret experience solely as a mechanism of socialization; rather, it views it as part of an educational destination—an experience that renders the individual not just social, but mission-bearing.

For this reason, it can be argued that socialization at this stage is the transition from security to capacity. The individual must first be protected, but this protected state will not lead to social maturity unless it is connected to real life, labor, relationships, commitment, and trial. Sūrah Ṭāhā clearly demonstrates that social agency does not arise solely through conceptual instruction or the inculcation of normative propositions; rather, it requires social lingering and prolonged dwelling within the context of real life.

3.3. The Third Level: Mission-Oriented Agency and Guided Role-Taking: From Maturation to Intervention

In this level, internal capacity and social experience are transformed into mission-oriented agency and action. This stage is manifest in the verses:

"Go, you and your brother, with My signs, and do not slacken in My remembrance. Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed" (Quran, 20:42–43).

Here, the educational process escalates from the level of preparedness and capability to the level of historical intervention and responsibility.

The repetition of the command *idhhab* (go) indicates that the time of quiet accumulation and internal genesis has come to an end, and the moment to enter the social arena has arrived. However, this entry is structured by two decisive conditions: first, *bi-āyātī* (with My signs), and second, *wa-lā taniyā fī dhikrī* (and do not slacken in My remembrance). The first condition demonstrates that the agency of Moses and Aaron is not an autonomous, self-justifying agency, or one arising

merely from moral sentiment; rather, it is an agency formed in relation to guided truth and proof. The second condition illuminates the internal foundation of this action: confrontation with tyrannical power, if devoid of a continuous link to the source of meaning and direction, leads to weakness, absorption, or exhaustion. In the exegeses of *Majmaʿ al-Bayān* and *Tasnīm*, the prohibition against slackening in remembrance is understood as maintaining steadfastness and avoiding languor in the field of confronting the tyrant (Ṭabarsī, 1993, Vol. 7, pp. 45–47; Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 490–495).

Within this framework, *dhikr* (remembrance) is not merely verbal recitation or an individual act of worship; rather, it can be understood as the mechanism for preserving identity within the field of social pressure. From an educational perspective, this corresponds to what modern literature explains through concepts such as normative self-regulation, inner coherence, and value stability. This is the point where Sūrah Ṭāhā enters into dialogue with critical pedagogy. Freire regards critical consciousness as the prerequisite for moving past passivity and reaching transformative action (Freire, 1970, pp. 66–69). In Sūrah Ṭāhā, however, this critical action is defined within the horizon of *dhikr* and *āyāt* (signs); that is, liberation and social reform do not stem from a rupture from the transcendent, but draw strength from alignment with guided truth. Consequently, mission-oriented agency in this surah is not a repetition of the modern language of autonomy, but a specific formulation of faithful, responsible, and guidance-centered agency.

Furthermore, the sentence *innahu ṭaghā* (Indeed, he has transgressed) demonstrates that the issue is not merely confronting a rebellious individual, but facing the structure of transgression. In his exegesis of this passage, ʿAllamah Ṭabāṭabāʾī emphasizes the structural aspect of Pharaoh's transgression, viewing it as something far beyond a personal infraction (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 156–159). Consequently, complete socialization in the Qur'anic logic does not mean that the individual learns the rules of society and becomes dissolved within them; rather, it means that they reach a level of insight, courage, and direction that enables them to intervene responsibly and instructionally against the structure of domination.

3.4. The Fourth Level: Normative Protection and Preservation of the Monotheistic Order; Responsibility Toward Collective Deviation

The final level in the dynamics of socialization in Sūrah Ṭāhā is the stage of safeguarding the normative order and preserving the value-based cohesion of society. If, in the previous level, the educated agent is transformed into a reformative actor, then in this stage they are expected to become sensitive to collective deviation and to assume responsibility for preserving the identity boundaries of the monotheistic community. This meaning becomes evident in the verses: *"He said, 'O Aaron! What kept you, when you saw them going astray, from following me? Did you disobey my command?"* (Quran, 20:92–93).

In these verses, *ḍallū* (they went astray) does not refer merely to intellectual error or an individual lapse; rather, it points to a

collective and identity-based deviation that threatens the very foundation of the nascent monotheistic society. For this reason, Moses' question to Aaron is not a simple inquiry about an executive shortcoming; rather, it is a question concerning the relationship between leadership and the safeguarding of the community's guiding identity.

In *Tafsīr Tasnīm*, this passage is analyzed within the framework of protecting the ummah from practical relapse into polytheism and from the collapse of monotheistic identity (Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 9, pp. 140–145). In *Al-Mīzān*, too, the central issue is responsibility for safeguarding the path of truth and preventing the community from deviation (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 220–223). The conceptual linkage of these verses with the verse *"Be my successor among my people, and set things right, and do not follow the way of the agents of corruption"* (Quran 7:142) also shows that the matter is not merely a disagreement between two brothers, but rather concerns succession, reform, and resistance to structural corruption.

If this level is read within a broader theoretical horizon, it can be said that Sūrah Ṭāhā presents an understanding of socialization that goes beyond the internalization of norms and reaches the protection of the norm of truth. Berger and Luckmann show that social reality is stabilized through externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 60–74). Yet the issue in Sūrah Ṭāhā is that not every stabilized order deserves reproduction. Social order is worthy of preservation only if it is founded upon guidance, truth, and reform. Therefore, "normative protection" in the Qur'anic logic does not mean mere preservation of the status quo; rather, it means safeguarding a truth-centered value order against internal deviation, collective trial, and structural corruption.

From an educational standpoint, this stage may be regarded as the level of maturity in social responsibility, where the individual feels obligated not only toward the self or close relationships, but toward the moral destiny of the collective. Noddings, though within a different tradition, holds that education is incomplete without sensitivity to responsibility, care, and accountability toward the other (Noddings, 1984, pp. 171–176). Sūrah Ṭāhā extends this horizon beyond intimate relations and develops it into care for the guiding life of society. Thus, the socially educated individual in this model is not merely a compliant member of society, but a guardian of its semantic and value boundaries.

Figure: Levels of Socialization Dynamics in Sūrah Ṭāhā

Level	Title	Qur'anic Evidence	Exegetical Implication	Educational-Social Function	Theoretical Equivalent/Dialogue
1	**Existential security and affective formation**	Taha 20:39–40	*"I cast upon you love from Me"* and *"so that you might be brought up under My eye"* indicate divine affection, providential care, and gradual formation of personality; Moses' return to his mother completes his emotional and psychological security (Tabataba'i, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 150–153; Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 480–489; Ibn 'Ashur, 1984, Vol. 16, pp. 255–258).	Formation of a secure core of personality, basic trust, a sense of safety, and readiness for healthy entry into the social world.	Erikson: basic trust; Bowlby: secure attachment.
2	**Experiential socialization and capacity maturity**	Taha 20:40	*"Then you remained for years among the people of Madian"* indicates prolonged residence and social experience, while *"thereafter you came at the appointed time; measure"* points to the time, measure, and capacity needed for mission (Tabataba'i, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 153–155; Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 485–489; Tabarsi, 1993, Vol. 7, pp. 43–45).	Transition from security to capacity; maturity within labor, family, responsibility, and lived reality.	Dewey: continuity and quality of experience; Vygotsky: development through social interaction.
3	**Mission-oriented agency and guided role-taking**	Taha 20:42–43	The command *"Go, you and your brother, with My signs"* and the prohibition *"do not slacken in My remembrance"* show that the desired agency rests on guided proof and sustains its inner steadfastness through remembrance; *"Indeed, he has transgressed"* points to confrontation with the structure of transgression (Tabataba'i, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 156–159; Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 8, pp. 490–495; Tabarsi, 1993, Vol. 7, pp. 45–47).	Conversion of inner capacity into social intervention, reformative action, normative resistance, and value steadfastness.	Freire: critical consciousness; with Qur'anic emphasis on remembrance and signs.
4	**Normative protection and preservation of the monotheistic order**	Taha 20:92–93	The phrase *"when you saw them going astray"* indicates not merely individual error but collective deviation endangering the monotheistic community; Moses' reproach concerns leadership, safeguarding identity, and preventing relapse into corruption (Javadi Amoli, 2010, Vol. 9, pp. 140–145; Tabataba'i, 1997, Vol. 14, pp. 220–223).	Protection of the truth-centered normative order; responsibility for collective deviation.	Care ethics and moral accountability, extended to societal guidance.

Conclusion

This study sought to systematically reinterpret the stages of social education in Sūrah Ṭāhā and, by relying on an exegetical analysis of the

verses related to the educational life and conduct of Prophet Moses , to present a Quranic model of the formation of a social, responsible, and norm-oriented human being. The findings demonstrated that Sūrah Ṭāhā depicts social education not merely as adaptation to the collective order, but as a multilayered, gradual, and teleological process—one that acquires meaning through an intimate connection with divine lordship, lived experience, responsibility, and normative protection.

On the basis of the analysis conducted, the structure of social education in this surah can be explained in terms of three interconnected dimensions. The first dimension demonstrated that, within the Qur'anic logic, social education begins with the initial stages of personality formation in accordance with the course of human development and gradually prepares the individual for entering the social arena and assuming responsibility, while taking into account their psychological and perceptual capacities.

The second dimension revealed that this education possesses a staged and layered character. It begins with the primary levels of care, preservation, and guidance, and extends to the higher levels of discernment, action, leadership, and confrontation with the complexities of social life. The third dimension demonstrated that the dynamics of socialization in Sūrah Ṭāhā pass through four levels: existential security, experiential socialization, mission-oriented agency, and normative protection.

Accordingly, the desirable form of socialization presented in this surah neither leads to the passive integration of the individual into existing structures nor to an individualism detached from collective responsibility. Rather, it culminates in the cultivation of an identity-conscious, active, reform-oriented, and vigilant human being.

The principal theoretical contribution of this study is that Sūrah Ṭāhā can be regarded as embodying an indigenous and revelatory model of social education—a model that, while possessing internal coherence, is also capable of engaging in dialogue with contemporary theories in educational sciences and sociology. The relationship between this model and concepts such as psychological security, experience-based learning, interactive development, agency, and social responsibility demonstrates that the Holy Qur'an, in this domain, does not merely occupy a position of affirmation or opposition vis-à-vis contemporary knowledge. Rather, it offers an interpretive, complementary, and direction-giving horizon.

Nevertheless, the fundamental distinction of this model lies in its reorganization of all these elements within the horizon of monotheism, divine guidance, and moral responsibility.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study may contribute to reconsidering the foundations of social education in the family, the educational system, cultural institutions, and curriculum planning. According to the model derived from Sūrah Ṭāhā, social education should move beyond the mere instruction of behavioral rules and focus on strengthening affective security, providing experiences that foster responsibility, cultivating moral agency, and increasing sensitivity toward collective deviations.

At the same time, the limitation of the present study—namely, its focus on Sūrah Ṭāhā—necessitates comparative studies of other surahs and Qur'anic narratives in order to generalize the findings to the Qur'an's broader system of social education.

Furthermore, since this research was conducted primarily at a theoretical and exegetical level, the practical evaluation of the extracted model in contemporary educational environments will require interdisciplinary research and field studies.

Therefore, it is recommended that future studies compare this model with other educational surahs of the Qur'an and examine its potential in areas such as curriculum planning, teacher education, family education, and emerging issues in social education.

Overall, Sūrah Ṭāhā offers a coherent, staged, and teleological depiction of social education in which the human being, through a gradual and divinely governed process, advances from the level of initial security and individual development to the level of social responsibility, guidance-oriented agency, and protection of the normative life of society. From this perspective, Sūrah Ṭāhā can provide a theoretical foundation for reconstructing the Islamic understanding of social education in the contemporary world.

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In the present study, the first author was responsible for developing the research design, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the findings, and drafting the article. The second author supervised and guided the overall research process and was responsible for preparing and finalizing the revisions to the article. Overall, the conclusions drawn from the findings, as well as their elaboration and interpretation, were developed jointly.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Negative AI Statement

The author(s) declare that no AI tools or services were not used or not highly applied during the preparation of this work.

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