

CRITICAL REVIEW

## Creation of the Islamic Self for Sustainability: Strategies for Parents, Education System and Entrepreneurs toward Meeting SDGs

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### Abstract.

**Purpose:** The first part of this paper, titled "Creation of the Islamic Self for Sustainability" was published in the Journal of Islamic Business and Management Vol. 10, Issue 2. In the first part, the authors attempted to establish the relationship between Self-Image, Worth and Esteem (SIWE) and sustainable consumption habits, within the conceptual framework and praxis of the Islamic tradition. In the second part of the paper, the authors, now attempt, to trace the causes of a weak SIWE and what role Parents, Education and Muslim Entrepreneurs can play in (a) strengthening the SIWE of the next generation of Muslims, (b) Inspire them to become environmentally conscious consumers and producers.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The analysis presented in the paper is based on an interpretive synthesis of a focused literature review.

**Findings:** The paper explores the role which parenting and education in Muslim communities can play to develop environmentally conscious entrepreneurs equipped with a strong SIWE as well as how the environmentally-conscious Muslim entrepreneurs can pursue their businesses to transform their communities in an environmentally sustainable manner.

**Originality/Significance:** This is perhaps the first paper which explores the critical relationship between the psychological outcome of Muslim parenting, education in the form of development of SIWE and environmentally conscious entrepreneurship.

**Research Limitations/Implications:** The framework presented in the paper will require further substantiation when practically applied within Muslim families, educational institutions and market place.

**Practical and Social Implications:** The paper can provide insights to parents, policy makers in the education system, and concerned entrepreneurs.

**KAUJIE Classification:** 03, P0

**JEL Classification:** A2, M1

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## INTRODUCTION

The first part of this paper (Raquib, et al., 2020) was about the relationship between a weak Self-Image, Worth and Esteem (SIWE) and how it leads to unsustainable consumption among the Muslim youth. In the second part, we will outline the causes of a weak SIWE rooted in early parenting experience, which is often reinforced by ill-informed methods employed within the education system. Appropriate parenting techniques and suitable design of educational pedagogies as discussed in the relevant literature will be explained in the paper.

Since a strong SIWE is one of the fundamental psychological needs of a human being (Wilburn & Smith, 2005); therefore those who have a weak SIWE may easily be manipulated by corporate propaganda into purchasing unsustainable products<sup>1</sup> (Busch, 2008). Such consumers also inadvertently damage the environment through their consumption habits. In this context, the role of parents and the educational system may be pivotal in enhancing the SIWE of the new generation to develop internal resistance against the corporate propaganda; parenting and education can also inspire them to grow into environmentally conscious consumers and producers.

The paper explores the possible role of environmentally conscious Muslim entrepreneurs who can pursue business ideas to transform the lifestyle of their consumers and remodel their communities in an environmentally sustainable manner. Some selected examples of business ideas and strategies Muslim entrepreneurs can employ on the supply side in the process of providing environment friendly offering without resorting to manipulative tactics are discussed as well.

This paper is based on reflective analysis of a review of interdisciplinary literature (Brydges & Butler, 2012). An approach to literature review known as 'Critical Interpretive Synthesis' or CIS (Depraetere et al., 2020) was used to explore the relevant literature. CIS is an "iterative, reflexive, and exploratory" (Xiao & Watson, 2017) approach to literature review; therefore, it allowed the authors to choose specific literature which explains how and why parenting techniques or educational pedagogy affect the SIWE of children. Likewise, literature on appropriate strategies adopted by environmentally conscious entrepreneurs was also reviewed. Therefore, this paper summarises the relevant literature concerning the three-tier agenda of the paper into three main sections. The three sections will sequentially discuss the methods of:

- a) Parenting and its influence in forming a strong SIWE within the children (Section 2);
- b) Formal education and its influence on SIWE, and how formal education can expand pupils' awareness about the impact of contemporary methods of production and consumption on the environment (Section 3);
- c) Entrepreneurship and what environmentally conscious entrepreneurs can do to take part in the necessary transformation of the society for environmental sustainability (Section 4).

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<sup>1</sup>Corporate communication and advertising strategies are inspired from Edward Burney's propaganda techniques, see Curtis (2002) for details.

## PARENTING FOR A WEAKER AND A STRONGER SIWE

This section explores the kind of parental behavior that needs to be avoided, which results in a weak SIWE, which eventually pushes a child into various forms of addiction, including addiction to shopping later in adulthood. The connection between childhood neglect, a weak SIWE and addictive behavior is explained from a neurological perspective. How such parental behavior can be avoided, along with examples of ideal parental behavior from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is also discussed.

### Parental Neglect as a Possible Cause of SIWE and Addiction

Mate (2013) argues that parents, despite wanting the best for their children, can often neglect or reject a child's authentic expression of anger, stress, and frustration because they are themselves stressed out. If such neglect and rejection is perpetual, then it eventually teaches children to hide their authentic expression for the sake of acceptance. Harris (1969) argued for the same much earlier, that early childhood experiences can result in developing this perception that 'I am not ok' which can remain persistent during adulthood if the parental figures did not make a frequent effort to unconditionally love their children, particularly when the children were distressed themselves. Such an experience can be very painful for a child and if persistent, can shape the child's SIWE (Anda et al., 2006).

Mate (2013) also argues that any kind of addiction, or an excessive desire for more and more, referred to as *Batar*<sup>2</sup> in Islamic discourse, which also includes addiction to consumption or shopping, may be used as anaesthesia against the pain caused by a weak SIWE. Woodman (1993), a Jungian psychoanalyst, also makes the same point. Hari and Corballis (2019) also suggest that the addiction is a result of social isolation, or in other words, when human beings are unable to express their authentic selves in front of others, they tend to feel lonely and fear of rejection of their authenticity may result in loneliness. Fear of rejection thus can lead to reinforcement of any self-image problems developed during early childhood experiences (Finzi-Dottan & Karu, 2006).

Parents, if stressed out or emotionally unstable, or themselves suffering from a damaged self-image, would find it hard to raise children with a strong SIWE. One cannot simply instruct a person, more specifically, a child to have a strong SIWE. Children would rather learn it from the behavior of their parents. If parents have their attention fixated on issues other than their child and rather see their child's demand for attention as a distraction from the things they deem important, it would eventually give children a signal that they are not important or perhaps there is something wrong with them. For parents who are stressed out already, the demands of their children can be an addition to their stress. So despite having their best intentions, if the child's actions cause the parents' stress to go beyond the threshold they can bear, they may unintentionally react negatively, or at least fail to wholeheartedly address their child's issue (Anda et al., 2006).

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix - A, for definitions of all Islamic spiritual traits referred to in the paper

## Parents' Self-Regulation and its Impact on Child's Self-Image

Burnouts eventually happen to almost every parent, even the most ideal parents. However, if parents remain in the state of distress persistently while engaging the child, then over years, children learn that they are not good enough, and thus their SIWE may weaken. Parents' actions, body language, and attitude, when the child interrupts them while they are doing something important, send out the signals to the child about how important he or she is to the parents. If the non-verbal cues predominantly communicate to the child that he or she is less important, then eventually the child learns that "I am not good enough", and vice versa (Spinelli et al., 2020).

Stressed-out parents often unintendedly do something worse. For example, if a child is distressed, they would rather try to pacify the child by giving a toy, or a chocolate bar, or a gadget or getting the child hooked to YouTube. Modern parents, who have learned to suppress their stress and grief cycles instead of completing them, also end up teaching their kids to suppress their grief and stress cycles, because it is too stressful for the parents to provide a safe company to their children while they show their tantrums (Warren & Aloia, 2019). Such parenting is referred to as Helicopter Parenting in the literature. It has been documented that millennial parents have this tendency to resort to helicopter parenting to keep their children perpetually happy while keeping them away from emotionally painful experiences causing frustration, anger, sadness, even boredom (Reed et al., 2016).

Such parents are perhaps oblivious that by shielding away their children from experiencing difficult emotions they are not being good parents. However, as a result, the children learn that it is not good to be sad, or be angry, or experience any difficult emotions, because doing so upset their parents (Neece et al., 2012). However, difficult emotions are just natural reactions to events that are distressing. If a pet dies, is it not a time to be sad or even cry, or if the father fails to fulfill his promise, would the child not be upset about it? But the message often given by stressed-out parents is that it is not okay to have difficult emotions. The emotions never go away but are somewhat overshadowed by a sense of antagonism against a part of their psyche, which they are eventually taught to escape from (Schwartz, 2013).

This antagonism in extreme cases can turn into self-hatred, a split in one's personality into parts that are consciously accepted and parts that are suppressed into the unconscious referred to as the 'shadow-self' in Jungian psychology (Ziveig, 1997). The shadow-self typically contains aspects of one's being which a person has been conditioned to despise so much that he or she cannot even consciously acknowledge the fact that those parts belong to them at all. Bringing these parts into conscious awareness can become a source of immense shame and hatred towards oneself (Sieff, 2017).

The content of the shadow-self may have a significant impact on a person's SIWE. Exercise of *batar* in consumption can be a means to escape the shadow-self particularly if the conscious-self, ego, in particular, abhor its content. The items purchased from the market, the clothes, the gadgets, the car, the house or anything which the world outside acknowledge having a cosmetic value are thus used to create an artificial personality, a mask, not just for the sake of acceptability in the outside world, but also to escape from the content of the shadow-self. In view of Woodman (1993), the volume of the items purchased by a shopaholic

person may symbolically represent the size of the existential void or the size of the shadow self. So, in this context, it may also be argued that the greater the size of the shadow-self which one intends to escape, the greater the need to resort to *batar* and *riyah* to distract one-self from the contents of the shadow.

The problem of weak SIWE and corresponding addictive behavior, or avoiding it altogether, can be addressed through conscious parenting, which is possible when the parents do not unconsciously see their children as a burden; rather a responsibility to take pride in. To achieve conscious parenting, the parents perhaps need to avoid accumulating grief and stress and complete their own stress and grief cycle as and when needed (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2005; Nagoski & Nagoski, 2019). Completing the grief and stress cycles requires breaks from the modern-hamster-wheel like routine so that a person can breathe (Chin & Kales, 2019) and return to the state of vulnerability when needed (van der Kolk, 2014). *Ṣalāh* (daily prayers) indeed offers Muslims a great opportunity to be in a state of vulnerability, as there is no need to act tough in front of Allah (SWT), Who already knows what His subjects are experiencing within, the deepest corners of their being.

### **It Takes a Village-The Significance of Social Support in Building SIWE**

The modern nuclear family culture falls behind in providing breaks to parents from a hectic routine (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006). Humans are social beings, and as the African proverb goes 'it takes a village to raise a child' - the claim in this proverb is also substantiated by anthropological evidence (Diamond, 2012). In an extended family environment, if there is a spirit of mutual support, where there is no worldly competition to get ahead of each other (the opposite is also very much possible), it is perhaps possible to take breaks and recharge while other family members take the responsibility to manage the affairs of the house and the family (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006).

The literature on therapeutic techniques used to cure psychological trauma suggests that it is possible to reverse the damage and polish one's SIWE in the presence of someone who would show respect and avoid being critical when emotional support is needed (van der Kolk, 2014). In Jungian terms, one's shadow is brought to light with the help of a person who will not judge or act critically of what lurks behind in the shadow. A non-judgmental company of a religious mentor or a trusted friend with whom one feels safe to be vulnerable may also help one recover (Sieff, 2017). Muslims believe that Allah (SWT) is all forgiving and already knows the content of one's shadow-self, and despite this, Allah (SWT) has not stopped taking care of us and will welcome us every time someone turns toward Him for support and salvation.

Acting according to such beliefs in front of the children will also enable them to mirror the effort that parent's make to seek the support of Allah (SWT). However, if the children are too young to fully grasp the nature of their relationship with Allah (SWT), then the parents themselves need to provide the needed safe, yet structured space for the children. Parents should also honor their children's dependency on them with respect and compassion. The message given to the children from parents, through their conduct, that the children are worthy of respect, compassion and attention, is regarded as essential to develop a strong

SIWE within children in the relevant literature.

A strong SIWE would not create a need to develop addictions to various activities or substances, including addiction to unnecessary shopping and consumption and exercise *riyah* for that matter. In other words, if one's shadowone's shadow creates no existential pain to run away from, while one is also internally equipped with the spiritual resources of *takāful* and *tazkīyah*, resorting to *batar* and *riyah* would perhaps be unlikely. Instead, it would be easier to enter into the state of *qana'ah* and *sa'adah* (see Appendix - A for definitions). Parents need to get into such a psychological and spiritual state and subsequently inspire their children towards the same, as it is needless to mention that preaching without practicing never leads to the desired transformation. Keeping this in view, Muslim parents need to reassess their internal states and their impact on their parenting strategies if they find their children becoming addicted to the stuff, for example, addiction to screen (Zubair & Raquib, 2020) and processed food is a common problem among young children (Schiestl et al., 2021).

**TABLE 1**  
**Examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from his Role as a Father**

Parenting practice by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)	Reference
Showing affection and warmth	Sunan Abi Dawud; 5217; In-book reference: Book 43, <i>ḥadīth</i> 445 Sahih Muslim; 2317; In-book reference: Book 43, <i>ḥadīth</i> 85
Equal treatment	Sunan Abi Dawud; 3544; In-book reference: Book 24, <i>ḥadīth</i> 129
sPrioritising children's well-being over one's work	Tirmidhi; Vol. 1, Book 46, <i>ḥadīth</i> 3774
Accepting interruption of kids despite doing something important	Sahih al-Bukhari; 5996; In-book reference: Book 78, <i>ḥadīth</i> 27
Making dua for children	Sahih al-Bukhari; 6003; In-book reference: Book 78, <i>ḥadīth</i> 34
Tolerance and self-restraint toward their unintended mistakes	Sahih al-Bukhari; 6002; In-book reference: Book 78, <i>ḥadīth</i> 33 Sahih al-Bukhari; 6038; In-book reference: Book 73, <i>ḥadīth</i> 64
Disciplining	Sunan an-Nasa'I; 5140

### Seeking Inspiration from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as An Exemplary Father

The goal is to ensure that wholehearted attention is given to the children which gives the message to them that 'you are worthy' through both the verbal and non-verbal cues. For Muslim parents, it becomes easier as they can simply follow the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Showing kindness, compassion and patience with children, also exercising discipline when needed has been a key theme in the Prophet's role as a father.

Emulating the *sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) reaps the blessing of Allah (SWT) here and in the Hereafter. Being compassionate, patient, and disciplined with children is not just good for the children's SIWE but also is meaningful and spiritually beneficial for the parents. It has been known in modern psychology that having a meaningful purpose behind a difficult experience makes the experience rewarding (Jung, 2006). Suppose parents are aware of how psychologically beneficial their compassion and patience could be for their children. In that case, the belief in a desirable outcome can add further motivation to become more effective parents (Ferrey et al., 2016).

There are many examples from the life of the Prophet (PBUH) which teach us that he was the most compassionate and patient parent one can find in history. And yet he also guided his children about the right and wrong, the *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, in a polite yet assertive manner. See Table 1 for examples from the life of the Prophet (PBUH).

## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

It may be argued that the conventional design of the education system is not suitable to establish a strong SIWE in general. The key features of the conventional design of the education system will be briefly highlighted below to see which of the features can or cannot work to develop a healthy SIWE, let alone an SIWE that is grounded in the idea of environmental consciousness.

### The Contemporary Design of the Education System

The relevant literature establishes that the education system, with all its pedagogical tools and structural features, is meant to transform individuals into rational robots for the bureaucratic machinery either for the public or private sector and filter out those who resist such a transformation (Fukuyama, 2011; Toffler, 1980). The students who perform well in the education system are rewarded based on their mindless and conscienceless obedience to the authority of the system. At the same time, there is limited room for creative and out-of-the-box thinking (Robinson, 2012).

The goal of the contemporary design of the education system thus is not to develop environmentally-conscious citizens having a healthy conscience and a strong character, who also possess the ability to think critically and creatively. The choice of methods and structural elements in the education system is thus dependent on the goal of creating mindless workers for the industry so much that the model of education closely resembles that of a modern factory (Coffield & Williamson, 2011). Though field visits may be getting common, still students spend much of the time in class listening to the lectures, smemorising facts and definitions, and then reproducing the same in written examination (Kohn, 2006). The content which is taught has hardly any relevance to real life. On top of that, the content is scompartmentalised into different subjects and concepts within the subjects (Spectre, 2019).

Such automization and scompartmentalisation mirrors the design of a bureaucratic organisation where an individual is not able to see the big picture and yet is expected to perform on minuscule part of the whole (Javaid & Suri, 2016). Such a structural design in the contemporary education system perhaps nurtures the scompartmentalisng abilities of the

brain, while creative-intuitive-integrative-holistic abilities of the students remain ill-nurtured during much of the formal educational experience (Robinson, 2012). The innate need of the human mind to find meaning while looking at the big picture (Armstrong, 2014), to have a sense of inspiration, oozing out of being part of a sacred whole (Mate, 2003), typically remains unfulfilled in contemporary education as well (Jossey-Bass Inc, 2008).

The evaluation methods have a profound role to play here. Students are expected to prove in writing their ability to understand and smemorise the particularities of the meaningless bits. Students' 'academic performance' is thus measured quantitatively and ranked using a bell curve (Tan Yuen Ling et al., 2020). An atmosphere of competition among students is thus enforced, which ranks students into different performance categories from high to low (Deutsch, 1979; Kohn, 2006).

In such an atmosphere, students who form their SIWE as a function of their academic performance are often able to better perform in the education system. If SIWE and academic performance are directly proportional, then it may adversely affect the SIWE of average or low performing students. Students whose SIWE is not grounded in their academic performance but still perform well are perhaps rare exceptions. So generally speaking, except for a few high performing students, the bell-curve grading policies in particular (Frisby, 1995), do not allow the development of a healthy SIWE within most students (Filippello et al., 2014).

### **Pedagogical Reconsideration to Reinforce SIWE and Environmental Consciousness**

Institutionalised methods are meant to achieve specific socioeconomic or political goals of a particular scivilisation (Javaid, 2015a). The sketch mentioned above is brief; however, it highlights the fact that the design elements of the educational system are based on the goals to produce an obedient workforce for the contemporary corporate-bureaucratic establishment (Mitra, 2015). If the goal is rather to develop individuals who take pride in being constructive members of society, have an entrepreneurial appetite, are also environmentally conscious, are creative and have a strong SIWE, then the structure which may be employed to develop such traits and qualities would perhaps be profoundly different from the one described above. There is a profound influence on the learning methodology. How to ride a bicycle cannot be taught by mere class lectures. Children learn to talk and be kind to others by listening to and observing parents or elders, not by listening to lectures on how to speak and be kind. Likewise, students cannot be expected to develop a relationship with the natural environment just through lectures, even documentaries. They may develop an academic understanding of the subject. Still, to form a bond with nature, they would have to engage with nature in real-time, and experience its influence on their entire being, from somatic, to emotional and spiritual. Relationships are primarily emotional and spiritual; they are not for the most part grounded in logic or reason, and so is the relationship with nature. Building a relationship with nature can thus best happen by experiencing nature directly (Tillmann et al., 2018) and contrasting the experience of being in a synthetic environment (Morris, 2020). Likewise, students can be ssensitised to feel for a problem, by actually experiencing the pain caused by the problem, or at least witnessing it closely (Kricsfalusy et al., 2018). For more details, the concerned reader may find it useful to explore pedagogical philosophies referred to as



‘Problem Based Learning’ and ‘Experiential Learning’ methodologies.

### **The impact of Evaluation Methods on SIWE**

A question may arise about how to evaluate and give students feedback that aids in developing a strong SIWE, environmental consciousness and other necessary changes in their mindset and personality. The contemporary method of quantitative grading is counterproductive here. Experts acknowledge that the quantitative evaluation of performance pushes people toward competing with each other for superficial outcomes (Kohn, 2006). In other words, they can pretend or fake their response and still get good grades. Evaluating students and ranking them does not ensure that the cause behind their inability to learn will be eliminated.

In this context, one may ask, what method of evaluation and giving feedback Prophets used while teaching? What method did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) use to teach? Did he use a quantitative method to rank his disciples and label anyone as a failure as a general practice? The answer is clearly negative. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in particular criticised the behavior in general, and not the individual, and made sure that the esteem of his disciples was not damaged in the process of giving feedback. Prophet (PBUH) was also conscious of individual differences and limitations and would customise his message accordingly while giving full attention to the person being addressed (Rahman, 2018).

The positive impact of such personalised coaching on the SIWE of an individual is not hard to understand; that the last messenger of God, the most important person in the history of mankind, giving full consideration while directly and respectfully addressing one of his companions. An ordinary teacher is not of the same stature, of course. However, for students, relative to their peers, a teacher may possess moral and intellectual authority and can still positively impact the SIWE of students if the teacher gives value to each student’s needs and limitations while addressing their queries or giving them feedback. The Prophet’s approach is thus the opposite of the methods used in conventional education. One can imagine how profoundly different an alternative model of education, specifically the design of evaluation and feedback system, would be if it is based on Prophet’s example (Rafie et al., 2014).

Mere information may be transmitted through impersonal teaching, and through practical application, students may gain a better intellectual understanding; however, if a psychological and spiritual transformation is needed, then perhaps an impersonal student-teacher relationship will not suffice. We can learn from the life of the Prophet (PBUH) that teachers who take a personal interest in the development of students and form an emotional and spiritual bond with students while maintaining necessary boundaries and protocols may be able to bring about the desired psychological and spiritual transformation.

### **Self-Regulation of Teachers and its Possible Influence on Students SIWE**

Like parents, if the teachers are under a high degree of stress and overreact to the students, the teachers may also send the message to students that they are a source of stress for the teacher, while students’ behavior may amplify the stress of the teacher as well (Embse et al., 2019). If exposed to such a teaching atmosphere for long, students may develop a sense of guilt or shame, more so if they are coming from a similar stressful environment at home.

The teachers thus also send a non-verbal message to students that ‘they are not okay’, which if persistent may be internalised by students. The impact of such an atmosphere on their SIWE may be negative (Mbuva, 2016).

The causes of the teachers’ own stress may be numerous, ranging from personal to professional. There are ways to identify at the time of hiring to filter out candidates who are unable to regulate their stress or if they do not have a capacity to make the students feel safe in their presence. The signs may include if a person appears to be overly on guard or defensive or displays incoherence in his or her verbal and non-verbal communication (van der Kolk, 2014). This capacity may also be evaluated while in the probationary period, and the students may be asked if the teacher makes them feel safe and respected (Sieben & Wallowitz, 2009).

Once hired, many policies and elements of the educational institution’s organisational culture may contribute to the teachers’ stress levels. These policies and elements may include the teaching load, student-teacher ratio, the performance evaluation criteria of teachers, the degree of empowerment, appreciation to unique abilities or styles of teachers to better engage students, non-judgmental atmosphere for human vulnerabilities, open communication channels among peers, especially with seniors or top management (Ferguson et al., 2012). The list is not exhaustive.

There is a trickle-down effect from the top management to the students in educational institutions, of a sense of safety and respect, or the very opposite. In the context of the discussion, to inspire students into any kind of behavior, even developing spiritual traits mentioned in Appendix - A, would require a genuine environment of safety, mutual respect and leading through example (Beekun, 2012). An environment with a superficial sense of security and respect would instead create a superficial response among students as well. The ineffectiveness of teachers not practising what they themselves are teaching is needless to mention (Rafie et al., 2014). A threatening environment may push students toward fawning instead of genuinely adopting virtues being taught to them, including a fake demonstration of a sense of responsibility toward the environment (Lickona et al., 2007).

## ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The previous two sections concerned how parenting and education can positively influence SIWE among the coming generations of Muslims, thus eliminating the key weakness that the corporate establishment may exploit for their own advantage. The same approach may also inspire them toward inculcating spiritual qualities like *qa’anah*, *shukar*, *zuhd*, *takāful*, while avoiding *batar* and *riyah*. Once psychologically and spiritually equipped, Muslim youth may also find it motivating to avoid consumption behaviors that may have adverse consequences for the natural environment. Muslim youth would thus avoid indulging in the pleasure of consumption while remaining conscious of the consequences of being part of the unsustainable production and consumption cycle.

To have environmentally conscious consumers with developed SIWE is one side of the equation. On the other hand, to satisfy the demand of environmentally conscious consumers, we need producers who are also environmentally conscious and do not tend to allure and manipulate consumers with low SIWE into consuming their offerings for the sake of their

own greed or to maximise their returns. That is where the role of environmentally conscious Muslim entrepreneurship comes in.

Holding holistic understanding of meaningful happiness, environmentally conscious youth having a high SIWE, may prefer careers that offer them satisfaction (Herzberg, 2003), and meaning (Frankl, 1997), and may avoid career choices just to boost their SIWE. In terms of Herzberg (2003), career choices to boost SIWE, may eliminate the sense of dissatisfaction of a class of people having low SIWE, but elimination of dissatisfaction does not ensure a sense of satisfaction, for which a sense of meaningfulness is necessary (Frankl, 1997).

Youth with a strong SIWE may not be interested in choosing a career that only offers them a fancy title in a popular firm. They may rather prefer career options allowing meaningful work, which would give them a sense of purpose. Unfortunately, later types of firms are rare, while much of the corporate establishment comprises transnational corporations, in particular, the practices of which have been responsible for much of the environmental degradation (Klien, 2015). So, a Muslim youth high on SIWE, who has been equipped with knowledge about the damaging nature of the consumer culture, is aware of how the industry at large is responsible for environmental degradation. Such an individual has developed a strong relationship with nature; such a youth is expected to shy away from joining the industry which has been responsible for the destruction of nature.

An alternative for them may be to have their own venture, that allows them to offer products for the needs of their community produced sustainably. A strong SIWE may also prevent them from following the examples of modern entrepreneurs, whose value is measured in billions of dollars and not how much they have done to benefit the people and nature (Palihapitiya, 2017). However, mere environmental consciousness and a high SIWE are not enough to pursue an entrepreneurial career. Necessary training pertaining to the entrepreneurial method, potential challenges and how to tackle them have to be a necessary part of their education. In this context the BS entrepreneurship program at IoBM (Mahmood et al., 2020) and training philosophy adopted by AMAN Tech IBA may be reviewed by the concerned reader (Qureshi et al., 2021).

### **The Local Circular Economy**

In this subsection, the possible business ideas and supply chain strategies pertaining to the paradigm of local-circular-economy would be highlighted for the environmentally conscious entrepreneurs. In the local-circular economic paradigm, the businesses and the consumers, use, reuse, recycle, reduce and strictly refuse what cannot be reused or recycled (WEF, 2018). The idea of local-circular economy naturally aligns with the inclination of Muslim entrepreneurs to find stakeholders within their neighborhood and community while organising a supply chain, as the buyers or sellers who are closer socially and geographically will be preferred over those who are further away as per the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH)<sup>3</sup> (Javaid, 2019).

This preference for neighborhood and community can encourage responsible practices as the workers, buyers, sellers, investors, suppliers are personally known to the entrepreneurs

<sup>3</sup>See Sahih-Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 35, *ḥadīth* Number 459; source: doi: <https://www.sahih-bukhari.com>

outside of their business relationship as well (Javaid, 2019). In contrast, when modern entrepreneurs with an individualistic mindset attempt to organise their value chain globally, their relationship with the workers employed in other countries is close to zero. It is even possible for modern entrepreneurs to never know who works for them in another country and how their production methods affect the natural environment in Vietnam or China, for example. Such a geographical distance thus makes it easier for modern entrepreneurs to make self-centric decisions which may also have adverse environmental and humanitarian externalities (Cockcroft, 2012).

On the other side, localisation of the supply chain naturally establishes informal feedback loops, providing information to the Muslim entrepreneurs to fine-tune their products and processes in real-time. Feedback would only be necessary if the Muslim entrepreneur inadvertently does something, which may harm the local community or environment, otherwise, the need to remain locally relevant and acceptable would keep the entrepreneur careful while organising the production activity (Javaid, 2015b, 2019).

Islam also encourages its followers to avoid wastage (Qur'ān 17:26-27), an idea that complements the local-circular economy philosophy that insists on reusing and recycling (Khalid et al., 2015). It is possible to organise supply chains in a way that the wastage which inadvertently happens is avoided at every stage of value addition. Toyota realised this soon after their inception, and eventually invented the JIT (Just in Time) system where the process involves far less inventory. Their entire production system is flexible to change the sequence of production in real time, significantly reducing the inventory holding cost and the time is also minimised. The Toyota Production System is able to produce at a much cheaper price, and much faster, while maintaining the due quality of their products (Villa & Taurino, 2013). Muslim entrepreneurs, by adopting the same approach, may produce as per natural demand of the society and use the extra time for their social and religious commitments (Javaid, 2015b).

### **Localising the supply chain**

The local-circular economy model would prefer to have bicycles used for much of personal transportation, as school, markets, workplace, manufacturing units would be within close distance. Minimisation of transportation is one of the key agenda of the local-circular-economy concept because of the adverse environmental effects (Geisendorf & Pietrulla, 2018). Ideally, products need to be manufactured closest to the point of consumption, and even raw material to be grown closer to the point of manufacturing and consumption. In the modern capitalist world, the supply chain has turned global because products are sourced from the cheapest suppliers and sold to those who can pay the best price in as much quantity as the global production system allows. Often, the products travel for tens of thousands of miles to get processed and packaged into products to be sold in supermarkets. So the farmer in Indonesia produces for a buyer in Europe, and not for his or her own neighbourhood and community, often leaving the local communities - not having enough buying power - dependent on the global supply chain, leading to colossal amounts of distributive injustice (Javaid, 2020).

Reducing the distance between the producer and the consumer not just aids in meeting

the local needs, but also the transportation cost and its environmental impact can be reduced. The packaging requirements to transport products to long distances are significantly reduced. In this context, the case of bread manufacturing offers us insights. The naan (flat bread) is manufactured locally in the subcontinent (Parimala & Sudha, 2015) on almost every street, while the bread for morning breakfast is mass-produced by a few brands. The naan can simply be taken to home hot and fresh in a cloth bag right after it is produced, while the bread has to be put into a plastic bag because of the time it takes to produce at a centralised unit and distribute to retailers across the city. If bread is manufactured like naan, which is technically very much possible, in local bakeries and then distributed to the customers early in the morning, there will be no need for plastic bags. The customer would also get a fresher product (Sundkvist et al., 2001).

Globally, the phenomenon of urban rooftop farming is spreading quickly to minimise the distance between the buyer and the producer and to have freshly grown vegetables and fruits free from GMO and other synthetic and possibly toxic substances (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Ferreira et al., 2018; Manriquez-Altamirano et al., 2020). There are initiatives all over the world for growing vegetables indoors, even in basements, while using the techniques of aquaponics or hydroponics so that the carbon footprint of transporting vegetables can be minimised, while the water consumed to grow vegetables is also reduced by as much as 90% (Goddek et al., 2019).

### **Minimising long-distance commuting and transportation**

All over the world car free zones are now being created so much that Wikipedia has a page enlisting all such places<sup>4</sup>. This has been done to prevent the burning of fossil fuel, and create a push to organise cities where one does not have to travel long distances to work or school. In Karachi alone, annually 400 billion rupees of fuel is burnt only in traffic congestion (Shabbar et al., 2014). The root of this crisis can be traced back to how and why the urban infrastructure is designed in such a way. The advent of transportation allowed cities to 'sprawl' exponentially as it was cheap and convenient to travel long distances quickly. The result was increased distance between one's residence and workplace. The resulting mega cities now have mega carbon footprints (Bart, 2010). The idea of a local-circular economy, on the other hand, looks forward toward minimising the distance between the workplace and residence (Obersteg et al., 2019).

Ricardo Semler, a Brazilian entrepreneur, has created small offices all over the city of Sao Paulo. The employees can simply choose to go to an office that is closer to their residence and use technology to connect with their supervisors and team members (Semler, 2007). Lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid19 forced people to work from their homes; however, the home environment didn't turn out to be as feasible for everyone (Chattopadhyay, 2021). Office spaces near residential places may be created and rented to companies, where employees may work without distraction. Localised production for local consumption may not require huge factories and can be organised in a sustainable way, and they may also be located closer to or even within the residential zones, which was typically a norm during

<sup>4</sup>See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_car-free\\_places](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_car-free_places)

much of the Muslim history (Javaid, 2015b).

Many sustainable and self-reliant communities all over the planet are now emerging, which produce much of their necessities, including food and electricity within a close proximity (Roseland, 2012). Amish and other similar communities, who never resorted to modern lifestyle, are still producing for their needs. (Dana, 2007). A Dutch startup called Regen Villages<sup>5</sup> is creating such communities, which can be a good example for Muslim entrepreneurs. Muslim entrepreneurs can learn from such examples and try to create startups to bring the production and work closer to homes so that the need to transport is minimised. Localising the supply chain of food, in particular, is thus imperative. Products like soaps, tooth pastes, and shampoos can be manufactured on a small scale as well. A startup may use the franchise model as adopted by international chains like Starbucks or McDonalds, to establish small manufacturing units which would locally manufacture and sell the FMCG products.

### ***Rethinking architecture***

Just like the advent of automobiles allowed this phenomenon known as urban sprawl, likewise, the advent of air conditioning allowed the vertical sprawl of the urban infrastructure involving architectural designs where air conditioning is necessary (Chang & Winter, 2015). The fuel burnt to run the air conditioning in urban infrastructure has a significant contribution in the urban carbon footprint (Winter, 2013). Many technologies have been invented to reduce the energy consumption of urban infrastructure including better insulation materials and smart air-conditioning management. It is ironic that the air conditioning due to its current carbon footprint is a major contributor in climate change, eventually increasing the need for more air-conditioning during hot weather. Perhaps the ideal solution would be to design any new infrastructure in a way that natural air circulation eliminates the need for air conditioning to the extent possible (Barber, 2020).

Architectural designs during the pre-air-conditioning era may need to be brought back, with better thermally insulated materials (Dahl, 2013). Terracotta, a traditional material used in making clay pots, gets cooler when sprayed with water. So, an infrastructure with an outer structure made of terracotta tiles may naturally cool down the interior of a building, and the air if blown inside through a mesh made of the same material, then it may not require further cooling (Alhefnawi, 2021). The need to use air conditioning may not be eliminated altogether, but it can perhaps be minimised significantly (Barber, 2020). Environmentally conscious entrepreneurs can enter into the construction industry with such energy-saving ideas.

### ***Water security***

The growing water security due to melting glaciers is a profound threat for human survival and even to law and order (Mustafa et al., 2013). Innovative water-saving, preserving and extracting techniques may be used. If we look at Karachi, there are hardly any rainwater storage systems, and much of the rain water is wasted, and due to covering of the earth with concrete and asphalt, the water hardly replenishes the underground natural reserves (Ali Hasnain, 2018). So, a huge opportunity to prepare a rainwater harvesting system exists. Moreover, conventional air-conditioning produces a huge quantity of condensate, which

<sup>5</sup><https://www.regenvillages.com/>

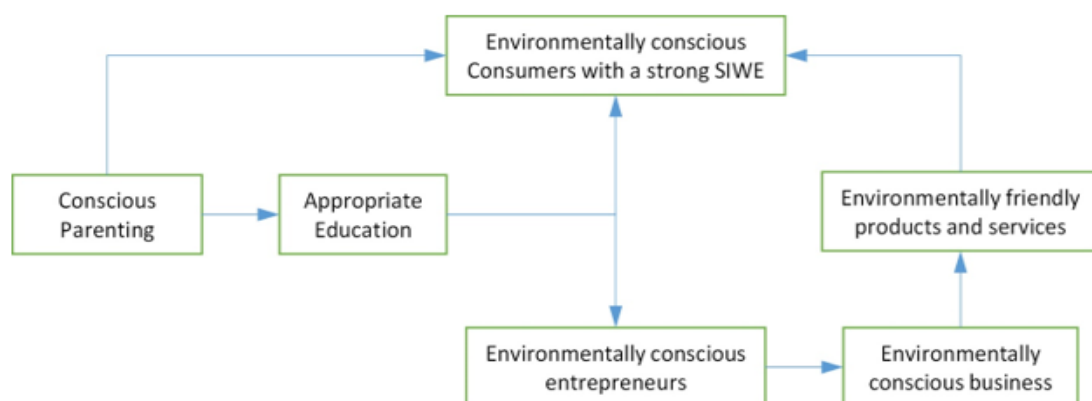


is again thrown in the drain. Since conventional infrastructure will not be replaced in a short period of time, ways to save and reuse the condensate from air-conditioning systems is perhaps imperative, keeping in view the emerging water crisis (Algarni et al., 2018).

The grey water wastage may also be easily recycled and reused for activities like washing the car. There are even ways to recycle the domestic black-water wastage (Tabassum et al., 2020). Capturing the water vapors naturally evaporating from the sea and lakes can be another key source of clear water (Fujiwara & Kikuchi, 2017). There are even ways to naturally capture the water vapors in regions of high humidity without even using energy or any mechanical systems (Jarimi et al., 2020). All of these techniques to save or recycle water can be seen as business ideas for environmentally conscious entrepreneurs to pursue. However, if people carelessly waste water while washing cars or taking baths, the alternatives suggested may not suffice. There is an analogous need for people to adopt the *sunnah* of Prophet (PBUH) with respect to water usage, where any unnecessary wastage is religiously avoided.

### Recycling

Another key feature of the circular economy paradigm is recycling. To properly recycle the domestic waste, for example, segregation with homes is necessary. In Indore, an Indian city, citizens have been trained to separate their garbage into two categories: 'geela' and 'sookha'. *Geela* refers to the biodegradable organic kitchen waste, while *sookha* comprises inorganic materials like plastic, cardboard, glass, tin etc. The two categories have made segregation easy for the ordinary citizen, while the rest of the task of segregating different types of inorganic waste becomes even easier for the city's waste management department. The organic *geela* waste is then converted into compost, while the *sookha* waste is recycled into raw material for fresh production (Rasmeet, 2021).



**FIGURE 1.** The Relationship Between Conscious Parenting, Educational Methodology and Environmentally Conscious Entrepreneurship Discussed in this Paper

One might argue that in a local circular economy why there are large quantities of inorganic waste in the first place? Ideally if the economy is not employing ideas like planned obsolescence and centralised mass production, then the huge quantity of waste may not be produced in the first place. Products will last longer, and by virtue of decentralised production, the use of plastic as a packaging material will be minimised. Further, a culture where the customer is incentivised to bring their jars and bottles can also reduce the use of packaging material. Prominent advocates of the zero-waste lifestyle have shown that it is even possible to eliminate almost all of one's domestic waste to the extent that an entire year's waste can be filled in a small glass jar (Johnson, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

The paper discussed the impact of neglectful and distressed parents on children's SIWE and what they need to do in order to develop a strong SIWE within their children. Likewise, inadequacies within the contemporary education system were also discussed, along with the changes which are required to reinforce the SIWE, to inculcate environmental consciousness and entrepreneurial orientation within students. Some examples of business ideas from the local circular economic paradigm were also highlighted for environmentally conscious entrepreneurs to pursue the vision of creating an environmentally sustainable community.

However, in this context, it is argued that the role of parents and education precedes the role of entrepreneurs, as the parents and the educational institutions are the ones that can create an intrinsic orientation among the next generation of consumers who will not buy to fill the existential void created by a weak SIWE, rather they will be conscious of their impact on the environment as a consumer. The same class of Muslim youth developed through the recommended ways of parenting and education will also be more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, which will then produce and supply for the needs of the environmentally-conscious consumers. If parents and education could not develop a strong SIWE and the right environmental and entrepreneurial orientations, then the consumption and career choices would be inclined to soothe the existential pain caused by a weak SIWE. To achieve the SDGs of developing sustainable society and communities in Muslim regions, Muslim parents and education systems need to employ the appropriate methods to develop the self, which inclines toward playing the necessary role in the needed transformation as discussed.

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