Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi

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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

This qualitative paper investigates Iqbal's dynamic concept of experiential learning presented in his philosophy of khudi through phenomenological study. The historical and philosophical foundations of experiential learning and the relevance of Iqbal's ideas to contemporary education are explored through in-depth phenomenological interviews of twenty young adolescents about their perception of experiential learning and how it helps to develop their khudi (individuality). Content analysis of Iqbal's anthology of sixteen poems, 'Asrar-i-Khudi' and some selected works from Iqbal's prose and poetry was also undertaken to draw Iqbal's ideas of experiential learning and its role in the development of khudi. Selected secondary sources, including research papers, articles, books, and other scholarly analyses of Iqbal's works were also used. Thematic analysis of the data revealed three themes; the role of environment, the role of action, and the role of trial and error in experiential learning which endorse Iqbal's ideas of experiential learning and the factors that facilitate it. Iqbal has emphasized active experiential learning for the development of khudi as only a dynamic personality in interaction with the environment and material world will reach his full potential. Results also reveal that like Iqbal, adolescents also perceive experiential learning as providing opportunities to construct their concepts, unleash their creative powers in a free environment and take responsibility for their actions. According to Iqbal, all new developments in science, arts and culture are also the result of an active self. Recommendations are given for the implications of Iqbal's concept of experiential learning for teaching and learning practices in diverse educational settings through well-formed policies and their implementation in classroom settings through thoughtfully designed curricula that allow individual learners to actively participate in their learning and self-growth.

Introduction

Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877- 1938 A.D.) was a philosopher, poet, and writer of the Sub-Continent. He is also considered the Poet of the East and Ideologue of Pakistan. Iqbal devoted his life to uplift the Muslims through his work; mostly in the form of writing poetry and prose. As a great reformist, he focused on writing and spreading his message based on his dynamic theory of life. He propounded an active and dynamic life holding a buoyant optimism, working towards a potentially glorious future by upholding the eternal values of Islam. He motivated Muslims to regain their past glory by abandoning lethargy and embracing a life full of action. In 1915, Iqbal published his famous Persian anthology of sixteen poems, Asrar-i-Khudi (The Secrets of the Self), followed by Rumaz-i-Bekhudi (The Mysteries of Selflessness) in 1918.

Through these books, he transformed himself into a poet with a message and a man with

a mission and was soon recognized as an outstanding philosopher in all the literary circles of India. His active participation in politics of the sub-continent, led him to be elected as a member of the Punjab Legislative Council in 1927. Iqbal delivered a series of lectures at the Universities of Madras, Hyderabad and Aligarh. His book 'Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' published in 1930 contains these lectures (Maqsood et al., 2022).

Iqbal has presented a complete philosophy, like all other main philosophies of the world. The distinguishing feature of Iqbal's philosophy lies in its potential completeness and being a continuous philosophy of man and the universe. He has organized his concepts in intellectual and logical order making his philosophy effective as it stands on a strong foundation. For its effective and comprehensible implementation and assuring its distinguished place among the world's philosophies, it is important to present Iqbal's thoughts in the form of a philosophical system by unravelling the rational order (Rafiuddin, 2018). As a thinker and philosopher, Iqbal's ideas are based on a single concept of self or 'Khudi', and are rationally and scientifically drawn from Khudi. These ideas are interrelated and form a complete system of thought and can only be understood in the light of khudi. Thus, khudi is an organic whole that provides an exposition and explanation of every single idea. However, understanding each of these ideas as part of an entire system is also equally important (Rafiuddin, 2018).

Like all other ideas, Iqbal's emphasis on experiential learning is also based on the idea of the development of the self or 'Khudi' as a result of the self's invasion and interaction with the material world. Without any personal experiences, an individual is unable to develop himself and fails to achieve self-actualization as the ideal of an individual is not merely an idea of theoretical or academic importance. An idea is not inert but is dynamic in action and controls all activities of an individual due to the love an individual feels for it and ultimately accepts it as

the sole determining force of his practical life (Iqbal, 1975).

Consequently, Iqbal's philosophy is distinguished by a dynamic and creative approach to understanding the self and the world, where khudi is primarily associated with spiritual development that leads to a state of inner peace and contentment. Such a state can only be attained by realizing one's full potential through experiential learning by living a life following one's values and beliefs (Iqbal, 1975). Ali (2011) propounds it is the realization of a strong 'Khudi' through a dynamic education system that nurtures and maintains this individuality by providing opportunities to the learner, where he interacts with the material world realizes his true potential, and defines his creative individuality. An environment conducive to experiential learning serves as a springboard to the creative process and leads to the growth and transformation of individuals by realizing their innate potential. Such dynamic individuals then ultimately lead to the formation of a progressive and dynamic society. Iqbal (1975) highlights experiential learning activities as opportunities for the creative and challenging nature of human beings that drive the individual to take on new and difficult tasks and boldly go through the process of trial and error and ultimately achieving the desired goal resulting in growth and development of khudi. In Asrar-i-Khudi, Iqbal (1975) has used numerous examples, analogies and metaphors to display the creative power of self when engaged in experiential learning. For the growth of a perfect rose, a gardener goes through a lot of experiential learning where thousands of roses must bloom and die to achieve the perfect one. A diamond is the result of the creative element in carbon, undergoing various stages of a dynamic environment that develops its potential thus making it more valuable than coal.

Inferring from Iqbal's work, Razak (2011) contends that Iqbal's idea of an individual is that of an active agent who participates in the affairs of life to bring a substantial change to his ego. As such, passive education is alien to a highly developed ego. According to Ali (2011),

curiosity and accepting challenges to come out as a winner an inherent need of khudi for its development. Aligning Montessori's thoughts with Iqbal's conviction, Qaiser (2008) concludes that both assert the importance of experiential learning for the development of every child's potential for creativity, initiative, and independence to their fullest. This enables him to face new challenges during the growing period.

Though Iqbal is considered the Ideologue of Pakistan, his educational philosophy which is highly based on the growth of individuality with an active and experiential learning approach to life has not been given due recognition for its implementation through developing an education system. This study intends to draw Iqbal's elucidation of the growth of khudi through experiential learning. This research aims to answer two research questions:

1. How do adolescents view experiential learning?
2. How does experiential learning build khudi in adolescents?

Literature Review

Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Iqbal's Concept of Experiential Learning

Iqbal's writings and concept of experiential learning can be contextualized in terms of his historical and philosophical background, which was a period of significant social and political turmoil in the Indian subcontinent. The British colonial rule had left the Muslims of the Sub-Continent in dismal conditions as they had lost their self-esteem. Due to hopelessness, they had become inactive. As an intellectual and philosopher, Iqbal sought to diagnose their illness, understand their agony and respond to these changes by motivating them towards action through his poetry and prose on through his poetry and prose (M. A. Ali, 2011; Murad, 2019).

Iqbal was also influenced by the teachings of Jalaluddin Rumi (767-820) who emphasized the importance of spiritual enlightenment, the transformative power of love,

and the pursuit of inner truth. Iqbal began to highlight parts of Rumi's work which represent the dynamic activism of a believer. In his Persian anthology, Mathnawi Pas che bayad kard (1936), he espoused Rumi's ideals of a true believer and considered a sense of purpose and trust in God as two essential qualities of a believer who can now crumble the mountains into pieces by his blow. According to Iqbal, the heart of a believer enclaves a thousand Resurrections within itself ("Influence of Rumi on Poetry of Iqbal," 2021).

Iqbal has defined the nature of a human being, his personality and the growth of individuality (khudi) in an environment of experiential learning from the Qur'anic perspective (M. A. Ali, 2011). His pioneer work on educational philosophy and "Khudi" was first published in his Persian anthology of poems, "Asrar-i-Khudi" in 1915 and "Rumuz-i-Bekhudi" in 1918. Asrar-i-Khudi contains Iqbal's inventive doctrine of the self and its development deeply rooted in the natural learning process which goes through different stages (Murad & Ali, 2022). Discouraging reliance on abstract or predetermined knowledge, Iqbal believed that education through natural learning should be a process of discovery and self-realization, rather than indoctrination or passive absorption of information, which limits the learner to theoretical knowledge and skills only. Similarly, the development of an individual's character and personality is equally important for self-actualization through experiential learning (Iqbal, 1975; Murad & Ali, 2022; Tufail, 1966). The main theme of Asrar-i-Khudi rests on two points; that personality is the central fact of the universe which the Old Testament describes as the great "I am", and that the great I am is the central constitution in the constitution of man (Razzaqi, 2003, p. 207). Since humans are endowed with multiple potentials, they are capable of performing any assignments in both ways but are expected to act in the manner most befitting for their status in the eyes of the Creator. Human-self has two sides; one towards his Creator and the other towards other human beings. On one hand, a human being must prove to be the Creator's

Title: *Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi……..*
Author: Amina Murad, Dr Sarwat Nauman, Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali

servant, while on the other, he must harness all good things through his actions for his as well as for the benefit of humanity and the environment (Mughal, 2011). Refuting Leibnitz's Monadism in his letter addressing Saiyidain, Iqbal asserts that the mind is not a closed entity; in fact, it is assimilative and that it is the possibility of change that is the greatest asset of man in his present environment (Saiyidain, 1971).

Development of Khudi through Experiential Learning

The magnanimous world of material according to Iqbal (1930) is a means to self-actualization as Prophet Muhammad SAW proclaimed the entire earth as a place of worship for the believers (Iqbal, 1930). Consequently, the physical world is also the source to materialize the realization of the spiritual ideal of growth of selfhood. Active teaching methods involve the learners in experiential learning where they can build a connection between material and spiritual through profound observation, critical analysis and self-reflection, ultimately unleashing their creative intelligence as Iqbal expressed:

> You (God) created the night, I the lamp;
> You created the clay, I the vase.
> You created the jungle, mountains, and deserts
> I created gardens, orchards, and flower plots.
> It is I who make glass out of stone
> It is I who extract elixir out of poison.
(Iqbal, 2002)

True knowledge is therefore the outcome of personal experience, as individuals take an active role in their learning. Acquisition of knowledge must be through direct experience while hands-on learning is the most effective way to interact with the material world to develop skills and understanding (Ahmed, 2021), else learning without experience is nothing more than intellectualism (Iqbal, 1930).

Iqbal's ideas on experiential learning can also be seen as an extension of Iqbal's concept of experiment or 'tajruba' where knowledge gain is not confined to theory but allows individuals to develop their understanding of the world (M. Ali & Sajid, 2020). Such an approach makes experiential learning a dynamic and iterative process where the individual continually engages in observation, reflection, and action, and adapts his knowledge and skills to new situations and contexts. Iqbal believed that experiential learning is a more effective and meaningful approach to education than traditional forms of learning, which rely on the passive absorption of information (Iqbal, 1975). This gives a learner-centered approach to education rather than teacher-centered, though Iqbal has equally emphasized the important role of the teacher in the learning process who helps the student to identify their interests and goals, and facilitates their engagement in practical experience and reflection (Tufail, 1966).

Another important aspect of Iqbal's concept of experiential learning is that education should be contextualized, where the learner is engaged in practical experience and reflection within specific contexts and settings, which allows him to adapt his knowledge and skills to the unique challenges and opportunities of those contexts. Education that is detached from the real-world context in which the learner lives and experiences does not benefit him. Instead, it should be closely connected to his practical experiences and challenges that he encounters in his daily life (Iqbal, 1930; Saiyidain, 1971; Tufail, 1966). Such an experiential learning approach requires educators to design learning experiences that are relevant and meaningful to the learners' lives and foster a deeper understanding of the concepts and skills being taught. Such a contextualized education also promotes the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. By grappling with real-world problems and dilemmas, learners are encouraged to analyze, evaluate, and find innovative solutions by approaching and exploring new perspectives, and challenging assumptions, thereby developing a broader understanding of the world around them. Resultantly, the gap between theory and practice

Title: *Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi……..*
Author: Amina Murad, Dr Sarwat Nauman, Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali

is reduced due to flexibility and adaptability; the learners ultimately develop lifelong learning skills (Tufail, 1966).

Comparing Kolb's and Iqbal's approach to experiential learning, Nauman (2022) asserts that ideas are not fixed entities, but are formed and reformed through one's experiences. Thus, according to Kolb (2014), all new skills, knowledge or attitudes are achieved through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. These stages result in making the learning process filled with tension and conflict such that the learning activities are opposite; concrete experience and abstract conceptualization are opposite, whereas reflective observation and active experimentation are also opposite one another (Kolb, 2014). Iqbal (1930) asserts the learning process should be grounded in practical experience, as only direct experience provides the foundation for all knowledge. Underscoring the importance of reflection and critical thinking in the learning process, Iqbal believed that learners should be encouraged to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and generate their ideas and interests for the development of a creative and active mind which enables them to become active agents of change in society. True development and evolution of khudi depend on interaction with the real world and real situations is very important in Iqbal's ideas of experiential learning as it allows contemplation and reason which takes one towards practice and creation (Nauman, 2022). Consequentially, all new development in science, arts, and culture is the result of an active self and act as servants of life and not its masters (M. A. Ali, 2011).

Methodology

This qualitative study used Phenomenology as the main source of information gained to answer the given research questions. "Phenomenology may be the method of choice when you want to study what an experience means to a particular group of people. An accurate presentation of the experience under study is more important in this approach than the ability to claim that the findings apply to across situations or people." (Grossoehme, 2014, p. 7)

Sample

The sample was drawn from a population of young adolescents who were between 10 to 15 years of age. The participants were selected from both genders, belonging to any ethnicity, religion or culture. There was no limitation in terms of their socio-economic level. The inclusion criteria for participants in the sample were deliberately broad for collecting rich data without any religious, social or cultural biases. Twenty young adolescents were selected through purposive snowballing in semi-structured interviews. They were recruited through personal networks with purposive sampling. The participants were contacted through phone calls, social media and emails. The school gatekeepers were not contacted to not let the participants perceive that the interviews were related to their academic learning only.

The rationale for taking young adolescents is supported by Kellough and Kellough, who state that young adolescents take substantial interest in real-life experiences and genuine learning opportunities and show little interest in long-established academic subjects. Besides, their increasing cognitive level propels them to look for opportunities that will facilitate their quest for environmental exploration and seek opportunities to explore its varied facets (Brighton, 2007).

Data Collection

Individual interviews were conducted both in person and via Zoom as convenient. No interview was conducted without confirming the written or verbal informed consent of the participants and their parents. Each participant took approximately 20 to 30 minutes in a single semi-structured interview asking open-ended questions. The interviews were recorded

Title: *Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi……..*
Author: Amina Murad, Dr Sarwat Nauman, Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali

electronically using a conference recording service Zoom and transcribed by an online service Otter. The transcriptions were matched with the audio recordings to ensure accuracy.

Data Analysis

Data analysis started along with the collection of data, simultaneously shifting to interpretation to explain the ideas. This allowed the researcher to continue thinking, reflecting, analyzing, and writing points and manually make a list of words and phrases that represent the meaning of what the respondents said. Later these words and phrases assisted in formulating the themes and finding the relationship between apparently different concepts. One of the most important steps during the analysis stage is coding which according to Saldana (2012), usually represents a word or phrase used to describe a cumulative characteristic for a segment of data that can be based on language or visually represented. Participants' perceptions and reflections on their experience allowed the researcher to produce a thick description of the data analyzed using thematic data analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Ethical consideration in research is significant as its absence may lead to the failure of the whole research. Bryman & Bell's (2007) guidelines were followed as he compiled ten principles from the nine different research associations for social sciences.

Results

Plausible explanations for the analysis of the data and outcome are posited as follows.

As the data was collected, patterns of individual perceptions began to emerge and many similar and different dimensions of experiential learning were unearthed by the respondents. The analysis of the data revealed three themes: The role of Environment in Experiential Learning; the Role of Action in Experiential Learning; and the Role of Trial and Error in Experiential Learning.

Figure 1 Themes in Experiential Learning
Role of Environment in Experiential Learning

Adolescents have perceived the human environment as one of the major factors that play a great role in learning. All of them underscored the importance of the environment and appreciated the home environment where parents are supportive, and allow them freedom with less criticism and comparison between siblings. In school, when teachers allow the students to be partners in the learning process, and allow them to form their own learning goals from real-life experiences and concrete situations, the students thrive. Such a progressive environment encourages students to think beyond classrooms and engage in real-life activities which are meaningful to them. Results also indicate that both boys and girls felt good when their relationship with their teachers was strong. When teachers encourage participation and group learning experiences with peers, it helps to boost their energy, confidence and courage. They experience emotional well-being due to the absence of too much criticism, comparison and competition at home as well as in school. Arfa opined:

I like Science because I am very passionate about how things work. Our science teacher supports all students as she wants them to enjoy what they learn. Instead of boring lectures, we do experiments, everyone is involved and there is like feeling of energy that we can do that thing. To be able to do whatever you're doing and then together as you need, you have to have passion for this subject because then that gives you the motivation to be able to successfully learn the topic or do whatever you're doing. Like being able to use that knowledge somewhere, like, let's say you learned something new in, like, let's say math, again, you learn this, how to use this formula. And if you're able to use that like formula, in like real life in the real world then like, that's my definition of that you've learned that. Or you can like if somebody asked you, like, can you explain to me how to do this? And if

Title: *Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi........*
Author: Amina Murad, Dr Sarwat Nauman, Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali

you're able to, like, explain it in the way that person understands, then like you have learned something you didn't know before.

Most participants also agreed that online is not a replacement for real classrooms. Interaction with peers and teachers should not be undermined. Learning online for hours is very demotivating if they don't have self-control as managing their time and concentration is a big challenge due to lack of personal touch. They feel the online environment is very dehumanizing as they have to stare at the screen, which makes them change windows and get involved in non-academic activities. There is no focus due to constant switching from one window to another as they lose interest without human interaction.

Steve compared online learning to classroom learning:

During COVID, I used to procrastinate and wake up five minutes before class. I used to forget homework assignments because I didn't., we didn't pay attention to what the teacher taught as we used to do in the class. I feel we learned a lot of negative habits as well like pretending, lying, wasting time etc. We learn much more in class when we are not passively listening to the teachers. Sometimes boys are too funny and they make me laugh while the teacher is talking and so she gets angry. When our teacher allows us to be involved in classroom activities, I feel so accomplished which makes us feel happy and confident. I feel the classroom environment matters a lot as we learn so much more. Everyone is involved. There is energy in the class as we feel we can say what we want.

Mace, a homeschooler, shared her learning environment at home which she feels is more open, flexible and relaxed as compared to school:

I am homeschooled. I guess I just get to learn even more at home instead of school, because in a school, there's like, a limited time you have to be there. But like, at home, you can work as long as you want. You have all of the things that you need at home, like textbooks, and everything that you need to learn more at home; you have your mom as your teacher. I can ask anything to my mom, which will help me learn even more. I have so much flexibility; I can create my environment, and do things at my own pace. There is no fear of competition.

Interestingly, participant Ilma was quite upset about the negative environment at home as well as in school that supports competition and rote learning instead of allowing learners to participate in their learning and feel empowered. However, Ilma also praised the teachers who are friendly and encourage students to participate in the class and not insult them when correcting their mistakes:

I feel like nowadays, children are growing up in a household where they're being compared a lot. So that enhances their competitiveness in a way, but sometimes it can get channeled negatively. Because they get compared to, for example, cousins, or family, friends, and stuff, then I feel if I'm not the best at something, I wouldn't necessarily strive and work hard to become the best. I would lose interest. I would just wait for opportunities to come to Me. For me, I compare myself with myself, not others, if I start comparing myself with others then there is no stop to that. In school, it's all about lectures, study, exams and grades as if getting all 'A's is the biggest issue in the world and we as human beings are nowhere. I am not talking about teachers who really care about us and involve us in learning.

Children are attracted by the natural environment as it allows opportunities for interaction with different natural materials and brings joy and satisfaction as kids' inherent need for freedom and action is satisfied. Adolescent Maria loves to draw and paint natural sceneries. She considers the natural environment to bring so much joy for her besides honing her artistic, observation, and reflective thinking skills. Spending hours in the natural environment brings new ideas as Maria uses her five senses to give life to her paintings:

Yeah, I love drawing and painting natural sceneries and feel so peaceful. There's so much greenery here and all that kind so I just look at the trees and draw them on the canvas. Nature helps

29

Title: *Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi……..*
Author: Amina Murad, Dr Sarwat Nauman, Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali

you to be more creative. I like to touch, feel and smell things I draw which brings so much beauty to my work. This also helps me like in English where we have to do a lot of creative writing, paragraph writing and story writing. So like when I see nature, I get creative which helps me in my studies too. You don't get such ideas sitting in the class and staring at the paper. It's so boring in the class!

Role of Action in Experiential Learning

All respondents agreed that active involvement in their learning journey increases their motivation and interest as they get an opportunity to activate their potential. They become conscious thinkers of their actions and have a greater realization of their metacognition. They learn to solve problems by taking action as individuals as well as a team when the teachers focus more on involving learners. The learners experience the world around them which enables them to think, reflect, analyze and synthesize the learning material as well as their own learning process. They feel happy and proud on the completion of their task Emma elaborated on her own active learning experience:

When we have project work, it makes you want to learn that subject and it really helps and motivates you to do good on it and you listen, and stay focused and accomplished because you really, really want to learn. You learn a lot with hands-on instead of long lectures. You actively discuss your ideas with the teacher and other group members and also learn so much from them. Then group members share different topics and tasks which help us to focus, think and research on one part of the topic only but understand the whole chapter. I feel I have done something myself instead of following the lesson. I feel so happy and proud.

Human nature is curious, and inactivity seems alien to it. Almost all young adolescents confessed that their curious nature actively searches for activities they like to do, understand and learn about. Curiosity creates a desire to seek information and adolescents are intrinsically motivated to explore the world around them even if there is no immediate benefit. Ronny raised an interesting point in this context:

I am curious about things. For me, a challenge is like you always want to do more difficult things. You want to learn more and more. Interestingly, you want to always be pushing yourself to learn more difficult things. I think you don't make goals for all the activities; you choose your challenging goals. Like sometimes I am attracted to a material and realize that materials have a challenging nature too, and I want to explore them. You like to interact with them and you enjoy doing that. Your challenging nature wants to understand e.g., how they work.

The direction of actions is always in the future. The planning of actions also requires the individual to know whether the relevant material, events and other resources are available. When the individual takes an action, his action also reflects different aspects of his cognitive and emotional development. He feels an urge and interest to actively participate, think of his motives, understand that a problem needs to be solved, the constraints and possibilities of physical, emotional and sensorimotor involvement. The individual understands that without personal initiative and involvement, there can be no learning as Bill acknowledged:

I like cooking, I like what I want to do, like learning how to cook. Like it could, be traditional things from different places or it could be from different cultures. I want to learn how to cook things that I've never learned how to cook before. For that, I must cook. I got this passion from my mother and I watch and help her while she cooks. I got a Thai recipe from YouTube and cooked a dish with my mother's help. I felt so confident in myself and I asked her to let me try new dishes. She told me to make my book of recipes and first try one of them without her help.

The action of one individual has the potential to motivate others. As a result, they begin to interact and interchange their learning experiences. With synergy, they can solve a problem and come up with creative strategies and solutions as Reese enthusiastically shared her experience:

Well, one time we were in class there was like this equation something in Math. We had a quiz coming up. Our teacher said that I wanted you to do like a group quiz, and she said, whichever group got the highest score on a quiz, will get goodie bags or something. So, I created a quiz game and my group liked it and everyone got involved. We solved all the questions our teacher gave us and together we answered all of them. We also learned other things while on Zoom and joined other co-hosts. And when the teacher took the quiz between the teams, we got first.

Most participants also view active learning as the consequence of one's desire to learn and achieve the result. Reflecting on the contribution of emotions, most adolescents perceive that when they have a desire to pursue a goal, it pushes them towards their goal. They are ready to take action. As a result, they make an action plan and devise strategies and activities that are meaningful in achieving their goal. Layla said:

When you have a desire to learn something new, you just start, you start immediately towards achieving the goal. You don't wait until the weather's nice, or if you have a computer or you have this or that. Whatever, you have, you just plan and start doing, you search for more ways and means as you take action. You go ahead to solve a problem instead of swapping with activities that are unrelated to your goal. Swapping happens when you have no interest in the task.

Role of Trial and Error in Experiential Learning

Almost all participants believed that they willingly accept failure and don't give up if they have a goal meaningful enough to be achieved and it develops a desire and passion to work towards it. In this case, even encountering failure does not demotivate them and they continue to multiple tries instead of giving up. They understand that unless they keep themselves persistent and committed despite setbacks and disappointments, they cannot achieve their goal. Furthermore, another reason for accepting multiple trials is that the participants realized

such experience helps them improve their skills and unleash their potential, earlier unknown to them. John said:

If you really want to achieve your goal and you don't achieve it, you keep trying, and still you fail, then you try a lot of different things to achieve what you want. You think it over, try different methods and maybe do things you couldn't do before. You feel improvement in your skills and you feel good about it because you wanted to do the task. So the more passionate you are about your job, and then the more motivated you will be to try again. You work hard to achieve your goals. But if you were less motivated to do something that means you're not very interested in this. So, you won't try after a few attempts and give up.

For many respondents, trial and error is a process that succeeds but frustration is embedded in it. There is a feeling of burnout but doing something personally and accepting defeat is also against human nature. The more they interact with something that evades them, the more they have an urge to overpower it. Most participants thought that they give up only when they are forced to do something against their interest as Ameer succinctly responded:

I guess you'll just keep practicing it on and on and on. And once you just keep practicing and you keep failing again, and again, and again, it's like trial and error, you keep falling, you keep trying, keep failing, keep trying. You try to do it two times in a row, and then you try to do it three times in a row until you can get consistent at that thing. The feeling that something else is controlling you, and frustrates you. I challenge myself and that 'I can do it' feeling keeps me going. You give up only when you are forced to do something that doesn't make any sense to you.

Many adolescents acknowledge that repeating the same task is very frustrating, but surviving despite frustration is on the other hand very rewarding. It is one's passion that endures failure as Arfa shared her experience.

I feel accomplished, especially if I have achieved the goal after so many trials because then I know I can do more. And if I have learned

31

Title: *Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi…….*
Author: Amina Murad, Dr Sarwat Nauman, Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali

this, I can learn something even more, if I have achieved this goal, I can set higher goals for myself. I think we learn so many things from repeatedly doing the same thing. So if I just set a goal for myself and I don't achieve it with things that would probably be stopping me, I know it's because I'm not passionate about it, else I would have done it. That I didn't feel too good about it so I didn't put enough effort. I didn't focus and reflect on my mistakes because if I don't have passion for something, it'll stop me from thinking and making strategies to achieve it." Arfa

Trial and error involve problem-solving when the learners try and reject different strategies until they find their desired outcome. It also provides them the opportunity to use many clues related to their context and decide which solution works to solve their problem.

"So being a very competitive person, I take French, and tennis, and I am a part of a video gaming team. So, when challenges come up, what I always do is make time for each thing and see if it works. So, if like, I'm bad at tennis, or like, I didn't have a good day after work on my serves, though I've practiced, then I reschedule my timetable so that way I can, like tackle each problem. I observed that to practice after a very hectic day is very tiring and you don't feel any improvement. So, I keep on working on my timetable so that I have a fresh mind and body when I'm tackling that problem and just fixing the challenge every day, like with a blank space. So, like I fix one challenge at like 4:30 and then fix one challenge at 7:30. That way I can have, like a break in the middle."

Discussion

Role of Environment in Experiential Learning

Results uncover that most respondents spoke of the influence of the human environment more than any other environment. When human beings support each other, it creates symbiosis giving opportunities for every individual to flourish in all dimensions of his personality. Despite the advantages of online learning, the respondents

preferred physical interaction in a real class environment. Considering humans as a creative element, Iqbal (1975) argues that without providing an environment conducive to learning, the learner's creativity will be stifled and he will be unable to explore and interact with the material world. The individual is motivated when the environment offers a challenge as it activates his inner instinct to learn and grow which then urges the learner to accept the challenge by active participation to not only recreate his khudi but also bring changes to the entities in his environment resulting in new inventions (Murad, 2019; Tufail, 1966). Comparing a dewdrop and a diamond, Iqbal rejects the fragility of the dew drop as it perishes in the environment whereas a diamond survives and overcomes any challenge posed by other entities in the environment. An environment which offers struggle helps the self to survive and strengthen (Iqbal, 1975). According to Khan (2012), Iqbal promotes such a learning environment which influences the learner's intellectual and spiritual development through personal experiences. A nurturing and stimulating environment arouse the learner's curiosity to seek knowledge as he gets opportunities for exploration, critical thinking, and creativity. In Asrar-i-khudi, Iqbal (1975) has given great emphasis on the socio-cultural environment to shape individuals' learning experiences. When learners are exposed to diverse perspectives, traditions, and cultural contexts, such exposure helps broaden their understanding and enables them to engage with different ideas and viewpoints. Also emphasizing interaction and collaboration, Iqbal encouraged learners to engage in meaningful dialogue and share different ideas and viewpoints to foster intellectual exchange and develop critical thinking. Any predetermined thoughts and actions imposed upon the self cannot demand moral standards from it (Qaiser, 2008) and activities determined in advance will neglect the learner's interests, result in indoctrination, limit the operation of the intelligent choice and paralyze originality and creativity (Tufail, 1966, p. 110).

Underscoring the role of the natural and physical environment in experiential learning, Iqbal contends that connecting with nature and appreciating its beauty and harmony enhances the learning experience. A natural environment provides a source of inspiration, contemplation, and spiritual reflection for the learner (M. A. Ali, 2011; Qaiser, 2008).

Overall, Iqbal advocated for a learning environment that supported learners in their educational journey, with access to resources, guidance, and mentorship. At the same time, the environment should provide intellectual challenges that encourage learners to push their boundaries and strive for excellence. Iqbal considered the environment as a catalyst for intellectual and spiritual growth that shapes the experiences, interactions, and opportunities that contribute to the development of learners. By creating a nurturing, diverse, and stimulating environment, individuals can fully engage in the learning process and realize their full potential (M. A. Ali, 2011; Murad & Ali, 2022; Tufail, 1966).

Role of Action in Experiential Learning

It was interesting to note that almost all participants supported the idea that total physical involvement holds great significance endorsing Iqbal's philosophy of self-development through action. The participants showed their dislike when treated as passive learners. Experiential learning is the result of human action that lies at the core of human existence and a means of self-realization. "The conditions of our life are mainly external to us. The only kind of life known to us is desire, pursuit, failure, or attainment - a continuous change from one situation to another" (Iqbal, 1930, p. 37). Considering a human being as the heart and soul of the universe, Iqbal asserts that man must consciously participate in creating a new universe by questioning, contemplation and action. Action involves active participation, exploration, and critical thinking on the part of the learner.

Iqbal postulates that the universe is still incomplete and needs enhancement, whereas God designed human beings according to the creative formula, which requires every individual to use his creative will to construct new worlds overcoming all challenges (Iqbal, 1930). Since a human being in his genesis is a 'creative activity' (Iqbal, 1930, p. 10), he is bound to ascend from one state to another. Iqbal (1930, p. 11) also ascertains that only this creative self is entitled to the universe which comes into existence due to its creative activity (1990, p. 395). Therefore, action is not simply a mechanical or automatic process, but rather a creative and transformative one that requires intention, effort, and reflection. Discouraging conformity to tradition or external authority, action should be guided by individual creativity and innovation, and should contribute to the development of khudi (Iqbal, 1930).

Iqbal ascertains that experiential learning should be meaningful, so every action must be guided by a clear and conscious ideal and goal formation to make learning an active process of self-awareness and self-reflection. Such an invasive khudi controls and alters the environment through continuous and ongoing struggle by realizing all its potentialities in meaningful activities leading to new actions, resulting in new learning, growth and changes in the self and environment. "The life of the self consists in its movement from appreciation to efficiency, from intuition to intellect" Iqbal advocates that the growth of khudi takes place when an individual is willing to embrace challenging experiences. Withdrawing one's self from the world of effort and hard work stunts the growth of personality as its potential remains dormant. Active involvement of the learner is a prerequisite for the growth of individuality (Murad et al., 2021; Saiyidain, 1971).

When lecture is kept minimum and replaced with experiential learning activities, the course is designed and implemented in such a way that posits learners and teachers as knowledgeable actors who are then able to contribute research insights through their transactions (Brailas et al., 2017).

His khudi creates and recreates activities for self-development and control which results in the realization of its inherent potentialities. A

strong self thus achieves what is otherwise unattainable without active participation. Conversely, when the self becomes lethargic and inactive, avoiding experiences and interactions with the environment, an individual becomes dull, infertile and a low achiever as he has no ideals to seek (Iqbal, 1930).

Resultantly, with such a dynamic khudi, an individual becomes a high achiever and exclusively proactive.

Role of Trial and Error in Experiential Learning

Almost all participants agreed that they consider making mistakes as part of learning. They dislike the exercise of multiple trial and error when the learning task is not meaningful for them as it does not align with their goal. However, when they own the goal, they are ready for continuous effort and understand that it's part of the learning process. By not giving up, they develop resilience and solve problems to achieve goals and solutions. As a result, they resist putting in effort and easily give up. Iqbal (1975) strongly advocates the significance of supporting learners in making high goals and avoiding mundane ones. Since human nature is challenging, it does not accept tasks that have no meaning for them. On the contrary high and meaningful goals allow trial and error as a fundamental aspect of learning. Appreciating the role of trial and error, Iqbal propounds that performing multiple trials, making mistakes and rising after every fall encourage individuals to develop a sense of responsibility, self-reliance, resilience and creativity. Without the spirit of intellectual adventure, trial, and error, and fearless exploration into new realms of thought, one cannot contribute original and meaningful experiences to enrich nations with new knowledge, culture, and ideas. The spirit of trial and error has led to the development in all learning fields, works of art and science, architecture and culture, helping the khudi to unleash its creative energy (Iqbal, 1930).

Therefore, Iqbal's idea of trial and error is a conscious experiential learning process of exploration and discovery of one's potential and abilities and willingness to take risks and make mistakes. Such an attitude helps the learners to grow and become self-reflective, learning from their mistakes. This psychological growth of self-fulfils the purpose of education which is to develop a learner to become the Perfect Man or Mard-e-Kamil, who according to Iqbal is a vicegerent of God on earth (Iqbal, 1975). This state of perfection is only achieved through intellectual and physical efforts and trials that develop the ego and enable the individual to realize the objective of his creation as described in the Qur'an and become aware of his relationship with God and the universe (M. A. Ali, 2011; Nauman, 2018).

Iqbal has declared that the stability of life depends upon the stability of self, whereas experiential learning is the source of stable self to ensure the growth of khudi through continuous trial and error. Only an individual with such a growth mindset can experiment and embrace multiple failures as he who does not experiment does not exist. "The man who is content with what he has done will never become famous for what he will do. He has lain down to die before he is dead." (Iqbal, 1930, p. 128). Iqbal further postulates that action will certainly be accompanied by mistakes as perfection lies in the discipline of error. One who does not make mistakes has in reality never tried anything new. The khudi lies in a state of imperfection which drives it to the state of self-discovery through the process of trial and error without the fear of making mistakes (Iqbal, 1930).

A highly developed personality is therefore the manifestation of a strong khudi in perpetual action in an environment of trial and error during the process of experiential learning. Without action and being persistent through trial and error, the self remains unaware of its latent abilities (Murad, 2019).

Conclusion & Recommendations

Title: *Experiential Learning: A Dynamic Aspect of Iqbal's Philosophy of Development of Khudi……..*
Author: Amina Murad, Dr Sarwat Nauman, Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali

Responses of all the participants endorse Iqbal's ideas of experiential learning and how it helps to develop their personalities. These respondents belong to different races, genders, cultures and religions which endorse that Iqbal's ideas are relevant to human nature. As such his ideas are getting more and more relevant in the modern world due to their closeness to human nature as created by Allah SWT Almighty. Experiential learning needs to be made part of the education policy, and the curriculum is designed to cater to the needs of the students. While Iqbal originally presented them in the early 20th century, the core principles are not only applicable, but they are also useful for educators and learners today by helping them unleash their creative powers and realize their true selves. One reason for the continued relevance of Iqbal's ideas is its emphasis on direct experience as a crucial aspect of learning. With growing technology in the field of artificial intelligence, there is an increasing need for individuals to have practical skills for gaining knowledge through self-exploration. Experiential learning is a powerful tool for developing these competencies. Another reason is that experiential learning provides a focus on reflection and critical thinking during the learning process. In today's fast-paced and complex world, individuals need to be able to think deeply and critically about the information they encounter to make informed decisions and solve complex problems. Moreover, Iqbal emphasizes the importance of integrating spiritual and ethical dimensions in the learning process. In an era where issues such as apartheid, climate change, social justice, and inequality are pressing concerns, there is a growing need for individuals who are not only knowledgeable and skilled, but also compassionate, ethical, and spiritually aware. Iqbal recommends achieving these goals by providing lofty ideals to students that encourage continuous action through experiential learning. The learning goals can be personalized when the focus is on student-centered learning which is becoming more and more relevant in the modern world. With advances in technology and the increasing diversity of learners, there is a need for education that is tailored to the needs and interests of individual learners.

In conclusion, by emphasizing experiential learning in the light of Iqbal's ideas, it is possible to develop strong individuals who are creative, active and daring with skills for reflection, critical thinking, and flexibility to learn from mistakes. With the integration of spiritual and ethical dimensions in the learning process, educators and learners will be able to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century and develop a strong and dynamic khudi.

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