

# A Comparative Study of the Educational Philosophy of Fazlur Rahman and Ibnu Khaldun

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## Abstract

The objective of this work is to juxtapose the educational ideologies of Fazlur Rahman and Ibnu Khaldun. Indeed, these two individuals hold contrasting perspectives on Islamic education. Fazlur Rahman, an Islamic reformer, holds a philosophical perspective on the historical progression of Islamic education. Fazlur Rahman has contributed alternative ideas for Muslims in the contemporary period, particularly in the realm of Islamic education. Rahman views education as primarily focused on the hereafter and mostly defensive in nature, aiming to protect Muslims against the impact of Western culture that poses a challenge to traditional Islamic ethics. Islamic education plays a crucial role in uplifting the most disadvantaged segments of society by addressing poverty, ignorance, social inequity, and helplessness. Conversely, Ibn Khaldun, a prominent Islamic intellectual who greatly impacted the advancement of science, regarded education as a means to safeguard the future of society. According to Ibnu Khaldun, the primary obstacle in education is in the ability to cultivate high-caliber human capital.

## Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan filsafat pendidikan Fazlur Rahman dan Ibnu Khaldun. Dari kedua tokoh tersebut tentunya terdapat perbedaan pemikiran tentang pendidikan dalam Islam. Fazlur Rahman sebagai tokoh pembaharu Islam memiliki pandangan filsafat tentang perjalanan historis pendidikan Islam. Fazlur Rahman juga telah memberikan alternatif berpikir bagi umat Islam di era modern, termasuk dalam bidang pendidikan Islam. Bagi Rahman, tujuan pendidikan diorientasikan pada kehidupan akhirat dan cenderung bersifat defensif, yaitu untuk menyelamatkan umat Islam dari pengaruh budaya Barat yang mengancam moralitas tradisional Islam. Pendidikan Islam bisa menjadi wahana penting bagi masyarakat dan untuk mengangkat lapisan terendah masyarakat dari kemiskinan, kebodohan, kesenjangan sosial, dan ketidakberdayaan. Di sisi lain, Ibnu Khaldun, yang merupakan salah satu tokoh pemikir Islam yang berpengaruh besar dalam perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan, memandang pendidikan sebagai usaha untuk melestarikan masyarakat yang akan

datang. Tantangan pendidikan menurut Ibnu Khaldun adalah pendidikan yang dapat mewujudkan sumber daya manusia yang berkualitas..

### **Keywords**

Educational philosophy, Fazlur Rahman, Ibnu Khaldun, Educational goals

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the intellectual process through which humans gain information and abilities that allow them to comprehend and recognize their humanity. An individual can be deemed fully human only when they possess the capacity to efficiently employ their cognitive skills in their everyday endeavors. Education is crucial for cultivating human awareness. If humans can optimally use their cognitive faculties in all pursuits. The aim of Islamic education, which largely centers on self-preservation and the metaphysical domain, should be swiftly reassessed. The goal of Islamic education should embrace both the worldly life and the afterlife while being firmly rooted in the principles of the Quran. To eradicate the dualism of the Islamic education system, it is necessary to merge religious sciences and general sciences in a comprehensive and unified manner.

Education sometimes falls short in molding individuals to fully use their benefits. Ibnu Khaldun characterizes education as a hard undertaking. Humans have a natural tendency to engage in acts of disobedience without any limitations, regardless of the circumstances or location. The purpose of education is to efficiently alter human behavior in conformity with Islamic principles. Islamic philosophical scholars have rigorously analyzed various aspects of education throughout the entirety of human existence. Prominent Muslim philosophers include Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Arabi, and Fazlur Rahman. Fazlur Rahman is a modern Muslim scientist who dedicates his efforts to the progress of Islamic philosophy and actively participates in dialogues concerning education. According to him, the progress made by intellectuals throughout ancient times was a result of their efforts to develop scientific knowledge. He criticized Muslims from the medieval era to the present for being seen as having had a setback. This setback occurred due to their inability to develop and nurture this particular skill or knowledge.

Ibn Khaldun is a prominent philosopher known for his expertise in historical studies and his significant contributions to the subject of Islamic sociology. Ibnu Khaldun's ideas are consistent with Fazlur Rahman's conceptual framework. Both individuals contribute to the progress of scientific knowledge and possess ideas in the field of education. Ibn Khaldun's teachings emphasize the need for education as a purposeful human effort to understand, absorb, and appreciate the events in nature

throughout many historical periods. Education is a societal occurrence that is intrinsic to human beings.

This article will examine the life stories of Fazlur Rahman and Ibn Khaldun, and also analyze Fazlur Rahman's views on education within the context of Islam, as well as Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on education within the context of Islam. This article provides a comprehensive summary of the concepts proposed by Fazlur Rahman and Ibnu Khaldun, while also emphasizing the divergent viewpoints of these two persons.

## **METHOD**

This study employs the library research approach, namely by examining the claims or propositions made by prior researchers. Through this approach, the author endeavors to gather data about the issues that will be addressed in this paper. The author examines the sources of the acquired data and subsequently extracts significant points that align with the discourse presented in the article. The author uses content analysis techniques to analyze the data, drawing upon procedures outlined in a book or article. The data utilized in this study originates from scholarly books and periodicals that specifically examine the perspectives of Fazlur Rahman and Ibnu Khaldun on the subject of education. This discussion focuses on the education of Ibnu Khaldun and Fazlur Rahman, examining their biographical profiles, the dynamics of their educational philosophy, and their epistemological studies. Specifically, it explores their perspectives on the concept of science and the sources of knowledge.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

September 21, 1919 marks the birth of the individual in the Hazara region, which is presently situated in northwest Pakistan. Fazlur Rahman's father, Maulana Sahab al-Din, was a renowned alim who obtained his degree from Deoband. Rahman's father diligently focused on his son's recitation and memorization of the Koran. Rahman received his education within a family that followed the Hanafi Madzhab tradition.

This provision had a profound impact on the development of Fazlur Rahman's character and intellectual abilities in subsequent years. Fazlur Rahman acquired knowledge from diverse sources and media, including Western literature, due to the thorough upbringing provided by his father. During his childhood, he acquired a conventional education in Islamic sciences from his father, Maulana Shihab ad-Din, inside the confines of their family. Given his extensive experience in religious life, it was only fitting that he would instruct at Durham University. Subsequently, he relocated to McGill University in Canada, where he assumed a teaching position at the Institute of Islamic Studies. He had the esteemed title of Associate Professor of Philosophy until the early 1960s.

In the beginning of 1960, Fazlur Rahman was summoned to Pakistan to assume leadership of a research institution known as the Institute of Islamic Research in Karachi. Through this establishment, he successfully launched the publication of the Islamic Studies Journal, which continues to be published at regular intervals and is recognized as an internationally esteemed journal. In addition to his role as Director of the Islamic Research Institute, Fazlur Rahman was also selected as a member of the Islamic Ideology Advisory Council of the Pakistani government in 1964. Given these two roles, he was motivated to reexamine Islam through a reasonable and scientific lens in order to address the demands of society. Nevertheless, in 1969, Rahman voluntarily gave up both roles.

Ibnu Khaldun's complete name is Abu Zaid 'Abdurrahman bin Muhammad bin Khaldun al-Hadhrani. Birthdate: May 27, 1332. Originates from a wealthy Andalusian family with Arab ancestry. Ibn Khaldun, renowned as a historian and pioneer of Islamic sociology, demonstrated exceptional ability by committing the Koran to memory at a young age. He is renowned as the Father of Islamic Economics due to his rational and pragmatic economic philosophy. According to the Britannica site, Ibn Khaldun acquired knowledge of Islamic law through the process of memorizing and familiarizing himself with the Al-Quran.

In addition to his academic pursuits, this individual embarked on his professional journey in the realm of politics. Under the rule of Muhammad Ibn Tafrakin, Ibnu Khaldun secured employment as an official seal engraver. He further advanced in his government job. One individual was elevated to the position of secretary at Tilamsan. Subsequently, he assumed the identical role and ascended to the rank of advisor to the Moroccan monarchy in the year 1389 AD. In addition to that, there is a plethora of additional employment experience. Subsequently, Ibnu Khaldun directed his concentration towards the act of writing. One of his renowned literary pieces that delves into the topic of society is *Muqaddimah*.

#### *Fazlur Rahman's Thoughts About Education in Islam*

Fazlur Rahman proposed an educational framework that promotes the development of an Islamic ethos and the incorporation of knowledge. While Fazlur Rahman did not explicitly use this word, his thinking towards Neo-modernism is evident. This offer aligns with contemporary Islamic education. Fazlur Rahman presents his opinions and thoughts on educational reform by examining several works of classical literature. He suggests that reforming Islamic education can be achieved by first acquiring a contemporary secular education and thereafter integrating Islamic principles into it.

Fazlur Rahman's ideas in the realm of education and other disciplines are founded upon his comprehension of the intellectual riches within Islamic tradition. Fazlur Rahman discussed key elements of education, such as the foundational principles of Islamic education and the existing

defensive strategy for Islamic education, as per Fazlur Rahman. Defensive refers to the act of safeguarding the intellect of Muslims from contamination and harm resulting from the influence of Western concepts across diverse scientific fields, particularly those that pose a challenge to traditional ethical principles. Fazlur Rahman possesses a unique approach to comprehending the occurrences inside his field of study. In order to ensure that the methodological qualities of Fazlur Rahman's thought are evident in every investigation of his thinking. As a result, the thought processes of Rahman will be presented in the following manner.

First, the critical history method. The historical-critical technique and the socio-historical method differ, while both addressing the question of "why?". The first method, known as historical criticism, is employed to ascertain the contextual and background details of historical events. On the other hand, the second method, referred to as socio-historical analysis, serves as a preliminary exploration of the first method. These two methodologies are specifically associated with the examination of historical studies.

In practice, the historical-critical method does not prioritize the chronological aspect of education in the Islamic world. Nevertheless, it highlights the significance of the values encompassed within historical data pertaining to education in the Islamic world. More precisely, this approach involves examining the past developments of Muslim education, with a particular focus on Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Rahman occasionally draws similarities between the educational systems of these nations. Therefore, Fazlur Rahman's approach to historical critique prioritizes the significance of the values found within the history of Islamic education. Subsequently, this is employed as a novel approach to discover fresh concepts in Islamic education updates that are pertinent to the current day.

Second, the systematic interpretation method. The historical criticism method, which has long been applied in writing down sharp and critical thoughts, was later developed into a more systematic method, which is called the systematic interpretation method.

Third, a double movement method. A double movement is a movement that focuses on studying the social and moral context of the Prophet's time and then bringing it to the current world level. This means trying to utilize the values and principles of the Al-Qur'an in a general and systematic way and applied in a contemporary or modern context.

Fazlur Rahman's thoughts in this article include the characteristics of knowledge, educational goals and educational methods.

a. Characteristics of knowledge

Fazlur Rahman explains in his article entitled "The Qur'anic Solution Of Pakistan's Educational Problems" that the characteristics of knowledge

are divided into three types, namely: (1) Knowledge obtained through observation and experimentation. (2) Knowledge is always developing and is dynamic. Knowledge is not stagnant and repetitive. Stagnation and repetition are signs of the death of knowledge. All knowledge, both inductive and deductive, is always based on what precedes it and is a creative process that never knows an end. (3) Knowledge is an organic unity, in a sense. that knowledge is always developing but remains in organic unity.

Based on the Koran, Fazlur Rahman classifies human knowledge into three types, namely knowledge about nature (physical universe), history (the historical study of society) and humans (constitution of the human mind). First is knowledge about nature created for humans such as physical knowledge. The two crucial types are knowledge of history and geography. The Qur'an encourages humans to travel across the earth and examine what happened in past human civilizations. Third is knowledge about humans themselves.

All knowledge is based on three sources, namely: (1) Nature (Physical Universe). Natural phenomena must be studied and this investigation naturally never stops. Based on these data, the laws that govern the workings of nature can be discovered and integrated to create a total picture of the universe. (2) Human (Constitution of the Human Mind). Explained as follows; humans must be researched with sufficient intensity. The Qur'an emphasizes the study of the inner world, such as the human soul (al-anfus). The data obtained through this research is related to human work and motivation, morals and the soul must be used to overcome imbalance, crime, and to form the moral standards of humanity. The main aim of this knowledge is to create a balanced, healthy, confident and creative human personality. (3) History (The Historical Study of Societies). Fazlur Rahman explained that the Koran places the same emphasis on history. Correct appreciation of other cultures, societies and religions (of course) can produce various positive directions. If studied clearly and seriously, the subject of history really leads to comparative studies of certain societies with other societies and functions as an important instrument for criticism and self-assessment. Therefore, it can be said that history produces sociology.

#### b. Educational goals

According to Fazlur Rahman, the purpose of education is to develop humans in such a way that all knowledge will become an organ in the creative whole person which enables humans to utilize natural resources for the good of humans and create justice, will and order in the world. According to Fazlur Rahman, several objectives of Islamic education are: (1) Oriented to life in this world and the afterlife while also being based on the Koran. The aim of Islamic education is defensive and tends to be oriented towards the afterlife and must be changed immediately. Thus, the aim of education is not only oriented towards the afterlife, but its

orientation must be balanced between this world and the hereafter. Because humans in this world have a duty as caliphs on earth, namely as managers of nature to achieve the benefit of all mankind. (2) Saving the minds of Muslims from pollution/damage caused by Western cultural ideas. The psychological burden of Muslims in facing Western culture must be removed immediately. Fazlur Rahman recommends conducting a comprehensive historical and systematic study of Islam regarding the development of Islamic disciplines such as theology, law, ethics, hadith, social sciences and philosophy by adhering to the Koran as an evaluator. (3) Changing the negative attitude of Muslims towards science. Because according to Rahman there is nothing wrong with science, it is the users who are wrong.

### c. Educational methods

The method that produces critical and creative alumni is the a double movement method. This method was originally used to understand and interpret the Koran. This method consists of two double movements. The first is to bring the current situation to the time when the Koran was revealed and back to the present. Furthermore, this movement is translated as an educational method between teachers and students in learning. Second, there is movement from teacher to student and from student to teacher, if necessary there is also movement among students. With this method, students are expected to have the freedom to carry out various activities. Other methods that are no less important are: (1) Discussion Method. Is a method that aims to get a conclusion from the deliberation process carried out by students. Generally, discussions will bring up many opinions from each student. These opinions are then summarized to be more concise. The urgency of the discussion method is to instill good and correct ways of discussing and deliberating in students. (2) Lecture Method. Is a learning method where learning is carried out by the teacher conveying material orally to students. And students who listen carefully and note down the important things conveyed. (3) Question and answer method. This is a learning method where the teacher asks students questions during learning activities. The questions asked can be in the form of material evaluation, discussion material during learning, attracting students' attention to focus on the material, and guiding students' thinking direction.

In the midst of the widespread problem of the dichotomy of the Islamic education system, Rahman is trying to offer a solution. According to him, the way to eliminate the dichotomy in the Islamic education system is by integrating religious sciences with general sciences in an organic and comprehensive manner. The integration method as offered by Fazlur Rahman was the one that was applied during the golden age of Islam. At that time, science was studied in its entirety and in balance between the sciences needed to achieve prosperity in the world (general sciences) and the sciences to achieve happiness in the afterlife (religious sciences).

### *Ibn Khaldun's Thoughts About Education in Islam*

Ibnu Khaldun views that science is a gift from Allah SWT. Although he classifies types of knowledge into two groups, namely *naqliyah* science and *aqliyah* science. The science of *naqliyah* which comes from the Koran is the word of Allah. Meanwhile, *aqliyah* knowledge is knowledge obtained with the mind and is essentially a gift from Allah. As a Muslim philosopher, Ibnu Khaldun's thinking is very rational and relies heavily on logic. Ibn Khaldun's thoughts in this article include the characteristics of knowledge, educational goals, and educational methods.

#### a. Characteristics of knowledge

The characteristics of knowledge according to Ibnu Khaldun are socio-progressive which holds the view that the educational subject must be active, the school is a small world for a large society, classroom activities are able to solve problems, and the school atmosphere must be cooperative and democratic. Socio-progressive education is an educational thought that prioritizes the implementation of education in schools that is child-centered, has an education perspective that is free, modified, progressive, dynamic and tries to solve educational problems with analysis or a sociological approach.

The aim of socio-progressive education is to shape children so that in the future they will be able to work according to the work requirements required in their social environment, work systematically, love work, have a developing spirit, be dynamic in updating knowledge and skills, and work with the brain and heart.

Socio-progressive educational thought considers the subject of education to be active, not passive. School is a small world (miniature) of a large society, classroom activities are focused on problem-solving practices, and the school atmosphere is directed towards a cooperative and democratic situation. They adhere to the principle of child-centered education. They think that children are unique. Children are very different from adults. Children have their own train of thought, have their own desires, have their own hopes and anxieties that are different from adults. In socio-progressive thinking, teachers have a role as: (1) Facilitator, namely a person who makes themselves available to make the learning process smooth. (2) Motivator, namely a person who is able to inspire students to continue to be enthusiastic about learning. (3) Counselor, namely a person who helps students to find and overcome the problems faced by each individual. (4) Sociator, namely a person who accompanies students to get to know and enter into the social life of society.

#### b. Educational goals

Ibn Khaldun formulated the goals of education inseparable from his views on human nature as he understood them. According to Ramayulis

and Samsul Nizar in (Muhammad Kosim, 2012) the educational goals offered by Ibnu Khaldun are universal and diverse. These goals are: (1) The goal of improving thinking. The aim of increasing intellectual educational thinking is in accordance with the concept of "humans as thinking creatures". Education is needed to obtain knowledge, while science will increase the potential activities of the human mind. Therefore, education must be directed at equipping students with various knowledge that can increase their intelligence so that humans become human beings. In every learning process, humans always try to check the knowledge or information that will be obtained by their predecessors. Humans collect facts and inventory skills that they have mastered to gain more inheritance of knowledge that increases throughout the hours as a result of human reasoning activities. Based on this, it can be concluded that the aim of education intended by Ibn Khaldun is to increase human intelligence and his ability to think. (2) The aim of improving society. Ibnu Khaldun believes that knowledge and teaching are very necessary to improve the standard of living of human society in a better direction. Islamic education aims to educate humans to be able to achieve social life so that with the knowledge and capacity they possess, they are able to build a civilized society very quickly. (3) Goals from a spiritual perspective. The aim of Islamic education is to improve human spirituality by carrying out the practices of worship, dhikr, seclusion (solitude) and isolating oneself from the general public as much as possible for the purpose of worship as is done by Sufis. Education in the process must lead to efforts to get closer to God and human perfection, directing humans to achieve their life goals, namely happiness in this world and the hereafter.

### c. Educational methods

Ibnu Khaldun put forward matters relating to educational methods, namely: (1) Memorization method. This method is one of the methods used in Islamic education. According to Ibnu Khaldun, this method is used in certain fields, especially in learning languages. Ibnu Khaldun said that those who want to learn Arabic must memorize or master a lot of material. Not all fields of study are suitable for rote memorization methods. The choice of this method is in accordance with the principles developed in modern educational theory which state that the choice of method must be considered with the material to be taught. (2) Dialogue method. According to Ibnu Khaldun, the most appropriate method for mastering a scientific discipline is the dialogue method. This method is more needed than the rote method. (3) Widya tourism method. Ibn Khaldun likes how the second way or rihlah in this way is just a journey that aims to observe knowledge directly at its source. As well as explaining what was observed directly. The purpose of this rihlah is to gain experience and knowledge directly from the original source, even if the paths are different, but perhaps receive lessons from scholars who have special expertise in their homes providing lessons from special views and observations. (4) Exemplary method. The

exemplary method is very important in the educational process. Nana Jumahana (1998: 104) states that the exemplary method was well recognized by Ibnu Khaldun who emphasized the importance of the example of educators in the educational process. The importance of this method can be seen from Ibn Khaldun's statement (2001: 765) when telling about the tourism widya method above. He believes that educational perfection will be obtained by going to study and finding the most influential teachers so that they can emulate both their knowledge and morals. (5) Repetition (al-tikrar) and gradual (al-tadrij) methods. According to Ibn Khaldun, teaching science to students should be based on the view that the initial stage of knowledge is total (whole), then gradually, then detailed, so that students can accept and understand the problems in each part of the science being taught. Ibnu Khaldun said that this method can be carried out in three stages, namely: (a) Educators provide problems that are the main topic of a chapter to explain globally or generally by paying attention to students' thinking abilities. (b) Educators should present the same lesson a second time, but educators provide teaching in a wider scope by providing comments and explanations about different views on the object of study. (c) Educators should explain the material again in depth so that students can have perfect skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

Fazlur Rahman's opinions arose from his observations of the progress of Islamic education in the contemporary period. Fazlur Rahman stressed the significance of deriving ethical principles from the Koran to serve as the foundation for constructing intellectual frameworks and implementing educational models. The goals of education as outlined by Fazlur Rahman are applicable to the objectives of Indonesian education. Education consistently guides students towards developing a well-rounded set of capabilities, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and physical abilities, while also fostering a mindset focused on spirituality and moral values. An effective approach to achieve this objective is to offer educational resources on both religion and general sciences. In addition, education also strives to cultivate individuals who possess both creative and critical thinking abilities. According to Ibnu Khaldun's primary ideas, it may be inferred that his beliefs on the concept of education are applicable to education in Indonesia. This importance can be observed through two factors. Ibn Khaldun's ideas are applicable to the current implementation of Islamic education. Furthermore, the application of Ibnu Khaldun's ideas will be highly pertinent in the execution of this educational endeavor. Ibn Khaldun's distinctive perspective on Islamic education methods is evident in his critical stance towards various commonly employed approaches during his era, including the Al-Qur'an study method that neglected language aspects, reliance on condensed books for learning, and the rote memorization technique. Based on the psychological emphasis seen in the

numerous educational approaches proposed by Ibn Khaldun in his book *Muqaddimah*, it may be inferred that his philosophy is centered around the psychology of students.

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