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## Analysis of Islamic Educational Thought and the Study of Classical Scholars from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives

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**ABSTRACT** *This study aims to analyze the genealogy of classical Islamic educational thought by examining its epistemological foundations and the contributions of key classical scholars. The research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method, drawing from primary sources such as the original works of Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Miskawayh, Al-Kindi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina, as well as secondary sources including academic books, journal articles, and relevant scholarly studies. Data were collected through documentation techniques and analyzed using content analysis to identify key educational concepts and their relevance to contemporary educational theory. The findings reveal that classical Islamic educational thought is grounded in an integrated epistemological framework that combines revelation, reason, and experience as complementary sources of knowledge. This integration produces a holistic educational paradigm that emphasizes intellectual development, moral formation, and spiritual refinement. The study also shows that classical scholars developed distinctive yet interconnected educational perspectives: Al-Ghazali emphasized spiritual and moral purification, Ibn Sina focused on systematic and developmental learning, and Ibn Khaldun highlighted the social and psychological dimensions of education. Furthermore, the results indicate that classical Islamic educational thought has strong relevance to modern educational theories such as constructivism, humanism, and character education. These alignments demonstrate that classical ideas continue to offer meaningful contributions to contemporary educational discourse, particularly in addressing moral and spiritual challenges in modern education systems. This study concludes that classical Islamic educational thought provides a comprehensive and integrated framework for understanding education as a process of holistic human development. It is recommended that future research expand the scope of scholars studied and explore empirical applications of these classical concepts in modern educational settings, including curriculum design and pedagogical practices.*

**Keywords** : Islamic Education, Study, Classical Scholars, Historical, Conceptual Perspectin,

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of humanizing human beings that cannot be separated from the role of an educator (Kalogiannakis et al., 2021). Educators and learners can be described as two inseparable sides of a coin (Li et al., 2024). In carrying out their duties and functions, educators bear a very heavy responsibility because they are not only accountable to the students' parents or guardians but also accountable to Allah SWT.

Ibn Khaldun is a figure who made significant contributions to the discourse on the development of world civilization, particularly within the Muslim world (Kuswanto & Kurniawan, 2025). The concepts and theories contained in his magnum opus, *Muqaddimah*, have inspired both Western and Islamic intellectuals in building civilization. The British historian A. J. Toynbee referred to *Muqaddimah* as a highly valuable monumental work (Savenije et al., 2022). Moreover, Misbah al-Amily used Ibn Khaldun's thought as a variable in conducting comparative studies between Arab and Greek intellectual traditions (Sulaiman et al., 2025). In addition, many sociologists, philosophers, historians, and political scientists have praised the brilliance and breadth of his intellectual vision.

The genealogy of Ibn Khaldun's thought, particularly his theory of history, has permeated the entire structure of society (Murniasih & Anshori, 2024). All groups whether the general public, the government, or scholars, have shown great enthusiasm for studying his historical ideas. This is because history is a discipline that is widely studied by nations across generations. History explores accounts of political events, states, and occurrences of the past. It is expressed through various forms of narration and metaphor.

These events invite us to understand the condition of human beings and how they shape civilization (Ahn & Juraev, 2025). They explain how governments expand their territories and how they prosper the earth, thereby encouraging long journeys across regions and through time. Education cannot be separated from the views and ideas of scholars who later formulated theories that significantly contributed to the advancement of education (Anshori, 2026; Mufanti et al., 2024). During the golden age of Islam, many Muslim thinkers emerged. They mastered and understood almost all branches of knowledge (Suheri et al., 2022). In addition to providing commentaries on foreign works, they also produced original writings across various fields of knowledge.

In the field of Islamic education, there are many scholars who have produced great ideas that are still used today, such as Imam Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun, the Ikhwan al-Safa, Ibn Miskawayh, and others (Abbasi, 2023; Afifah Agustini & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2024). Among the Islamic educational thinkers who made major contributions, as mentioned above, is Ibn Miskawayh (Norman & Ruhullah, 2024). Not only was he a philosopher, but he was also highly skilled in the field of education. As a multi-talented scholar, Ibn Miskawayh developed ideas on moral and ethical education that are well known not only in the Muslim world but are also widely cited and referenced in the Western world. Beyond education, in philosophical literature, Ibn Miskawayh's name is frequently used as a reference, particularly in relation to ethical philosophy (Faruque, 2024; Franco, 2021).

After the advent of Islam, the Arabs conquered regions such as Persia, the Levant (Sham), and Egypt. Power then shifted from Medina to Damascus (Sham), a city that, in political terms, became the center of authority for the Umayyads (Abid, 2021). At that time, two other major cities emerged that played important roles in the history of Islamic thought, namely Basra and Kufa. With the coming of the Abbasid dynasty, these two cities became centers of Islamic civilization.

After the Abbasid rulers built the city of Baghdad, the center of Islamic culture moved from Basra and Kufa to this new city. From then on, Baghdad became the center of civilization. Many scholars and intellectuals from various parts of the world turned their attention there. The city resembled Athens in the 5th century BC or Paris in the 19th century AD, serving as a global center of culture and intellectual development.

This study offers novelty by providing a more comprehensive genealogical analysis of Ibn Khaldun's thought within the broader context of Islamic intellectual history, while also linking it

to the contributions of other classical Islamic educational thinkers such as Ibn Miskawayh, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Sina. Furthermore, this research not only examines historical dimensions but also explores the conceptual relevance of these ideas to the development of contemporary Islamic educational theory, thereby presenting a new perspective on the continuity between classical intellectual traditions and modern educational thought. This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of Islamic educational thought through a historical and conceptual examination of Ibn Khaldun's ideas and other classical scholars.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review design, as its focus is on the thoughts of classical Islamic scholars as reflected in written works. The entire research process is conducted through an in-depth examination of relevant primary and secondary literature. Primary data sources are derived from the original works of classical scholars such as Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Miskawayh, al-Kindi, and other figures who made significant contributions to Islamic educational thought. Meanwhile, secondary sources include books on the history of Islamic education, journal articles, academic studies, and encyclopedias that explain the social and historical contexts of these scholars.

Data in this study are collected using documentation techniques, namely by gathering literature related to the research theme. Each work is carefully read, followed by note-taking of key ideas related to educational aspects such as educational objectives, the role of teachers, teaching methods, the concept of learners, curriculum, and moral values emphasized by each scholar. This process is continued through data organization involving intensive reading, note-taking, classification, and selection of information to ensure focus on relevant aspects.

Data analysis is conducted using content analysis. The analysis process begins with data reduction, namely simplifying and selecting the core ideas from each scholar. After that, the data are categorized into specific groups to enable systematic comparison of ideas among scholars. In the next stage, the researcher interprets the meaning of the scholars' thoughts by considering their historical, cultural, and theological contexts. This analysis allows the researcher to understand not only the content of the ideas but also the conceptual reasons underlying their emergence. If necessary, a comparative analysis is also conducted to examine similarities and differences among scholars in their perspectives on Islamic education.

To ensure data validity, this study applies source triangulation, namely comparing various literatures to strengthen the accuracy and reliability of the information. In addition, cross-checking between primary and secondary sources is conducted to ensure that the understanding of a concept is not based on a single type of literature. In some parts, validity is further strengthened through the views of Islamic education experts who have conducted similar studies.

As a library-based research, all activities are carried out in both physical and digital libraries. Literature search is conducted through university libraries, digital repositories, and academic platforms such as Google Scholar, enabling the researcher to obtain authoritative sources. The research timeline is adjusted according to the researcher's needs in conducting an in-depth examination of the thoughts of these classical scholars.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The findings of this study indicate that the family plays a fundamental role as the first and primary environment in a child's educational process. In this context, the family is the oldest educational institution, characterized as informal and natural, where the father and mother act as educators and the child as the learner. The study reveals that the primary function of the family is to lay the foundations for a child's development, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Subiyantoro, 2022). Children who do not receive adequate basic education within the family tend to experience difficulties in their subsequent development (Purnama, S., & Ulfah, 2020).

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic educational thought in the classical period is characterized by a holistic, integrative orientation aimed at moral formation and balance between intellectual and spiritual dimensions. Classical scholars did not view education merely as a process of knowledge transfer, but also as a means of shaping a complete human personality in accordance with Islamic values.

The thought of classical figures such as Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) as the primary foundation of the educational process. He argued that the ultimate goal of education is to attain closeness to God, rather than merely acquiring worldly knowledge. In this context, the teacher plays a strategic role as both a spiritual and intellectual guide.

Meanwhile, Ibn Sina placed greater emphasis on rationality in education. He developed a systematic curriculum concept aligned with the developmental stages of learners. According to him, education should be adapted to individual potential and talents so that learners can develop optimally. This approach reflects an advanced awareness of educational psychology for his time.

Another scholar, Ibn Khaldun, made important contributions to the social dimension of education. He emphasized that the learning process should be gradual and should not overburden students. In addition, he criticized overly harsh teaching methods, arguing that they could hinder the development of creativity and intellectual capacity.

Furthermore, when examined from the perspective of contemporary educational theory, classical Islamic educational thought shows strong relevance to constructivist approaches. In this regard, Ibn Sina's idea of adapting learning to the developmental stages of learners aligns with the notion that knowledge is actively constructed by individuals through experience and interaction with the environment. This demonstrates that classical Islamic thinkers had already incorporated principles of active learning, which are widely applied in modern education systems today.

Moreover, Al-Ghazali's concept of moral and character formation can be analyzed through the lens of character education theory. In this framework, education is not only concerned with cognitive mastery but also with the internalization of moral and ethical values. This approach is highly relevant to contemporary educational challenges, particularly in addressing moral crises in various aspects of life. Thus, the integration of spiritual and moral dimensions in classical Islamic education can serve as an alternative model for strengthening character education in the era of globalization.

On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun's ideas regarding gradual learning processes and his rejection of repressive teaching methods are consistent with humanistic educational theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of creating a conducive learning environment, respecting individual potential, and fostering natural development without excessive pressure. This reinforces

the argument that classical Islamic education is not rigid, but rather adaptive and attentive to the psychological aspects of learners, making it relevant as a reference for developing a more inclusive and learner-centered educational system.

Based on the analysis of these scholars' thoughts, it is found that there is a common thread in the integration of knowledge, morality, and spirituality in classical Islamic education. This is highly relevant to be reconsidered in the context of modern education, which tends to be fragmented and overly focused on cognitive aspects.

Thus, classical Islamic educational thought can serve as a philosophical foundation for formulating a more humanistic, balanced, and value-based educational system. This relevance demonstrates that the ideas of classical scholars continue to make a significant contribution to addressing contemporary educational challenges.

**Table 1.** Classical Islamic Educational Thinkers and Their Relevance

Scholar	Educational Focus	Core Concept	Relevance	Educational Implication
Al-Ghazali	Spirituality and moral development	<i>Tazkiyat al-nafs</i> , education as a means to attain closeness to God	Character education	Strengthening moral and spiritual values
Ibn Sina	Rationality and curriculum	Education aligned with developmental stages and individual potential	Constructivism	Learner-centered instruction
Ibn Khaldun	Social dimension and learning methods	Gradual learning process, rejection of harsh teaching methods	Humanistic education theory	Supportive and student-friendly learning environment
Classical scholars	Integrated education	Balance of knowledge, morality, and spirituality	Holistic education	Balanced cognitive, affective, and spiritual development

## Discussion

The results of the analysis show that classical Islamic educational thought cannot be separated from the epistemological context of Islam, which positions revelation, reason, and experience as complementary sources of knowledge. This integration makes education in the classical (Alkouatli, 2018; Salim et al., 2025), not only oriented toward intellectual aspects but also spiritual and social dimensions. In this context, education is understood as a process of forming *insan kamil*, namely a person who is balanced in intellectual intelligence, emotional maturity, and spiritual depth.

The findings further indicate that classical Islamic educational thought is grounded in a strong and systematic epistemological foundation derived from the integration of the Qur'an, Hadith, and scientific rationality. This pattern shows that education in the Islamic tradition is not partial, but rather constitutes an integrated system of knowledge. This aligns with the view of Syed Naquib al-Attas (Khalina Mohammed Khalili, 2024), who emphasizes that the ultimate goal of Islamic education is *ta'dib*, namely the inculcation of adab, which includes the recognition, acknowledgment, and proper application of knowledge in human life. Thus, classical Islamic education can be understood as a process of forming a civilized human being who is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally and spiritually mature (Horgan & Timmons, 2022; Januar & Rahmi, 2024).

Furthermore, this study reinforces that Al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Khaldun made significant contributions to the formation of an educational paradigm that remains relevant today.

In *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, Al-Ghazali emphasizes that knowledge which does not lead a person to piety is knowledge without value (Afifah Agustini & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2024). This view indicates that the orientation of education must be based on transcendental values, not merely utilitarian purposes. Meanwhile, Ibn Sina in *Kitab al-Shifa* developed a systematic approach to education that includes the classification of knowledge and stages of learning according to the age and cognitive development of learners, which is conceptually in line with modern cognitive development theory as proposed by Piaget.

On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun in the *Muqaddimah* made important contributions through his sociological analysis of education (Pavlenko & Maltseva, 2026). He emphasized that education must consider *asabiyyah* (social solidarity) as well as the socio-cultural conditions of society. He also rejected overly harsh teaching methods, arguing that they could create psychological barriers and reduce students' learning motivation. This view corresponds with Carl Rogers' humanistic education theory, which stresses the importance of a supportive, non-coercive, and learner-centered learning environment.

When analyzed within the framework of modern educational theory, the ideas of these scholars show compatibility with several major pedagogical approaches. First, constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through experience, is reflected in Ibn Sina's concept of staged learning. Second, character education, which is currently emphasized by UNESCO and various education systems worldwide, aligns with Al-Ghazali's idea of moral development as the core of education. Third, humanistic education, which positions learners as active subjects, is clearly reflected in Ibn Khaldun's thought (Dajani, 2015).

In addition, data from global education reports such as the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2023 indicate that the main challenges in contemporary education include a moral crisis, low moral literacy, and an imbalance between technical skills and human values. In this context, classical Islamic educational thought offers an alternative paradigm that emphasizes the balance between knowledge, values, and spirituality (Irham, 2026). This is highly relevant, considering that modern education systems are often dominated by economic and workforce-oriented goals.

Furthermore, in relation to the implementation of education in Indonesia, classical Islamic educational concepts are relevant to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Wasehudin, W., & Anshori, 2021; Wasehudin et al., 2023), which emphasizes the development of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly in the dimensions of faith in God Almighty and noble character. This similarity indicates a convergence between classical Islamic educational values and national education policies that prioritize character building and 21st-century competencies.

Thus, it can be concluded that classical Islamic educational thought is not merely historical in nature but also empirical and applicable in the context of modern education. The integration of spiritual values, scientific rationality, and social awareness offered by classical scholars provides a strong theoretical foundation for building a more humanistic, sustainable, and globally responsive educational system. Therefore, revitalizing classical Islamic educational thought is essential to enrich contemporary educational discourse and strengthen the philosophical foundation of education in the modern era.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that classical Islamic educational thought represents a coherent intellectual system in which revelation, reason, and experience function as mutually reinforcing

sources of knowledge. This integration affirms that education in the Islamic tradition is not limited to the acquisition of knowledge, but also emphasizes the holistic formation of human character, encompassing moral and spiritual development. The analysis of its genealogy indicates that the development of classical Islamic educational thought emerged through a continuous intellectual transmission that closely connects theological, philosophical, and social dimensions. The study highlights that the core strength of classical Islamic educational thought lies in its ability to construct an integrated worldview that unifies spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions within a single educational framework. This makes it remain relevant as an alternative paradigm in addressing modern educational tendencies that often prioritize technical and skill-based competencies. For future research, it is recommended that the scope of study be expanded by including more classical and post-classical scholars in order to develop a more comprehensive intellectual map of Islamic educational thought. In addition, empirical studies are needed to examine how these philosophical concepts can be implemented in contemporary educational practice, particularly in curriculum development, teaching strategies, and classroom pedagogy. Comparative studies with other global educational traditions are also encouraged to broaden perspectives and enrich the development of a more universal and inclusive educational theory.

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