

ERIK ERIKSON'S THEORY AND THE EXCELLENT AVERAGE: TOWARDS BETTER SCHOOLS AND SOCIETIES

نظرية إريك إريكسون والمتوسط الممتاز: نحو مدارس ومجتمعات أفضل

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ملخص:

تدور هذه الدراسة حول مفهومين مختلفين ظاهرياً: المتوسط الممتاز ونظرية إريك إريكسون. فمن ناحية، المعدل الممتاز هو مفهوم يدل على أن المعدل العام للفرد أو الفصل أو المدرسة أو المجتمع ممتاز. بشكل عام، فإن المنتجات الممتازة للمدارس تؤدي في النهاية إلى مجتمع ممتاز، وإصلاح المجتمع يتطلب إصلاح المدارس. من ناحية أخرى، تشرح نظرية إريك إريكسون النفسية الاجتماعية النمو النفسي والاجتماعي للإنسان طوال حياته. النظرية تحتوي على ثمان مراحل وتحليلها يمكن أن يولد العديد من الأسئلة حول الذات والهوية والمشهد النفسي الاجتماعي والنضج العاطفي والتنشئة الاجتماعية وتحقيق الذات. يشرح هذا البحث النظرية ويوظفها، وتحديداً المرحلة الرابعة منها، في محاولة لقراءة البناء النفسي والاجتماعي والعاطفي للإنسان، بهدف فهم كيفية إنشاء المدارس والمجتمعات التي يكون متوسطها ممتازاً. الدراسة نظرية بشكل رئيسي حيث يكشف هذا التحليل النظري أن إحدى الأدوات النفسية الاجتماعية لإصلاح النظام التعليمي ومساعدة الطلاب على أن يصبحوا متفوقين ومجتهدين هي تجنب المقارنة والمنافسة غير الصحية من خلال الابتعاد عن أنظمة تقييم تصنيف الدرجات التي تطبقها العديد من المدارس. علاوة على ذلك، يحتل التعليم الشامل والإسلامي مكانة بارزة كمسار محتمل لإصلاح المدارس والمجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

المقارنة والمنافسة؛ إصلاح النظام التعليمي؛ نظرية إريك إريكسون النفسية الاجتماعية. المدرسة والمجتمع؛ المتوسط الممتاز.

Abstract:

This study spins around two seemingly distinct conceptualizations: the excellent average and Erik Erikson's theory. On the one hand, the excellent average is a notion signifying that the general average of a person, class, school, or society is excellent. Generally speaking, the excellent products of schools lead ultimately to an excellent society, and reforming society requires school reform. On another hand, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory expounds human psychosocial growth throughout the lifespan. The analysis of the theory, which contains eight stages, can generate many questions about one's self, identity, psychosocial landscape, emotional maturity, socialization, and self-actualization. This paper explains and employs the theory, specifically the fourth stage, in an attempt to read human psychological, social, and emotional building aiming to understand how schools and societies whose average is excellent are established. The study is mainly theoretical. Therefore, the theoretical analysis reveals that one psychosocial tool to reform the educational system and help students become excellent and industrious is avoiding comparison and unhealthy competition by steering clear of the grade-classifying evaluation systems that several schools apply. Furthermore, holistic and Islamic education are foregrounded as highly potential tracks for school and society reform.

Keywords: Comparison and competition; educational system reform; Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory; school and society; the excellent average.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The usual norm in today's world is that people and societies are classified into castes. Social stratification, no matter what layers it is based on, is real. Even when we wish and work for equality, social equity, and economic justice, huge differences remain between people. Relatedly, the classification approach that many educational systems rely on intensifies social stratification. In one way or another, it teaches young learners about classes, layers, and eventually, about inferiority and superiority. In his renowned theory, Erik Erikson stated inferiority as a main crisis that young learners face in case their early school years fail to teach them hard work and industry (Erikson, 1963). Observation within the Algerian society and other communities where the educational framework classifies students according to their grades shows that there is a hidden issue of inferiority and superiority operating at many levels of thought. These two crises can say a lot about one's self-esteem and self-image, as well as about social feelings. Wherever there is classification, there are inferiority and superiority feelings, which in turn have an impact on humans' self-concept and self-efficacy.

The prime research question is: what can be learned from Erik Erikson's fourth stage about school and society reform? This question is examined in this theoretically analytical paper. Throughout, the research considers the problem of classifying students based on their results (student classification) and how it engenders issues like shame, inferiority, jealousy, envy, comparison, unhealthy competition, bullying, and social classification. Challenges like trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, self-esteem, satisfaction, and devotion are also explored as they are deemed essential to building an excellent community where the majority of individuals are excellent, leading up to an excellent social average rather than a medium one. There is a special focus on the Algerian Muslim society, yet some observations may apply to other communities.

This paper seeks to combine the excellent average and Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, highlighting some inquiries about the self, education, schooling, and society. The term excellent average was coined in reference to the Finnish educational system which has been one of the best in the past decade. It reflects how accentuating learners' individual strengths leads them to excel, which eventually makes the school outcomes excellent, and thus, the socio-economic benefits augment. This theoretical study gathers data from different sources like books, chapters, articles, theses, and observations. Screening studies, analyzing the data, and synthesizing them are all pursued with the object of reinforcing our understanding of how the educational system functions and how it directly affects individuals, their success, relationships, society, and mobility.

2. Literature Review: Erik Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory

There are a few theories in the world of psychology that provide a general overview of what humans go through psychologically and socially in a lifetime. Erik Erikson’s psychosocial theory is one of them as it unfolds the psychological, emotional, and social challenges, crises, and virtues humans encounter from birth to death, and for this, it is often described as an outstanding theory (Burden & Williams, 1997). According to the German-American psychoanalyst, psychologist, and founder of the theory, Erik Erikson, a lifetime can be divided into eight pre-determined stages, each with specific psychosocial determinants. These are set by Erikson (1963) as comprehending a challenge, a crisis, and a virtue, which are all three highly affected by the surrounding people, that is, by the socio-emotional environment. For Erikson (1963), each stage brings specific achievements and failures, and each stage has a pre-determined age (Table 1).

Table 1: The Pre-determined Eight Stages in Erikson’s Theory

Stages	Life Stages	Ages	Achievements vs. Failure to Achieve
1	Infancy	0-23	Trust vs. Mistrust
2	Toddlerhood	2-4	Autonomy vs. Shame/Self-Doubt
3	Early Childhood	5-8	Initiative vs. Guilt
4	Middle Childhood	9-12	Industry vs. Inferiority
5	Adolescence	13-19	Identity vs. Role Confusion
6	Young Adulthood	20-39	Intimacy vs. Isolation
7	Middle Adulthood	40-59	Generativity vs. Stagnation
8	Late Adulthood	60+	Ego Integrity vs. Despair

Source: (Samsanovich, 2021, p. 14)

As life progresses and age advances, humans meet psychosocial challenges that are imparted by society, but also, the assistance of significant others is rudimentary to succeed at these challenges. In case of lack of assistance or in case the assistance is not good enough, the person might fail at the challenges which will turn into crises that stay with the person in the following stages. However, when the challenge is met adequately, the person gains a virtue and moves to the next stage smoothly.

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The purview of this developmental theory encompasses the psychosocial perplexities that humans transition through throughout their lifespan, deploying the epigenetic principle of preordained stages and outcomes (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). These stages are in tandem with each other for they are perceived as a continuum rather than a categorization (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). Syed and Fish (2018) deduce that Erikson's ideas are salient, appealing, and ample, offering numerous perspectives and touching on several topics, which can inspire both theoretical and empirical research studies. Even more so, Weiland (1993, p. 17) states that "today no developmental theory is better known than Erikson's". In the ensuing section, the eight stages will be propounded.

2.1 The First Stage: On Trust

Questions on the self, trust, confidence, commitment, self-esteem, and similar concepts can be driven to the first year after birth. In the first year of life, the main challenge babies face is called trust or, as put by Erikson (1963), basic trust in the world. One can wonder: how can babies learn basic trust in the world? The answer lies in the fulfilment of their needs by their caregivers. This is the main concern of this delicate age, but unlike what is believed, that all what infants need is food and sleep, infants have two main categories of needs: physiological, like food, sleep, being clean, and absence of pain, and emotional, like love, safety, and attention. One excellent way to build trust for babies is through breastfeeding, which helps to fulfil crucial needs such as food, safety, love, and more.

Broadly speaking, the first stage is represented by trust versus mistrust and takes place in the period between birth and 18 up to 23 months. Dunkel and Sefcek (2009) elucidate this dichotomy of trust/mistrust in what follows: "If caretakers are responsive development tends toward a basic sense of trust, if caretakers are not responsive the infant develops a basic sense of mistrust". When trust is gained in this early stage, babies acquire psychological virtues and strengths. Hope, contemplates Erikson (1963), is the virtue that comes along with basic trust allowing infants to move placidly to the next challenge.

2.2 The Second Stage: "Can I Do It?"

The second stage starts around 18 to 24 months and lasts approximately 2 years, till the beginning of the fourth year. The main challenge is autonomy versus shame and doubt as the crises in case of failure. In this phase of life, the mobility (motor skills) and language of a child enhance allowing them to explore and expand, thus making them feel a sense of will to carry out actions independently (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). If the child is well assisted and guided by the caretakers to pursue the small actions s/he wants to conduct autonomously, like holding the spoon, buttoning the shirt, lacing shoes, or choosing clothes, the child will feel that s/he can do and conduct actions and that the caregivers know of this ability and trust it. The child

feels potential and starts learning to depend on the self and to become responsible, which keeps enhancing with growing age and capacity. However, in the eventuality of the child being inappropriately guided or even restricted in their autonomy endeavors, the child will end up feeling ashamed, doubting their abilities, and believing that they cannot do it which is why, they feel, the grown-ups are not allowing them to perform autonomously. Two of the psychosocial virtues that children obtain if they learn autonomy adequately in this stage are willpower and self-control (Erikson, 1963; Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009).

The second stage is the time when children learn to become doers. Unlike adults who often think before starting an action, children in this stage are often impulsive actors/doers. They do not think about the consequences of the actions they undertake, but they start learning to do it if they are well-guided to balance the doing with the thinking. It is essential to consider this so as not to turn children into overthinkers instead of doers. It is also essential to assist children as they start learning autonomy and responsibility. Such values are often learned through pertinent guidance in the early years of life.

2.3 The Third Stage: Starting Initiatives

The third stage can be seen as a follow-up to the previous one as children expand their autonomy attempts. After they manage to pursue some tasks autonomously and feel that they can do actions, they aspire to bigger actions like taking initiatives on their own. They think, plan, and execute plans with or without necessarily referring to their elders.

The third stage launches in the fourth year. It is a time of initiative (challenge) versus guilt (crisis) in case the child does not receive significant assistance, encouragement, understanding, and error-tolerance. The feeling of guilt settles impeding the child from taking future initiatives, turning them into a person who overthinks their actions before they even undertake them. Meanwhile, encouraging initiative and guiding throughout the process renders the child “able to initiate goal-directed actions and success” (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). For this matter, praise and encouragement of efforts and intentions increase initiative and lead to the virtue of purpose (Erikson, 1963; Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009).

2.4 The Fourth Stage: On School

The fourth stage is where the heart of the matter of this research paper sits. It happens during the first school years, basically from the year the child joins school, around 6 or 7, till right before adolescence, i.e., 10 or 11 years old. It is summed up in industry versus inferiority as the challenge versus the crisis/failure (Erikson, 1963). Joining school means learning many skills including academic skills like literacy and numeracy skills, social skills, like making friends and building new relationships, cultural skills by getting to discover new lifestyles and cultures of

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others they meet in school (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009), besides physical and artistic skills through the new sports, arts, and extracurricular activities they discover thanks to school. School, indeed, sharpens children's skills and multiplies them tremendously. School gives children something to work on seriously and to learn; hence, the school experience teaches children industry and hard work. Acquiring these challenges secures that children feel the virtue of competence which further enhances the psychosocial strengths gained in the previous stages.

Nevertheless, failing to learn hard work and competence can usher children into struggling with a sense of inferiority where they feel less competent and industrious than their peers. What is more, inferiority comes with a package of other crises, like superiority, jealousy, envy, and possibly hatred, and is often nurtured by comparison, competition, and classification. These three are present in most grading systems as schools classify and thus compare learners based on their outcomes, which leads them to feel both superior and inferior to others and to compete. In due course and with the many years spent in school, the crisis of inferiority/superiority turns into a thought and feeling pattern especially if it also runs in the social system through comparison and other mechanisms.

2.5 The Fifth Stage: "Who Am I?"

Adolescence is when the fifth stage occurs. In general, this marking life phase runs for approximately 9 years between 12 and 21 years old, varying from one person to another in how much it endures and when it starts and ends. It is often considered a pivotal stage as it comes with the search for identity, questioning childhood identity, and exploring new identities and possibilities. "Who am I?" and "Whom do I want to become?" are central questions here. Role models are equally indispensable as adolescents look for what they want to be or become in others.

This phase is beyond the scope of this research, but it is paramount to mention that guidance, acceptance, tolerance, understanding, and communication are key in this stage. If caregivers provide all the latter as they accompany teenagers in their identity search and construction, the major challenge, search for identity, will be fulfilled by the end of this time, whereas if not, they may fall into the crisis of role confusion, and at worst perhaps delinquency and anti-social behavior (Erikson, 1963; Burden, & Williams, 1997; Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). Moreover, achieving the challenges of the first four stages will be of service in this one, while reaching this time with crises from the preceding stages may complicate the search for identity. The psychosocial strength or virtue that the individual attains thanks to identity formation is fidelity and a sense of self-continuity (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009).

2.6 The Sixth Stage: Relationships

The focal challenge of the sixth stage is attaining intimacy in one's relationships. This stage arises in early or young adulthood, starting in the twenties till the forties. Fulfilling the previous challenges increases the chances of forming solid, healthy, and intimate relationships. This is often the time when people look forward to strengthening their already-existing relationships and forming new lasting ones through marriage and friendship. Nonetheless, arriving to this stage with unresolved crises may lead to failing at the current challenge and falling into the crises of isolation and loneliness (Erikson, 1963). Briefly, this stage "represents the ability to share with and commit to another" (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). Thus, love is the virtue that is gained owing to establishing strong relationships.

2.7 The Seventh Stage: Am I Still Useful?

After more than 40 years of living, learning, taking, and giving, the seventh stage arrives with a critical challenge/crisis: generativity versus stagnation (Erikson, 1963). In the previous stages, the person is usually self-absorbed, advancing with big steps in life, moving from early childhood to school time which are often characterized by fast progress, then to young adulthood where people usually try new experiences, start a vocation or a profession, a family, raise children, and so forth. All these can keep a person very active and productive. The forties are the chapter where life may start slowing down in action and progress. The real challenge is to remain generative, productive, and useful to one's environment and society. Dunkel and Sefcek (2009) observe that this stage is when the adult is challenged with doing and giving to others through, for instance, taking part in shaping the next generations. This is how care blossoms as the gained virtue when generativity is secured. Furthermore, it is the time when the person is psychosocially tested for their ability to generate new interests and activities (Burden & Williams, 1997). Failing to remain generative in this time means stagnating which can be distressing emotionally and socially.

2.8 The Last Stage: Integrity or Despair?

The last stage is the culmination of a lifetime of fulfilled psychosocial challenges and/or perpetuating crises. It settles during old age which is a time of self-review and evaluation. In this age, old people find either integrity or despair, as a challenge or crisis (Erikson, 1963). Looking back on their lives, they either end up with a sense of satisfaction, fulfilment, and self-actualization, or despair, regret, and failure (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). Successful management of the previous stages culminates in integrity which means being honest and satisfied about one's self, life, and achievements, whereas accumulated crises lead to regretting choices and missed opportunities, and thus falling into despair because there is no time left as death is approaching (Burden & Williams, 1997). In Islam, no living time is deemed late to

ask for forgiveness, improve, and fix one’s mistakes. Even in very old age, people are clearly instructed that they should not lose hope and faith in being forgiven and doing good. The door to improvement is open even if death is close. Prophet Mohamed (PPBUH) demonstrates and encourages people to plant what is in hand even when life is ending; it can be an actual plant as the hadith mentions as it can be a representation of any good deed.

Old age is known to be a time of wisdom, and this is the psychosocial strength/virtue that goes hand in hand with integrity. Life experiences conclude with wise lessons that are to be shared with the close ones who surround the elderly, accompany them, and do not leave them to deal with loneliness and regret.

The stages, in fact, rest and devolve around each other like a building or a chain. Each resolved psychosocial task deeply marks the coming stages; for example, basic trust increases the likelihood of developing basic autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity, and integrity (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). Each stage depends on the antecedent ones, each challenge relies on the earlier ones, and each crisis may find roots in unresolved prior failures.

3. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

To revisit the research question about what can be learned from Erik Erikson’s fourth stage about school and society reform, a plethora of lessons and implications can be drawn. First of all, Erik Erikson’s theory of psychological development is a famous, established, and accepted work (Samsanovich, 2021) of eight stages. In those concatenated “eight ages of man” as Erikson (1950) labels them, the impact of the socio-educational system on personality development is crystal clear. Education is known to be the process of developing one’s skills, knowledge, personality, and society. Said otherwise, it is the conscious and mapped effort to enhance an individual’s values, competencies, personality, self-control, and spiritual power (Irmawan, 2024). It ideally presupposes an interaction between the educator(s) and the person(s) being educated as it involves setting educational goals to be achieved (Irmawan, 2024). One of these goals can be attaining a better social position or class, since it is believed that social and economic mobilization can be procured thanks to better education (Irmawan, 2024). The higher education gets, the more progress is expected. This progress implies more chances to move to a higher social class which is one way towards advancement and improved societies (Irmawan, 2024).

As a point of fact, one major method to improve society is improving education. On that account, the role of education is to cause social prosperity, which makes schools a place for holistic human care and building, not just a content and grade delivery system (Ansari, 2023). Ansari (2023) thinks that: “The concept of holistic development is not confined to simply teaching-learning of textbooks but is inclusive of social capabilities and life skills”. Erikson’s theory is a work that

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propounds holistic human psychosocial development. It is a stunning attempt to understand the basic challenges and explorations that the human being goes through in each stage of life. Several discussions and implications can stem from the theory. To start with, the significance of relationships in improving schools and societies is indubitable. Arum (2011) discerns that restoring the moral value of relationships in schools has the power to boost student learning. This is a crucial yet often invisible factor in an educational setting; improved relationships between educators and learners, learners and their peers, learners and parents, as well as between parents and teachers, can not only propel learning in school but also improve society overall. Improved relationships lead to improved schools and societies. Hosseinsabet (2023) corroborates that excellent students have higher academic motivation and buoyancy than average students but they also enjoy a better family emotional climate. She endorses that fostering the bonds between learners and their family members can leave a remarkable impact on students' academic achievement.

In the fourth stage of Eriskon's theory (industry versus inferiority), learners join school where they learn to work hard to achieve learning and other goals. Notwithstanding, most schools globally rely on a grade-classifying system, which insinuates comparison and unhealthy competition between learners. Rizza and Reis (2001, p. 54) confirm that: "schools encourage competition simply by the nature of assigning grades and that students learn very early about the winners and losers". Instead of focusing on learning for the sake of learning and amelioration, learners find themselves pushed by their environment to study more, achieve higher, rank better, and win a race often in competition with others. To mention an example, in the Algerian society, the learner is often compared to others, classmates, friends, neighbors, cousins, and/or siblings. Not just at school and not just about grades, the learner or the child is told that someone else is better so they need to do more to surpass them and succeed. While success does not necessarily indicate doing like others or succeeding in all school tasks, this puts the individual in healthy/unhealthy competition with others. There are even teachers who would say something like: "your sister or brother is/was better than you or you are better than them". If we assume that this is said with the intention of motivating the learner to work harder, the learner feels motivated and works harder to achieve higher. The superficial outcome appears to be attained, which might lead us to think that comparison is effective as a motivating tool. However, this can cause at least two major issues. The first one is personal, mental, and emotional. A glimpse at the feelings one can experience when being compared and competing with others can unveil that comparison and competition can be damaging. Some of these feelings are stress, anxiety, pressure, and caring to please others. Regardless of learning and acquiring the challenge of industry, the crisis of inferiority/superiority is installed. Learners work hard and succeed, but they can still feel less or better than others. They do not always work hard to learn because learning is important and valuable; sometimes it

is done to avoid feeling inferior or being compared, to improve the way they are viewed by others, to be more valued by others, and/or to feel/be superior. All these shake their self-esteem, self-image, and social image, which leads to the second concern, a social one. Here, one can inquire about the repercussions of comparison and competition on relationships. The straight answer is that they ruin and destroy them. They kill creativity (Lieberman, n.d.) and relationships. Comparison disrupts and can even devastate relationships, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Meanwhile, competition is seen as a negative behavior that is kindled by comparison (Rizza & Reis, 2001). Comparison and competition provoke jealousy, anger, envy, avoidance, and even hatred. What is noteworthy of mentioning is that the Islamic religion asks people not to surrender to these feelings as they are harmful. Healthy competition in Islam is encouraged in matters of religion, doing good, and pleasing Allah, not those of the material world. Islam instructs humans not to harm each other nor to hurt feelings. Therefore, if comparison and competition cause emotional and mental harm, they are to be avoided. The Islamic religion cares for relationships and for nurturing decent ones between Muslims by using legitimate tools and refraining from detrimental ones.

That being so, individuals and schools in Muslim societies are invited to focus on relationships, the value of seeking knowledge, and industry because they are held in a high position in Islam. For this, learners can be taught that school is a place to seek knowledge, learn, work hard, and build valuable relationships so that they do school for the good cause and right intention instead of working hard for school but for the wrong intention of succeeding better than others. Instead of having rivals and bullies in school due to comparison and competition, it is more suitable to strengthen relationships through cooperation and collaboration. A study by Di Stasio, Savage, and Burgos (2016) shows that social comparison and competition are directly related to increased bullying and victimization in schools and guides stakeholders to propel good relationships, cooperation, and pro-social behavior in schools. These components have the potential to turn almost every learner into an expert with an excellent average, without any form of classification.

There are notably some alternatives to the current international commodified educational systems (Bastos, 2017) that often rely on classifying teaching and grading models. The Nordic, Finnish, and Singaporean school systems have been ranking high globally for years, showing some of these alternatives and different educational patterns by underscoring lifelong learning, cooperative development, less competition and comparison, more autonomy, dignity, equity, and social cohesion (Bastos, 2017). Stressing such ethical and social standards is directly linked to today's real-life skills and competencies as set by the world's educational and cultural councils and recommendations (Søby, 2015); they are also held high in Islam. Cooperation, social cohesion, and equity can be inculcated by schools through orienting learners to strengthen and thus excel in what they have a proclivity for

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naturally. When each learner is guided and scaffolded to ameliorate their competence in what they are inclined to study and do, each learner could have increased chances to excel and hone school and life skills. This can also be promoted by encouraging learners to assist each other through peer teaching-learning where each learner helps the others. This can turn every learner into an expert in what they are assisting classmates with as teaching is one of the best methods to understand and master content. Correspondingly, learners' averages and achievements will heighten, and the school's average will rise leading to an excellent school average instead of a medium one. By the same token, society will get better because it is a continuity of school.

Subsequently, school is a microcosm of society. If school prepares for life by what it trains on and instructs, a successful school experience will pave the way to a prosperous social and professional life. More real-life disciplines at school, support for individuality and individualization of instruction, besides less classification and comparison can all together imply a better society in outcome. Labaree (2012) perpetuates the belief of fixing and improving society by remedying and reforming the educational system and synopsisizes that: "Schools are asked to promote equality while preserving privilege" (p. 143). Ansari (2023) also maintains an analogous idea by inviting schools to involve the community in the educational process so as to foster learners' social skills and societal duties. She reckons that while school education is supposed to be a socialization process, it is rather leading to isolation and alienation from society. School is reasonably a place where psychosocial competencies and skills are nurtured not weakened and repressed. Despite that, the current modus operandi of many schools, which is content-based and examination-oriented, makes learners' focus and stakeholders' priority on grades (Ansari, 2023), averages, and classifications. This exam-driven school frame cannot comply with holistic education and its purposes of raising a self-actualized and accomplished person and bringing one's life to fruition, integrity, and fulfilment. Ansari (2023) carries on to distinguish that this "myopic view of education" is producing individuals with literacy and probably even academic proficiency, yet they are "socially confused youth". They are psychosocially struggling.

This analysis can stir up the keynote of the relativity of school success and failure. Polyzou and Karypis (2018) illustrate this concept by a B-grade that can be both bad and good, according to who receives it. For an A-level student, it is a failure, but for an F-level student, it is a success. Perspective is momentous when discussing learning, education, school, and society improvement, seeing that there are various layers, roles, and players within school and society. These strata form what is known as social stratification which is about variations in class status (Irmawan, 2024). This phenomenon is equivalently present in education with an impact on the equality and equity of the process and its upshots between what is rated low, middle, and high social divisions. It influences the chances and facilities that some social classes can access compared to higher groups, and thus the earned

benefits and abilities would be divergent which will create deeper gaps within the hierarchy (Irmawan, 2024). To no surprise, social and school classes are not just theory, they are “social reality” as Irmawan (2024) substantiates. As mentioned earlier, education is intended to spark social and economic mobility both in wealth and knowledge. It is quite challenging to transfer from stratification to a layer-free society. Thereby, the Islamic prospect promulgates the measure of knowledge, piety, and morality as the foundations for social-order formation, which can motivate people to seek them in tenable manners (Irmawan, 2024).

Islamic education highlights knowledge, excellence, faith, charity, and good doing. It does not accept social stratification that is based on wealth, heritage, ancestry, or other material determinants (Irmawan, 2024). It also gives prominence to the holistic development of humans and their potential, underlining spiritual, physical, mental, and psychosocial growth. When schools care to provide the kind of holistic education that calls attention to ethical values as much as it does with syllabus content, it can be said that school contributes to personality formation (Bobryn’ov, 2024). For this, schools need academically and morally excellent teachers and educators who can instill and implant the required seeds all while assuring their instructional responsibilities and helping learners meet their share of school challenges.

4. CONCLUSION

Erik Erikson’s theory is a milestone work where emphasis is put on the socio-psycho-emotional development of individuals. The Eriksonian work articulates the challenges and crises that a person confronts in each stage of life. Through this paper, the researcher attempted to probe some facets of the social and educational systems by employing a number of the premises that the aforementioned theory sets, like industry and inferiority. The investigation ignited a handful of topics such as relationships, comparison, competition, excellence, social stratification, Islamic education, and holistic education, concluding that it is vital to reform school in order to reform society. Some practices like comparison and unhealthy competition had better be abandoned in schools. It is also recommended to improve relationships between learners, their families, teachers, and peers. Moreover, swapping social stratification from one that is based on material parameters to a classification that is based on knowledge, devotion, charity, and morality can help heal several parts of the social apparatus and education. This work is not thorough for there is much more to notice, study, and reform. This article concentrated on the fourth stage; future work can explore society and school in relation to the other stages of Erikson’s theory or other social and psychological theories. The theme of school and society reform cannot be stressed enough, that is why more focused studies are called for and needed.

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