

Free will enhancement: Earlier than behavior, there is will

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ABSTRACT

A person's life on earth is a journey that starts from birth until the soul moves to the other world. During this journey, an individual must fulfill many religious, personal, or societal aspirations. All this can only be achieved through positive behavior that pushes one towards achieving these goals and aspirations, and the basis for this behavior is free, strong will. The will drives behavior towards practical application rather than mere desire. Individuals can be considered as piles of interactive particles, and therefore nothing but material systems, or can be looked at as free beings with psychological qualities and mental skills. If it's attempted to perceive humans in the first reduction method, there will be no place for free will. But the human

and social sciences support the second way when exploring, the non-reduction method, and this, in turn, supports the hypothesis that there is free will. The subject of free will is shared by several disciplines, in addition to psychology, including philosophy, religion, sociology, and law. Specifically, free will is discussed considering the views of the different psychological schools. In this research, the aforementioned was reviewed and briefly tackled, but the main direction was to the significance of realizing this concept in psychological studies and educational applications, by inductively and deductively interpreting existing literature, because of its value reflected in individuals' behavior. Then, attempts to answer the question of how free will is built from an educationally Islamic perspective by mentioning several applications.

Key Words: *Free will; Islamic perspective; Psychology; Methods of raising free will*

INTRODUCTION

Free will is an important topic dealt with by various sciences from the fields of human thought to the fields of philosophy, politics, sociology, education, psychology, jurisprudence, etc., according to different concepts based on the discussed context. The issue of free will has preoccupied thinkers due to its great importance in moving nations towards civilizational achievement. Thus, enhancing and educating individuals about free will is an important requirement to allow the individuals to reach their human perfection, especially as it is the right way to achieve goals and transform them from the world of nothingness to existence. Free will is the only means in the human hand to achieve goals and reach them to the end. It is one of the basic components of human behavior, as it affects and is affected by most patterns of behavior. It constitutes an important factor in many psychological functions and plays a key role in the individual's life. It also motivates individuals to perform well, pushes them to achieve success in many aspects of life, and helps them overcome crises [1]. Raising individuals' free will constitutes the education of a collective will capable of working effectively, and history is still well aware of how the strong will was able to create generations and victories with patience, steadfastness, and strength. Perhaps the link of this topic with philosophy and the inability of philosophers to this day to reach a final statement regarding the issue of free will has made those interested in the human psyche and educational institutions in a state of confusion

and reluctance about the importance of free will and the effect of strengthening it in the hearts of individuals. Greek philosophy and its thinkers were among the first to give their opinion on the concept of free will, as it affirms that human has free will, just as its pioneers, the philosophers Plato and Aristotle, argue that virtue and vice are human wills. Plato sees that the person who chose virtue or vice is responsible, and Heaven has no responsibility for it. Further, Nietzsche believes that the will is at the heart of human nature, and we can explain all other manifestations of existence through it [2]. On the other hand, Muslim scholars were interested in the concept of free will and the issue of compulsion and choice, and they went through various doctrines and contributed many books and literature [3]. The correct understanding of the concept of destiny, which is a basic Islamic foundation, was affected by the entry of groups of nations with pagan religions and philosophies into Islam. This is how fatalism appeared, believing that man is the creator of his actions and their good and evil. Then Jabriya appeared as a reaction to fatalism, which states that human actions, both good and evil, are from God and that their attribution to the servant is only a metaphor. However, it is believed that it is more useful for psychologists to focus on the belief in free will, its origins, and its effects on behavior rather than to take sides in an ontological dispute to disprove its existence [4]. As a result, the concept of free will enables us to strive for and anticipate a better life and happiness.

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METHODOLOGY

The method of identifying and locating sources was initially conducted as a topic of interest after witnessing its impact on the personal decisions of individuals when realized. Yet, Finding reliable and valid experimental research regarding free will was challenging for the researchers. One of the reasons for this difficulty is the nature of the concept, which is difficult to test and measure accurately, and its overlap with other terms such as self-regulation, motivation, goal pursuit, agency, etc. The second reason is the nature of applied psychology, which favors the study of measurable concepts, and the connection of the concept of free will to philosophical or theological research. The researchers found conventional and online literature on the subject by using electronic databases and keyword-searching techniques, the utilized database was Ibn Haldun University, which has enormous access to reliable journals in various fields, the other is the Shamela database which contains About 7 million pages, 8,000 books, and 3,000 authors related mostly to Islamic literature and heritage. Reliability was the main consideration while choosing the sources mentioned above. However, it was the researchers' responsibility to critically analyze the resources and to integrate different cultures' knowledge without prejudice to the Islamic belief. Reviewing technique was used when dealing with multiple sources, and then relevant information was collected by carrying out the process of induction, deduction, and analysis. Besides, integrating what was reached within a framework of knowledge that can be applied and continued research on it.

DISCUSSION

Free will internalizing outcomes, and the interaction with cultural upbringing

Alleviating distress and pain and treating disorders is the main goal of traditional approaches to psychotherapists. On the contrary, positive psychology interventions focus on the completion, support for quality of life, happiness, hope and a positive orientation towards the future, positive emotions, developing personal strengths, and strengthening meaningful relationships. A group of applied approaches to positive psychology has been prepared within the context of psychotherapy. These approaches include well-being, quality of life, strength-based, and will-based therapy. A growing body of evidence reveals that believing in free will is more than an abstract or philosophical idea and has significant ramifications for cognition and behavior [5]. When you ask people on the street if they have free will, they almost always say yes. The belief in free will has been linked to the fundamental social concepts of moral responsibility, prosociality, and accountability, as well as key factors for the self, such as motivation, self-regulation, choice, learning, and goal pursuit, according to research emerging from the intersection of social psychology and experimental philosophy. Additionally, those who believe in free will are more likely to learn from their own mistakes and misdeeds, have a higher perceived ability and positive attitudes toward decision-making, have greater self-efficacy and experience less helplessness, be more honest, have higher levels of autonomy and to report higher willingness to exert effort [6-10]. The belief in free will has been shown to influence fundamental processes of agentic volition, such as increased voluntary motor preparation, better suppression of automatic pain reactions, and more efficient neural reactions to errors [11,12]. These findings support the hypothesis that belief in free will has developed to assist both individual pursuits of long-term objectives and cultural cooperation. Although the philosophical question has remained unanswered, ordinary individuals from various cultures appear to be unanimous in their belief that the world is indeterministic. Westerners, according to Markus and Kitayama, have a distinctive concept of individuality [13].

Many Western cultures believe in the fundamental separateness of people, who are considered as autonomous locus of control imposing themselves independently on their external circumstances. On the other hand, Individual behavior is seen as dependent on and to a significant part ordered and determined by the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others in Asian, Southern European, and African civilizations. Thus, the question of the study by Sarkissian et al. conducted was to what extent do cultures affect individuals' understanding of the existence of free will? [14]. The study that was carried out in America, Hong Kong, Colombia, and India concluded that belief in the concept of free will is a common concept among those four cultures. This was attributed to 3 interpretations made by researchers: on the one hand, it's plausible that the cross-cultural resemblance seen is because certain parts of moral reasoning are innate. On the other hand, these answers could be the product of shared experience rather than innate abilities, and there are a variety of approaches to take here as well. Individuals all across the world, for example, may encounter a human social reality that is consistently and stubbornly unpredictable, feeding into the assumption that human decision-making is indeterministic. Finally, it's possible and probably that the study's findings are the result of a complicated combination between innate endowment and experience. It's possible, for example, that people have an inbuilt predisposition to see agents as accountable only when they are having free will in some way, but that people rely on experience to figure out what that free will requires or results in. According to X. Zhao et al., forming beliefs about internal conflicts between desire and "will" is just one of several cultural models for action comprehension [15]. Children in the United States are indoctrinated to associate their developing awareness of desires how they work, how they conflict, and how they may be overridden with willpower difficulties. As a result, they may learn to ascribe self-control by intuitively interpreting the sensation of self-control as an internal fight of conflicting wants. While children from Singapore and China may perceive their self-control as externally guided as a result of social norms or external pressures, rather than an internal "will."

Free will through various considerations

Various psychological schools emphasized the importance of volition, and most theorists agreed that it is one of the basic components of behavior. Freud sees in psychoanalytic theory that the Super-Ego is the system most related to the volitional variable, as this component of the interpersonal and inter-communal system represents the complex. Adler focused on the individual's will when building himself and his salvation from the feeling of inferiority because this pushes the person forward towards control and superiority. As for Ottorank, the concept of will has occupied great importance in his theory, as the latent force in a healthy personality is free will. While the behavioral school differed from the above in that it sees behavior as a prediction, and did not refer to the issue of free will, Skinner believes that every behavior can be predicted according to the laws and systems of behavioral theory, and this means that there is no free will. The humanistic theory considers that a person has complete freedom and energy for growth and personal achievement. The individual is not a victim of unintended motives or enhanced environmental responses, but he can form goals and self-directions, and Maslow believes that self-realization requires that the individual express his identity and will without alienation from society [16]. Philosophical research has dealt with the will at its voluntary level through the controversy between philosophers about human free will or determinism. This discussion is not without differences and divergence of views. Each psychological school has a view concerning the subject of the will, and it is not more compatible with each other than the philosophical approaches, as was previously detailed.

From another point of view, the word free will has its roots and its fixed concept, which was mentioned in the Quran many times. There is a separation between the divine will and the human will, and there are types of human will in which this research is not a space for detail. But what the commentators agreed upon in their interpretation of the human will is, as Al-Shawkani said, that free will is "the direction of the heart and mind towards a specific thing" [17]. Aleadili and Nasir points out that the different points of view on the concept of free will agree on one thing, which is that free will is a force, motivating behavior and action, differing in its source and its main motive [16]. Psychologists attribute this to biological, psychological, and social factors. And while Sufis refer to the source as the heart and soul, rational philosophers attribute it to reason and science. Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn Al-Qayyim - who are considered among the most prominent symbols of Islamic thought have their claims on the topic of free will which will be demonstrated partly.

In the formation of free will, Al-Ghazali sees it as a combination of two forces: a knowledge-based force, and a psychological force. In places, he refers to the mental aspect of the will, meaning that free will is generated through an awareness of the consequences of the matter, and this, in turn, stimulates the psychological desire. In other places, he indicates that free will is the heart's resurrection to a purpose, and this may be intended to please Allah or gain in this world. In the philosophy of Al-Ghazali, action is an ability and a will [3]. This analysis helps us when looking at and analyzing educational issues so that we do not deviate from the free will of individuals or ignore its existence. Behind every action, there must be a will and intent that motivates it, and understanding this helps educators deal with issues relating to the source, and not from the behaviors. This is the significance that many therapeutic trends have focused on, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, and existential therapy which is based on the idea of the existence of a will, and the individual's responsibility to bear the consequences of this will. If we turn to Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Ibn al-Qayyim, they see that the will is innate and that the Psyche according to Ibn Taymiyyah is the center of the will and it does not exist in the absence of a free will [18]. Compatibly, Maslow's affirmation of self-realization and authenticity [16]. Both Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim believe that the principle of the individual's righteousness is the goodness of the will, and the will is valid if it agrees with the will of Allah and clings to him, the Mighty and Sublime. Taking all into consideration, it can be concluded that free will is a psychological and mental process, affected by internal factors, and passes through different levels, motivating the implementation of the action with a prior intention. As for the internal factors, they mean the desires and tendencies that overlap and differ within the human psychological dialogue, and the related tendencies of the individual likes and dislikes. Whereas the external factors include the historical, cultural, and social background of the person, including one's value system. Islamically discussed methods in raising an individual's free will All ideas remain confined to theorizing unless it finds another applied vision that tries to bring it down from the sky of theory to the ground by proposing applications that benefit the educational reality, and employ the findings of research in raising individuals in their families and schools. This part contributes to achieving this goal by presenting methods mentioned in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Islamic heritage for raising human free will. However, it is important to emphasize that the accumulation of methods and knowledge does not mean the possibility of being implemented directly.

Rather, every educator and teacher must consider variables such as individual differences and cultural diversity when applying any tool or method. The following methods are well-known means, yet this is an attempt to consider their benefit in free will enhancement:

Pre-commitment

It can be said that a significant starting point in raising the free will within the individual is the pre-commitment to certain goals or actions. For example, Schelling describes how consumers who are afraid of being tempted to hit the snooze button when their alarm clock rings in the morning pre-commit to not succumbing to that temptation by placing the alarm clock on the opposite side of the bedroom the night before, forcing them to get out of bed in the morning to turn off the alarm [19]. Al-Shawkani said in his interpretation of this verse, "When the Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam from their loins-their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"[17]. They said: "Yea! We do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this, we were never mindful" (Al-A'raf: 172) Al-Shawkani interpreted that everyone acknowledged that Allah is our Lord, and acknowledged His lordship, Glory is to Him, so He took a covenant from them: that they worship none but Him, that they do not believe in anyone but Him, the Ruler, and the Owner, and that they believe only in Him [17]. So, all the offspring acknowledged that, all the heavens and all earth. Thus, it is important to remind individuals of the solemn covenant they carried using several ways, like discussion, questioning, and reminding. This mechanism, which is called pre-commitment, does not mean only in the devotional sense, but rather is the reinforcement of the pre-commitment to the good values that the individual holds towards himself and society.

Setting goals

The clarity of the goals and their consolidation in the minds of the educators and preparing the atmosphere for them to strive to achieve these goals has positive results in promoting free will. Setting Goals is based on two pillars: first, setting them in a participatory and interactive manner, and consolidating them by many different means. Then, creating the appropriate atmosphere and means for everyone to strive towards achieving these goals. Kennedy as cited in says that the new things in our life do not depend on acquiring a specific quality, but on whether we see our new goals clearly, as the person who can distinguish himself with a reasonable goal finds himself heading on the path to willpower and obtaining it [16]. Clearly, it is seen the importance of a person's knowledge of his goal, and the extent of his belief in it. Thus, when the goals dissolve, either at the level of principles or the level of application, or become limited, superficial, and utilitarian, this result in a decline and narrowness in the level of the will. According to Frankl, the human heart does not find a way to rest unless it can transcend itself. Therefore, the superficial goals that individuals are mobilized with, such as becoming rich, distinguished, or famous, only amplify one instinctive motive: survival and possession [16].

Role modeling

Role modeling is a highly influential learning method, and in the matter of will, it is even more so. The scholars urged to read the biographies of people of high determination and a strong will to follow their example. Role models are either not witnessed like the stories of the Prophets or witnessed. It is possible to benefit from the two types together in the field of will breeding.

In the first, we can try, through several activities, to imagine the life of the Prophet as a real reality and note the locations of the strong will, and then discuss why he had this will. Among these situations is when the leaders of Quraish gathered and offered the Prophet money, kingship, and prestige, to abandon the call. His response was unequivocal, and his strong will is that the message he sent down is a message of unification of Allah Almighty. As for the role model that is seen, it is the most influential of these types of behavior, and there is no doubt that what the individual sees as a reality represented by his teacher or his parents is more influential on him than all the sermons and speeches. Muhammad Qutb says that the lies that parents practice with their children can destroy the value of honesty oneself. Accordingly, the responsibility for raising the will of individuals rests with society as a whole, and the role of media is not to be ignored in this construction [20].

CONCLUSION

Over the years, studies have sought to clarify the concept of free will within different contexts (philosophical, religious, psychological, etc.) and this contributed to enriching the concept and mixing it with several other concepts, such as agency, self-control, and decision making. This only indicates the importance of this concept and the value of bringing it into the educational process. This research sought to provide an overview of the concept of free will enhancement from the Islamic heritage as mechanisms and means, incorporating the latest research presented on this subject, and shedding light on the influence of free will in several psychological and societal aspects. This study faced several obstacles; therefore, it is recommended to pay more attention to the aspect of human free will by developing educational and societal policies that help the individual to understand their will, its multiple levels of analysis, and its application in contemporary life.

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