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# Self-Confidence in Psychology and Islamic Ethics: Towards an Interpretive Framework and Its Relation to Trust in God

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# **Abstract**

This paper focuses on self-confidence in psychology in both conceptual and empirical ways and investigates the status of self-confidence in Islamic ethics. Five relevant approaches to self-confidence are identified and then comparatively studied in psychology and Islamic ethics. In addition, an attempt is made to present an appropriate framework to build, boost, and improve self-confidence through psychology and to find its relation with Islamic ethics. This is conducted by using the analytical-descriptive method along with library research.

The principal elements of Islamic ethics include self-awareness, insight, self-respect, human dignity, positive thinking, optimism, endeavor, will, and being responsible, as well as spiritual and psychological independence. On the other hand, major elements of psychology include pattern, self-belief, self-consciousness, positive self-thought, strong will, positive thinking, self-respect, invincibility, perseverance, objective-centeredness, patience, and acquisition of knowledge. These two approaches have some elements in common, such as self-awareness, knowledge, and experience acquisition, positive thinking, and self-respect. The results show that the God-oriented approach in an ethical framework of self-confidence, the essence of which lies in trust in God, can be distinguished from a psychological approach reflected in behaviorism and pragmatism.

**Keywords**: God-oriented approach, psychology, self-confidence, trust in God, Islamic ethics.

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### 1. Introduction

Self-confidence is one of the prominent concepts and major concerns of human life today. It is necessary for any individual at any level of knowledge and experience. As the feeling of emptiness seems to be a psychological disadvantage, man has always tried to be away from it. The major barriers to the development of self-confidence include aimlessness, passivity, negative thinking, lack of responsibility and perseverance, inconstancy, and impatience in facing obstacles and failures.

Thus, self-confidence may be considered a powerful instrument to regulate and enforce individual behaviors, which would finally lead to the enhancement of the collective behaviors of the society. This should be investigated comparatively in different schools of thought to discover further aspects of human psychology.

Self-confidence has been studied from various perspectives of psychology, existentialism, and cultural studies and in the holy Quran, the sayings of the Prophet and Imams, and Islamic ethical works. This hypothesis is now posed that the epistemological sphere of ethics, moreover, deals with such a concept and gives it a special status in human life. The principal objective is to identify the components of self-confidence and to design two models and present a framework in the fields of ethics and psychology. The question raised here is whether the designed models match these two fields or not. Furthermore, this paper aims to determine a variety of approaches to religious and ethical necessities. Then, an analytical comparison is made to study self-confidence in psychology and Islamic ethics through a theoretical review. This comparison shows the similarities and differences between these two fields to design both a model and a framework for the human behaviors.

The term *self-confidence* signifies one's belief in one's own capabilities. L. Reece and Brandt define self-confidence as "what you think of yourself and what you feel will be the end result of self-assurance and self-respect" (Islami 2004, 26-28). Thus, certainty and resistance against hardships and tribulations will make man stand on the peaks of success (Reece and Brandt 1990, 74). In fact, self-confidence is not acquired and should be discovered and developed. What matters is the belief in one's abilities, leading to self-confidence, which is nothing but having a real and logical self-knowledge (Sobhaninia 2001, 73).

Psychology of religion consists of the application of psychological methods and interpretive frameworks of religious traditions in both religious and irreligious individuals. Although psychology appeared as a self-conscious discipline recently in the late nineteenth century, all its functions date back to many centuries before that time (Wulff 2010).

Islamic ethics, defined as "good character," began to develop in the seventh century and was finally established by the eleventh century as a successful amalgamation of Quranic teachings, the Sunnah of the Prophet, the precedents of Muslim jurists, the pre-Islamic Arabian tradition, and non-Arabic elements (including Persian and Greek ideas) embedded in or integrated with a generally Islamic structure (Becker 2001).

# 2. Literature Review

Most of the research on self-confidence has been conducted in the field of psychology. In this regard, more than nine-hundred scientific works, including books, theses, and papers, were identified in the National Library of Iran. Papers from databases such as Noor Specialized Magazines Website (Noormags), Scientific Information Database

(SID), and the National Scientific Publication System, as well as other databases were studied. These works are mainly related to topics such as reinforcement, surveys of self-esteem in children, adolescents, and adults, psychology of self-respect or self-esteem, ways to improve self-respect, and other related issues. Among these works, Islami Nasab (1994) has studied the psychology of self-esteem based on both Islamic and Western schools of psychology with a new approach to humanistic psychology. Although he has concentrated on various scientific dimensions from both Islamic and psychological perspectives, he has paid little attention to the issue from religious and ethical points of view, and has not put forward any coherent model. In his research on self-esteem, Islami (2004) has analyzed the spiritual personality of Imam Khomeini not from a psychological but from an ethical perspective.

This paper is organized as follows. At first, the introduction and research question are presented. Then, the nature of self-esteem is investigated and the characteristics of those with self-esteem are described. Then, psychological approaches towards self-esteem are introduced in detail, and their models as well as the ways to enhance them are discussed. On the other hand, this paper elaborates on the teachings of the Prophet of Islam in relation to self-esteem and trust in God within the framework of Islamic ethics. In this way, the reality of self-esteem in ethics is studied and the value of trust in God and self-esteem is discussed. Then, the components of self-esteem in Islamic ethics derived from the Quran and Hadith, as well as the views of the scholars of ethics are enumerated, resulting in a model. Finally, the practical results of the study are presented through a comparative analysis of the two proposed models and the similarities and differences between their foundations, details, methods, aims, and effects.

# 2.1 Self-Confidence in Psychology

In this section, to make the reader more familiar with the concept of self-confidence in psychology, its features and components are described and the psychological approaches to self-confidence are introduced.

# 2.1.1 Features and Components of Self-Confidence

Futurism, risk-taking, controlling emotions and feelings, helping and being helped, accepting others, showing self-assurance, self-openness, purposefulness, accepting responsibility, and unified personality are among the characteristics of a self-confident person (Islami 2004, 29-30, 44-45). These resemble materials used in the construction of human character and are even applied to the management of motivation and excitement such as anger (Doyle 2007, 194).

Optimism, positive and negative emotions, and social support play mediatory roles between being extrovert and self-confident. In other words, high self-confidence has a direct relationship with optimism, social support, and positive emotions and stands in reverse relationship with negative emotions (Farhudiyan 2003, 70). Moreover, Kutob et al. (2010) has analyzed positive self-esteem as being correlated with academic achievement, occupational success, positive relationships with others, healthy coping skills, and a general sense of well-being. On the other hand, low self-esteem is associated with a variety of psychological, physiological, behavioral, and social problems (see Mather 2015; Kutob et al. 2010). Self-efficiency and self-confidence are seen to stand in an effective link other than the direct link between self-confidence and extroversion. A strong correlation has been found between self-efficiency and self-confidence: someone who is highly self-confident is more self-efficient, has suitable healthy behaviors, and

will finally make considerable progress (Mazlumi, Mehri, and Morovati 2006, 111-17).

# 2.1.2 Psychological Approaches to Self-confidence

Firstly, what has a leading role in achieving self-confidence is actualizing human capabilities, which is interpreted as "motivation." Considering the inherent inclination of man towards growth and acquisition of positive changes, Karl Rogers came to the conclusion that the basic motivational force of man lies in his inclination towards self-actualization, which means the actualization of all the existing capabilities towards growth, evolution, and affirmative changes (Hilgard et al. 2001, 469-71).

Secondly, Maslow could reach two certain or uncertain groups, or as he put it "healthy and unhealthy people," by applying the speech-based discovery technique. The first group was self-confident with senses of superiority and positive self-evaluation. They had no sense of shyness or embarrassment, while distrusting their capabilities and strength. He used the term "self-actualized" for a very certain, healthy, and self-reliant person (Shekarkan et al. 1993, 2:466-67).

Maslow regarded self-confidence and self-esteem as needs and conceded that human communities need to have self-respect, self-esteem, and respect for others, beyond their need for constant value. His seven-level bottom-up needs are physiological needs, safety, belonging and affection, self-esteem, cognitive needs, taste, and self-fulfillment.

Therefore, if food and safety are gained with difficulty, the attempts to satisfy these needs will control the behavior of the individual, and higher motivations will lose their importance. The basic needs are easily satisfied, and the individual will have sufficient chance and force only when he follows his mental and artistic interests. The greatest need,

which is "self-actualization," can be fulfilled only when all other needs have been met (Hilgard et al 2008, 472; Shultz 2007, 361-68). In addition to oneself, Maslow maintains, other factors including other people, the environment, culture, the manner of education, and tribal teachings are effective as well. He remains critical of the idea that environmental factors determine behaviors, and says that human behaviors result from the interaction of needs and situations (Maslow 1987, 10). Maslow holds that most people do not think or decide by themselves; rather, others make them act. He also maintains that only thirty percent of society are self-dependent (Maslow 1988, 33-34).

Atkinson and Horney argue that self-assurance and security are formed in childhood and that it is hard to be self-actualized in adulthood without having received any affection, enough security, and respect in childhood (Schultz 2007, 375). They maintain that self-actualization is influenced by factors such as the individual himself, the culture in which he lives, and certain self-concepts, coupled with the identification of his points of strength and weakness (Schultz 2007, 375).

Thirdly, Horney (1947), while holding that self-awareness is a key to human spontaneous growth, believes that, for neurotic needs, each of the defensive mechanisms of satisfaction and security as childhood needs can become unchanging parts of personality and, later on, affect the individual's behavior.

As a result, the real self-concept of the neurotic individual must be static and fruitless, because it is aimless and, like dogmatism, prevents the individual's growth. At the end, he keeps far from his real self and increments his conflicts, which lead him to the feeling of emptiness (Schultz 2007, 176-85). In addition to Horney's point, Rogers (1963)

concedes that man has an idealistic self-meaning, a portrait of self-concept; the closer the idealist self sits to the real self, the more satisfied and fulfilled the person will feel. Dissatisfaction follows when the idealist self and real self are far from each other.

Fourthly, William James and, fifthly, Alfred Adler consider positive self-respect as the basic factor of emotional-social compatibility. Self-respect means that the individual's success is proportionate to his level of expectations; if he reaches what he wants, the sense of value and high self-respect will result; otherwise, the feelings of inefficiency and worthlessness will develop (Shojaie 2009, 324). On the other hand, Adler (1939), Horney (1980), and Rogers (1961) incorporate the idea of self-concept into their own surrounding personality.

Such experimental investigations show that positive self-respect is associated with more appropriate and effective performance. On the other hand, Adler and his advocates agree with Maslow on the above needs and somewhat reaffirm it, but Freud remains more or less negligent of it. However, nowadays, clinical psychologists approve the significance and pivotal role of such needs more than before. Smith (1967) says that children with higher self-confidence are those who feel valuable, independent, and creative and are not easily affected by environmental factors. Therefore, if someone is disrespected and disregarded, his self-assurance diminishes and his psychological health is endangered (Islaminasab 1994, 26). In addition, Sullivan (1938) also points out that self-imagination of an individual emanates from reflected evaluation of others; that is, a positive concept of oneself develops when one is embraced and supported. Moreover, one's selfconcept is subject to social and foundational motivation of affection (Islaminasab 1994, 33-34). In this way, some degrees of confidence must exist in every person in order to have a healthy personality.

Henceforth, if an individual has high self-respect, he will be more independent and creative, will have a constructive attitude towards failure, and can better control his desires and demands (Shojaie 2009, 324).

# 2.2 Self-Confidence in Islamic Ethics

In this section, an attempt is made to put forward a framework for Islamic ethics in both its theoretical and practical aspects. After the theoretical discussion, the behaviors and lifestyle of Prophet Mohammad with regard to self-confidence will be studied.

#### 2.2.1 Theoretical Framework

Since self-confidence has components or conceptual networks, it is possible to completely review its characteristics within religion; in this way, self-confidence can be re-identified in the Quran and Hadith with an Islamic and ethical approach.

It is believed that since what has been said by God is important and excellent, self-confidence is to be excluded from religious virtues. Besides, as trust in God is emphasized in religion and all power stems from Him, self-confidence seems to stand against confidence in God and to be inconsistent with Islamic teachings. Therefore, self-confidence is not ethical and acceptable. In some works, self-confidence (or confidence in others) is said to be wrong, because it means that man should build confidence in himself and his power (Tabataba'i 1996, 4:374; Javadi Amoli 1998, 11:367). Of course, some have assumed positive and negative aspects for self-confidence and have approved its negative aspect with the belowmentioned explanation and rejected its positive aspect (Mesbah 1997, 16-17).

# 2.2.2 Practical Affirmation of Self-Confidence in the Prophet's Conduct

It is reported that a poor person went to the Prophet three times to ask for help. Each time he heard from the Prophet the following heartfelt words: "Whoever asks us for help, we shall help him, but whoever seeks richness, God shall make him rich," which touched the man's soul. Thus, trusting in God, he used his internal powers and talents to collect firewood and sold it and became rich. Later, he visited the Prophet again and approved the Prophet's statement (Kulayni 1983, 2:139; Motahari 1987, 3). As can be seen, in Islamic ethics, self-confidence is achievable through trust in God.

# 2.3 The Meaning of Trust in God

Imam Ali is reported to have said that trust in God has degrees, one of which is trust in God for all the things He has done for you, knowing that He has bestowed upon you only good and that He is the only Commander. Therefore, trust Him in all your affairs (Kulayni 1983, 2:65).

It is said that trust is one of the high degrees of spiritual wayfarers, and, according to the Quran, it is obligatory (3:159; 5:23; 14:12; 65:3). Thus, Islam awakens self-confidence in man by removing his hope from any actions not taken by him (Motahari 2000, 25:450).

# 2.4 The Degrees and Levels of Trust in God

People are different in exercising trust in God due to their strong or weak beliefs. As such, trust in God bears no meaning for those who are solely concerned with earthly life, save for times of danger and worry when they remember Him.

Trust in God is a level of faith realized through faith-based knowledge, state of mind, and practice. Such knowledge culminates in heartfelt faith. A true believer, then, is one whose faith is grounded in trust in God. Ghazali regards trust in divine grace as the highest degree

of trust in God, and Fayd Kashani views this degree as being peculiar to the sincere servants of God, who have detached themselves from material bonds and truly believed in the unity of the Supreme Being (Ghazali, n.d.b, 13:158; Fayd Kashani 1996, 7:381).

This means that none should be relied upon other than God, nor should anyone other than Him be a source of fear or hope, as He is the unfailing force that has dominion over all things; without Him, there is no existence or power to move a single particle in the heavens or earth. Trust in God in daily matters is not in conflict with human endeavor toward his goals. In other words, human trust should be initially placed in the Origin of Causes, then he should do his best to achieve his goals. With that said, the levels of trust in God are as follows:

### A) Primary Level

The primary level of trust in God is to engage in work and effort, as instructed by the Prophet. Trust in God should not become an excuse for indolence, as trust in God was the Prophet's state of mind and earning a living his Sunnah. Therefore, one should maintain the Prophet's Sunnah even if one fails to attain the Prophet's degree of trust in God.

### B) Intermediary Level

This level is peculiar to those who seek proximity to God. Therefore, they abandon the earthly world, but are never left without sustenance and always yearn for mundane and heavenly fulfillment. They are distinguished servants who seek the grace of the benevolent God without pursuing any business. Such people are referred to in the following verse: "And how many a living creature that does not carry its sustenance: Allah sustains it and yourselves; He is all-hearing and all-knowing" (Quran 29:60). Similarly, the Prophet is reported to have

said: "If man [tried] to escape sustenance as he [tries] to escape death, he would [inevitably] face it as he will face death" (Mohammadi Reyshahri 1996, 4:435).

Abu Nasr al-Sarraj maintains that this level of trust in God is realized when the soul is emancipated from its attachments—when all pleasures are vanished and earthly and heavenly means are detached from mankind, as they are detached from the dead (Sarraj 1914, 105). Ghazali believes that abstinence from accumulating wealth is only sanctioned for those who have reached the highest level of trust and faith in God (Ghazali 1988, 237).

#### C) High Level

The state of individuals in this level resembles that of a soul bereft of selfness and immersed in absolute divinity. He speaks nothing but the truth; his heart is a source of purity and seclusion, radiating divine lights and manifesting the signs of divinity. His body has been detached from physical attributes and entered the realm of the Holy Spirit, immersed in the sea of the unity of the Absolute Being by detaching itself from what is other than God. Shibli defines this unique type of trust in God as "being there for God as if you are not and have never been, and God being there for you as He has always been and will be" (Sarraj 1914, 105).

#### 2.5 Trust in God or Self-Confidence

As for striving, the Quran says, "[M]an hath only that for which he makes effort" (53:39), which indicates the acceptability of self-confidence in Islam. Motahari underlines the acceptability of self-confidence in one's relations with other people. But there is no position for self-confidence before God. Self-confidence is to refrain from relying on others in one's affairs as much as possible (Motahari 2000, 16:205).

In this way, man in his life uses his intrinsic eligibility and never waits for others. He never keeps away from God and regards him above everything. The Quran instructs: "And say not of anything: 'Lo! I shall do that tomorrow'"; rather, say that I will do it if God wills (18:23-24). Imam Ali's saying that self-confidence is one of the greatest Satanic traps (Tamimi 1987, 235) or his advice "The more you are confident in your own self, the more you should be careful about its deceptions" (Tamimi 1987, 307) do not mean that self-confidence is immoral, because it refers to a specific stratum of the soul, not to its whole entirety.

To explain the above concept, it should be mentioned that, from the Islamic point of view, the soul has been sometimes criticized and blamed. In other cases, God has sworn to it, which indicates its value. Sometimes, it is counted among the most belligerent enemies of mankind, and at times it is cherished. What matters is the emphasis put by the infallibles on human dignity. On the other hand, the human soul has been regarded as a precious jewel or as the price of paradise, which shows the fact that self-confidence is ethical and a basis for building trust in God.

#### 2.6 Method

In this study, which uses the analytical-descriptive method, the similarities and differences between the basic elements of self-confidence in psychology and in Islamic ethics are identified and two models are designed. These similarities and differences are compared and analyzed on the basis of their features, principles, solutions, aims, and functions.

#### 3. Results

The results and findings of this study are presented through introducing the strategies and model of self-confidence in psychology as well as the reality of self-confidence in moral conduct and the components of self-confidence in Islamic ethics.

# 3.1 The Strategies and Model of Self-Confidence in Psychology

Strong determination, perseverance and pursuit, readiness to fully face the issues, concentration on the subject matter by making use of all physical and mental powers, trustworthiness, valor, diligence, movement, activity, competition, tolerance, self-restraint, constancy, steadfastness, expertise, responsibility, recognition of weaknesses and strengths, consideration of manners and deeds, heartening of inward call, and searching for new opportunities in life are all factors which, if observed, reinforce self-confidence and thus facilitate greatest success. With another careful look, it might be claimed that these factors open the door to strong self-confidence, which makes the achievement of supreme goals of mankind possible (Mitcham 1993, 116-120). The first stage of growing self-confidence after insight is self-awareness.

Self-reliance, narcissism, having a positive opinion of other people, confronting the problems, firm resolve, patience and prudence, instructional experience, and self-respect are among other factors that reinforce self-assurance (Islaminasab 1994, 284-285). Based on the above concepts, the model of self-confidence in psychology may be achieved (see Figure.1).

#### 3.2 The Reality of Self-Confidence in Moral Conduct

Self-confidence is to claim responsibility for one's life and personality and to strive to achieve prosperity and perfection. If self-confidence means being distanced from God, nobody will believe it and it will be abandoned. Positive self-confidence stands against feebleness, dependence on others, and lack of education and self-esteem. Finally, self-confidence is formed by relying on strengths. When man achieves

self-belief, his endeavor will be centered upon real states. As a result, he will attain desirability by attaching himself to his Lord. By and large, the structure of self-confidence has been founded upon the following components.

# 3.3 Components of Self-Confidence in Islamic Ethics

This section discusses self-awareness and insight, self-respect, human dignity, positive thinking, hopefulness, endeavor and determination, accepting responsibility, and psychological and spiritual independence as components of self-confidence in Islamic ethics.

# 3.3.1 Self-Awareness and Insight

The first step to achieving a goal is to be aware of the status quo. The next stage is knowing the final aim and how far one stands from it. Naturally, someone who is unaware of his status cannot properly imagine his final aim. Ibn Miskawayh believes that whoever wants to achieve virtues has to awaken his soul and constantly call it to that which is better for it. When the soul is careless, it becomes like a snake with constant movements in line with the carnal soul and unconsciously influenced by it. Even if the soul can save itself from that influence, the least harm is that it has wasted the time that could be used to gain virtues (Ibn Miskawayh, n.d., 328). Ghazali maintains that self-awareness is a key to prosperity, and carelessness and conceit lead to wrongdoing. On the other hand, he regards faith in God and knowing Him as the greatest blessings, and insight and self-awareness as a light that enlightens human heart (Ghazali, n.d.b, 11:78).

Mulla Muhammad Mahdi Naraqi holds that, in addition to observing the divine law, maintaining awareness through reading or listening to words of wisdom is necessary for those who seek to be adorned with virtues. He also says that it is crucial to know our vices and then to repel them to secure our spiritual health. He reaffirms the point that awakening and awareness form the first stage of purifying the soul of moral vices (Mojtabavi 2002, 2:65, 144, 248).

### 3.3.2 Self-Respect

Self-respect is another component of self-confidence. The fact that everyone tries to be socially accepted and popular indicates the common need for self-respect. Self-respect in social life is so important that one can form his relations with others based on it. Everyone is entitled to be respected. One who lacks self-respect easily commits ignoble acts. Imam Ali says, "The price of your souls is nothing but Paradise, so do not sell it to anything other than that" (Shahidi 1999, 442; Tamimi 1987, 232).

# 3.3.3 Human Dignity

Dignity is regarded as the foundation of self-confidence and among the salient virtues of man in religious sources. Dignity involves self-respect and refraining from wrongdoing. This gift of God exists beyond one's beliefs, and everyone tries to maintain it (Javadi Amoli 1993; Mostafavi 2006, 93-100). The Quran regards piety as a criterion for human dignity (49:13), leading to Paradise and worldly grace. Citing precious words of the Prophet and Imam Sadiq, Fayd Kashani and Naraqi introduce piety as the most beautiful characteristic of the faithful (Fayd Kashani 1996, 2:179; Naraqi, n.d., 3:340).

If dignity is used to describe man (Quran 29:26-28), it is to delineate his acceptable behavior and morality (Raghib Isfahani, n.d.). If this dignity is inherent, human dignity and respect and human rights will be the most important bases of social life in Islam. This dignity might include basic human capabilities related to his soul and body or even his transcendental inclinations. This interpretation is taken from the

Quran: "We have honored the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of Our creation" (Quran 17:70). Now, if human dignity is acquired, the basic capacities of all people would be the basis of the evaluation of human dignity.

### 3.3.4 Positive Thinking

Negative thinking, or "regarding things as ill omens" in religious terms, has destructive consequences firstly for the person himself and then for society. Imam Ali says, according to Shaykh Saduq (1983, 2:624), "If one of you takes something for an ill omen, he should ignore it and remember God." It is also reported that the Prophet liked to regard things as good omens and disliked to do the opposite. He would advise people that when they face something unpleasant, instead of regarding it as an ill omen, they should say, "O God! No one bestows good but You; only You can remove ills, and there is no power or might except by You" (Tabarsi 1991, 350). Allama Tabataba'i believes that salvation and damnation and good and evil are what people earn by their actions, because the holy Quran states that "man hath only that for which he makes effort" (53:39). He also says that if someone regards something as an ill omen, he himself will be afflicted by its bitter consequences (Tabataba'i 1996, 19:78; 17:74). In al-Kafi, the Prophet of Islam is reported to have said that trust in God removes ill omens (Kulayni 1983, 8:198).

#### 3.3.5 Hopefulness

Hopefulness is a foundation of human volitional acts and of self-confidence. In whatever one decides to do, one has hope for achieving the desired goal. Hopefulness is a host of wisdom, and despair is a host

of ignorance and Satan. Knowing that God is the absolute perfection and that there is no limits to His mercy and power leads to absolute hope and trust in Him (Khomeini 1999, 129). According to Ghazali, having no hope in people and regarding God as the only source of hope and trust are the keys to prosperity. This is achieved when man reaches the level at which he finds God the best companion and realizes that all affairs are under His power and control (Ghazali, n.d.a, 108-9). Someone who remains hopeful of something seeks it and may finally reach it, but one who fears something keeps away from it and will never achieve it (Ghazali, n.d.b, 11:90). The way to attain desirability is possible only through God, which necessitates losing hope in the others. One has to discover all his talents and powers and should make use of them.

#### 3.3.6 Endeavor and Determination

Awakening will not suffice to reach the destination. Those who are awakened and aware of their own affairs may not take any action to change themselves. What is necessary after awakening is resolve, determination, and endeavor. Determination should be known as the essence of humanity, since it distinguishes man from other creatures. Imam Ali states that the value of every person depends on his endeavor (Shahidi 1999, 369). Elsewhere, he says that human honor and virtue are tied to endeavor and strong resolve rather than to decayed bones of the dead (Tamimi 1987, 448).

One of the ten-folded moral rules in Ghazali's *Alchemy of Happiness* is great endeavor. In this book, Ghazali holds that man must not abandon or postpone his actions in any circumstances. He should be concerned only with performing his duties and should not be worried about the results. In his view, determination is a trait of heart parallel to knowledge (Ghazali, n.d.a, 102). Mulla Mahdi Naraqi also maintains

that achieving high ranks requires great endeavor and that a human being is essentially able to achieve whatever he strives for\_(Mojtabavi 2002, 2:323).

# 3.3.7 Responsibility

The Prophet says, "All of you are shepherds and responsible for your herd" (Majlisi 1983, 72:38). According to this hadith, all people are responsible for their works individually and socially. Therefore, it may be concluded that everyone is responsible for the tasks to which he is assigned and he himself must be responsible.

# 3.3.8 Psychological and Spiritual Independence

The reality of independence is that we can have whatever others can have. So, spiritual independence does not mean separation from others, denial of others and their achievements, or finding oneself superior to others. God has created the nature of human beings equally, yet one should not forget one's values for growth and flourishing and regard the values of others as unchanging laws. Mulla Mahdi Naraqi (1984) maintains that one's psychological and spiritual independence is dependent on one's real value, which is embedded in one's human personality. According to him, human independent soul and his authority in nature is possible (Mojtabavi 2002, 7:307, 8:249). Hence, self-confidence stands in contrast to imitation; that is, everyone should see himself distinctive and not find his growth dependent on imitating others. Therefore, independence rests on self-confidence, and foundational independence is internal and spiritual.

The pattern of self-confidence formed by the above-mentioned components based on trust in God as discussed above is depicted in Figure 2.

# 4. Conclusion

In this article, the two approaches were compared in terms of foundations, characteristics, strategies, goals, and effects. Finally, the model of self-confidence in Islamic ethics was offered. For more details, see Table 1.

Psychology is based on empirical evidence and generally falls into the category of *meta-science*. It is often associated with internal experiences; it is the result of clinical treatments and is founded upon pragmatism, utilitarianism, and, in other words, individualism and secularism. Pragmatism is defined as the principality of action or the principle of "the utility of action," the analysis of which is beyond the scope of the present article. Moreover, the strategies presented for acquiring self-confidence in psychology lack elements that involve the reinvigoration of the soul and body. As a result, any superficial power gained through these strategies is transient and short-lived.

The ethical approach propounded in this article is based on Quranic models and hadiths and is rooted in revelation. This is because its propositions are canonical and require the affirmation of revelatory sources. In addition, human excellence in Islam lies in his servitude to God. The reason why he is called to action in Islam is because of his servitude and devotion to God as well as the fact that he is the beneficiary of this principle. Both theoretical and practical aspects are, therefore, taken into account in this approach. Islamic precepts and decrees, which are practical and consistent with human nature, can resolve social and individual problems, given their solid foundations. The ultimate goal of this approach is to achieve closeness to God, which is only attainable through action.

Accordingly, the contrast between these two approaches is the contrast between revelation and experience, which is tilted in favor of

the former, because although experiences of different individuals throughout the years might be beneficial, they cannot constitute a path to the ultimate haman salvation and happiness. In other words, they do not lead to divine intimacy and rather fall into the category of "secular sciences." What is more, self-confidence has physical and psychological benefits that occasionally suit individual frames of mind; however, it disregards a place for divine intimacy and the acquired peace through this method is devoid of any trust in God's knowledge and power. One of the greatest advantages of the educational school of thought in Islam over its global counterparts is that, in addition to developing self-confidence, it fosters faith and instills a sense of reliance on God in people.

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