

An Analytical Examination, Comparative Assessment, and Critical Evaluation of Choice Theory in the Holy Quran and Psychology

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Abstract:

This research aims to systematically analyze, juxtapose, and critically evaluate choice theory as presented in the Holy Quran and psychological discourse. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study operates within a critical paradigm and adopts a comparative-analytical framework. The investigation identifies points of convergence, areas of contention, and original Quranic perspectives about the core tenets of choice theory. Cumulatively, the findings encompass 60 instances of agreement, 29 critical objections, and 19 innovative Quranic viewpoints.

The study meticulously examines each constituent element of choice theory—internal control, accountability, intrinsic human needs, the desired world, perceptual mechanisms, and behavioral systems—by delineating overlapping stances, Quranic critiques of the theory's propositions, and novel exegetical insights derived from the Quran. Key similarities, criticisms, and original contributions were systematically outlined in a structured format, supplemented by tabulated references that specify verse citations, surah names, and concise contextual explanations.

Within the domain of internal control, the analysis revealed 10 commonalities, 3 critical rebuttals, and 2 unprecedented Quranic perspectives. The dimension of responsibility yielded 6 shared principles, 3 critiques, and 2 innovative interpretations. Regarding fundamental human needs, the study not only introduced two uniquely Quranic imperatives (eternity and divine cognition) but also documented 28 points of alignment, 13 Quranic counterarguments, and 10 novel theoretical propositions. The examination of the ideal world component produced 7 congruent viewpoints, 6 critiques, and 3 original theoretical contributions. The perceptual system component demonstrated 4 areas of agreement, 2 critical evaluations, and 1 newly articulated perspective. Similarly, the behavioral system component was characterized by 5 shared positions, 2 critiques, and 1 groundbreaking theoretical assertion.

Keywords: Choice theory, Holy Quran, Psychology, Critical paradigm

Introduction

A prominent psychological framework that has recently gained considerable traction, owing to its behavior-centric principles, accessibility, and efficacy in reshaping beliefs, particularly among the general populace, is "Choice Theory Psychology," developed by William Glasser.

Glasser underscored the inherently social nature of human beings and the intentionality of their actions, rejecting the notion that individuals are solely shaped by their familial background, environment, or early-life conflicts. He posited that an individual's behaviors and decisions are the determinants of their past, present, and future, maintaining that while others may provide input, it is ultimately the individual who selects their course of action¹.

¹ Glasser, W. (2000). Reality therapy in action. HarperCollins: Publishers; 26.

This therapeutic modality, classified as a third-wave behavioral therapy, constitutes a psychological intervention grounded in functional contextualism, with its theoretical underpinnings derived from Relational Frame Theory (Hale & Sindlinger, 2017)². Its primary objective is to diminish reliance on control mechanisms and experiential avoidance, guiding individuals to engage constructively with their distressing thoughts, emotions, and feelings (Lojk, Butorac, Posavec, Maras, Kraneli, & Bakovi, 2010)³. The approach presupposes that psychological suffering stems from experiential avoidance and equips individuals to bolster their psychological flexibility through engagement with six fundamental components: values, committed action, acceptance, cognitive defusion, present-moment awareness, and self-as-context.

The foundational tenet of Choice Theory asserts that all behaviors exhibited by an individual are deliberate choices aimed at fulfilling their intrinsic needs, including love and belonging, freedom, enjoyment, power, and survival⁴. From this perspective, individuals can learn to address their challenges and exert greater control over their lives by making more effective choices. Glasser suggested that many chronic conditions might reflect a form of physiological creativity, proposing that in cases of chronic illness lacking a definitive physical cause or medical remedy, the condition could represent an unintentional, creative physiological response to unmet needs.

Empirical studies have indicated that this approach, beyond facilitating behavioral change, can mitigate stress, anxiety, and depression in individuals diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis⁵. In treating mental health conditions, Glasser championed reality therapy, whereby the therapist introduces the client to Choice Theory, fostering awareness of the implications of their choices and behaviors. The therapist supports the client in internalizing and applying these principles in their daily actions and conduct.⁶

Several verses from the Holy Quran appear to resonate with this perspective on human behavior and agency, such as:

«الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ»

² Hale, V., Sindlinger, J. (2017). Reenvisioning reflective supervision: a choice theory/ reality therapy application using reflecting teams. *International Journal of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy*, 31:40-5.

³ Lojk, L., Butorac, D., Posavec, M., Maras, T., Kraneli, V., Bakovi, A. (2018). Reality therapy training efficiency in helping participants to better their relationships & improve their psychological wellbeing. *International Journal of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy*, 31:111-21.

⁴ Rouhollahi, Mohsen (2016). Choice Theory: Investigating Human Behavior. *International Journal of Choice Theory and reality therapy*. Vol. XXXVI, No.1, P: 31 - 35.

⁵ Christopher, W. (2005). Warning: Psychiatry Can Be Hazardous to Your Mental Health. *Prim Care Companion J Clin Psychiatry*. 2005; 7(2): 76.

⁶ Glasser W. (2014). [Reality therapy, introduction to the new reality therapy based on choice theory]. Tehran: Saye Sokhan; 121 - 5.

“Those who heed the Word and adhere to its finest aspects are those guided by Allah and endowed with discernment.” (Surah Az-Zumar, Verse 18)

«...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَهُ حَتَّىٰ يَغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ...»

“...Verily, Allah does not alter the state of a people until they transform what lies within themselves...” (Surah Ar-Ra’d, Verse 11)

This verse emphasizes that divine intervention in altering human circumstances is contingent upon individuals’ own choices and transformations. Such verses suggest that only through deliberate choices to modify their circumstances can individuals improve their conditions. Nonetheless, a comparative analysis reveals that a complete congruence between the Holy Quran and Choice Theory may not be feasible, given potential discrepancies in defining fundamental needs and their fulfillment—such as love and belonging, survival, freedom, power, and enjoyment—or in the application of reality therapy. Consequently, the objective of this study is to examine, compare, and critically evaluate Choice Theory within the frameworks of the Holy Quran and psychological theory.

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study

Shared Perspectives of the Quran and Choice Theory

Choice theory’s core premise asserts that all actions performed by an individual are deliberate choices aimed at fulfilling their intrinsic needs, encompassing love and belonging, freedom, enjoyment, power, and survival.⁷ From this standpoint, individuals can acquire the ability to address their challenges and exert greater authority over their lives by opting for more effective decisions. Frequently, those afflicted by illness succumb to the cognitive fallacy of fixating on their symptoms, perceiving themselves as helpless.⁸ Conversely, Glasser maintains that individuals can enhance their quality of life through intentional behavioral choices.⁹ According to Glasser, numerous chronic conditions may reflect a form of physiological ingenuity. He posits that when a chronic illness lacks a definitive physical etiology or medical remedy, it may represent an unconscious yet inventive bodily response to fulfill the individual’s needs. Glasser argues that standard therapeutic approaches not only fail to empower patients to reclaim control over their existence but may also worsen their circumstances. By applying choice theory to guide individuals in illness toward achieving effective life control, the brain generates restructured behavioral patterns, resulting in a significant alteration of the disease trajectory.¹⁰

⁷ Rouhollahi, Mohsen (2016). Choice Theory: Investigating Human Behavior. International Journal of Choice Theory and reality therapy. Vol. XXXVI, No.1, P: 31 - 35.

⁸ Pooravari, Mino; Zandipour, Tayeb; Pooravari, Marjan & Salehi, Somaieh (2016). The Effectiveness of group choice theory and reality therapy training on reducing aggression among female. International Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences. Vol. 3, No. 4, P:50-56.

⁹ Sponiar, M., Sharpe, L., Butow, P., Fulcher, G. (2007). Reproductive Choices of Women with Multiple Sclerosis. Int JMS Care. 9: 9 - 12.

¹⁰ Glasser W. (2013). Choice Theory. New York, HarperCollins Publisher; 17.

Several verses from the Holy Quran appear to align with this perspective on human conduct and decision-making, such as:

«الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ»

“Those who heed the Word and adhere to its finest aspects, they are the ones guided by Allah, and they are the ones possessed of true discernment.” (Surah Az-Zumar, Verse 18)

As evident, this verse underscores the significance of selecting virtuous paths and adhering to prudent judgment through individual agency.

Upon closer examination, parallels between the Quranic emphasis on internal locus of control and the rejection of external determinism can be identified, which will be briefly elucidated.

Table 1: Shared Views of the Quran and Choice Theory on the Component of Internal Control

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Internal Control	Al-Lail (4-10), Ya-Sin (54), Al Imran (30), Al-Baqarah (284)	Verses about punishment or paradise are not models of external control in the Quran; rather, they are similar to the concept of consequences and outcomes in Choice Theory, which states that the results of a person's thoughts and actions are their consequences or outcomes.
	Yunus (99), Hud (28), Al-Kafirun (6), Az-Zumar (14-15)	Forbidding external control and destructive behaviors such as coercion, threats, insults, etc.
	Al-Ghashiyah (21-22), Al-Insan (3), Yunus (108), Al-Ma'idah (48), Al Imran (20), Az-Zumar (18)	Emphasizing the first and second principles of Choice Theory: we are only providers of information, not enforcers. We also choose from external information and are not compelled.
	Al-Qalam (4), Al Imran (159), At-Tawbah (128)	These verses emphasize using internal control models and higher internal human motivations. Compassionate behaviors are introduced as alternatives to external control in Choice Theory.
	Ash-Shams (7-11), Al-Hujurat (13), Ar-Ra'd (11), Al-Mu'minun (1)	"Taqwa" is the Quranic equivalent of internal control in the language of Choice Theory.
	Al-Ma'idah (105), Al-Baqarah (44)	Strategies such as focusing on oneself instead of others; in Choice Theory literature, this means change begins with oneself, not with others.

Accountability constitutes a fundamental pillar of Choice Theory. This critically important element also serves as one of the conceptual underpinnings of the Holy Quran, thereby rendering the parallels between the Holy Quran and Choice Theory in matters of responsibility particularly significant:

- Each person bears the obligation of addressing their necessities.
- The approach to satisfying these necessities must ensure that the individual retains sustainable and effective command over their life—implying that short-term demands should not compromise long-term objectives.
- How needs are met must not impose undue hardship upon others.

As articulated in the fourth tenet of Choice Theory: Dysfunctional relationships are an inherent aspect of contemporary existence, and assigning exclusive blame to past events constitutes an evasion of accountability.

The fifth tenet of Choice Theory asserts that although past occurrences exert influence, they do not preclude the satisfaction of present or future needs. This principle resonates with the Quranic doctrine of repentance (Tawbah).

Furthermore, convergences exist between the Holy Quran and Choice Theory concerning various dimensions of responsibility, including duties toward family, community, the environment, and animals—albeit distinctions are likewise present and will be examined at the appropriate juncture.

Table 2: Shared Views of the Quran and Choice Theory on the Component of Responsibility

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Responsibility	Al-Maarij (19-25)	Confirms the inherently responsibility-averse nature of humans and emphasizes that responsibility requires practice, education, and strengthening.
	Fatir (18), Al-Isra' (285), Al-Muddaththir (43-46), Al-Ma'idah (105), Al-Baqarah (44), Al-Isra' (36)	Everyone is responsible for effectively meeting their own needs. The responsibility for your behaviors and actions rests solely with you; no one else can fulfill your needs or bear the consequences of your actions. The outcomes of your behavior return to you.
	Ash-Shura (42), Al-Baqarah (140)	Fulfilling your own needs should not prevent the rightful fulfillment of others' needs.
	An-Nisa (34)	A person is responsible for their family, providing for both the material and spiritual needs of family members.
	Al-Ghashiyah (21-22), Yunus (108)	A person has a duty toward society to be an effective and positive provider of information, but never a coercer.

	Al-A'raf (85), Al-Baqarah (164), Al-Qamar (49), Talaq (3), Al-Ma'idah (87), Hud (61), Al-Anbiya (30), Al-Baqarah (164), Al-Jumu'ah (1), At-Taghabun (1), An-Nahl (68), An-Nisa (119)	Both perspectives share a sense of responsibility towards nature and animals.
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Choice theory delineates five core needs, positing them as the underpinning of human behavior and asserting that individuals engage in actions to satisfy these needs. The Quran corroborates the presence of these five needs within humanity and endorses their significance:

Common viewpoints on the need for survival: The imperative to survive and ensure the perpetuation of the species constitutes a primary human need. Consuming food and drink is an indispensable requirement, prompting human behavior to meet this need; profligacy and waste in consumption are condemned; satisfying survival needs must be undertaken with accountability. Illicit acquisition and analogous behaviors are regarded as irresponsible by both perspectives. Apparel represents a fundamental and essential human need. The need for housing, provided its pursuit is not driven by ambitions of dominance or avarice, originates from elemental survival needs. The sexual drive is anchored in the need for survival. The necessity for security, encompassing psychological well-being, is mutually acknowledged.

All individuals require the capacity to love and be loved, fostering a sense of connection with others. Parallels between the Quran and choice theory emerge in this domain: recognition of the intrinsic human need for love and belonging; the bond of affection between marital partners; the reciprocal love between parents and children; and the potential for humans to experience love that may not align with their best interests.

The aspiration for advancement, the pursuit of power, and personal growth are intrinsic human needs. Congruence between the Quran and choice theory is evident in this regard: affirmation of the inherent power wielded by those who effect positive change; acknowledgment of power attained through cooperative efforts; recognition of power exerted over others, namely compelling others to submit to one's authority, which both the Quran and choice theory reject; the prohibition of employing power for irresponsible or deleterious ends; the need for spirituality as a component of the need for power; the embedding of the need for aesthetic appreciation within the need for power; and the human quest for knowledge and understanding as a means to fulfill the need for power.

The human need for autonomy and the right to make choices is a cornerstone of the Holy Quran, a principle equally emphasized in choice theory. Convergences between the two include: the exhortation to treat others as one desires to be treated; the fulfillment of personal needs in a manner that respects the freedom of others to meet their rightful needs; the recognition of freedom of expression and belief as an inalienable human right; the rejection of coercion in matters of belief; the prohibition of

disparaging others under the guise of freedom; and the condemnation of baseless accusations made in the name of freedom.

The need for leisure and happiness is an inherent human requirement. The Holy Quran, in acknowledging this need, exhibits parallels with choice theory: the mutual affirmation of the essential need for recreation and play; the endorsement of travel and immersion in nature as effective means to satisfy this need; the recognition of recreation as an outcome of learning and education; and the emphasis on harmonizing education with recreational activities.

Table 3: Shared Views of the Quran and Choice Theory on the Components of Basic Needs

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Need for survival	Abasa (24), Al-Baqarah (168), Al-An'am (5), An-Nahl (14), Abasa (26-32), Al-Anbiya (30), An-Nahl (66, 69), Al-Isra' (27)	Acceptance of eating and drinking as subsets of the human need for survival, emphasizes that this need must be fulfilled responsibly.
	Al-A'raf (26), An-Nahl (81)	The need for clothing to cover the body and protect from cold and heat is recognized by both perspectives as a subset of the survival need.
	An-Nahl (80), Al-Ahzab (13), Al-A'raf (74)	The need for shelter is an essential human need and a subset of survival. Beyond safety and comfort, any additional aspects of shelter relate to the need for power.
	An-Nur (32), Yusuf (99)	The need to satisfy sexual instinct is a fundamental human need and is considered a subset of survival.
	Fatir (32), Al-Baqarah (143)	The need for security is not limited to physical safety; psychological peace is a fundamental aspect of psychological security.
	Al-Baqarah (126)	The need for security is a subset of the survival need.
Need for love and belonging.	Al-Baqarah (165), Maryam (96)	Love, expressed in terms such as "hub" and "wudd" in the Quran, is accepted as a human need.
	Ar-Rum (21), An-Nur (58)	Love between spouses, parents children, and relatives are examples of the need for love and belonging.

Need for power	Yusuf (56), Al-Baqarah (177), Al Imran (92), An-Nisa (36)	The existence of the need for power and the understanding that spiritual needs are a subset of this need.
	Al-A'raf (32), As-Saffat (6), Al-Hujurat (7), Al-Kahf (7)	The need for beauty satisfies the need for power.
	Al-Mujadila (11), Fatir (28), Al-Baqarah (31-35), Al Imran (164)	An excellent way to satisfy the need for power is through the fulfillment of scientific knowledge.
Need for freedom	Az-Zumar (17-18), An-Nahl (125), Yunus (108), Al Imran (61), Al-Kafirun	The principle of freedom, especially freedom of expression and belief, is fully confirmed in both perspectives.
	Al-An'am (108), An-Nisa (148), Al-Hujurat (11), An-Nur (11, 4)	Avoidance of insulting the sacred beliefs of others, and unjustly exposing others' faults, mockery, and criticism are outside the bounds of freedom of expression.
Need for fun	Yusuf (12-13)	The human need for recreation is recognized as a fundamental need.
	Yusuf (12-13), Al Imran (137), An-Naml (69), Al-Ankabut (20), Saba (17-19), Ash-Shu'ara (7), As-Sajdah (27), Al-Baqarah (164)	Traveling and playing are examples of ways to satisfy the need for recreation.

Shared viewpoints regarding the concept of the ideal world encompass: recognition of distinct visions of the ideal world unique to each individual; acknowledgment of the inclusion of envisioned representations of individuals desired within the ideal world; confirmation of the incorporation of envisioned representations of material possessions, objects, and locations preferred within the ideal world; validation of the presence of envisioned representations of human beliefs and values within the ideal world; endorsement of an internal mechanism within individuals that balances desires and possessions to assess the envisioned representations of the ideal world; the capacity for individuals to modify the envisioned representations of the ideal world; and the principle that the inclusion or exclusion of envisioned representations in the ideal world is subject to individual agency, exercised voluntarily rather than through coercion.

Table 5: Shared Views of the Quran and Choice Theory on the Component of the Desired World

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Desired World	Ibrahim (40-41), Al-Kahf (46), Al-Isra' (23), Al-Baqarah (83), Al-An'am (151), Al-Baqarah (180), An-Nisa (36, 135), Al-A'raf (189), Al-Furqan (28, 67)	Individuals who appear in the images of the desired world, such as spouses, children, and friends.
	An-Nisa (5), Al-Adiyat (8), Al-Baqarah (198), At-Tawbah (76, 34), Al-Furqan (8), Al-Baqarah (80, 215, 272)	Things that a person desires to have, such as a favorite city, specific places, home, car, possessions, and assets.

The perceptual system encompasses the processes by which individuals perceive and interpret the cosmos. It includes the mechanisms through which information is acquired, the cognitive filters that process this information, and the methods used to assess it. In this regard, parallels exist between choice theory and the Holy Quran: the utilization of the five sensory faculties as filters for acquiring information; individuals obtain external information through the faculties of hearing, vision, olfaction, touch, and taste; the rational filter articulated in the Holy Quran aligns with the general knowledge filter delineated in choice theory; this rational or general knowledge filter undertakes the preliminary evaluation of information derived from the external environment.

Table 6: Shared Views of the Quran and Choice Theory on the Perceptual System Component

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Perceptual System	Al-Anbiya (53), Ash-Shu'ara (74), Az-Zukhruf (23), Al-An'am (76-79)	The beliefs a person holds are part of their desired world.
	An-Nahl (78), Al-Mulk (23), Al-A'raf (179), Al-Isra' (36), Al-Jathiya (23)	The five senses are affirmed as the primary gateway and filter for incoming information.
	An-Nahl (78), Al-Mulk (23), Al-A'raf (179), Al-Isra' (36), Al-Jathiya (23), Al-Baqarah (171), Yunus (42), Al-Anfal (22), Al-Ma'idah (58), An-Nahl (12), Al-Imran (190), Ta-Ha (128), Al-Fajr (5), At-Tur (32)	The intellect is affirmed as the filter for evaluating and comprehending knowledge.

The notion of total behavior pertains to the constituent elements of behavior, with Glasser positing that behavior is composed of four dimensions: cognition, action, emotion, and physiology. The Holy Quran demonstrates significant parallels with choice theory in this domain, as the theory’s prioritization of cognition and action corresponds closely with the Holy Quran’s emphasis on faith and deeds: each of the four behavioral dimensions articulated by Glasser—cognition, action, emotion, and physiology—finds clear corroboration in the Holy Quran; both frameworks underscore the importance of faith and deeds, equated with cognition and action; both contend that the primary aspects of behavior subject to direct human influence are cognition and action; both assert that emotions and physiological states are not directly controllable by individuals, but through the regulation of faith and deeds, one can exert an indirect influence on emotions and physiology.

Table 7: Shared Perspectives of the Quran and Choice Theory in the Component of Overall Behavior

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Behavioral System	Al-Baqarah 284, Ash-Shams 8, Yusuf 53, Al-Qiyamah 2, Al-Fajr 27 & 28, Al-Fajr 23, Al-Hujurat 12	Affirmation of thought is one of the four components of the behavioral system.
	Az-Zalzalah 7 & 8, Hud 46, Az-Zukhruf 65, Al-Jathiyah 7, Adh-Dhariyat 60, Al-Mursalat 15, Al-Mutaffifin 1, Al-Humazah 1, Ibrahim 15, Al-An’am 160	Affirmation of action (or, in Quranic language, “deed”) is the second influential component in the behavioral system.
	Al-Baqarah 82, Al-Bayyina 7	Combination of thought and action as the main components of the behavioral system, which are fully under human control. In Quranic terminology, these are referred to as “faith” and “righteous deeds.”
	Al-Isra’ 9, Al-Insan 8–12, Al-Qasas 7 & 13, At-Tawbah 40, Al-Baqarah 262, Al-Baqarah 274, Al-Baqarah 277, Al-Ahqaf 13, Al-Baqarah 112, Al-Baqarah 38, Al-Ma’idah 69, Al-An’am 48, Al-A’raf 35, Yunus 58	Affirmation of the component related to feelings is the third of the four components of the behavioral system. These verses also address how feelings are influenced by thought and action.
	At-Tawbah 40, Yusuf 84–86, Al-Anfal 65 & 66	The issue of the physical or physiological state and its being influenced by thought and action.

Evaluation of Choice Theory through the Lens of the Holy Quran

Upon close examination, several Quranic critiques can be directed toward the internal control element of choice theory. The behaviors associated with external control are not restricted to the seven actions (criticism, fault-finding, reproach, grievance, nagging, intimidation, bribery, and punishment) identified by Glasser. Likewise, compassionate behaviors extend beyond the seven actions (listening, supporting, negotiating, encouraging, respecting, trusting, and constructive dialogue) advocated by Glasser. The Quran proposes additional behaviors, such as kindness, patience, forgiveness, altruism, enthusiasm for companionship, and responding to malevolence with benevolence, which aligns with the paradigm of internal control and are grounded in the principle of righteousness.

The concept of responsibility is a central tenet in both the Quran and choice theory. Reality therapy and choice theory are fundamentally rooted in the notion of responsibility, and the Holy Quran similarly underscores its significance. Nevertheless, choice theory’s failure to account for the spiritual dimension of humanity results in a superficial treatment of responsibility, neglecting critical prerequisites inherent to this concept. Table 8 provides an overview of select Quranic critiques about this matter.

Table 8: The Quran’s Critique of the Responsibility Component

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Responsibility	At-Tahrim 6, Hud 46	The Quran emphasizes that a person has greater responsibility towards their family than towards other members of society and must ensure their family does not stray towards wrongdoing. In contrast, choice theory does not differentiate between the degree of control or responsibility one has over family members versus others in society.
	Al-An’am 151	The sense of responsibility towards parents is expressed in the Quran as explicit and sensitive; one must obey their parents even if it is difficult. Choice theory, however, conditions care for parents on not disrupting one’s effective control over life.
	Al-Fajr 18, Al-Ma’un 3, Adh-Dhariyat 19, Al-Haqqa 33–34, An-Nisa 36	The Quran strongly encourages responsibility towards the needy. One is obligated not only to give charity but also to encourage others to do so, regardless of whether one feels an internal motivation. Choice theory, by contrast, sees helping others as valuable only if it satisfies one’s sense of worth, and does not impose a duty beyond that; the Quran fundamentally disagrees with this view.

The Holy Quran articulates a perspective on the need for love and belonging that diverges from the framework presented in choice theory. The Quran censures excessive attachment to worldly desires, including women, children, vast wealth in gold and silver, and other temporal attractions, while advocating for endeavors oriented toward the Hereafter. It prioritizes the principle of monotheism (tawhid) above parental directives, stipulating that when a conflict arises between adhering to monotheism and obeying parents, monotheism prevails. Conversely, choice theory emphasizes the child’s effective autonomy and fundamentally dismisses unconditional submission to parental authority, regardless of whether the context involves monotheism or other issues. Affection for a child does not absolve one from the greater obligation to prevent the child from engaging in actions that lead to divine punishment. Permitting a child to undertake actions that draw them closer to Hell under the guise of love is impermissible. Choice theory confines the exploration of love and belonging to interpersonal relationships, such as those between spouses or among individuals connected to the person. In contrast, the Holy Quran delineates a sacred love between the Creator and His creation, alongside condemning profane love that conspires against the Creator. Extravagant devotion to anything other than God is strictly prohibited.

Significant disparities exist between the Holy Quran and choice theory concerning the satisfaction of the need for power. The mere assurance that long-term effective control over one’s life is maintained and that the responsibility for fulfilling the need for power does not burden others does not legitimize engaging in acts prohibited by the Shari’a, such as commerce in forbidden substances like intoxicants.

The need for freedom constitutes a core principle in both the Holy Quran and choice theory, yet differences emerge in the approach to its fulfillment. Freedoms related to attire, consumption, and similar matters are governed not only by the conditions of sustaining long-term personal control and avoiding dependence on others but also by additional stipulations, including the avoidance of innovation (bid’a) and adherence to explicit divine injunctions. The fulfillment of the need for recreation differs between these perspectives due to the material foundation of choice theory and the spiritual, divine foundation of the Quran. From the Quranic viewpoint, responsible fulfillment, beyond the two conditions of responsibility outlined in choice theory, encompasses further requirements, such as avoiding innovation and ensuring alignment with the Shari’a. Recreational activities should not be pursued merely for amusement and must not lead to heedlessness of God.

Table 9: The Quran’s Critique of the “Need for Fun” Component

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Need for survival	Al-Ma’idah 3, Al-Baqarah 219, Al-Ma’idah 90, Al-Baqarah 275	The Quran introduces forbidden foods and drinks as part of its critique on the responsible satisfaction of eating and drinking, which falls under the need for survival. Choice theory does not make such distinctions, focusing only on personal control.
	Al-An’am 141, Al-A’raf 31	The Quran warns against extravagance, meaning using more than one’s share, while choice theory sees no issue as long

		as effective personal control is maintained.
	Al-Isra' 32, Al-Furqan 68–70, Al-Mu'minin 5–7	The Quran prohibits even approaching adultery, while choice theory sees no barrier to adultery for singles as long as it does not disrupt personal control. The Quran considers marriage the only legitimate way to satisfy sexual needs.
Need for love and belonging.	Al Imran 14, Hud 45–46	Excessive love for anyone other than God is considered incorrect in the Quran, whereas choice theory views such attachment as constructive.
	At-Tahrim 6	Love and attachment between parents and children should not prevent one from guiding family members away from hellfire.
Need for power	An-Nur 31	The need for adornment and beauty, as a subset of the need for power, should not contradict religious law or hinder spiritual progress, nor lead to corruption in this world.
Need for freedom	Al-Ma'idah 3, Al-Baqarah 219, Al-Ma'idah 90, Al-Baqarah 275, Al-Isra' 32, Al-Furqan 68–70, Al-Mu'minin 5–7	Irresponsible freedom in eating forbidden foods and drinks, engaging in adultery, or any freedom that contradicts Islamic law is excluded from acceptable freedom.
Need for fun	Yusuf 12–13	Recreation should not distance a person from God or spiritual matters.
	Al-Hadid 27	Recreation must not be an innovation or forbidden act; it is not enough for it to merely not disrupt personal control or burden others, as choice theory suggests.

The concept of an ideal world is inherent in every individual. Nevertheless, the framework of an ideal world as articulated in choice theory diverges substantially from the perspective presented in the Holy Quran. The Quran offers several critical observations: adversaries of God are barred from entering the ideal world; the utilization of wealth must not serve the purposes of accumulating riches or fostering arrogance; the ideal world should not cause one to neglect God; and the governance of the ideal world must align with divine directives rather than human autonomy.

Table 10: The Quran’s Critique of the “Desirable World” Component

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Desired World	Al-Mujadila 22	People who undermine an individual’s faith and monotheism should not be part of their desirable world, even if they are parents, who are otherwise highly significant. Such individuals must be excluded from the desirable world according to the Quran. Choice theory does not emphasize this distinction.
	Al-Kahf 34, 36, 42; Al-Qasas 79; Saba 36	Loving wealth for its own sake, or for showing off and similar motives, is criticized by the Quran as a misuse of possessions. Choice theory, however, considers these attitudes acceptable as long as they do not threaten effective personal control over life.
	Al-Hadid 23	The desirable world should not become everything to a person; it must not dominate one’s life entirely.
	Al-A’raf 32	Asceticism (zuhd) does not mean abandoning the world and is not forbidden. Choice theory regards such decisions as personal choices, valid if the individual is content with them.
	Al-Qasas 77; Al-Munafiqun 9; Al-Hijr 3	The desirable world should not be the ultimate goal nor cause forgetfulness of God. The Quran warns against such distractions, while choice theory rejects these concerns.
	At-Tawbah 111; Al-Hajj 58; Al-Ma’idah 119	The Quran strongly critiques the notion of self-command over the desirable world, stating that its governance must be under divine command, not individual desire. Choice theory, in contrast, holds that the individual is the commander of their desirable world.

The system of human perception and the processes by which information is received and interpreted are discussed in both frameworks. Nevertheless, owing to its profound insight into human nature, the Holy Quran proposes methodologies that diverge from those outlined in choice theory. As a result, the primary criticism leveled against choice theory is that "perceptual mechanisms are not confined to the three tools delineated by choice theory." While the Quran endorses the four elements of general

behavior—namely, thought, action, emotion, and physiology—it also articulates specific critiques: the influence of thoughts and actions extends beyond an individual’s temporal achievements to impact their eschatological outcomes or repercussions; divine guidance, in addition to the four behavioral elements, exerts an influence on an individual’s conduct.

Novel insights of the Holy Quran in the context of choice theory:

Concerning the aspect of internal control, the Holy Quran elucidates its distinct perspectives: specific Quranic approaches for enhancing internal control and fostering piety, such as the remembrance of God; and the promotion of virtuous ethical behaviors as substitutes for detrimental actions, including altruism and responding to malevolence with benevolence.

Table 11: New Perspectives of the Quran on the Component of Internal Control

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Internal Control	Al-Hashr 19	The Quran emphasizes strengthening internal control through the remembrance of God, a concept that choice theory does not address.

New Perspectives of the Holy Quran on the Component of Responsibility

Avoidance of innovation (bid‘ah) and non-opposition to divine command;

Responsibility in confronting domination and oppression.

Table 12: New Perspectives of the Holy Quran on the Component of Responsibility

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Responsibility	Al-Hadid 27	The avoidance of religious innovation (bid‘ah) and non-opposition to the commands of God and His Messenger are exclusive conditions emphasized by the Holy Quran regarding responsibility.
	An-Nahl 36, An-Nisa 144, An-Nisa 139, Al-Ma’idah 151, Hud 113	The sense of responsibility to stand firm against tyrannical and arrogant systems is a distinctive aspect of responsibility highlighted by the Quran.

The Holy Quran provides innovative insights into Glasser’s framework of five fundamental needs, while also highlighting two critical and inherent needs that choice theory has neglected. Specifically, the need for monotheism and understanding of the divine, as well as the need for eternal existence, represent two intrinsic and unique needs articulated by the Holy Quran in distinction from choice theory. The following table delineates the main headings of these insights:

Table 13: New Perspectives of the Holy Quran on Fundamental and Genetic Needs

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Need for survival	Al-Ahzab 59, An-Nur 31	Setting boundaries for dress is a new perspective from the Holy Quran, presenting responsible behavior regarding clothing as a subset of the need for survival.
	An-Nisa 34	Temporary marriage (mut'ah) is introduced as a novel solution in the Holy Quran for fulfilling human sexual needs.
	Ar-Ra'd 28, Al-An'am 82, Al-Baqarah 112	Improving one's relationship with God leads to psychological security.
Need for love and belonging.	Al Imran 159, Al Imran 146, Al Imran 31, Al-Baqarah 165, An-Nur 19, Al-Qiyamah 21, Al Imran 119, Yusuf 30, Al-Ahzab 72	The Holy Quran distinguishes between sacred and profane love: love for God, the patient, and the prophets is sacred, while love for idols, tyrants, and the promotion of immorality is profane. This is a unique perspective of the Quran.
Need for power	Hud 4-6, Al-Baqarah 148, Al-Baqarah 247, Yusuf 21, Al-Kahf 39, Al-Kahf 84	The origin and source of human power is from God.
	Al-Isra' 80, Al-Mujadila 21, Al-Baqarah 93, Al-A'raf 145	The Quran emphasizes that the use of power must be aligned with divine guidance and used for righteous purposes, such as overcoming falsehood and implementing God's laws.
	An-Nisa 59	Emphasis on guardianship (wilayah) in social power.
Need for freedom	Al-Ahzab 36, An-Nahl 116	Opposition to God's command, innovation (bid'ah), and falsely attributing statements to God and His Messenger are excluded from the scope of freedom of expression.
Need for fun	As-Sajdah 27, Al-Ankabut 20	Recreation should not be for mere amusement but should be accompanied by learning and reflection.

Need for seeking God and immortality.	Ar-Rum 30, Al-Isra' 67, Az-Zumar 49	The need for monotheism and worship of God is a fundamental human need that is overlooked in choice theory.
	Al-Hadid 22–23, Al-An'am 59, Ar-Ra'd 28, Az-Zumar 53, An-Nisa 116	Seeking and knowing God contributes to resilience, tranquility, and hope.
	Ta-Ha 120, Al-A'raf 20, Al-Baqarah 96, An-Nahl 95–96, Al-A'la 16–17, Al-Qasas 60, Ash-Shura 36, Ta-Ha 131, Qaf 34, Al-Kahf 46, Maryam 76	The need for immortality is an innate human need, which choice theory neglects.
	Al-Fajr 24, Al-Ankabut 64	The acceptance of death and life's hardships is made possible through the fulfillment of the need for immortality.

The Holy Quran introduces novel insights into the concept of the quality world, extending beyond the framework provided by choice theory. These insights specifically pertain to the construction of a quality world that aligns with the needs of both the human soul and body. Unlike choice theory, which lacks guidance on how individuals should engage with their quality world or determine what to incorporate or omit, the Holy Quran offers such direction. The following table outlines several of these perspectives:

Table 14: New Perspectives of the Holy Quran on the “Desirable World” Component

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Desired World	Al Imran 134, Al-Baqarah 222, At-Tawbah 4, Al Imran 146, Al-Ma'idah 42, Al-Hujurat 9, Al-Mumtahanah 8, At-Tawbah 108	With whom should we form friendships? The Holy Quran provides a unique perspective on the “desirable world” by specifying that friends should be those who are virtuous-such as the doers of good (muhsinin), the repentant, martyrs, and prophets.
	Saba 37, At-Tawbah 11, Al-Isra' 29, Al-Fajr 15–20	Wealth should be used for righteous deeds, such as honoring orphans, helping others, and giving zakat (charity).
	Ar-Rum 30, Al-Ikhlās	Monotheism (tawhid) should be the most prominent feature of one's desirable world, according to the Quran.

The Holy Quran addresses the phenomenon of extrasensory perceptions and their various forms as a significant aspect of the human perceptual system. This subject, however, remains neglected within the materialistic framework of choice theory, which does not account for such non-physical dimensions of perception.

Table 15: New Perspectives of the Holy Quran on the Perceptual System Component

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Perceptual System	Yusuf 94–95, Maryam 19–22, Hud 71–73, Yusuf 93, An-Naml 38–40, Al-Qasas 7, Al-Ma'idah 111, Ash-Shu'ara 193, Al-An'am 121, At-Tur 8, Yusuf 4, Yusuf 100, Al-Baqarah 257	The Holy Quran introduces extrasensory perceptions as a unique category of perception. These include thought-reading, foretelling the unseen, inspiration, true dreams, revelation, and more. Choice theory, with its materialist orientation, does not address such phenomena.

From the Quranic viewpoint, human total behavior encompasses not only the four fundamental components of thought, action, feeling, and physiology but also necessitates an additional element for achieving ultimate success: divine grace (tawfiq). This divine facilitation serves as the guiding force behind the actions and conduct of the faithful, underscoring the indispensable role of spiritual assistance in human behavior.

Table 16: New Perspectives of the Holy Quran on the Behavioral System Component

Components	Surah / Verse Numbers	Shared Views
Behavioral System	Al-An'am 124, Maryam 76, Yunus 100	Divine grace (tawfiq) is granted to believers who align their thoughts and actions with divine commands, and this grace enhances their outcomes and achievements.

Conclusion

Choice theory psychology, as an emerging paradigm in contemporary psychology, is steadily gaining recognition among both professionals and the general populace. Its widespread acceptance suggests that it is poised for further development shortly. The core tenets and foundational elements of this theory are profoundly relevant to modern society. The primary objective of choice theory is to enhance the quality of life, a goal that those acquainted with its principles confirm is achievable through its application, leading to an improved standard of living.

The theory advocates for a life grounded in the acknowledgment of responsibility for all decisions, rejecting external determinism, affirming human autonomy, embracing realism, examining the

motivations and mechanisms of human behavior, and, above all, emphasizing accountability across all facets of existence. These are elevated principles that choice theory seeks to advance.

Individuals familiar with the teachings of Islam and the divine revelations of the Holy Quran recognize that these concepts represent only a subset of the profound and noble precepts found in Islam and the Quran. This research endeavored to assess the propositions of choice theory psychology, given its materialistic foundations, against the divine revelations of the Quran. The aim was to guide those who value the core principles of this theory toward a framework consistent with divine revelation.

The study commenced with a concise exposition of choice theory psychology, detailing its origins, historical context, novel contributions, and the critiques it has faced from other psychological frameworks. For each constituent element of choice theory—internal control, responsibility, fundamental human needs, the ideal world, the perceptual system, and the behavioral system—shared perspectives, Quranic critiques of choice theory, and novel Quranic insights were delineated. These commonalities, critiques, and new perspectives were systematically presented, with each section concluding with a tabulated summary, including relevant Quranic verse numbers, surah names, and brief explanations. Specifically, for internal control, 10 shared perspectives, 3 critiques, and 2 new insights were identified; for responsibility, 6 shared perspectives, 3 critiques, and 2 new insights were noted; for fundamental human needs, two uniquely specific needs (immortality and knowledge of God) were introduced, with a total of 28 shared perspectives, 13 Quranic critiques, and 10 new theories articulated; for the ideal world, 7 shared perspectives, 6 critiques, and 3 new theories were presented; for the perceptual system, 4 shared perspectives, 2 critiques, and 1 new theory were provided; and for the behavioral system, 5 shared perspectives, 2 critiques, and 1 new theory were outlined.

The author posits that, in the contemporary era, one of the most effective mediums for conveying the Quran's guidance on lifestyle matters is the modern discourse of psychology. The choice theory has excelled in simplifying these concepts. The findings demonstrate that the foundational elements of choice theory are endorsed and validated by the Holy Quran, with numerous verses aligning with these principles. Nevertheless, choice theory's omission of the spiritual dimension of humanity renders its teachings incomplete, a deficiency that this study has addressed through insights derived from the Holy Quran. Several key points are highlighted below. Contrary to choice theory's assertions, behaviors associated with external and internal control are not confined to seven types, and numerous behaviors, particularly those about ethical virtues, such as responding to malevolence with benevolence, have been overlooked. The concept of responsibility in choice theory is underpinned by incomplete conditions, which the Quran supplements with additional stipulations. The five fundamental needs (survival, love, power, freedom, and fun) were found to have deficiencies in their modes of fulfillment, which were subsequently rectified. Two critical needs—knowledge and pursuit of God, and the need for immortality—were entirely neglected by choice theory, and their significance was elucidated. The distinctions between the ideal world as conceptualized by choice theory and the Quran were highlighted as fundamentally significant, notably that divine commandments, not human agency, govern this world. In terms of the perceptual system, choice theory failed to account for an advanced and remarkable system known as the extrasensory system, reflecting an incomplete understanding of human perception. The four-component behavioral system proposed by choice theory was

corroborated by the Quran; however, a significant oversight in choice theory was its neglect of the role of divine grace in shaping human behavior.

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