

## The Concept of Educational Leadership in the Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini

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**Abstract:** This study explores the concept of educational leadership within the philosophical and political thought of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. As the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Khomeini viewed education not merely as an instrument for intellectual instruction, but as a vital mechanism for moral purification, political awakening, and societal transformation. Utilizing a qualitative research design with a historical-philosophical and content analysis approach, this paper examines primary speeches, writings, and decrees by Khomeini concerning educational theory and governance. The findings indicate that educational leadership in Khomeini's thought is intrinsically tied to spiritual guidance (*tarbiyah*) and the concept of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist). The ideal educational leader functions as a moral exemplar (*murrabbi*) aimed at liberating society from cultural imperialism, fostering self-reliance, and aligning educational institutions with Islamic ethics and social justice. Ultimately, Khomeini's model redefines educational leadership as a dual responsibility of political resistance and spiritual elevation, positioning the educator as a catalyst for holistic ideological reformation.

**Keywords:**  
Educational  
Leadership;  
Ayatollah Khomeini;  
Islamic Education;  
Velayat-e Faqih;  
Tarbiyah; Spiritual  
Guidance

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi konsep kepemimpinan pendidikan dalam pemikiran filosofis dan politik Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini. Sebagai pendiri Republik Islam Iran, Khomeini memandang pendidikan tidak sekadar instrumen pengajaran intelektual, melainkan sebagai mekanisme vital untuk penyucian moral, kesadaran politik, dan transformasi sosial. Menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan historis-filosofis dan analisis isi, artikel ini mengkaji pidato, karya tulis, dan dekrit utama Khomeini mengenai teori pendidikan dan tata kelola masyarakat. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan pendidikan dalam pemikiran Khomeini terikat secara intrinsik dengan bimbingan spiritual (*tarbiyah*) dan konsep *Velayat-e Faqih* (Wilayah Fakih). Pemimpin pendidikan yang ideal berperan sebagai teladan moral (*murrabbi*) yang bertujuan membebaskan masyarakat dari imperialisme budaya, memupuk kemandirian, serta menyelaraskan lembaga pendidikan dengan etika Islam dan keadilan sosial. Pada akhirnya, model Khomeini meredefinisikan kepemimpinan pendidikan sebagai tanggung jawab ganda antara perlawanan politik dan elevasi spiritual, dengan menempatkan pendidik sebagai katalis reformasi ideologis secara holistik.

**Kata Kunci:**  
Kepemimpinan  
Pendidikan;  
Ayatullah Khomeini;  
Pendidikan Islam;  
Velayat-e Faqih;  
Tarbiyah; Bimbingan  
Spiritual

## **A. Introduction**

Educational leadership has long been recognized as a fundamental catalyst for social transformation, institutional efficacy, and cultural continuity across human civilizations. In contemporary scholarship, educational leadership extends beyond administrative management and bureaucratic oversight to encompass visionary guidance, ethical stewardship, and ideological orientation (Bush, 2011). As societies navigate rapid global shifts, the theoretical frameworks governing educational leadership are increasingly scrutinized for their cultural, spiritual, and philosophical grounding.

Historically, paradigms of educational leadership in mainstream academic discourse have been heavily dominated by Western-centric, technocratic, and neoliberal models. These perspectives often emphasize transactional efficiency, managerial performance, and market-driven outcomes, frequently divorcing educational processes from deeper metaphysical and ethical dimensions (Sergiovanni, 2007). Consequently, scholars in comparative education have highlighted the limitations of applying universalized Western frameworks to non-Western contexts where education is inextricably linked to faith, morality, and communal identity.

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, education (*tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib*) is intrinsically holistic, aiming at the complete development of the human soul alongside intellectual enrichment (Halstead, 2004). Unlike secular paradigms that divide spiritual life from civic instruction, Islamic educational philosophy posits that knowledge acquires true legitimacy only when aligned with divine oneness (*Tawhid*) and moral accountability (Nasr, 1987). Educational leadership within this framework is thus conceptualized not merely as a professional role, but as a sacred trust (*amanah*) rooted in prophetic guidance.

During the twentieth century, the Muslim world experienced profound socio-political upheavals driven by colonialism, Westernization, and secular modernization initiatives. In many Muslim-majority nations, post-colonial

state-building efforts sought to marginalize traditional religious educational institutions in favor of secular systems modeled after Western nation-states (Keddie, 2006). This structural dichotomy created an enduring crisis of identity, ethics, and leadership across public educational institutions throughout the Middle East and beyond.

In response to these socio-cultural transformations, critical Islamic thinkers emerged to formulate alternative epistemological and political frameworks designed to reclaim Islamic heritage and sovereignty. Among the most influential and revolutionary figures of the twentieth century was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989), whose philosophical, jurisprudential, and political thought reshaped not only the geopolitical landscape of Iran but also contemporary Islamic sociopolitical discourse (Algar, 1988).

While Ayatollah Khomeini is widely recognized as the supreme political architect of the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, his foundational contributions to educational philosophy and leadership remain critically significant yet comparatively under-analyzed. Khomeini viewed the prevailing educational structures of his time as instruments of cultural imperialism (*gharbzadegi* or Westoxification) that alienated Muslim youth from their spiritual and cultural roots (Dabashi, 1993; Khomeini, 1981).

For Khomeini, education was not a passive mechanism for transmitting technical skills, but a dynamic arena of moral purification and political liberation. He asserted that human beings are inherently capable of infinite spiritual elevation or moral degradation, making the nature of educational leadership the decisive factor in determining societal destiny (Khomeini, 1981). Therefore, educational institutions were positioned as the primary frontlines for holistic societal reform and spiritual awakening.

Central to Khomeini's thought is the concept of *tarbiyah* (spiritual and moral education), which he prioritized over raw intellectual instruction (*ta'lim*).

Khomeini famously argued that unrefined intellect without spiritual purification is the most dangerous force in human history, leading to corruption, oppression, and moral bankruptcy (Arjomand, 1988; Khomeini, 1981). In his paradigm, an educational leader must first undergo rigorous self-purification (*tazkiyah-ye nafs*) before attempting to guide or lead others.

The theoretical foundation of Khomeini's model of leadership is anchored in his doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist). While *Velayat-e Faqih* is predominantly studied as a constitutional and political theory, its underlying logic is intensely pedagogical (Rajaei, 2007). The *Faqih* (jurist-leader) functions fundamentally as an educator-in-chief whose supreme objective is to guide the collective conscience of society toward divine justice and ethical rectitude.

Following the 1979 Revolution, Khomeini implemented his educational vision through the Cultural Revolution (*Enqelab-e Farhangi*), which sought to purge Western ideological dominance from Iranian universities and schools (Mehran, 1989). This movement redefined educational leadership across all tiers of governance, mandating that academic administrators, teachers, and curriculum designers align their pedagogical practices with Islamic values and anti-imperialist principles (Paivandi, 2012).

In Khomeini's framework, the ideal educational leader embodies the attributes of a *murrabbi*—a spiritual mentor and moral exemplar whose authority derives from piety, knowledge (*'ilm*), and commitment to social justice (*'adalah*). This perspective challenges bureaucratic and transactional views of leadership, asserting that true educational authority cannot be conferred solely by official titles or administrative appointments, but must be earned through moral integrity (Mottahedeh, 1985).

Furthermore, Khomeini articulated a strong connection between educational leadership and political consciousness (*aagahi*). He argued that educational leaders must foster critical awareness among students regarding global power asymmetries, economic exploitation, and cultural subversion

(Abrahamian, 1989; Khomeini, 1981). Education under his vision was explicitly counter-hegemonic, designed to empower the oppressed (*mostaz'afin*) against corrupt socio-political elites.

Another vital aspect of Khomeini's educational thought was his effort to bridge the historical divide between the traditional Islamic seminaries (*Hawza*) and modern secular universities (*Daneshgah*). He recognized that the polarization between religious scholars and modern intellectuals weakened the nation's cohesion, calling upon educational leaders from both domains to synthesize religious ethics with scientific advancement (Davari, 2005).

Despite the profound influence of Khomeini's ideas on state policy and educational institutions in Iran, academic literature on educational leadership has largely treated his contributions as political ideology rather than systematically evaluating them as a coherent model of educational leadership. Existing studies often analyze Khomeini's political speeches or revolutionary strategy without synthesizing his specific teachings on pedagogical governance, administrative ethics, and institutional leadership.

This literature gap creates a major theoretical blind spot in comparative educational leadership studies. By overlooking Islamic revolutionary approaches to education, contemporary scholarship risks presenting a monolithic view of leadership that fails to reflect non-Western and faith-based governance paradigms operating in revolutionary and post-revolutionary contexts.

Moreover, understanding Khomeini's concept of educational leadership provides essential insights into the broader tensions between tradition and modernity, secularism and religion, and state control and moral education in contemporary Islamic societies. Re-examining his original speeches, decrees, and written works (*Sahifeh-ye Imam*) through the analytical lens of educational leadership theory allows scholars to evaluate how spiritual philosophy translates into organizational practice.

Consequently, there is a clear academic imperative to critically examine how Ayatollah Khomeini conceptualized the role, qualifications, objectives, and methods of educational leadership. Addressing this problem requires systematically interrogating his primary texts and contextualizing his thought within wider Islamic educational philosophy and contemporary educational theory.

To address these conceptual gaps, the primary objective of this study is to systematically reconstruct and analyze the concept of educational leadership in the thought of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. By synthesizing his primary philosophical, jurisprudential, and political writings, this research articulates the foundational principles that define his unique paradigm of educational leadership.

Specifically, this study aims to accomplish four key sub-objectives: first, to examine the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of educational leadership in Khomeini's works; second, to identify the essential qualities, roles, and responsibilities required of an educational leader according to his vision; third, to analyze how the doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih* shapes educational governance and institutional policy; and fourth, to evaluate the relationship between spiritual purification (*tarbiyah*) and political emancipation within his pedagogical model.

Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute significantly to the fields of comparative educational leadership, Islamic educational philosophy, and Middle Eastern studies. By providing a comprehensive theoretical framework of Khomeini's educational leadership model, this study offers fresh perspectives on non-Western educational paradigms, enriching global academic discourse on the intersection of faith, politics, and leadership in education.

## **B. Method**

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in philosophical-historical inquiry and hermeneutic content analysis to

systematically examine the concept of educational leadership in the thought of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Because this research investigates theoretical frameworks, theological doctrines, and political ideologies embedded within primary historical texts, a qualitative hermeneutic approach is uniquely suited for interpreting the nuanced meanings, foundational premises, and pedagogical implications of Khomeini's works. This methodological framework facilitates an in-depth analysis of educational leadership not merely as an administrative function, but as a dynamic, evolving construct operating at the intersection of Islamic jurisprudence, socio-political revolution, and state-building.

The primary data for this study consist of the written works, public speeches, official decrees, and transcribed lectures of Ayatollah Khomeini. Crucially, the comprehensive multi-volume compilation *Sahifeh-ye Imam* serves as the principal textual dataset, alongside pivotal foundational works such as *Velayat-e Faqih: Hokumat-e Eslami* (Islamic Government) and *Kashf al-Asrar* (Unveiling of Secrets). Secondary data sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, historical accounts of the Iranian Cultural Revolution, and critical commentaries on contemporary Islamic educational theory. The selection of materials specifically targets primary passages and secondary literature addressing institutional governance, moral purification (*tarbiyah*), anti-imperialist education, and administrative ethics.

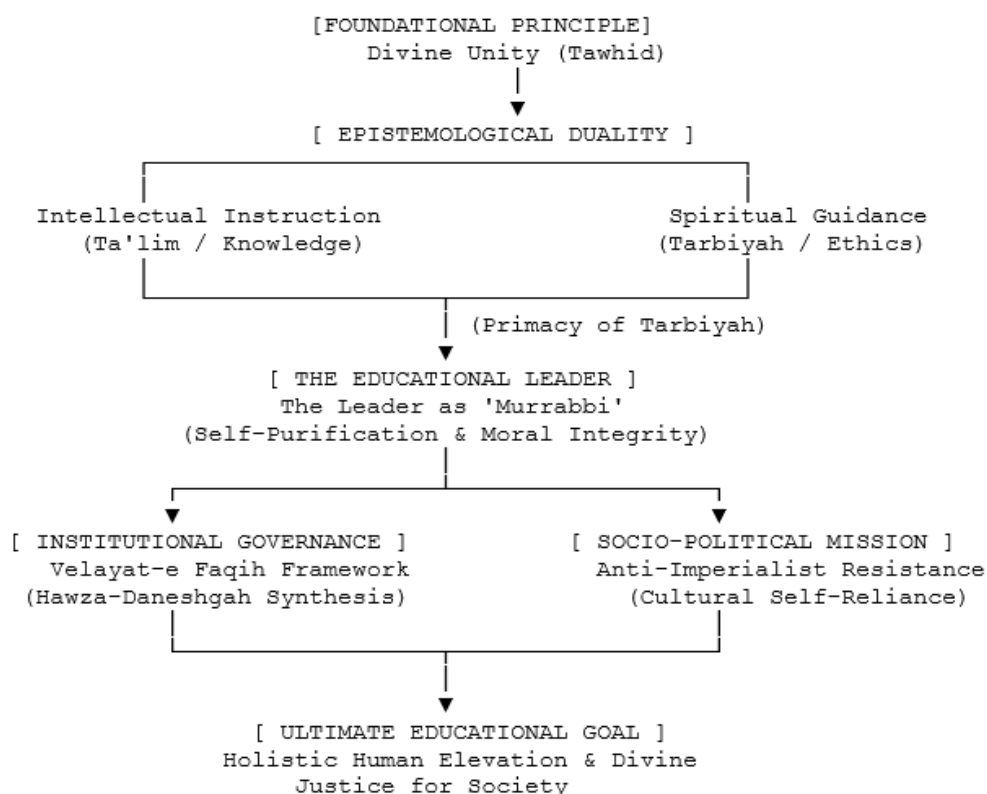
Data analysis is conducted through systematic thematic content analysis combined with contextual textual criticism. The analytical procedure involves an iterative coding process applied to the primary corpus to identify core concepts, recurring motifs, and overarching theoretical themes concerning pedagogical leadership. These thematic codes are subsequently categorized into structural dimensions, such as the moral attributes of the educational leader (*murrabbi*), the pedagogical function of the jurist-leader (*Faqih*), and the socio-political objectives of revolutionary education. To maintain analytical rigor and objective validity, findings are cross-evaluated through source triangulation



and contextualized within the broader traditions of Islamic educational philosophy and comparative leadership theory.

### C. Results and Discussion

The qualitative analysis of primary texts—most notably the *Sahifeh-ye Imam*—alongside historical and philosophical literature reveals that educational leadership in the thought of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is not an isolated administrative function, but a integrated socio-spiritual paradigm. The findings demonstrate that Khomeini’s vision redefines educational governance through five core dimensions: epistemological grounding in divine unity (*Tawhid*), the ethical primacy of spiritual purification (*tarbiyah*) over technical instruction (*ta'lim*), the role of the educational leader as a moral exemplar (*murrabbi*), institutional alignment with the governance model of *Velayat-e Faqih*, and the strategic imperative of anti-imperialist liberation (*Gharbzadegi* resistance). The conceptual relationship between these core dimensions is illustrated in the concept map below.





The foundational premise of Khomeini's educational thought rests upon an unyielding commitment to *Tawhid* (the oneness of God), which serves as both the epistemological starting point and the ultimate objective of human knowledge. Within this worldview, knowledge cannot exist in a moral or theological vacuum; rather, every educational activity must function as a pathway toward divine awareness (Algar, 1988). Khomeini explicitly rejected Western secular models that frame knowledge as a neutral commodity or purely utilitarian tool for economic advancement, arguing that secularization systematically severs intellect from its transcendent origin (Dabashi, 1993). Consequently, educational leadership must be anchored in the conviction that institutional management, curricular design, and pedagogical practice are sacred duties intended to guide individuals toward spiritual alignment with God.

Central to Khomeini's framework is a sharp distinction between *ta'lim* (formal instruction or acquisition of information) and *tarbiyah* (moral development, spiritual cultivation, and ethical refinement). In numerous speeches preserved in the *Sahifeh-ye Imam*, Khomeini emphasized that while *ta'lim* provides the cognitive skills necessary for societal development, *ta'lim* without *tarbiyah* produces educated corruption (Khomeini, 1981). He argued that raw intellectual competence divorced from moral restraint is the single most destructive force in human history, as highly educated individuals without ethical integrity possess greater capacity to enact systemic oppression and harm (Arjomand, 1988). Therefore, educational leadership in Khomeini's paradigm prioritizes *tarbiyah* as the non-negotiable prerequisite and governing framework for all instructional activities.

This ontological priority of *tarbiyah* is rooted in Khomeini's philosophical anthropology, which views the human soul as possessing dual inclinations toward moral perfection and demonic corruption. According to Khomeini, human nature is not static, but inherently dynamic, capable of ascending to celestial perfection or descending into total depravity based on the nature of the

education received (Khomeini, 1981). The educational system, therefore, acts as the primary arena where this spiritual struggle takes place. Leaders of educational institutions are positioned at the center of this battle, holding the systemic responsibility to create environments that nurture virtue (*fazilah*) while actively suppressing systemic vice and moral decay (Halstead, 2004).

Within this framework, the educational leader cannot function as a dispassionate administrator or bureaucratic manager; instead, the leader must embody the archetype of the *murrabbi*—a spiritual guide, mentor, and moral exemplar. Drawing heavily from the Islamic mystical (*'Irfani*) tradition, Khomeini asserted that leadership authority is fundamentally spiritual rather than structural (Mottahedeh, 1985). An individual who has not conquered their own egoistic desires (*nafs*) cannot legitimately direct the moral trajectory of an educational institution. The authority of an educational leader is thus derived not from administrative appointment or academic titles, but from their personal commitment to continuous self-purification (*tazkiyah-ye nafs*) and moral rectitude (Rajaei, 2007).

The requirement of self-purification imposes a rigorous standard of personal conduct on educational leaders across all tiers of governance. Khomeini maintained that educators and school leaders exert a powerful covert curriculum through their personal behavior, tone, and lifestyle, which often impacts students more profoundly than formal lectures (Mehran, 1989). An educational leader who exhibits arrogance, greed, or hypocrisy undermines the ethical foundation of the institution, regardless of how advanced the formal curriculum might be. Consequently, executive selection in Khomeini's educational vision emphasizes moral integrity (*'adalah*), humility, and spiritual devotion as essential qualifications alongside administrative competence.

Furthermore, Khomeini identified discernment (*basirah*) and moral courage as indispensable attributes of the educational leader. In his view, an educational leader must possess the critical insight required to perceive subtle forms of ideological subversion and cultural decay operating within academic

institutions (Dabashi, 1993). This intellectual and spiritual vigilance enables leaders to navigate external socio-political pressures without compromising the core ethical principles of the system. Leadership, therefore, requires a continuous state of moral readiness, where administrators remain actively engaged in preserving the ideological integrity of the learning environment (Khomeini, 1981).

A key aspect of the leader's moral profile in Khomeini's thought is a commitment to simplicity, anti-materialism, and proximity to the marginalized (*mostaz'afin*). Khomeini frequently warned educational leaders against succumbing to bureaucratic elitism or adopting luxurious lifestyles that separate them from the common people (Abrahamian, 1989). He posited that when educational leaders become consumed by institutional prestige, material accumulation, or social status, they lose their capacity to cultivate empathy and social justice in their students. Educational leadership must remain grounded in service to the underprivileged, reflecting the prophetic model of political and spiritual stewardship (Arjomand, 1988).

At the institutional level, Khomeini's concept of educational leadership is structurally connected to his broader doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist). While *Velayat-e Faqih* is widely recognized as a political framework for state governance, analysis reveals that its operational logic is fundamentally pedagogical (Rajaei, 2007). Under this doctrine, the supreme political ruler (*Faqih*) acts as the ultimate educational leader of society, responsible for creating the macro-level conditions that enable moral and spiritual cultivation. Educational governance under *Velayat-e Faqih* establishes a top-down structural alignment where state policies, academic institutions, and social values reinforce one another in pursuit of divine guidance (Paivandi, 2012).

This macro-pedagogical vision translated directly into systemic structural realignments following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Under Khomeini's guidance, state bodies such as the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution

(*Shora-ye A'li-ye Enqelab-e Farhangi*) were created to oversee educational policy, reform university curricula, and ensure that institutional leadership reflected revolutionary and Islamic values (Mehran, 1989). Educational administration was re-engineered so that school principals, university chancellors, and departmental chairs functioned not merely as organizational managers, but as local custodians of the state's educational and spiritual mission.

The operationalization of this vision reached its peak during the Cultural Revolution (*Enqelab-e Farhangi*), which Khomeini initiated to systematically overhaul Iranian higher education. Khomeini argued that pre-revolutionary universities operated as strongholds of Western cultural imperialism, producing intellectuals who were alienated from their own society and reliant on foreign epistemological models (Paivandi, 2012). Educational leaders were charged with transforming universities from institutions that passively imported Western ideologies into centers of indigenous scientific innovation grounded in Islamic ethics (Dabashi, 1993). This period highlighted the highly political nature of educational leadership in Khomeini's thought, where institutional management was directly enlisted in the service of state-building and ideological consolidation.

Despite the heavy ideological orientation of this restructuring, Khomeini repeatedly emphasized that the purification of academic institutions should not mean the destruction of rigorous scientific inquiry. He insisted that Islam does not oppose science, technology, or modern empirical methods, but rather seeks to liberate science from secular and destructive applications (Khomeini, 1981). Educational leaders were instructed to foster academic excellence and technological self-reliance, while ensuring that scientific knowledge was governed by moral boundaries. The ideal educational institution, under Khomeini's oversight, was one that excelled in scientific research while maintaining an atmosphere of spiritual piety and ethical responsibility (Davari, 2005).

A critical pillar of Khomeini's educational strategy was his diagnostic critique of *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxification or cultural imperialism). Khomeini argued that decades of foreign influence and secular state policies had inflicted deep psychological and cultural damage on Muslim societies, instilling a collective inferiority complex regarding Western civilization (Algar, 1988; Keddie, 2006). He identified the educational system as the primary mechanism through which this cultural dependency had been historically cultivated and reinforced. Consequently, educational leadership was assigned a counter-hegemonic mission: to deconstruct colonial mindsets and restore cultural self-worth within the student population.

To counter *Gharbzadegi*, Khomeini mandated that educational leaders cultivate *khod-bavari* (self-reliance and self-belief) throughout the educational process. Leaders were required to align curricula, institutional culture, and teaching methodologies toward highlighting indigenous history, Islamic intellectual contributions, and national sovereignty (Mehran, 1989). By actively rejecting the uncritical imitation of Western models, educational leaders were expected to transform schools and universities into incubators of cultural resistance and intellectual independence. Education was thus redefined as an act of national liberation and spiritual reclamation (Abrahamian, 1989).

Connected to this counter-hegemonic mission was Khomeini's emphasis on fostering political consciousness (*aagahi*) among educators and students. Khomeini rejected the notion that educational environments should remain politically neutral or detached from social realities. He argued that political neutrality in the face of domestic tyranny or international imperialism was equivalent to complicity in injustice (Khomeini, 1981). Educational leaders were charged with encouraging critical awareness regarding geopolitical power dynamics, economic exploitation, and social inequality, ensuring that graduates emerged as active agents of social transformation rather than passive observers.

This politicization of pedagogical space aimed to empower the *mostaz'afin* (the oppressed and marginalized) against oppressive power structures. In

Khomeini's discourse, educational institutions were intended to function as instruments of social mobility and political empowerment for working-class populations who had been historically excluded from higher education under the Pahlavi monarchy (Arjomand, 1988). Educational leaders were instructed to expand access to rural and impoverished communities, making education a catalyst for social justice and civic mobilization (Paivandi, 2012).

Another major theoretical contribution of Khomeini to educational leadership was his insistence on bridging the historical divide between the *Hawza* (traditional Islamic seminaries) and the *Daneshgah* (modern secular universities). Historically, these two educational systems operated in parallel isolation, giving rise to a divided intelligentsia: religiously educated scholars who lacked training in modern sciences, and secular academics who lacked grounding in Islamic ethics (Mottahedeh, 1985). Khomeini recognized this dualism as a fundamental vulnerability that compromised national unity and social stability (Davari, 2005).

To overcome this divide, Khomeini formulated the policy of *Vahdat-e Hawza va Daneshgah* (Unity of Seminary and University), assigning educational leaders from both sectors the task of building structural and intellectual bridges. Seminary scholars were encouraged to engage with modern social and natural sciences, while university faculty and administrators were urged to integrate Islamic ethical frameworks into their disciplines (Davari, 2005; Khomeini, 1981). Educational leaders were positioned as key facilitators of this dialogue, responsible for creating joint research initiatives, interdisciplinary curricula, and collaborative governance models designed to synthesize traditional faith with modern knowledge.

When evaluated within the broader field of educational leadership theory, Khomeini's model presents a distinctive, non-Western alternative to mainstream contemporary frameworks. While modern Western models such as transformational leadership (Bush, 2011), authentic leadership, and spiritual leadership (Sergiovanni, 2007) emphasize vision, ethical consistency, and

personal authenticity, they typically operate within secular, pluralistic, or organizational contexts. In contrast, Khomeini's model integrates leadership directly into a comprehensive theological, jurisprudential, and revolutionary political order, where the leader's moral authenticity is derived from divine law (*Sharia*) and personal spiritual purification (*tazkiyah*).

Furthermore, whereas contemporary administrative theories often treat educational leadership as a set of technical competencies, strategic management skills, and measurable performance outcomes, Khomeini's paradigm treats leadership primarily as an act of spiritual stewardship (*amanah*) and ideological resistance. The success of an educational leader in Khomeini's thought is measured not by bureaucratic efficiency, market competitiveness, or administrative throughput, but by the leader's ability to foster moral purity, political awareness, and devotion to divine justice within the learning community (Halstead, 2004; Rajaei, 2007).

However, the implementation of Khomeini's educational leadership model in post-revolutionary Iran has also faced significant practical challenges and academic critique. Scholars note that the strong emphasis on ideological alignment and political loyalty frequently created tension with academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and pluralistic inquiry (Paivandi, 2012). The ideological vetting of faculty and administrators, while designed to ensure ethical and revolutionary commitment, sometimes resulted in the exclusion of highly competent scholars and caused structural friction within academic institutions (Mehran, 1989).

Ultimately, Ayatollah Khomeini's concept of educational leadership offers a powerful, multi-layered framework that bridges metaphysics, personal ethics, institutional policy, and revolutionary politics. By positioning the educational leader as a *murabb*i operating under the overarching guidance of *Tawhid* and *Velayat-e Faqih*, Khomeini formulated a pedagogical paradigm that challenges the secular, managerial assumptions of modern leadership theories. His model demonstrates that within an Islamic revolutionary worldview, educational



leadership is the decisive mechanism for shaping human destiny, achieving cultural sovereignty, and building a morally purified society.

## **E. Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that educational leadership in the thought of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini represents an integrated socio-spiritual paradigm rooted in the metaphysical principle of *Tawhid* (divine unity). Rather than viewing leadership through a purely managerial or technocratic lens, Khomeini redefines the educational leader as a *murrabbi*—a moral exemplar whose authority stems from personal spiritual purification (*tazkiyah-ye nafs*) and ethical integrity rather than administrative appointment. Central to this vision is the ontological priority of *tarbiyah* (spiritual and moral cultivation) over *ta'lim* (intellectual instruction), asserting that intellectual capacity unguided by ethical restraint inevitably becomes an instrument of societal corruption and systemic oppression.

Structurally, Khomeini's model links educational governance directly to the doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist) and the broader imperative of revolutionary state-building. By positioning the jurist-leader as the primary macro-educator of society and implementing structural reforms through the Cultural Revolution, Khomeini sought to eliminate Western cultural dependency (*Gharbzadegi*) and bridge the historical divide between traditional Islamic seminaries (*Hawza*) and modern secular universities (*Daneshgah*). Within this framework, educational institutions are designed to function as counter-hegemonic spaces that foster critical political consciousness (*aagahi*), cultural self-reliance, and social empowerment for the marginalized (*mostaz'afin*).

Ultimately, Khomeini's paradigm provides a distinct non-Western alternative to mainstream educational leadership theories, challenging secular assumptions by embedding institutional management within a comprehensive theological and revolutionary framework. While the practical implementation

of this model in post-revolutionary Iran faced ongoing tensions between ideological alignment and academic autonomy, its theoretical contributions remain significant. By conceptualizing educational leadership as a sacred trust (*amanah*) that synthesizes personal piety, institutional governance, and political emancipation, Khomeini's thought offers essential insights for comparative discourse on the intersection of faith, power, and pedagogy.

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