

## IBN KHALDUN'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO ISLAMIC BASIC EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *This research focuses on Ibn Khaldun's thoughts about education and its relevance to the basic education system. In the development of education in Indonesia, secular thinking dominates, which results in the breakdown of the unity of personality. Ibnu Khaldun, apart from being a scientist and historian, was also a phenomenal figure in Islamic education. This research describes the concept of education according to Ibn Khaldun, including educational objectives, students, educators, learning methods, curriculum, and educational environment. The research method used is literature study with reference to Ibn Khaldun's phenomenal work, namely the book "Al-Muqaddimah," as well as other books that examine his thoughts. The main conclusion from this research is that there is relevance between Ibn Khaldun's concept of education and the national education system, especially basic education, so that this idea can be a reference for the development of basic education in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Concept of education, Ibn Khaldun, Islamic Basic Education*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the key word in every effort to improve the quality of human life which plays a role and aims at humanizing humans. Education is essentially a process of maturing the quality of life, through this process humans are expected to be able to understand what the meaning and essence of life is, as well as what it is for and how to carry out life's tasks and life correctly. Education is a basic human need that emphasizes the learning process with the hope that humans can become complete humans after being equipped with various knowledge and sciences that have an effect on changing character, personality, thinking and behavior for the better.

Talking about education in general, it cannot be separated from Islamic education, this inevitably has to clash with the figures involved in it. Among the Islamic education figures who have made major contributions, one of them is Ibnu Khaldun. This figure has a special place in the world of Islamic education. His thoughts have always been the subject of discussion among educational practitioners. Both at that time and in the times after. Such a large contribution to the world of education, his thoughts are not only consumed by practitioners of Islamic education but also many western scholars who use it as a reference in the research they develop.

As a result, studying the thoughts of this educational figure always attracts the attention of academics. His concept of thought was not only interesting in its time but is also very urgent to be used as a reference in the world of modern education. Especially when talking about the world of Islamic education in Indonesia, which is currently still searching for its identity, referring to past thought figures including Ibnu Khaldun is a necessity. This is very natural, considering that they have achieved the golden age of Islamic education brilliantly. In fact, this people will never develop and progress unless they follow what has been applied by their predecessors. Based on this, the author wants to highlight how patterns or concepts of educational thought according to Ibn Khaldun can then become educational concepts in the next life.

## **METHOD**

The approach in this research was a qualitative approach that is descriptive interpretative. This study used library research design by employing reference search attempts to locate materials relevant to the topic being explored in detail. The process of conducting literature reviews involves conducting an in-depth and critical analysis of the relevant literature in conjunction with the subject matter investigated and evaluated (Singarimbun & Effendi, 1989). Data was obtained from descriptive narratives of Journals and Books about Ibn Khaldun's Educational Thoughts and Their Relevance to Islamic Basic Education. The data collection technique used was documentation, by taking data from various relevant literature.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Biography of Ibn Khaldun**

Abd al-Rahman Abu Zaid Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun (better known as Ibn Khaldun) was born in Thunisia on 1 Ramadhan 732 H/27 May 1332 M. and died in Cairo on 25 Ramadhan 808 H/19 March 1406 M. He known as a state expert, historian and legal expert of the Maliki school. The origins of his ancestors came from Hadramaut who then immigrated to Seville (Spain) in the 8th century, along with the wave of Islamic conquest on the Andalusian Peninsula. His family are quite influential political figures. Among his family, only his father was not involved in education and chose to be more intense in the field of education. Family background and when he was born and lived his life seem to be determining

factors in the development of his thinking. His family has passed on an intellectual tradition to him.<sup>1</sup>

Like other Islamic thinkers, his childhood education was traditional. This means that he must learn to read the Koran, Hadith, Fiqh, Literature and Nahwu Sharaf. Khaldun first received his education directly from his father. Apart from his father, he also studied Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh (Maliki), Arabic grammar, Mantiq science, and philosophy with a number of Andalusian and Tunisian scholars. He only received formal education until he was 17 years old. He studied the Koran and its interpretation, Fiqh, Sufism and Philosophy. At this relatively young age he was able to master several classical disciplines, including 'Ulum 'Aqliyah (the sciences of Philosophy, Sufism and Metaphysics). Apart from that, Khaldun is also interested in studying and pursuing Political Science, History, Economics, Geography, and so on.

When he was 17 years old, he then taught himself (self-taught), continuing what he had acquired in the previous period of formal education. Apart from holding important state positions, such as Qadi, diplomat, and teacher on various occasions. For 40 years, Khaldun lived in Spain and North Africa. Here, he was constantly faced with situations of political upheaval and held important positions under successive rulers. Upon his return to North Africa, Khaldun decided to perform the Hajj. In 1832 M, he then went to Alexandria. However, on his journey he first stopped in Egypt. Because of his popularity and credibility as a scientist, at the request of the king and people of Egypt, he was offered the position of teacher and chairman of the Supreme Court of the Mamluk Dynasty. This offer was finally accepted, so his intention to carry out the Hajj had to be postponed. This wish only came true in 1837 M.

From 1832 AD until his death, Ibn Khaldun held the position of professor and rector at Madrasah Qamliyah and chief justice (Mufti) in Egypt for 6 periods. This is where he used his remaining years to develop and use the knowledge he had left behind. Ibn Khaldun's first book was *Lubab Al-Muhashshal*, completed under the guidance of his beloved teacher, Al-Abili, when Ibn Khaldun was only 19 years old and still in Tunisia. The last book, namely a commentary on the Rajaz poem about *Ushul Al-Fiqh* by Ibn Khathib, was probably written in Granada, around 765 AH/1363 AD. He wrote many treatises, although they were less important. The majority of his later works deal with theological-philosophical issues.

There is another work before the book of Al-Ibar, namely *Syifa' Al-Sa'il* which was written during his second sojourn in Fez around 775 AH/1373 AD. He does not say a word

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<sup>1</sup> Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat* ..... 171

regarding this text (which is a real contribution for Islamic mysticism) in his autography.<sup>2</sup> Apart from that, Ibn Khaldun also wrote a monumental work, namely *Buku al-'Ibar wa Diwan al-Mubtada' wa al-Khabar fi Ayyam al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam wa al-Barbar wa man Asharuhum min Dzawi as-Sulthani al-Akbar* (Teaching Book and Historical Archives of the Early and Late Times Covering Political Events Concerning Arabs, Non-Arabs and Barbarians, as well as the Great Kings Who Were Contemporaneous with Them). In fact, the books of *Muqaddimah* and *al-Ta'rif* are part of the book of *al-'Ibar* which consists of seven volumes. The *Muqaddimah* is the introduction to *al-'Ibar*, and *al-Ta'rif* is the concluding part. The entire building of knowledge in the book *al-Muqaddimah* describes social sciences, culture and history. Meanwhile, the scope of the book *Al-'Ibar* is empirical-historical evidence of the theory it developed. The originality and depth of his thinking have succeeded in placing his work *al-Muqaddimah* as a masterpiece that is unique and beyond its time.<sup>3</sup>

For Ibn Khaldun, all metaphysical reasoning rests and depends on "second intelligences". In fact, the correspondence that we find between primary intelligence (particular things) and individual exintentia (propositions that describe those primary particular things) is not a logical necessity, but must be proven empirically. Referring to Plato as opposed to Aristotle's pseudo-Theologica, he says that in this area we may only have guesses. Moreover, when claiming to describe and reveal the nature of God, Neoplatonic theories have a bad influence on political entities because they can shift religious teachings from their main function which is needed not only by the state, but also by social organizations. For Ibn Khaldun this claim falsely presupposes that a perceiver constructs existence in his perceptions. But according to Ibn Khaldun neither the breadth of existence for the human mind nor the happiness it promises is possible to encompass.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Khaldun argued that the growth of education and science was influenced by civilization. This can be seen in the countries of Qairawan and Cordova, both of which are Andalusian civilizations and have extensive or heterogeneous problems. There is the growth of science, factories, neatly arranged markets. This situation will affect the style of education.<sup>5</sup> In another part, Ibn Khaldun said that the existence of differences in social layers arises from the

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<sup>2</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr dan Oliver Leaman, *Ensiklopedi Tematis Filsafat Islam*, Bandung: Penerbit Mizann dan anggota IKAPI, 2003, 444.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmad Falah, *Konsep Pendidikan Anak Menurut Ibnu Khaldun (Studi Atas Kitab Muqaddimah)*, <https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/thufula/article/viewFile/4267/2768>

<sup>4</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr dan Oliver Leaman, *Ensiklopedi* ..... 451-452

<sup>5</sup> Masturi Ilham, Lc dkk, *Muqaddimah Ibnu Khaldun (Terjemah)*, cet-1, Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2011, hal. 802

results of intelligence which is processed through teaching. This is different from what is suspected by some people who say that this difference originates from differences in human nature.

According to him, science in Muslim culture can be divided into two parts, namely: Aqli (philosophical) science and Naqli (Syar'iyah) science.<sup>6</sup> Aqli (philosophical) knowledge includes: logic, natural science (physics), metaphysics, and mathematics. Philosophical science is also often called natural science. This is because with their intellectual potential, everyone has the ability to master it well. Meanwhile, Naqli science (Syar'iyah) concerns the laws and teachings of the Islamic religion. This knowledge includes the Koran, Hadith, Sharia principles, fiqh, theology, and Sufism.

According to Ibn Khaldun, in his axiological view, humans are different from other creatures because humans have reason that God has given them. With this intelligence, humans can create sophisticated technology and can change human civilization. And this cannot be separated from the existence of God which cannot be proven empirically but can only be believed.<sup>7</sup> The application of all the knowledge that exists within us can lead us to the success of civilized society. Khaldun is a historian who has had a lot of experience from his travels and from there his philosophical concepts developed. He focuses his thinking on existing experiences and according to him humans are perfect creatures from existing creatures. And the aim of applying the knowledge you have is not only for happiness in the afterlife but also for worldly needs.

In Ibn Khaldun's view, science and education are a concluding symptom that arises from the formation of society and development in the cultural stages and encourages humans to have knowledge that is important for them in a simple life in the first period of the formation of society. Then sciences were born with an accumulation of knowledge, in line with the passage of time, because science was born as a result of doubts in the mind. Then education was born as a result of human pleasure in understanding and deepening knowledge. So science and education are two children born of a cultural life and working to preserve and improve it.

Therefore, Ibn Khaldun believes that education seeks to give birth to a cultured society and works to preserve the existence of society in the future, so education will lead to the development of quality human resources.

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<sup>6</sup> Masturi Ilham, Lc dkk, *Muqaddimah....*, hal. 804

<sup>7</sup> Masturi Ilham, Lc dkk, *Muqaddimah ....* hal. 792

The educational formulation put forward by Ibn Khaldun is the result of various experiences he went through as a philosopher of history and sociology who tried to connect concepts and reality. As an expert in the philosophy of history, of course he uses the historical philosophy approach, because these two approaches will influence the system of thought and thinking in discussing each problem, because both approaches are able to formulate several opinions and interpretations of the facts and experiences that have been passed.<sup>8</sup>

Khaldun's thoughts about the curriculum can be seen from his epistemological concept. According to him, science in Muslim culture can be divided into two parts, namely: Aqli (philosophical) science and Naqli (Syar'iyah) science. Aqli (philosophical) knowledge includes: logic, natural science (physics), metaphysics, and mathematics. Philosophical science is also often called natural science. This is because with their intellectual potential, everyone has the ability to master it well. Meanwhile, Naqli (Syar'iyah) science concerns the laws and teachings of the Islamic religion. This knowledge includes the Koran, Hadith, Sharia principles, fiqh, theology, and Sufism.<sup>9</sup>

Aqli (philosophical) science and Naqli (Syar'iyah) science are knowledge that humans (students) pursue and interact with each other, either in the process of acquiring or the process of teaching. This conception then becomes a pillar in reconstructing the ideal Islamic education curriculum, namely an educational curriculum that is able to deliver students who have the ability to shape and build human civilization.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from that, Ibn Khaldun believes that the Koran is the first science that must be taught to children, because teaching the Koran to children is part of Islamic law which is firmly held by religious experts and is upheld by every Islamic country. The Al-Qur'an that has been instilled in students will become their life guide, because teaching in childhood is still easy, because the child's brain is still clear.<sup>11</sup>

In the regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia no. 3 of 2012 concerning the Islamic religious education curriculum, article 9 paragraph 1, which states that the elementary and secondary diniyah education curriculum consists of the Islamic religious curriculum and the general education curriculum. Then the subject of Islamic religious education is mentioned in the next verse. This is the same as what Ibnu Khaldun stated in his

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<sup>8</sup> Abdul Kholiq Dkk, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Kajian Tokoh Klasik & Kontemporer*, Yogyakarta: Fakultas Tarbiyah IAIN Walisongo Semarang bekerjasama dengan Pustaka Pelajar, 1999, 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Masturi Ilham, Lc dkk, *Muqaddimah.....*, hal. 804

<sup>10</sup> Samsul Nizar, *Filsafat .....* 95-96.

<sup>11</sup> Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat .....* 175-176

work, that students will be taught knowledge that comes from the Koran in stages and then taught branches of science. However, he did not explain it systematically, he explained it in terms of knowledge and general division. Scientists can understand his meaning, so the author concludes that it is very relevant to modern world education. because the two divisions of knowledge referred to by Ibnu Khaldun are Naqliyah science and Aqliyah science.

Ibn Khaldun's formulation regarding the goals of education is to: Providing opportunities for the mind to be active and work, because this activity opens up the mind and individual maturity, then this maturity will benefit society, Obtaining various knowledge, as a tool to help him live well in a developed and cultured society, Obtain employment opportunities, which are used to obtain sustenance. There are several factors that are used as reasons for formulating educational goals, namely: The influence of sociological philosophy, which cannot separate society, science and society's needs, Scientific planning is crucial for the development of a cultural society, Education, as an activity of the human mind, is one of the industries that is developing in society, because it is very urgent in the life of every individual. The formulation of educational goals and the factors used as a basis for consideration in determining educational goals still seem to be in accordance with education today.<sup>12</sup> Ibnu Khaldun's thoughts about the goals of education are relevant to the goals of national education stated in the National Education Law No. 20 of 2003, namely developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe in God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

According to Ibn Khaldun, teaching knowledge to students will only be beneficial if it is done gradually, step by step and little by little. First he must be given lessons on questions regarding each branch he is studying. The information given must be general, taking into account the strength of the student's mind and his ability to understand what is given to him. If in this way the entire main discussion has been understood, then he has gained expertise in that branch of knowledge, but that is only part of the expertise which is not yet complete. Meanwhile, the overall result of his expertise is that he understands the subject matter completely with all its ins and outs. For this reason, if the main discussion has not been achieved well, it must be repeated again until it is mastered properly.

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<sup>12</sup> Abdul Kholiq Dkk, *Pemikiran .....18-19.*

When using educational methods, an educator should pay attention to six main principles, namely:<sup>13</sup> The principle of empowerment, the principle of gradualness, the principle of general introduction, the principle of continuity, the principle of paying attention to the talents and abilities of students, the principle of avoiding violence in teaching.

Modern world education demands that the methods used by educators must be creative in the teaching and learning process. If you look at what Ibnu Khaldun offered from various methods, it is still relevant when applied in the world of modern education. The method offered by Ibnu Khaldun is not only theoretically focused but also practical, this is why education is ideal if theory and practice are juxtaposed. Apart from that, the method offered by Ibnu Khaldun also makes students critical of something being studied. So the author concludes that the method offered by Ibnu Khaldun is very relevant in the world of education today.

An educator should have adequate knowledge about the psychological development of students. This knowledge will really help him to get to know each individual student and make it easier to carry out the teaching and learning process. Educators should know the abilities and absorption capacity of students. This ability will be useful for determining educational material that is appropriate to the level of students' abilities. If educators force material beyond their students' abilities, it will cause mental sluggishness and even hatred of the knowledge being taught. If this happens, it will hinder the process of achieving educational goals. Therefore, a balance is needed between difficult and easy subject matter in the scope of educational material.<sup>14</sup>

In the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007 concerning teacher competency standards including pedagogical competency, personality competency, social competency and professional competency. These four competencies are in accordance with what Ibnu Khaldun demands as an ideal educator in the world of education. Ibnu Khaldun strongly recommends that educators must have extensive knowledge and a good personal attitude. This will then ensure that the teaching and learning process will be achieved well. Because education is not only the imparting of knowledge, but educators will be imitated or become guidance to students in the world of education.

Ibn Khaldun views humans (students) as creatures that are different from various other creatures. Humans, said Ibn Khaldun, are thinking creatures. Therefore, it is able to give birth

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<sup>13</sup> Masturi Ilham, Lc dkk, *Muqaddimah....*, hal. 994

<sup>14</sup> Sansul Nizar, *Filsafat .....* 94-95.

to science (knowledge) and technology. These kinds of qualities are not possessed by other creatures. Through this ability to think, humans not only create their lives, but also pay attention to various ways to obtain the benefits of life. Processes like this give birth to civilization.

In another part, Ibn Khaldun argued that in the process of learning or seeking knowledge, humans must be serious and have talent. According to him, in order to achieve diverse knowledge, a person not only needs perseverance, but also talent. The success of expertise in a field of science or discipline requires teaching.<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Abd al-Rahman Abu Zaid Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun (better known as Ibn Khaldun) was born in Thunisia on 1 Ramadhan 732 H/27 May 1332 M. and died in Cairo on 25 Ramadhan 808 H/19 March 1406 M. he known as a state expert, historian and legal expert of the Maliki school. The origins of his ancestors came from Hadramaut who then immigrated to Seville (Spain) in the 8th century, along with the wave of Islamic conquest on the Andalusian Peninsula. His family are quite influential political figures. Among his family, only his father was not involved in education and chose to be more intense in the field of education.

Ibn Khaldun's framework of thinking in the context of education began with him explaining the nature of humans and science. In his view, humans are creatures who are given thoughts, because this mind is what differentiates humans from other creatures. Apart from that, Khaldun believes that humans are social creatures, because the existence of humans as caliphs will never be realized if humans themselves are without togetherness or relationships between them. In relation to science, there is a duality of knowledge in his view, namely traditional knowledge (naqly) and natural or philosophical knowledge (aqly).

Ibn Khaldun argued that education seeks to give birth to a cultured society and works to preserve the existence of society in the future, so education will lead to the development of quality human resources. The educational formulation put forward by Ibn Khaldun is the result of various experiences he went through as a philosopher of history and sociology who tried to connect concepts and reality. As an expert in the philosophy of history, of course he uses the historical philosophy approach, because these two approaches will influence his system of thinking and thoughts in discussing each problem, because both approaches are also able to

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<sup>15</sup> Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat* ..... 173-175.

formulate several opinions and interpretations of the facts and experiences that exist. has been passed.

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