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Advancing Daloz's Theory: A Triadic Model of Qur'anic Mentoring

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ABSTRACT:

Original Paper

Mentoring is universally recognised as a fundamental catalyst for human development, academic success, and professional retention. Nevertheless, contemporary educational ecosystems and professional landscapes are currently facing a profound and widening mentoring gap. As secular paradigms of mentorship struggle to address the holistic, psychological, and moral needs of increasingly diverse populations, there is an urgent imperative to explore alternative, culturally rich, and theoretically robust pedagogical frameworks. This research provides an in-depth, interdisciplinary investigation into the primary mechanisms of educational mentoring according to the Qur'an, specifically focusing on the conceptualization of the "teacher as a mentor." Drawing upon a qualitative exploratory research design rooted in social constructivism, this study subjects 76 purposively sampled Qur'anic verses to reflexive thematic analysis to uncover the structural, cognitive, and relational mechanisms of prophetic mentoring. The analysis reveals ten distinct mentoring mechanisms, encompassing the cultivation of psychological safety, cognitive challenge, analytical scaffolding, attitude formation, and the anchoring of the mentoring dynamic in the Divine presence. Specifically, these mechanisms operate as an integrated behavioural matrix wherein high-challenge cognitive interventions are systematically calibrated with unconditional dialogical safety to simultaneously cultivate intellectual autonomy and moral fortitude. These findings are subsequently interpreted through the theoretical lens of Laurent A. Daloz's seminal mentoring theory,

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which posits that adult growth occurs through a careful calibration of Support, Challenge, and Vision. The study demonstrates that while the Qur'anic framework aligns closely with Daloz's developmental paradigm, it significantly advances and transforms it. By introducing a triadic relational model (Mentor-Mentee-Divine) and elevating the concept of "Vision" from mere psychosocial or career development to the ontological transformation of the soul (*tazkiyah*), the Qur'anic model resolves inherent limitations in secular mentoring theories, such as mentor burnout and mentee over-dependence. This report ultimately offers a sophisticated, theoretically advanced paradigm of educational mentoring that bridges classical Islamic theology with modern developmental psychology, providing actionable frameworks for educators, academic institutions, and psychological theorists.

KEYWORDS: Qur'anic pedagogy, Educational mentoring, Laurent Daloz, Reflexive thematic analysis, Teacher as mentor, Islamic education, Psychological safety, *tazkiyah*.

1. Introduction

Mentoring functions as a vital psychosocial, academic, and professional mechanism designed to foster personal growth, professional competence, and psychological resilience (Hosseini Zarrabi et al. 2025). Within educational and corporate ecosystems, the presence of a structured, high-quality mentoring relationship has been empirically linked to increased institutional retention, enhanced self-efficacy, accelerated leadership development, and profound socioeconomic mobility (Mentoring Complete 2023). The pedagogical efficacy of mentoring lies in its inherently relational nature; unlike didactic instruction, mentoring facilitates a dynamic transfer of knowledge, emotional intelligence, and professional identity through a sustained, dialogical partnership between an experienced guide and a developing learner (Mundey 2025). Consequently, educational policymakers and corporate strategists alike have increasingly relied upon formal mentoring programmes to address systemic disparities, enhance diversity, and cultivate future leadership capabilities (Ryan 2026).

However, despite the overwhelming consensus regarding the transformative impact of mentoring, the global educational and professional landscape is currently confronting a systemic crisis, widely identified in sociological and educational literature as the "mentoring gap" (Barnett & O'Mahony 2008). Recent macroeconomic and sociological data indicate that access to quality mentoring remains severely inequitable (Mafi et al. 2020) and, alarmingly, is in a state of rapid decline among younger cohorts. According to comprehensive national reports, approximately one in three

young adults currently navigate their developmental and educational transitions entirely without the guidance of a formal or informal mentor (Hosseini Zarrabi et al. 2025). The data further reveal that this deficit is actively widening; specifically, individuals belonging to Generation Z are 9% less likely to report having a mentor during their developmental years compared to preceding generations, with nearly 6% reporting absolute isolation from any meaningful adult guidance (Blad 2023). Furthermore, 63% of millennials in the workforce report that their leadership potential is stunted due to inadequate mentorship, and severe structural disparities persist among marginalised student populations and early-career academics, particularly women and minority groups (Ryan 2026). The consequences of this mentoring gap are profound, leading to decreased academic retention, heightened professional disengagement, and a pervasive lack of social mobility among vulnerable populations (Rezaei-Zadeh 2023).

Despite the urgency of this widening mentoring gap, the dominant theoretical frameworks deployed by institutions to address it remain predominantly rooted in Western, secular paradigms of corporate coaching and academic advising (Wakeman 2012). While these standard models have proven effective for specific, transactional outcomes, such as career advancement, skillset acquisition, and institutional retention, they frequently fail to address the holistic, ontological, and ethical dimensions of human development (Misawa & McClain 2019). Secular mentoring frameworks often inadvertently foster a highly individualistic and hyper-competitive ethos, prioritising measurable performance metrics over moral fortitude and psychological well-being (Brown-Nagin 2016).

Furthermore, these dyadic models place an immense psychological burden on the mentor to act as the sole provider of wisdom and support, frequently resulting in mentor burnout, whilst simultaneously risking mentee over-dependence (Barnett & O'Mahony 2008). Crucially, this limitation represents a profound knowledge gap within mainstream secular educational theory: contemporary literature acknowledges the limits of instrumental, performance-driven metrics but lacks robust, alternative relational frameworks capable of countering the rising epidemics of student alienation, identity fragmentation, and existential anxiety plaguing modern higher education. Consequently, a significant research gap exists regarding the exploration of culturally responsive, spiritually integrated mentoring models that can transcend transactional skill-building to foster deep characterological transformation. Specifically, there is a pronounced scarcity of interdisciplinary research that investigates the pedagogical and mentoring frameworks inherent in classical Islamic sources, notably the Qur'an (Mohammed et al. 2024). While Islamic educational philosophy

intrinsically exalts the role of the teacher as a mentor (*murabbī* or *murshid*), the precise, actionable mechanisms that define this mentoring relationship, as depicted in the communicative dialogues of the Qur'an, remain significantly under-theorised within contemporary empirical academic discourse (Adigun 2025).

Unearthing the structural and relational mechanisms of mentoring within the Qur'an presents a transformative opportunity to engage educational theorists, developmental psychologists, and practitioners worldwide. The Qur'an, traditionally approached primarily as a theological, legislative, or linguistic text, contains a rich, untapped reservoir of pedagogical dialogues and instructional narratives (Mohammed et al. 2024). These narratives frequently depict prophets and sages not merely as conveyors of divine edicts, but as sophisticated educators employing highly contextualised mentoring strategies to guide their followers through profound intellectual and spiritual transitions.

By meticulously extracting and operationalising the pedagogical strategies embedded in these Qur'anic verses, it becomes possible to construct a more holistic, resilient mentoring model. Such a framework promises not only to address the structural deficiencies of the secular mentoring gap by providing culturally resonant paradigms for Islamic educational institutions, but also to significantly enrich global educational theory by reintroducing the critical dimensions of ethics, ultimate purpose, and psychological safety into the mentoring dynamic (Mohammed et al. 2024).

Therefore, to bridge this conceptual divide, synthesise classical theology with modern psychological science, and advance contemporary developmental theory, this study addresses the following central research question: What are the primary mechanisms of educational mentoring according to the Qur'an?

2. Theoretical Framework

To properly conceptualise, categorise, and rigorously analyse the dynamics of the mentoring relationship extracted from the Qur'anic text, this study relies upon Daloz's Theory of Mentoring as its underlying theoretical framework. First introduced in his seminal work *Effective Teaching and Mentoring* (1986) and subsequently refined in adult education and developmental psychology literature, Daloz's constructivist model posits that learning is fundamentally a transformational journey rather than a mere accumulation of empirical facts or technical skills (Daloz 1999).

Drawing heavily upon constructivist philosophy and developmental stage theories, Daloz argues that the mentor functions as a critical guide on this psychological journey. The ultimate effectiveness of the mentor is determined by their ability to harmonise and calibrate three distinct but deeply interdependent components: Support, Challenge, and Vision (Daloz 2012).

1. **Support:** Within Daloz's framework, support refers to the affective, relational, and psychological interventions that affirm the mentee's intrinsic value and humanity. Support mechanisms include building deep interpersonal trust, establishing genuine rapport, demonstrating profound empathy, engaging in active listening, and actively reducing the anxiety associated with navigating ambiguity, failure, or novel educational environments (Daloz 1983). Support is not synonymous with mere agreement; rather, it creates the foundational psychological safety required for a mentee to be vulnerable, to disclose private thoughts, and to remain open to profound personal change without the fear of punitive judgement or intellectual ridicule (Daloz 1983).

2. **Challenge:** Conversely, challenge refers to the pedagogical interventions that compel the mentee to confront their current reality, question their limiting assumptions, and step outside their psychological and intellectual comfort zones (Daloz 1983). This involves setting exceptionally high expectations, establishing strict accountability, providing constructive, reality-based feedback, highlighting inconsistencies between the mentee's words and actions, and introducing deliberate cognitive dissonance (Bower 1998). Daloz asserts that a high level of challenge is essential in an educational environment; its absence leads inevitably to complacency, indulgence, and developmental apathy (Daloz, 1983).

3. **Vision:** Vision is the vector that provides direction, meaning, and ultimate purpose to the mentoring relationship. It involves offering the mentee a compelling glimpse of their future potential, establishing a transcendent goal that stretches beyond their current capabilities, and modelling what success, maturity, or mastery physically and intellectually looks like (Bower 1998). Without vision, support and challenge lack a coherent trajectory, leaving the mentee adrift in a sea of undirected emotional and cognitive stimuli.

Daloz's theory elegantly utilises a two-by-two relational matrix to demonstrate how the elements of support and challenge interact to shape the learning environment. An environment characterised by low support and low challenge results in *stasis*, where no learning or movement occurs. High

challenge without adequate support induces *retreat*, wherein the mentee experiences psychological withdrawal, defensiveness, and overwhelming anxiety. High support without the necessary challenge leads to mere *confirmation*, fostering a complacent environment where the mentee feels good but experiences no actual developmental progression. However, the precise convergence of high support and high challenge, guided by a clear and transcendent vision, results in optimal *growth* (Daloz 2012).

Daloz's theory is exceptionally suitable as the underlying framework for this study due to its inherently developmental, constructivist, and holistic nature. The Qur'anic narrative frequently depicts prophets and wise figures acting as guides who navigate their followers through profound intellectual, ethical, and spiritual transitions, moving them from states of deeply entrenched ignorance (*Jāhiliyyah*) to states of enlightenment and moral fortitude. Daloz's emphasis on the mentor creating a dynamic, carefully calibrated tension between psychological safety (support) and cognitive disruption (challenge) maps intimately onto the pedagogical rhetoric observed in classical Islamic theology. By utilising Daloz's established framework, this study can systematically categorise ancient, sacred textual dialogues into observable, modern psychological constructs, thereby allowing for a rigorous, interdisciplinary evaluation of Qur'anic mentoring mechanisms without imposing unnatural positivist metrics upon a theological text.

3. Research Design and Procedures

3.1. Philosophical Underpinning

This study is firmly situated within the philosophical paradigms of social constructivism and interpretivism, which fundamentally shape the methodological trajectory of the research. Epistemologically, interpretivism vehemently rejects the positivist notion that meaning is a hard, objective, and tangible entity existing independently of human consciousness, waiting to be discovered through purely quantitative measurement. Instead, it posits that knowledge is a complex, context-specific construct generated through human experience and interpretation (Guraya et al. 2023). Social constructivism further asserts that meaning is generated through communicative interactions, cultural practices, and historical contexts (Van der Walt 2020).

This philosophical orientation is not merely appropriate, but absolutely essential for this study because the Qur'an is a deeply rhetorical, literary, and dialogical text. Understanding the mentoring mechanisms within it

requires interpreting the profound nuances of conversations, historical contexts, and interpersonal dynamics depicted between prophets and their respective audiences. A rigid positivist approach seeking absolute, quantifiable variables would fail entirely to capture the profound psychological and relational subtleties embedded in the sacred text's narratives. Therefore, an interpretivist lens allows the analytical process to respect the subjective, socially situated nature of the text's pedagogical wisdom, acknowledging the researcher's role in translating these ancient dynamics into modern educational terminology (William 2024).

3.2. Study Design

To align with the interpretivist paradigm, a qualitative exploratory research design was adopted for this investigation. Qualitative exploratory designs are specifically designed to investigate complex social phenomena that lack a clearly defined set of expected outcomes, or where existing empirical theories are insufficient to explain intricate relational dynamics (Rezaei-Zadeh 2014). Given that the concept of the "teacher as a mentor" within the specific context of Qur'anic pedagogy has not been exhaustively mapped into actionable, operationalised mechanisms in contemporary English-language educational literature, an exploratory design permits an in-depth, nuanced examination of the text. This design provides the methodological flexibility required to uncover latent meanings, communicative actions, and contextual subtleties without prematurely forcing the textual data into preconceived, rigid quantitative models, thereby allowing the nature of Qur'anic mentorship to emerge organically.

3.3. Method

The primary analytical method employed to analyse the textual data was Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), as conceptualised and refined by Braun and Clarke. Unlike traditional, rigid coding methodologies that aim for absolute inter-coder reliability and strive to eliminate the researcher's influence, RTA explicitly embraces the researcher's active, subjective involvement in the knowledge-production process. RTA treats the researcher's theoretical embeddedness, disciplinary knowledge, and cultural background not as biases to be eliminated, but as critical analytical lenses necessary to elevate the data from mere semantic description to latent, conceptual abstraction (Braun & Clarke 2019).

This specific methodological strategy is the most appropriate for this study because the analysis of a religious, historical, and highly symbolic text

to extract modern educational concepts requires a high degree of reflexive interpretation. RTA allows the organic, inductive emergence of themes from the Qur'anic verses while simultaneously permitting the analytical depth necessary to connect these ancient themes to modern pedagogical theories like Daloz's framework.

3.4. Population and Sampling

The overarching theoretical population for this research conceptually comprised the entirety of the Qur'anic corpus (6,236 verses). However, to extract meaningful, dense data specifically regarding mentoring, a purposive sampling strategy was employed. Purposive sampling involves the deliberate, non-random selection of data units based on their direct conceptual relevance to the research question and their capacity to provide rich information. The unit of analysis was the individual verse or a contiguous set of verses comprising a distinct narrative interaction.

In this research, three main inclusion criteria and three main exclusion criteria for the verses were established. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. The presence of linguistic indicators of pedagogical intent, which themselves comprised three components:
    - Specific triliteral roots related to the field of teaching and education, including *ʿ-l-m* (teaching/knowledge), *ḥ-k-m* (wisdom), *ṣ-b-r* (patience), *h-d-y* (guidance), *r-sh-d* (Righteousness/maturity), *dh-k-r* (reminder), *z-k-w* (purification), *f-k-r* (reflection), *b-ṣ-r* (insight), *ʿ-q-l* (intellect), *d-ʿ-w* (invitation), *n-dh-r* (warning), and *b-sh-r* (encouragement/glad tidings);
    - Explicit imperative and prohibitive verbs targeting the behavioral improvement or development of the addressee;
    - Interrogative particles of denial or reflection, such as *hal*, *a*, and *afalā* in Arabic, which aim to provoke contemplation and enhance insight in the addressee.
2. Interactive structures, including direct dialogues (with verbs of speech), pedagogical vocative addresses such as *yā ayyuhā alladhīna āmanū* (O you who have believed), and *yā bunayya* (O my son), and exemplary narratives containing guiding actions;
3. Explicit references to the qualities of the mentor or to the obstacles in the developmental process, including leniency, consultation, humility,

and compassion on the one hand, and arrogance, neglect, and obstinacy on the other.

In contrast, the three exclusion criteria were formulated as follows:

1. Verses pertaining exclusively to jurisprudential rulings;
2. Verses dealing solely with abstract eschatological or monotheistic themes;
3. Repetitive content, which was coded only once in the coding process.

Based on this objective and replicable protocol, a final sample consisting of 76 verses was selected. The final sample consisted of 76 specific Qur'anic verses demonstrating the strongest alignment with mentoring actions, such as direct guidance, corrective feedback, psychological encouragement, Socratic questioning, and the gradual development of understanding. These verses predominantly featured dialogues between prophets (acting in the capacity of mentors) and their followers, or explicit instructional narratives directed at believers.

This purposive strategy is more appropriate than random sampling for textual analysis, as random sampling would likely yield vast quantities of jurisprudential or eschatological verses irrelevant to the specific dynamics of mentoring. The sampling process was iterative and continued concurrently with data analysis until no additional verses generated new mentoring codes or substantially altered the existing thematic structure.

3.5. Data Gathering and Analysis

Data analysis proceeded meticulously through the recursive, six-phase process outlined in Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The analytical process commenced with prolonged familiarisation and deep, repeated reading of the 76 sampled verses, ensuring a holistic grasp of their contextual meanings, linguistic nuances, and historical applications. Following this deep immersion, an inductive, data-driven coding process was executed. Initial codes were generated directly from the textual data, focusing on guidance-oriented actions, rhetorical strategies, and communicative practices (Table 1).

Table 1. Example of the Coding Process

Qur'anic Verse	Translation	Sub-Theme	Theme
قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ (Q.3:137)	Certain [Divine] precedents have passed before you. So travel over the land and then observe how the fate of the deniers was.	Reflection on experiences	Facilitating Thought and Reflection Space
وَإِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَلَّى مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَنْ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَأَنَّ فِي أُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (Q. 31:7)	And when Our signs are recited to him he turns away disdainfully as if he had not heard them [at all], as if there were a deafness in his ears. So inform him of a painful punishment.	lack of listening intention	Active listening
وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ (Q.29:6)	Whoever strives, strives only for his own sake. Indeed Allah has no need of the creatures.	Activating agency	Creating and Strengthening Attitude

Through continuous, recursive comparison, these hundreds of initial codes were clustered into broader categories of mentor actions, eventually coalescing into ten distinct, preliminary themes. These themes were iteratively reviewed against the entire dataset to ensure internal coherence (that the data within themes held together meaningfully) and coherence with the broader dataset (that the themes accurately reflected the overarching dataset). This inductive approach was particularly important; rather than imposing external psychological theories onto the text during the initial coding phase, the methodology allowed the authentic voice and internal structure of the Qur'anic mentoring paradigm to dictate the findings.

3.6. Trustworthiness

To ensure the academic rigour, credibility, and trustworthiness of the findings within the qualitative interpretivist paradigm, several robust strategies were employed. Reflexivity was actively maintained through the continuous documentation of the analytical process, acknowledging the interpretive framework and pre-existing knowledge applied to the text. To bolster credibility and prevent unchecked subjectivity from distorting the findings, a peer-review process was instituted wherein the initial coding framework and the subsequent thematic structures were independently evaluated by secondary researchers familiar with both qualitative methodology and Qur'anic exegesis. Discrepancies in the thematic abstraction were resolved through dialogic consensus and constant, recursive comparison against the textual data, thereby ensuring that the final interpretations were robust, defensible, and grounded in the textual and

semantic features of the Qur'anic verses.

4. Findings

The rigorous application of reflexive thematic analysis to the 76 purposively sampled verses yielded ten distinct, highly operationalised mechanisms of educational mentoring. These mechanisms seamlessly encapsulate the cognitive, relational, and spiritual strategies employed by the "teacher as mentor" within the Qur'anic narrative architecture.

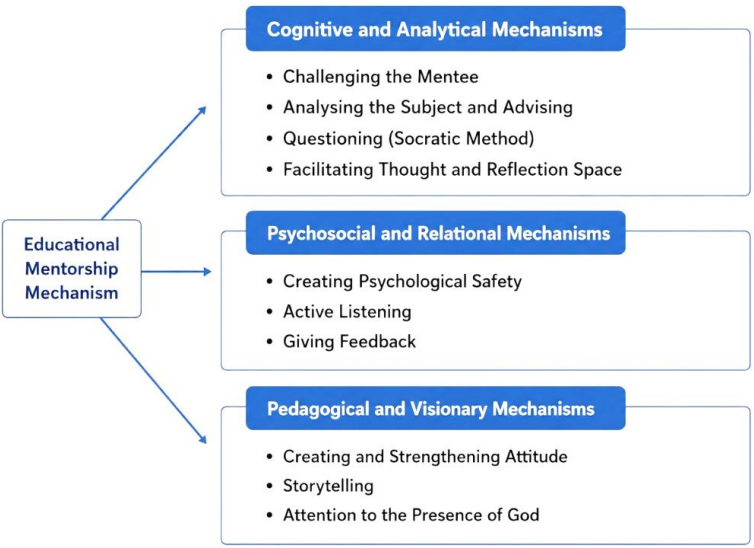


Figure 1. The Educational Mentorship Mechanism

To provide clarity and structural coherence, the findings are organised into three thematic tables reflecting the nature of the mentoring intervention: Cognitive and Analytical Mechanisms, Psychosocial and Relational Mechanisms, and Pedagogical and Visionary Mechanisms, as shown in Figure 1.

4.1. Cognitive and Analytical Mechanisms

The first category of findings relates directly to the mentor's pivotal role in stimulating the mentee's intellectual capacities, deliberately disrupting stagnant thinking patterns, and providing logical frameworks for rigorous problem-solving (Table 2).

Table 2. Cognitive and Analytical Mechanisms of Mentoring According to the Qur'an

Mentoring Mechanism	Conceptual Action	Illustrative Qur'anic Verse	Translation
Challenging the Mentee	Testing psychological limits; cognitive disruption; managing expectations	قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبراً (Q.18:67)	He said, Indeed you cannot have patience with me!
Analysing the Subject and Advising	Logical argumentation; highlighting outcomes; evidence-based reasoning	قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ (Q.2:258)	Abraham said, "My Lord is He who gives life and brings death," he replied, "I [too] give life and bring death." Abraham said, "Indeed Allah brings the sun from the east; now you bring it from the west." Thereat the faithless one was dumbfounded.
Questioning (Socratic Method)	Using interrogatives to provoke critical self-awareness and dismantle assumptions	وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ (Q.36:78)	He draws comparisons for Us, and forgets his own creation. He says, "Who shall revive the bones when they have decayed?"
Facilitating Thought and Reflection Space	Removing cognitive barriers; demanding deep reflection on historical/personal experiences	أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا (Q.47:24)	Do they not contemplate the Qur'an, or are there locks on the hearts?

As shown in Table 2, the Qur'anic mentoring model heavily emphasises the deliberate disruption of the mentee's cognitive equilibrium as a prerequisite for deep learning. The mechanism of *Challenging the Mentee* is epitomised in the profound narrative dialogue between Khidr (acting as the divine mentor) and Moses (the mentee) in Surah al-Kahf. Before the educational journey even commences, Khidr sets a formidable psychological challenge by bluntly stating, *"Indeed you cannot have patience with me"* (Q. 18:67).

This is a highly sophisticated pedagogical tactic; rather than providing false reassurance or diminishing the difficulty of the curriculum, the mentor deliberately introduces friction. This tests the mentee's resolve, manages their expectations, and prepares their cognitive architecture to endure the ambiguity, paradox, and uncertainty inherent in the upcoming lessons.

Simultaneously, *Analysing the Subject and Advising* demonstrates the mentor's fundamental responsibility to provide robust logical scaffolding. In verse Q. 2:258, Abraham does not merely assert his theological beliefs to the tyrant Nimrod; he engages in a profound intellectual debate, employing empirical observation (the rising of the sun) to systematically dismantle his opponent's worldview. The mentor here acts as a facilitator of critical thinking, teaching the mentee how to construct unassailable arguments

based on observable evidence and logical deduction, moving beyond mere dogmatic assertion.

This cognitive scaffolding is further reinforced by the pervasive mechanism of *Questioning*. The Qur'an frequently employs rhetorical and Socratic questioning, such as addressing the sceptic by asking how disintegrated bones can be revived (Q. 36:78), to bypass defensive psychological barriers and force the mentee into a state of productive cognitive dissonance.

Finally, the mentor is tasked with *Facilitating Thought and Reflection Space*. By provocatively asking if there are *"locks on the hearts?"* (Q. 47:24), the text underscores the mentor's duty to identify and help dismantle the internal biases, dogmas, or emotional blockages that prevent deep, transformative reflection.

4.2. Psychosocial and Relational Mechanisms

The second category encompasses the affective, emotional, and interpersonal strategies utilised by the mentor to build strong trust, maintain motivation, and secure the mentee's psychological wellbeing during the often-stressful educational process (Table 3).

Table 3. Psychosocial and Relational Mechanisms of Mentoring According to the Qur'an

Mentoring Mechanism	Conceptual Action	Illustrative Qur'anic Verse	Translation
Creating Psychological Safety	Ensuring autonomy; showing profound leniency; preserving privacy; avoiding coercion	فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ… (Q.3:159)	It is by Allah's mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and hardhearted, surely they would have scattered from around you. So excuse them, and plead for forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs.
Active Listening	Deep observation; acute attention to non-verbal cues, context, and emotional subtext	وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ (Q.47:30)	Yet you will recognize them by their tone of speech, and Allah knows your deeds.
Giving Feedback	Providing constructive, behaviour-focused critique without labelling, mockery, or public shaming	وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ (Q.49:11)	And do not defame one another, nor insult one another by [calling] nicknames.

As summarised in Table 3, for intense cognitive challenge to result in growth rather than psychological retreat or trauma, the mentoring

environment must be anchored in profound trust. The mechanism of *Creating Psychological Safety* emerges as a fundamental cornerstone of Qur'anic pedagogy. Verse Q. 3:159 aptly illustrates this relational dynamic: the Prophet Muhammad (serving as an archetypal mentor) is commended for his divine leniency and explicitly warned that harshness or rudeness would result in the alienation and disbanding of his followers. The explicit directive to *"excuse them, and plead for forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs"* outlines a collaborative, highly empathetic, and non-authoritarian mentoring dynamic.

By inviting mentees into the consultative decision-making process (*shūrā*), the mentor builds agency, ownership, and a safe space where inevitable mistakes are met with forgiveness rather than punitive exile. This psychological safety is further illustrated in verses establishing freedom of belief, such as *"There is no compulsion in religion"* (Q. 2:256), which may support the mentee's intellectual freedom and intrinsic motivation.

Active Listening within this framework extends far beyond mere auditory reception; it is framed as a profound observational and psychological discipline. Verse Q. 47:30 instructs the mentor to understand individuals through the *"tone of their speech."* This demands that the mentor develop acute emotional intelligence, becoming capable of reading subtext, hesitation, and non-verbal cues to better understand the mentee's psychological state, which may not always correspond to their overt statements.

Coupled inextricably with active listening is the delicate mechanism of *Giving Feedback*. The Qur'an meticulously regulates how critique must be delivered to preserve the mentee's dignity. Verse Q. 49:11 explicitly forbids mockery, insulting, and the use of offensive nicknames. In an educational and mentoring context, this signifies that feedback should be strictly behaviour-focused and objective, completely avoiding *ad hominem* attacks, psychological labelling, or public shaming that could undermine the mentee's self-esteem and compromise the previously established psychological safety.

4.3. Pedagogical and Visionary Mechanisms

The final category details how the mentor instils long-term resilience, shapes the mentee's overarching worldview, and provides a transcendent, eternal anchoring for their educational efforts.

Table 4. Pedagogical and Visionary Mechanisms of Mentoring According to the Qur'an

Mentoring Mechanism	Conceptual Action	Illustrative Qur'anic Verse	Translation
Creating and Strengthening Attitude	Normalising adversity; building psychological grit; cultivating patience	يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ(Q.31:17)	O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.
Storytelling	Using historical narratives, allegories, and parables as indirect educational models	وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ (Q.29:43)	And We draw these parables for mankind; but no one grasps them except those who have knowledge.
Attention to the Presence of God	Instilling mindfulness (*Muraqabah*); shifting ultimate accountability	الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ(Q.3:191)	Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.

As illustrated in Table 4, to sustain the mentee through the arduous, often painful process of personal and intellectual development, the mentor must actively engage in *Creating and Strengthening Attitude*. Luqmān's profound advice to his son (Q. 31:17) serves as a masterclass in this mechanism. The mentor explicitly prepares the mentee for inevitable hardship (*"be patient over what befalls you"*) and frames this endurance not as a failure, but as a marker of high moral resolve. By actively normalising suffering and adversity as intrinsic components of the developmental journey, as echoed in verse Q. 90:4, *"certainly We created man in travail,"* the mentor may help the mentee develop resilience in the face of despair, fostering profound psychological grit and perseverance that can extend beyond the formal mentoring period.

To operationalise these abstract attitudes and moral imperatives, the mentor utilises the powerful mechanism of *Storytelling*. The Qur'an frequently employs rich parables, allegories, and historical narratives, explicitly noting that *"We draw these parables for"* (Q. 29:43). Storytelling acts as an indirect, highly persuasive mentoring tool. It allows the mentee to project themselves into the narrative, learning from the successes and failures of historical archetypes without feeling directly attacked, lectured, or defensive.

Finally, the most distinctive and transcendent mechanism of this paradigm is *Attention to the Presence of God*. The Qur'anic mentor constantly redirects the mentee's focus away from temporal, earthly concerns toward a perpetual awareness of the Divine (Q. 3:191). By fostering a state of *murāqabah* (deep mindfulness of God), the mentor shifts

the locus of evaluation from human approval to divine pleasure. This mechanism fundamentally alters the mentoring dynamic, infusing every action, thought, and hardship with transcendent meaning, ultimate accountability, and profound spiritual significance.

5. Discussion

The ultimate aim of this study is twofold: first, to interpret the extracted Qur'anic mentoring mechanisms through the well-established theoretical lens of Laurent Daloz, demonstrating their alignment with modern developmental psychology; and second, to demonstrate how these theological findings may extend, enrich, and potentially transcend that secular theory.

5.1. Interpreting the Findings through Daloz's Mentoring Theory

When viewed through the analytical prism of Laurent A. Daloz's theory of adult learning, the findings of this study demonstrate a remarkable, intricate synergy with the core tenets of modern developmental psychology. Daloz (2012) argues that effective mentoring necessitates a delicate, deliberate equilibrium between Support, Challenge, and Vision to prevent the mentee from falling into developmental stasis or psychological retreat. The Qur'anic mechanisms identified in this study closely correspond to and operationalise this triadic framework, providing a granular blueprint of how these broad theoretical concepts may be enacted in dialogical practice.

As demonstrated in Figure 2, the ten identified mechanisms are systematically reconciled with the hierarchical levels of the Daloz model. The Qur'anic emphasis on *Creating Psychological Safety*, *Active Listening*, and *Giving Feedback* (specifically feedback delivered free from mockery or insult) constitutes a significant manifestation of Daloz's concept of Support. By emphasising leniency, consultation, and forgiveness in interpersonal relations (Q. 3:159), the Qur'anic text establishes relational conditions that closely correspond to those identified by Daloz as important for reducing anxiety and building foundational trust (Daloz 1983). The mentee is conceptually situated within a pedagogical environment where their autonomy is respected, potentially empowering them to engage with the educational process openly, without excessive fear of psychological harm or authoritarian reprisal.

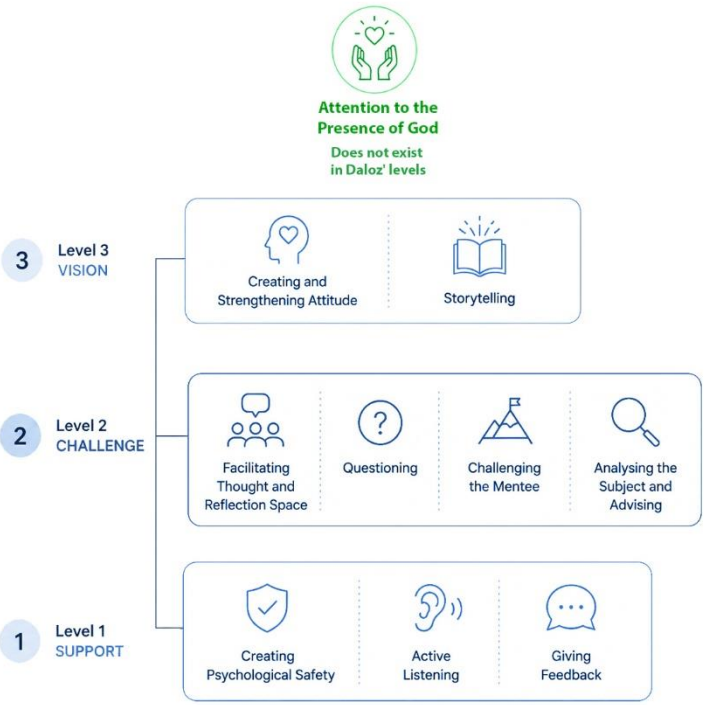


Figure 2. Mapping Mechanisms to the Levels of Daloz's Theory

Conversely, the mechanisms of *Challenging the Mentee*, *Questioning*, and *Facilitating Thought and Reflection Space* closely correspond to Daloz's concept of Challenge. The Qur'anic mentor does not allow the mentee to rest in intellectual complacency or dogmatic inertia. Just as Daloz suggests mentors may introduce perplexing tasks, demand accountability, and highlight limiting or incorrect assumptions (Bower 1998), Khidr deliberately challenges Moses' expectations of an easy, comprehensible journey, and Abraham employs empirical reasoning to challenge his opponent's worldview. The relentless Socratic questioning found throughout the text forces the mentee to confront their cognitive dissonance, thereby driving the intense intellectual growth that Daloz identifies in the optimal high-support/high-challenge quadrant of his matrix.

Finally, Daloz's vital concept of Vision, providing a trajectory and meaning for the mentee's future, is reflected in the Qur'anic mechanisms of *Creating and Strengthening Attitude* and *Storytelling*. Through vivid parables and explicit instructions concerning resilience, the mentor furnishes the mentee with a clear, compelling picture of what spiritual and intellectual maturity may entail. This visionary modelling may provide motivational resources necessary to endure the demands of the challenging

educational process (Kasapoglu et al. 2023).

5.2. *Advancing Daloz's Theory: The Triadic Paradigm and Ontological Transformation*

While Daloz's framework accommodates and illuminates many of the psychosocial and cognitive mechanisms identified in the text, the findings of this study also suggest ways in which the framework may be extended when applied to a spiritually integrated paradigm. Traditional, secular iterations of Daloz's theory, and indeed, the vast majority of Western mentoring models, are severely constrained by their strictly anthropocentric focus and temporal horizons. They view the mentoring relationship strictly as a dyad (Mentor and Mentee) and define Vision primarily in temporal terms, such as career advancement, leadership acquisition, or psychosocial adjustment (Misawa & McClain 2019). The findings of this study advance Daloz's theory in three profound, structural ways, as visually synthesised in Figure 3.

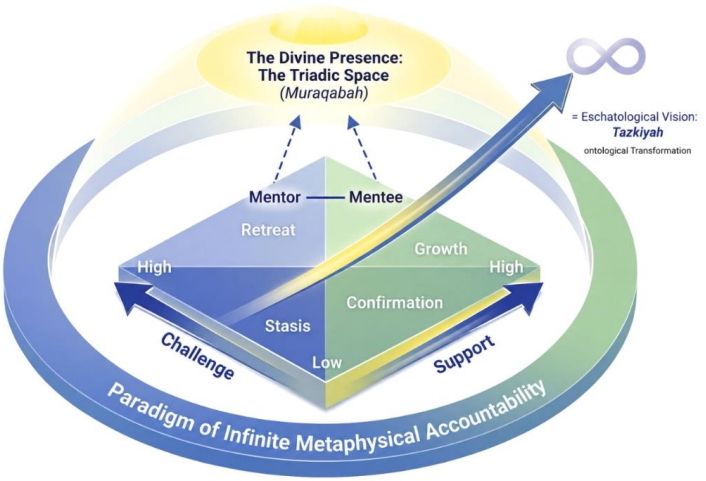


Figure 3. Advancing Daloz's Theory: The Triadic Paradigm and Ontological Transformation

The advanced model proposed in Figure 3 illustrates the substantial evolution of Daloz's Support-Challenge-Vision matrix into a holistic, spiritualised ecosystem.

First, the findings disrupt the traditional dyadic structure of mentoring by introducing The Divine Presence as a Triadic Mentoring Space. Crucially, rather than treating this node as a subjective, internal religious belief, this study operationalises the Divine Presence as an objective structural axis of

self-transcendence and transcendental ethics within the pedagogical environment. The mechanism of *Attention to the Presence of God* reveals that, in the Qur'anic model, the mentoring relationship is never a closed, isolated loop between two human actors. By anchoring the dyad to a supra-individual, ultimate reality, the framework shifts the locus of evaluation and meaning-making away from human ego and performance metrics toward an absolute ethical and existential standard. God is an active, observing, and ultimate participant (Smith 2026). This conceptual extension addresses a chronic, systemic issue in secular mentoring: mentor burnout and mentee over-dependence (Barnett & O'Mahony 2008). Because the Qur'anic mentor constantly redirects the mentee's reliance, gratitude, and accountability away from themselves and toward this transcendent horizon, acknowledging the theological reality that *"you cannot guide whomever you wish, but [it is] Allah [who] guides whomever He wishes"* (Q. 28:56), the mentor is relieved of the impossible psychological burden of being the ultimate saviour or infallible source of truth.

In psychological terms, this triadic framing acts as a structural buffer; by de-centering the mentor as the absolute authority and orienting both participants toward a shared paradigm of self-transcendence, it reduces the emotional codependency and systemic vulnerability inherent in standard secular dyads. The mentor transitions from being a guru to a co-traveller facilitating a connection to the Divine, which may enhance the psychological sustainability and humility of the mentoring relationship (Miller 2019).

Second, the study advances Daloz's concept of Vision by elevating it from mere professional or cognitive development to eschatological and ontological transformation (*tazkiyah*). In secular models, the vision of the future is inevitably tied to institutional success, academic graduation, or personal self-actualisation (Brantley 2020). However, the Qur'anic mentor instils a vision that transcends temporal life entirely. The ultimate goal of the mentoring relationship is *tazkiyah*, the holistic purification of the soul, aimed at achieving success not just in the material world, but in the eternal Hereafter (Shendyka et al. 2025). By integrating this transcendent, eternal vision, the mentor instils a level of grit and resilience (as seen in the *Strengthening Attitude* mechanism) that secular models struggle to replicate. This finding addresses a critical gap in contemporary holistic pedagogy discourse, where theorists emphasise the integration of intellectual and spiritual dimensions to prevent the fragmentation of knowledge and cultivate deep character transformation over superficial cognitive outcomes (Kedang 2026). Meaning-centred education can be anchored in a transcendent horizon, as demonstrated in recent models of curriculum

reform designed for spiritual transformation (Listiana et al. 2025). When the mentee's vision is anchored in eternity, temporal failures, academic rejections, or career setbacks lose their power to induce psychological retreat, thereby supporting continuous, lifelong growth and unshakeable moral fortitude (Joseph et al. 2026).

Finally, the findings advance the theory by proposing a Paradigm of Infinite Accountability. Daloz (1983) notes that challenge involves holding the mentee accountable to the changing expectations of human stakeholders and organisational goals. The Qur'anic model of *Analysing the Subject and Advising* pushes accountability to its absolute metaphysical limit by constantly highlighting the ultimate, eschatological consequences of the mentee's decisions and moral behaviour. This transforms educational feedback from mere administrative correction or performance reviews into a matter of profound existential urgency (Rezaizade 2025), thereby generating a much deeper, intrinsic, and unwavering motivation within the mentee (Beckwith 2010).

6. Conclusion

This study undertook an extensive interdisciplinary exploration of the mechanisms of educational mentoring within the Qur'an, seeking to bridge the stark theoretical and conceptual gap between classical Islamic pedagogy and contemporary developmental psychology. By subjecting 76 purposively sampled Qur'anic verses to rigorous reflexive thematic analysis, the research systematically operationalised the archetype of the "teacher as mentor." This process revealed a highly sophisticated matrix of ten distinct cognitive, relational, and pedagogical mechanisms. These mechanisms demonstrate that the Qur'anic framework incorporates sophisticated educational strategies, ranging from the meticulous cultivation of psychological safety and intellectual autonomy to the deliberate induction of cognitive dissonance, thereby fostering profound, holistic human development.

Crucially, interpreting these findings through Daloz's established mentoring theory not only highlights the Qur'an's structural alignment with contemporary psychosocial perspectives but also reveals the boundaries and limitations of purely secular educational paradigms. By anchoring these findings within current literature, this paper contributes directly to international dialogues on spiritual mentoring and holistic pedagogy. The Qur'anic model significantly advances Daloz's theory by reconceptualising the conventional, anthropocentric mentor-mentee dyad as a spiritually anchored, triadic relationship, in which the Divine Presence acts as the

ultimate source of support, guidance, and accountability. Furthermore, by elevating the mentoring Vision from transient career objectives to the eternal, ontological purification of the self (*tazkiyah*), the Qur'anic framework provides a distinctive source of psychological resilience and ethical clarity. Ultimately, this research offers a synthesised, culturally resonant, and theoretically informed mentoring paradigm. This advanced framework may enable modern educational institutions and policymakers to move beyond merely cultivating intellectual competence or professional retention, thereby supporting the development of profound spiritual, psychological, and moral fortitude in the next generation of learners.

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