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# Ibn Khaldun and John Locke's Thoughts, Reframing Contemporary Education World Order

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#### **Article Information**

#### Abstract

# **Keywords:**

Ibn Khaldun education, John Locke education, Islamic Thought, Comparative Education. Exploring two international philosophers' scholarship with lasting effect on education theory through a comparative qualitative study would help to synthesize alternative tools and epistemology to address contemporary education landscape and human-to-human interaction. Ibn Khaldun's and John Locke's intellectual legacy brought revolutionary knowledge based on their empirical observation (Assabiyya & Social Contract) which has inspired various social, political as well as modern education concepts. Indeed, though Ibn Khaldun and John Locke belong to dissimilar schools of thought, they share a number of philosophical and educational ideas deemed to offer new remedies to our current education and cross-cultural interactions by transforming the learner at the center of a new learning world order.

#### Kata kunci:

Pendidikan Ibnu Khaldun, Pendidikan John Locke, Pemikiran Islam, Perbandingan Pendidikan.

# Abstrak.

Menjelajahi keilmuan dua filsuf internasional yang memiliki pengaruh besar terhadap teori pendidikan melalui studi kualitatif komparatif akan membantu mensintesis alat dan epistemologi alternatif untuk mengatasi lanskap pendidikan kontemporer dan interaksi antar manusia. Warisan intelektual Ibnu Khaldun dan John Locke membawa pengetahuan revolusioner berdasarkan pengamatan empiris mereka (Assabiyya & Kontrak Sosial) yang telah mengilhami berbagai konsep sosial, politik, dan juga konsep pendidikan modern. Memang, meskipun Ibnu Khaldun dan John Locke berasal dari mazhab pemikiran yang berbeda, mereka memiliki sejumlah gagasan filosofis dan pendidikan yang dianggap menawarkan solusi baru untuk pendidikan kita saat ini dan interaksi lintas budaya dengan mentransformasi pelajar di pusat tatanan dunia belajar yang baru.

# **INTRODUCTION**

Exploring different schools of thoughts is to look for novel tools that inspire holistic and cross-cultural approaches deemed to locate the learner not only at the center of the learning order, but merely at the heart of a global world order. This cross-cultural study, connecting Ibn Khaldun's (1332- 1406) and Locke's (1632- 1704) intellectual property, seeks to redefine the contemporary education paradigm with the premise of rethinking the field while repositioning the learner's role and epistemic identity.

Ibn Khaldun a champion of social sciences and John Locke one of the forerunners of enlightenment and British empiricist school and classical liberalism have both lasting impact

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on human intellectual heritage, including education theory; bringing their education ideas grounded in their empirical observation legacy and sociopolitical framework may foreshadow novel critical apparatuses, to draw conclusions and alternative epistemologies responding to contemporary education and human to human crisis.

Nonetheless, Ibn Khaldun is one of the leading thinkers and philosophers not only in Islamic tradition, but across human intellectual history. His 'rihla' or scholarly travel across Europe, Africa, and Asia, plus being in the mid of various societies' troublesome and different nations up and down marked him as a genuine revolutionary scholar theorizing innovative scholarly insights shaping the scope of different fields such as historiography, politics, sociology, economics, philosophy and education. His ethnography, the cyclical nature of history, and 'Assabiyya' or social cohesion and economics theory emboldened innovative concepts in contemporary social and human sciences including the science of education.

Ibn Khaldun is more known as a social scientist, and his sharp thoughts on education are not recognized due to, often, reading his writings on education in isolation from his broad philosophy of history and thoughts. For example, Ibn Khaldun referring to teaching as 'Sinaa meaning industry or manufacturing would be hard to completely understand far attached to his economics theory, particularly division of labor, invented ahead of Adam Smith's, and the same thing applies to the development of the instructional strategies diffused from his development theory and social dynamic studies. His education theory was included in the last chapter of his Almuqadimah work which certainly was influenced by his broad philosophy and empirical observation legacy.

Certainly, reading other Ibn Khaldun theories related to economics or management, one may find new knowledge in the scholars' education deliberations such as cooperative learning, experiential learning, multiple intelligence, pedagogy of the oppressed, learning taxonomy, comparative education, communicative-based approach, leadership education... In his masterpiece Al-muqadimah, Ibn Khaldun wrote a particular chapter on education outlining various principles and rules that form the philosophy of learning, teaching, and teacher's education. His original comparative education study marked him an ipso facto educationalist, analyzing critically different regions' education, while drawing his remedies and education thought to respond to 'the incoherence of the teachers.'

# **RESEARCH METHODS**

This paper is a qualitative study. It connects two leading authors, with lasting impact on the field of education and intellectual thought. This descriptive qualitative research is more oriented to collecting and analyzing existing literature, documents, including other sources of knowledge on both scholars' works to gain further insight on their contribution including the details that shape the uniqueness of their scholarly production. Indeed, the study asks the following questions: what is the contribution of those scholars with different cultural and chronological backgrounds? What are the similarities and differences in Ibn Khaldun's and John Locke's thoughts on education? To what extent can those scholars' intellectual legacy help in responding to current education or even humanity crisis? This study is hence fundamentally important as it brings different thoughts on education for better implications in contemporary education. Data analysis was conducted employing content analysis, with a focus on textual exegesis and intertextuality.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# **Education according to Ibn Khaldun**

For Ibn Khaldun individuals are thinking beings, endowed with a reason identity to reflect on their being and milieu. Education is the keyword by which this prestigious human identity is activated, cultivated, and upgraded to locate the man at the center of the universe. Such humanness practice might be better illustrated by the Kantian anthropological dimension of education, regarding education as a means to prove one's human being (Kant, 2007). Education in Khaldunian philosophy is a cultural industry where human rational power is fuelled and functioned through his coined term 'Assabiya' (social agency) a byproduct of nature and nurture wherein group culture becomes the onto-epistemological voucher for any future civilization venture.

Hence perfecting human nature is the virtue by which individuals prevail over a prestigious level, where happiness and fulfillment or Plato's eudemonia can be achieved. . Similar arguments are prevalent in the deliberations of various thinkers, ranging from ancient figures like Aristotle to Muslim scholars like Al-Farabi, and Ibn Sinna Al-Ghazali, and enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke and John Jack Rousseau. This result shaping the Ibn Khaldun education framework is guided by two vital elements that lead education practices: quality education and teacher's competence which is referred to as 'malakah' in his education theory (Ibn Khaldun, 2015).

# Ibn Khaldun Education Philosophy

Teacher's education discourse for Ibn Khaldun is founded upon teacher's 'malakah', with reference to teaching as 'Sinaa' (Ibn khaldun, 2015), meaning that teaching is not defined in its classical context, but a very complex enterprise defined by teacher leadership skills, with the potential to influence a generation of learners to not only recognize education as a way for personal growth, but more as a lofty discourse punctuated with platonic questions of social justice translated as 'umraan' or civilization in his scholarly production. Ibn Khaldun in addressing teachers professional development, he foreshadowed Bandura's Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1977) by reminding teachers that pupils learn best through imitating their teacher's actions including mindset, behaviors and dispositions. Though Ibn Khaldun's learning connects kids to complex questions to fulfill the task of 'umran', learning in his conceptualization is a pleasure activity where kids enjoy education and have fun, simply put. Ergo, teacher's leadership or teacher leader discourse is a concept that must be highlighted in Ibn Khaldun philosophy.

# The Aim of Education

Education or 'taalim' for Ibn khaldun is to infuse moral, religious, and cognitive features among pupils, along with the reinforcement of the utility of learning (Ibn khaldun, 2015) defined as 'Al-ilm Annafie' in Islamic thought, connecting education to increasing individuals living quality, life skills and social transformation. This realist paradigm was later the focal point of the progressive school led by Charles Sanders, John Dewey and William James noting that education should be transformative, with the aim to prepare individuals for society integration. Ibn Khaldun's education goals might be vividly reframed by the Swiss naturalist philosopher (Pestalozzi, 1830)'s method or Anschauung: Head,

Hand, and Heart, emphasizing that learning should be the glue that brings spirit, cognitive and practical knowledge to gather to positively transform the learner.

Inspired by Islamic thought, Ibn Khaldun scrutinizes the process of learning and teaching via a holistic scope that is not limited solely to reforming the individual, but the society as a whole; education in its 'sinaa' sense is the benchmark by which nations' progress is judged. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldun iterated it clearly that education is a source to know God and its commands and the Qur'an is the basis of 'taalim' and the foundation for all skills searched for, though he recommends that the kid's learning journey should start with learning language basics, poetry and math then moving to Quran studies as citing Ibn Arabi' perspective in which type of learning to be overemphasized in the beginning (Ibn Khaldun, 2015).

#### Curriculum

Ibn-Khaldun's conceptualization of education is primarily illuminated by Islamic thought principles promoted by previous Muslim scholars, including his influence by Greek classics as well as his solid sociology and anthropology background. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun split knowledge (Asnuf Al-ulum) into two streams Nakkliya meaning theology knowledge and is derived from the authority of revelation and 'Akliya' with a focus on philosophy and logic. Both disciplines complete each other to ensure individual and society development, hence both kinds of knowledge in Ibn-Khaldun's philosophy are essential and basically important. Ulum Al-nakliyya knowledge is derived from the authority of revelation and its goal is to create an individual with full awareness of his God and his commands (Ibn khaldun, 2015).

Although 'Akliya' stream might be seen as more useful, refining learners' cognitive and job market skills, the 'nakkli' is critically significant in shaping learners personality and spiritual intensity; accordingly, Ibn Khaldun stresses that designing any educational curriculum should adhere to the country's special culture and norms. Moreover, crafts-based science was also insisted in Ibn Khaldun curriculum, with recommendations that any art or craft without theoretical knowledge is weak; the theoretical framework is a vital role in his learning taxonomy. In a nutshell, Ibn Khaldun's curriculum should foster a scientific perspective based on a solid theoretical framework and practice, while the social, moral, intellectual and economic development of students are reinforced.

# The Incoherence of the Teachers' in Ibn Khaldun's Deliberations

Ibn Khaldun, inspired by Al-ghazali's the Incoherence of the Philosophers' work, calls out the incoherence of his contemporary teaching traditions urging that a new approach must be taken in order to locate education at the heart of 'umraan' or civilization. Ibn Khaldun asked history questions in his original history methodology: how societies evolve and fall? He also asked the following questions in education: how learning takes place in different places across the Muslim nations? How effective learning takes place? What type of learning should be fostered? What makes a competent teacher? What is the role of education in his 'umraan's mission?

Ibn Khaldun provided a background of different education methodologies employed in Andalusia, Maghreb and Middle East while standing on each one's curriculum and method. In this sense, he was an ipso facto comparative education pioneer addressing and

synthesizing different education systems while offering his own recommendations and remedies. Therefore, his comparative educational study should be taken as a reference for comparative education and development studies. The most notable element in Ibn Khaldun teaching paradigm is referring to teaching as 'sinaa' meaning manufacturing, linking it up to its economics or even civilization constructing dictionary. This term cannot be understood or defined without connecting it to its economic context where Ibn Khaldun invented a number of concepts, namely division of labor ahead of Adam Smith. Hence in light of Ibn khaldun' theory, division of labor or cooperation-based learning style increases the effectiveness and quality of this education enterprise.

Ibn Khaldun upon observing different teachers' teaching styles, he gives harsh criticism to teachers with no effective instructional strategies knowledge, namely mixing advanced information with the basics from the very beginning. As a remedy, he theorized a logical sequence for delivering lessons, cushioned by three pedagogical stages: introduction, development and recap to ensure the smoothness of the learning process. This structure facilitates the learning by moving from the simpler to the harder and from easier to more difficult as well as the known to the unknown and from the concrete to the abstract.

Opting for this strategy aims at ensuring effective learning is taking place which boosts learner's confidence, motivation and focus, while guaranteeing no truancy. In this respect, he connected the truancy social phenomenon to the absence of effective learning strategies. With full awareness of states' dynamics and social structures, he argues that learning should be active and dynamic by imposing strategies such as knowledge negotiation, dialogue and debate, with the potential to promote a holistic learning environment targeting learner' cognitive and social abilities.

Ibn Khaldun was a revolutionary educator, disapproving imitation and blind reproduction arguing that "blindly following tradition does not mean the dead are living, but the livings are dead." Inspired by independent and rational learning, Ibn Khaldun embraced Socratic Method as an instructional practice, with the aim to turn learners into critical thinkers, not falling in imitation. Moreover, Ibn Khaldun's knowledge transformation should abide by regulations and delivery management; otherwise no effective learning would take place. Ibn Khaldun in structuring the learning process was influenced by his sharp management and governance skills including 'society's development stages from nomadic society to empire.'

Ibn Khaldun on the other hand places an emphasis on accuracy, giving critics to the employment of short lectures or using just book summaries instead standing at every aspect of the book; this habit is unhealthy, distorting knowledge and makes students unable to receive the correct knowledge and reach what he named 'Alhathq' or the mastery and excellency. He also rejects the idea of teaching two sciences at the same time which disorients the learner's attention and expertise, affecting picking up the correct knowledge. In addition, Ibn Khaldun attacks the habit of long breaks as well as incorporating some of the material with others; such practices are likely to lead the loss of the knowledge under study. However, Ibn Khaldun advocates for repetition and habituation at least three times, with the potential to make the learning outcome retain in the learner's mind.

The content or mastery based strategy employed in Ibn Khaldun's education theory is probably meant to cater to the needs of diverse learners , including slow learners, with the goal to create an inclusive learning environment, with a focus on competence based

learning. This method has been attacked as more content based, relying more on drilling and memorizing and long hours of lecturing. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun pedagogy is shaped by a variety of strategies to ensure different student's needs are met, therefore his pedagogy is neither deductive nor inductive, but rather 'needstactic,' standing on individual level and specific needs. It is implicitly indicated that inductive is suitable for beginners while deductive method is employed to ensure mastery level.

Ibn Khaldoun being influenced by Islamic thought, particularly Al-hadith "Kulun Muyassar Lima Kulika Lah affirmed that the knowledge should be tailored to the capacity and ability level of the students, with emphasis on simplicity and clarity while taking into account individual differences. His education theory argues that there is no education for all; people enjoy different talents and skills, hence teachers should find out their students' gifted qualities and guide them to improve. Ibn-Khaldun's personalized approach to education, imbedded in Platonic academy (e.g., Turan, 2011) and Islamic pedagogy, is to stimulate his coined term teachers' 'malakah' which upgrades teaching into 'sinaa' turning the teacher into a reflective practitioner to respond to learning, student and society needs while fostering teaching by leadership and role model.

Also, Ibn Khaldun recommends taking foreign languages classes as a means to excel in other disciplines and sciences. He supports the communicative based approach of teaching foreign languages through conversations, instead of focusing solely on grammar. Mathematics is also important in Ibn khaldun's education perspective, with the ability to improve learners' mental acuity and reasoning ability. Ibn Khadun's based on his inclusive and open perspective towards knowledge recommends travel for knowledge, outdoors learning and studying foreign languages. Experiential learning was included in Ibn Khaldun pedagogy by insisting on direct contact with knowledge through outdoors learning and constant travel. Other oriented approach can also be seen in his economic theory by supporting free trade with foreigners and freedom of choice.

However, teachers' in Ibn khaldun's philosophy are individuals with high ranking. Teaching craft is an esteemed job owing to the teacher's knowledge that makes them distinguished, with special status in this life and life after. The highest professional rank of a teacher is to reach 'the malakah' or the scientific property which is the practitioner and gifted level where the teacher is able to turn his teaching into a craft or a reference for others. The discourse of 'malakah' in Ibn Khaldoun teacher's education is the aptitude of a teacher to bring the moral, scientific, social and psychological to gather to meet different student's needs and make learning not only a learner center but civilization center.

Ibn Khaldun to faster 'malakah' paradigm encourages teachers to use love and compassion instead of punishment and torture which lead to student's low self-esteem. Fostering torture in education would cause the growth of untruthfulness and deception acts among students as a way to avoid punishment; Ibn Khaldun is, in this sense, diffusing his social science theory of misuse of power to pedagogy marking how violence may corrupt students' moral development as violence and misuse of power possibly will corrupt society growth. Ergo, Ibn Sinna (e.g., Elhussari, 2021) and Skinnerian conditioning (Skinner, 1971) has no role in Ibn Khaldun intellectual space noting that torture and negative reinforcement injure the mental faculty of the student, and destroys their personality.

Though Ibn Khaldun's method seems similar to Augustine's firm foundation of knowledge that is based on love, compassion, reciprocity and community of learning (Agustine, 2015), Ibn Khaldun was also too rational, warning against adopting too loose teaching environment that would corrupt the leaning context, being perceived with less seriousness. Ibn Khaldun, affected by his sociology and economics ideas, adopts the teacher leader style of teaching with priority given to compassion and teaching by model, yet management, monitoring and ethical supervision must guide the learning to ensure a healthy learning environment.

Ibn Khaldun attacked the misuse of power in politics within the context of oppression and enslavement; he was conscious about the effects of this element in education advising teachers to be a role model for their students, dealing with them as their kids using love and dialogue based teaching. In this aspect Durkheim in his work Essays on Moral Education (Durkheim, 2005) pictured teacher-student interaction to that of the relationship between a colonizer and colonized, illustrating that in both situations, interaction is indeed taking place between groups of people of unequal power. Ibn Khaldoun in another context argued that the defeated (submissive students) always want to imitate the victor (dictator teacher); the school is a place to perpetuate the status quo by raising infinite morally corrupt individuals, losing any meaning of humanity. In short, Paulo Freire' Pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1996) was well pictured in Khaldunian sociology of education ideas.

# John Locke and Ibn Khaldun Comparison

Both John Lock and Ibn Khaldun belong to well-off and intellectual families; Ibn khaldun's father was an aristocrat and poet and Locke's father was a lawyer and parliamentarian. Along with their scientific scholarship, they were both theologians and served as government officials and diplomats. Both scholars were tutored at home, which was later reflected in their recommendations to the tutorial form of education over schooling. John Locke is a British scholar of 17th century and he is well known for his empiricism ideas and social contract theory (Dai and Li, 2020). However, Ibn Khaldun is Muslim scholar belonging to the 14th century of the medieval era and well known for his historiography, sociology and economics theory. In education philosophies both of them have great contributions though not much recognized as often associated more with political and social sciences scholarship. Nevertheless, John Locke education ideas can be found mainly in his works An Essay Concerning Human Understanding and Some Thoughts Concerning Education, whereas Ibn Khaldun's education ideas are included in his multidisciplinary book Al-muqaddimah. Yet, some important education ideas of the scholars can be referred implicitly from other works not mainly addressing education.

Locke as Ibn Khaldun was an advocate of nonviolent communication model of teaching urging teachers and parents to imply nonviolent approaches with the employment of games, different positive reinforcements. Yet, Ibn Khaldun warns not to be too pliable with the kids to prevent any unpleasant behavior or attitude influencing their character and studies. The scholars supported an education that ensures emotion security, with emphasis on individual learners' differences. Furthermore, Locke claims that the true objective of education is not to create scholars, but creating noble individuals (Locke, 2008). Similarly Ibn-Khaldun affirmed this idea reminding that education should not only inspire intellectual thoughts but also moral and ethical disposition inculcating ethical citizenship within

individuals, with reference to education as the guiding light to God's insight (Ibn Khaldun, 2015).

John Locke was mainly an empiricist philosopher stressing the role of Aristotle sensation for acquiring knowledge. The sensation based approach resonates with Ibn Khaldun's teachings attained via his ethnography dedication and practice. Locke indeed deeply delved into this theory by coining the term 'tabula rasa' (Locke, 1975, p. 325) referring to human mind at birth which denotes the significant role of the parents as the first educator of their children, because during childhood, their experiences are formative. This is to state the role of senses in shaping the human mind, meaning that any knowledge received comes from senses such as hearing, smelling, touching, tasting, and touching. Those senses for both scholars are the initial tools by which humans cultivate knowledge, before referring to the brain to be processed and arranged. Thus, both scholars recommended early childhood education for the importance of sensations in honing kids' knowledge and character which resonate with the Italian scholar Montessori theory of early education (Montessori, 1936). Further, the scholars discussed the role of parents, environment and peers in education and though they support home tutoring over schooling, their ideas on this aspect of education inspired the social cultural theory championed by (Vygotsky, 1978).

Locke claimed that through experiences simple ideas were created, and as these ideas combined, they became complex and formed knowledge. Correspondingly, Ibn Khaldun spoke about how knowledge is constructed in a learning context which takes three stages starting with letters to words then moving to more complex sentences. Besides, they asked teachers to follow a gradual-based process to maintain engagement and interest. For example, Ibn Khaldun stressed on moving from simple knowledge to more complex knowledge and from the known to the unknown and from the concrete to the abstract. This is also applied to Locke's recommendations by not overwhelming the learners with challenging tasks from the very beginning.

Ibn Khaldun sketched levels of thinking into three: discerning, practical, and theoretical. The first one is about perceptions. The second one is associated with practical learning, this stage supports individuals to socialize and interact with each other. Individuals in this level can make connections and combine different elements to make meaning. The last one is abstract thinking which is a high level of thinking where knowledge is created and organized (Ibn Khaldun, 2015).

On the other hand, John Locke theorized two different types of qualities that inform learning practices: primary and secondary qualities. Primary qualities are quantitative in nature such as the extension, weight, motion, number or anything that can be perceived by the senses objectively. On the other hand, secondary qualities are sensations like color, smell, taste and sound, which reproduce the effect of the outer reality of our senses, which are qualitative. Everyone can agree on the primary qualities, because they are inherent within the objects themselves. However, when it comes to secondary qualities, disagreement arises, because these depend on the individual sensations of each person (Locke, 1975).

# **CONCLUSION**

The comprehensive nature of Ibn Khaldun's and John Locke's deliberation has enriched human scholarship, particularly in the field of education. Ibn Khaldun's and Locke's pedagogical theory embraces all features of their philosophy; research is always interdisciplinary. Thus Ibn Khaldun and Locke's education and social and political ideas can contribute to the rethinking of a modern intellectual space. Ibn Khaldun' social cohesion concept inspires virtual nomads to create their unique civilization sustained by Locke's tolerance Letter to create de-facto international relations discourse repositioning the individual's epistemological order at the center of a global world murder.

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