

Language, Communication, and Education in Ibn Khaldun's Thought: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Learning Strategies

Rika Gusfika^{1*}, Sri Lestari², Zul Hijrah³

^{1'2'3}Universitas SyiahKuala,Indonesia.

Correspondence Author: tariii01105@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to analyze in depth the relevance of Ibn Khaldun's educational thought through a historical review and the opportunities for its implementation in today's modern learning strategies. Contemporary education is often faced with a dilemma between achieving mechanical academic targets and forming a holistic character of students. Therefore, re-examining the thoughts of classical figures is an urgency that cannot be postponed. The method in this article is using a literature study method or literature review with a qualitative-descriptive approach that synthesizes data from fifteen sources of scientific literature related to Islamic thought. The brief results of this study indicate that: (1) the concept of learning stages (tadrij) and the compassionate approach initiated by Ibn Khaldun have proven effective in reducing the level of academic stress and mental boredom of students in the digital environment; (2) the application of the dialogic-interactive method can accelerate the formation of critical thinking skills (malakah) which are much needed in the 21st century. The novelty of this article is in the formulation of a contemporary holistic learning ecosystem model that combines the principles of educational sociology of the Muqaddimah book with a blended learning strategy based on Islamic moral ethics in an integrated manner. This conceptual synergy is expected to serve as a practical guide for today's educators. Through this paradigm, the essence of education is no longer reduced to the mere transfer of information, but rather to a sustainable pursuit of civilizational transformation.

Keywords: Ibn Khaldun's Thoughts, Historical Review, Modern Learning Strategies, Malakah, Tadrij.

INTRODUCTION

The development of modern education today faces very complex challenges, particularly related to moral degradation and a decline in critical thinking skills among students. While globalization and technological disruption have brought easier access to information, they have also led to a shallowing of meaning in the teaching and learning process. Students are inundated with an abundance of data

Every day, they receive information without any certainty of validity, yet they lack the wisdom and tact to manage that information. The learning process in schools and universities is often trapped in a highly pragmatic orientation, where educational success is measured solely by achieving rigid, formal academic grades without regard for depth of contextual understanding. This test-oriented orientation ultimately creates a generation adept at answering multiple-choice questions, yet incredibly confused when confronted with the dynamic social realities of the off-campus environment.

This phenomenon is exacerbated by the application of monotonous conventional teaching methods, such as rote memorization, which burdens students' short-term memory without stimulating their critical thinking regarding the social phenomena around them. Memorization is seen as the sole measure of emotional and intellectual intelligence, ignoring the analytical, synthetic, and evaluative aspects of human cognitive structure. As a result, students tend to become passive consumers of information and lose social sensitivity and a strong sense of independence. They are alienated from their own social environment because the education they receive in the classroom is disconnected from the sociological roots of the local community. The lack of innovation in teaching strategies for Islamic history and thought also makes the subject matter feel boring, theoretical, and lacking practical relevance for the lives of today's young generation. Therefore, a radical methodological reconstruction is needed that can restore the spirit of education as a means of substantive liberation of thought.

In addition to the methodological issues mentioned above, the contemporary academic climate often neglects the psychological development of individual students. The insistence on competency without regard for mental readiness results in increased levels of academic stress, anxiety, and even apathy toward the learning process. Chasing national curriculum targets leads teachers to ignore the fact that each student's learning pace varies. Consequently, the essential transfer of noble moral values is marginalized by the administrative formality of completing annual teaching materials. Assessing this sociopedagogical crisis, educational institutions seem to have turned into industrial factories that produce skilled workers but lack leadership character, empathy, and religious moral integrity.

To address this multidimensional crisis, the thoughts of legendary figures such as Ibn Khaldun in his masterpiece, *Muqaddimah*, offer a rich and relevant theoretical foundation for reconstruction. Ibn Khaldun, a prominent 14th-century Muslim historian, sociologist, economist, and thinker, laid the foundations of sociology and the philosophy of history long before modern Western thinkers such as Auguste Comte or Karl Marx formulated them. Ibn Khaldun's educational thinking is a humanist learning concept that emphasizes the importance of learning

stages, psychological adaptation, and the gradual, natural, and comprehensive development of intellectual potential. He fully realized that the human mind develops evolutionary with age and the accumulation of empirical experience, so forcing intellectual material beyond a child's cognitive capacity will only result in permanent mental damage to the student's future.

He strongly opposed the use of violence, intimidation, and coercion in the educational process, as these can damage the mind, stifle creativity, and foster hypocrisy in students. He argued that the fear engendered by physical punishment or psychological intimidation would instill in students the habit of lying, manipulative behavior, and concealing their weaknesses to avoid punishment, ultimately destroying their moral integrity from an early age. Conversely, Ibn Khaldun encouraged the application of dialogical methods, interactive discussions, independent exploration, and direct observation so that students could achieve a deep mastery of knowledge, known as *malakah*. *Malakah* is not merely textual knowledge memorized for exams, but rather a *habitus*, an ingrained skill, or an internal competence that enables a person to think critically and act rationally, find solutions, and ethically in all real-life situations.

This sociological theory of education emphasizes that the success of the knowledge transfer process is highly dependent on the mental readiness of students and the flexibility of educators in managing classroom dynamics contextually. Education never operates in a vacuum; it is always closely tied to the social, cultural, geographical, and psychological conditions of the students. This paragraph clearly distinguishes this study from previous research conducted by academics in the field of Islamic thought. While previous research on Ibn Khaldun generally only reviewed his historical biography in general or merely described his philosophical thinking in abstract-theoretical terms without touching on applied methodology, this article offers a more practical, tactical, and applicable innovation in the modern era.

The novelty of this study lies in the formulation of a direct integration model between Ibn Khaldun's principle of phasing (*tadrij*) and modern 21st-century learning strategies, such as the flipped classroom method, blended learning, and problem-based learning. We analyze in depth the opportunities for implementing a history of Islamic thought curriculum that is adaptive to the development of digital technology without losing the substance of religious spiritual moral values. This integration serves as a golden bridge between past wisdom and the increasingly uncertain challenges of the future caused by the wave of artificial intelligence (AI). This multidisciplinary analysis is expected to provide new conceptual contributions for educators in designing more engaging, interactive, dynamic, and contextual teaching modules. Thus, education is no longer a rigid and boring institution, but

rather a living ecosystem, nurturing reason, and humanizing humans according to their sacred human nature.

METHOD

This research uses a literature review method that is carried out systematically and comprehensively. A literature review is a scientific research activity that aims to collect, examine, evaluate, and analyze various data and information from written literature that has strong relevance to the problem topic being addressed. This method was chosen because the main object of study in this research is historical, philosophical, and conceptual ideas contained in original works of the past as well as contemporary literature that discusses them. Given the conceptual-historical nature of this research, the data population used in the study this is not a human subject in the physical sense, an interview informant, or the data collected were not from field respondents, but rather from all accredited scientific papers, historical manuscripts, dissertations, and primary textbooks on the history of Islamic thought published within the last ten years. This time limit was strictly enforced to ensure that the study remained contextually connected to current academic discourse on the implementation of modern education and the challenges of the 21st-century digital era.

From the scientific data population, the researcher then drew a purposive sampling sample of fifteen primary literature sources that specifically, in-depth, and comprehensively discuss the relevance of education in Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*. The selection of these fifteen sources was not done randomly or haphazardly, but through a rigorous screening process, where only literature with high theoretical analysis depth and explicitly containing the variables of *tadrij* and *malakah* were retained in the final analysis. The main tool used in this scientific data collection was an independently developed analytical documentation sheet instrument, which functions to classify text data based on the focus of the research problem formulation. This documentation sheet greatly assists the researcher in systematically mapping central ideas, searching for conceptual common threads, identifying theoretical contradictions, and finding research gaps that still exist in previous academic works.

The location of this research is entirely based on digital searches through the national scientific journal database indexed by Sinta (Ministry of Education and Culture), Google Scholar, Scopus, and the digital library network of Syiah Kuala University, so that this research is not bound to a specific physical geographic location conventionally. This unlimited digital access expands the researcher's horizons in obtaining high-quality literature from various institutions, both at the national level and international references related to classical Islamic thought. The

research time and all stages of literature data collection were carried out intensively, gradually, and systematically over a period of two full months, starting from the beginning of March to the end of April 2026.

The data analysis technique applied in this research is the method analysis Qualitative content analysis and a historical hermeneutics approach objectively map the relevance of the figure's thoughts. Historical hermeneutics was used to understand the 14th-century socio-political context when Ibn Khaldun wrote his monumental work, the Muqaddimah, to prevent his ideas from being misunderstood due to being detached from their original historical roots. Meanwhile, content analysis was used to deduce the deepest meaning of the text and critically contextualize it with the real needs of 21st-century education. All drafts of the reduced text data were then critically synthesized to produce a new conceptual model for updating modern learning strategies. This literature synthesis approach ensured that the final conclusions drawn had a strong degree of theoretical validity and reliability. The process of data triangulation between literatures was also carried out by comparing various interpretations of Islamic sociologists on Ibn Khaldun's thoughts, in order to minimize the researcher's subjective bias during the text interpretation process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Intensively collected literature data shows that the reconstruction of Ibn Khaldun's thought has a very significant positive impact when fully integrated into current teaching strategies. In the various scientific literature reviewed, a consistent pattern is seen that the mechanical and bureaucratic approach in modern education is starting to lose its substantive relevance and demands a pedagogical alternative that more holistically humanizes students. A summary of the findings regarding the comparison of the characteristics of the traditional educational paradigm, modern conventional, and Ibn Khaldun's integrated model is presented systematically in Table 1 below.

Teaching Aspects	Conventional/Modern Paradigm	Ibn Khaldun's Integration Model
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Material Delivery Method	Rigid memorization, fast sequential, chasing curriculum targets without adapting to students' psychological needs.	Continuous phasing (tadrij) that is fully oriented towards mental and cognitive readiness
Teacher and Student Relationships	Transactional instructional, rigid, distant, minimal emotional and spiritual closeness	Humanist, compassionate, dialogical-interactive, strongly rejects all forms of physical/verbal coercion
Final Achievement Target	Short-term formal exam scores and administrative document fulfillment	The formation of in-depth critical reasoning skills (papers) that are adaptive and sustainable

Table 1. Comparison of Contemporary Teaching Paradigms and Ibn Khaldun's Model

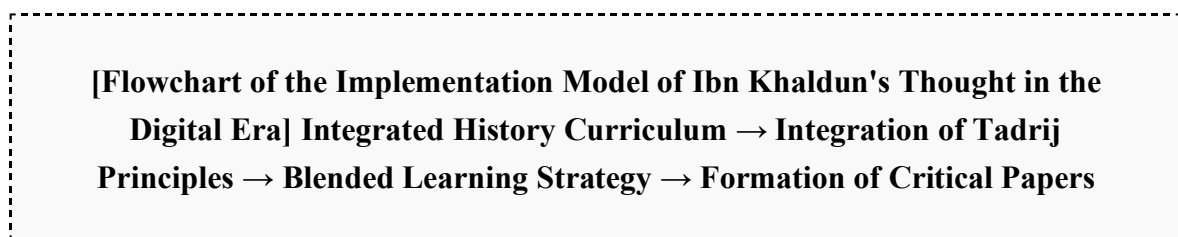


Figure 1. 21st Century Integrative Implementation Model Based on Educational Sociology Introduction

Table 1 above radically dissects the essence of the paradigm differences in terms of material delivery methods, the quality of the emotional relationship between educators and students, and the desired final achievement targets in the educational process. The results of the document review empirically and theoretically prove that the application of the principle of gradual learning has succeeded in substantially increasing students' absorption of Islamic history material. When students do not feel intimidated or burdened by material that exceeds their intellectual capacity and developmental age, they will demonstrate much greater openness to explore the science in depth, voluntarily, and enjoyably.

However, on the other hand, data analysis also successfully identified a real challenge in the field in terms of teachers' pedagogical competency readiness in implementing this inclusive dialogic method. Changing teaching habits from one-

way monologue lectures to dynamic dialogic facilitation requires a fundamental shift in mindset from educators. Teachers are required to be more patient, possess a broad multidisciplinary knowledge base, and be highly psychologically sensitive to the dynamics of student emotions in the classroom. In addition, this research produced a new conceptual scheme, visually depicted in Figure 1 regarding the implementation model of an integrative curriculum. This model shows how historical spiritual values can go hand in hand with the use of modern digital media to create an active, meaningful, and noble classroom atmosphere. The use of software, learning management systems (LMS), and interactive digital media is no longer seen as a learning distraction, but rather as a catalyst that facilitates the *tadrij* process for Generation Z and Alpha students.

Discussion

Based on the comparative paradigm data clearly presented in Table 1, these findings clearly prove that Ibn Khaldun's concept of stages or *tadrij* is an effective solution to overcome the weaknesses of the modern education system which tends to be rushed and quantity-oriented. Current school curricula are often designed with an extraordinarily high material density, which demands completion within a very short time target in order to meet the academic calendar. In current learning practices, students are often forced to master materials that are too complex and abstract before they fully understand the basic concepts, thus triggering high levels of academic stress, anxiety, and even depression in adolescents. This is very much in line with what Ibn Khaldun observed centuries ago in the *Muqaddimah*: when a beginner (*mubtadi'*) is directly confronted with complex, detailed, and high-level conceptual problems, their intellect will become dull, confused, and feel incapable and in the end it will give rise to feelings of hatred and despair towards science itself.

Through the application of our formulated *tadrij* principles, teachers are taught to deliver material on the history of Islamic development from the simplest, concrete, and contextual levels to the abstract, theoretical, and philosophical levels in a gradual and continuous manner. This phasing is measured not only by the structure of the syllabus on paper, but also by how teachers respond to the dynamics and unique learning styles of each student in the classroom. In the first stage (early *tadrij*), the material is presented in a global, broad outline, and uses concrete examples around the students to provide a compelling big picture. In the second stage (intermediate *tadrij*), teachers begin to delve into the details of the material, presenting cause-and-effect analyses with a moderate level of difficulty. Only in the third stage (advanced *tadrij*), after a basic understanding has been fully and firmly established, do teachers invite students into philosophical discussions, historical

debates, source criticism, and in-depth critical analysis of current social realities. In this way, children's cognitive structures are built in a solid, tiered, and systematic manner without causing intellectual trauma.

This humanistic and non-violent psychological approach has been proven to foster students' self-confidence and a genuine love for knowledge itself. Ibn Khaldun, in a special chapter on the sociology of education, sternly warned that violence in education—whether physical, such as beatings, or verbal, such as shouting and negative labeling—will produce passive, slavish individuals who are dependent on others, lose their fighting spirit (*himmah*), and tend to commit deception or hypocrisy simply to survive their teacher's anger. When the classroom climate is filled with a sense of security, respect, and genuine affection, neuroscientifically, students' brains will be in the most optimal alpha wave state to receive, process, and synthesize new information. This innovative method transforms the face of learning Islamic history, which was initially considered a boring memorization of the names of figures, places, and years, into a highly enjoyable and anticipated intellectual adventure for students. History is no longer seen as dead and dusty artifacts of the past, but rather as reflective mirrors (*ibrah*) to solve the current problems of modern society.

Referring to the visual implementation model shown in Figure 1, a flexible and adaptive curriculum is crucial for the successful development of *malakah* competencies in students in the era of disruption. *Malakah*, which sociologically and educationally can be defined as an ingrained *habitus* or practical intelligence, can never be achieved through cramming, instant tutoring, or learning solely oriented toward memorization for exams. It requires a process of meaningful repetition, internalization of values, and continuous practice of logical reasoning within a conducive ecosystem. The integration of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts into modern strategies such as blended learning provides ample space for students to explore historical sources independently through digital platforms before engaging in in-depth discussions in class. With this flipped classroom model, students can consume basic cognitive material at home through animated videos, journal articles, or history podcasts at a relaxed pace, at their own pace. When they arrive in the physical classroom, learning time is no longer spent listening to the teacher's monologue lectures, but is used entirely for healthy debates, group discussions, solving case studies, and strengthening their critical thinking skills.

In the context of modern teaching, teachers no longer act as "the sage on the stage" or the sole center of information and absolute truth, but rather transform into "the guide on the side" or dialogue facilitator who challenges students' critical thinking through relevant contemporary case studies. This challenging new role requires teachers to have a breadth of insight, academic humility, and emotional

intelligence that goes beyond the pages of school textbooks. Teachers must be able to connect the common thread between the factors of the downfall of a past civilization (as analyzed by Ibn Khaldun regarding the luxury that destroys *ashabiyah*), with the phenomena of sociological crisis, corruption, and moral economic degradation in the current modern era, so that students' critical thinking is truly stimulated to think systematically. This in-depth discussion emphasizes that the relevance of Islamic historical thought does not mean a romantic movement that rejects the progress of digital technology, but rather utilizes it intelligently as a means (*wasilah*) to strengthen values humanity, noble morals, and universal culture. Technology is a neutral tool, while educational vision and humanitarian values are its guiding compass. Without a clear compass of values, the use of technology in education has the potential to reduce human social interactions to mere numerical algorithms—cold, mechanistic, and devoid of spiritual meaning.

The interactive, inclusive, and dialogical collaboration within this classroom ultimately succeeded in producing a generation of educated young people who possess a complete balance: high intellectual intelligence as well as noble moral depth. This is the ultimate goal and noble ideal of all of Ibn Khaldun's pedagogical thought, namely to form complete human beings (*insan kamil*) who are not only rationally and cognitively intelligent, but also socially mature, emotionally sensitive, and spiritually steadfast. This generation is ready to be deployed into society to rebuild a just, highly cultured, balanced, and sustainable civilization of the people (*umran*) amidst the storms of modern globalization.

CONCLUSION

This literature study firmly concludes that Ibn Khaldun's educational thought, which was initiated in the 14th century, has a very high level of historical-conceptual relevance and offers a solutive-paradigmatic solution to various acute problems in the world of modern education today. The visionary ideas contained in the *Muqaddimah* book have been proven to transcend the limitations of space, time, and ancient traditions, penetrating the future towards the universality of cognitive psychology and modern sociology of education. The application of the consistent method of stages (*tadrij*) and a humanist approach without coercion or violence has been theoretically proven to be able to increase creativity, independent learning (self-regulated learning), and critical thinking skills of students in understanding the dynamics of history and social reality. A humane, adaptive, and compassion-based educational process will always succeed in winning the hearts and minds of students, defeating conventional approaches that are rigid, pragmatic, numerical

value oriented, and mechanistic.

The success of this integrative curriculum transformation is greatly influenced by the readiness of educators' pedagogical competencies and the availability of interactive learning media that adapt to developments in information technology. Teachers play the most central role as agents of change in the classroom; without a mental shift (paradigm shift) and improved facilitation skills from educators, no matter how well the ideal curriculum concept adopted, it will fail and become a mere administrative formality in the classroom. The harmonious synergy between classical Islamic sociological theories of education and modern 21st-century teaching strategies has not only succeeded in creating efficient knowledge transfer but also successfully built a solid foundation of moral character, integrity, and spirituality for students who remain highly competitive globally. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun's pedagogical thinking is highly worthy and urgent to be used as a primary reference in the ongoing reform of the Islamic education curriculum in Indonesia. Integrating his thinking is not a step backward (regressive), but rather a smart effort to use the light of past wisdom to illuminate the path out of the educational crisis in the future.

SUGGESTION

Based on the results of this in-depth literature research, several constructive strategic suggestions are proposed for various stakeholders. First, it is recommended that school teachers and lecturers teaching the history of Islamic thought at various institutions gradually begin to reduce the use of monotonous one-way lecture methods (teacher-centered learning). Educators should shift to using interactive, problem-based dialogic strategies (problem-based learning) and flipped classrooms that can actively stimulate students' critical thinking. Educators should also begin to design comprehensive learning evaluation instruments, not only testing low-level memorization aspects (C1-C2 in Bloom's Taxonomy), but also boldly touch on areas of sociological analysis, conceptual synthesis, and critical evaluation (C4-C6) so that the essential *malakah* competency is truly formed in students.

Second, for the leadership of higher education institutions, especially at Syiah Kuala University, it is recommended to regularly hold intensive training, workshops, and workshops on the development of integrative teaching modules based on the thoughts of classical Islamic figures for young lecturers and prospective student educators. This training is crucial to bridge the pedagogical and methodological competency gaps identified in the findings of this study. Macro

curriculum policymakers at the ministerial level are also advised to provide greater flexibility and curriculum autonomy for the integration of local wisdom values, religious history, and classical Islamic philosophy within the national digital learning platform system. National education standardization should not be made rigid, but must provide autonomous space so that educators in the field can adjust the stages of tadrij according to the unique demographic, psychological characteristics, and mental readiness of their respective classes.

Third, future researchers interested in the sociology of Islamic education are expected to expand the scope, validity, and reliability of this literature review through classroom action research (CAR) and quantitative experimental research in the field. This experimental step is crucial for empirically and measurably testing the effectiveness of Ibn Khaldun's tadrij model in improving intrinsic learning motivation, long-term retention of material understanding, and substantive exam results for students at various levels of education, from elementary school to university. Field research and a comparative quantitative approach are essential to provide concrete evidence in the form of accurate statistical data for the conceptual theories presented at length in this literature review.

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