



## Educational Values in Islam and Confucianism: A Comparative Analysis

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[cuc\\_arabic@163.com](mailto:cuc_arabic@163.com)**Abstract:**

This study compares the educational values rooted in Islamic and Confucian traditions, aiming to identify parallels that shape educational practices within these profound cultural and religious contexts. The methodology involves textual analysis and contextual evaluations, with primary references drawn from Islamic sources (the Holy Quran and Hadith) and Confucian texts (Analects, Mencius, Great Learning). It examines the comparative textual content and identifies core values, teachings, and morals defined by Islamic and Confucian principles. The findings reveal that both traditions emphasize moral and ethical development, disciplined learning, and the essential role of education in fostering societal harmony and effective governance. However, they differ in their emphasis, the roles of teacher, and the interplay between religious and secular knowledge. This comparative analysis highlights how foundational philosophical and spiritual texts influence educational paradigms and inform contemporary educational practices in societies shaped by Islam and Confucianism. The study underlines the moral and spiritual grounding of both values systems, particularly within multicultural and multi-religious contexts.

**Keywords:** Textual content, Curriculum Design, Islamic principles, Moral Education, the roles of teacher.

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**Cite this article as:** Al-Nahdi, Y. A. A. S. & LI, Y. (2025). Educational Values in Islam and Confucianism: A Comparative Analysis, *Arts for Linguistic & Literary Studies*, 7(1): 640-673.

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## القيم التربوية في الإسلام والكونفوشيوسية: دراسة مقارنة

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### المخلص :

يقارن هذه البحث القيم التعليمية المتجذرة في التقاليد الإسلامية والكونفوشيوسية، بهدف تحديد أوجه التشابه التي تشكل الممارسات التعليمية في هذه السياقات الثقافية والدينية العميقة. وتعتمد المنهجية على التحليل النصي والتقييمات السياقية، مع الاستناد إلى المصادر الإسلامية (القرآن الكريم والحديث) والنصوص الكونفوشيوسية (المحاورات، منسيوس، التعلم الكبير). وتبحث الدراسة في المحتوى النصي المقارن وتحدد القيم الأساسية والتعاليم والأخلاق التي تحدها المبادئ الإسلامية والكونفوشيوسية. تكشف النتائج أن هذه التقاليد تؤكد على التطور الأخلاقي والمعنوي، والتعلم المنضبط، والدور الأساسي للتعليم في تعزيز الانسجام المجتمعي والإدارة الفعالة. ومع ذلك، تختلفان في التركيز، وأدوار المعلم، والتفاعل بين المعرفة الدينية والدينية. يُبرز التحليل المقارن كيف تؤثر النصوص الفلسفية والروحية الأساسية على النماذج التعليمية وتُعزز الممارسات التعليمية المعاصرة في المجتمعات التي تشكلها الثقافة الإسلامية والكونفوشيوسية. وتؤكد الدراسة على الأسس الأخلاقية والروحية لكلا نظامي القيم، خاصة في السياقات متعددة الثقافات والأديان.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المحتوى النصي، تصميم المناهج، المبادئ الإسلامية، التربية الأخلاقية، أدوار المعلم.

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للاقتباس: النهدي، ي. ع. أ. ص. ولي، ي. (2025). القيم التربوية في الإسلام والكونفوشيوسية: دراسة مقارنة، *الآداب للدراسات اللغوية والأدبية*، 7(1): 640-673.

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## 1. Introduction

Education is essential to personal growth and societal progress, serving as the bedrock upon which civilizations build their cultural and intellectual heritage. Across diverse cultures and historical periods, educational values have been profoundly shaped by prevailing religious, philosophical, and social ideologies. This paper adopts a comparative analysis of the educational values articulated in the Holy Quran and Confucian texts, two foundation bodies of thought that have significantly influenced Eastern and Islamic societies, respectively. The Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) was born in 572 from the Hashemite tribe in Mecca and brought Islam to the people as a 'comprehensive way of life'. Islam has since the time of Muḥammad spread from Mecca to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, then to the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas and the rest of the world. Nearly one-fifth of the world population is Muslim. Confucius, born in Shandong, China, in 551 BCE, significantly influenced not only China but also Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, and other regions in both the East and West, impacting nearly one-fifth of the global population.

This study explores the comparative educational values in Islam and Confucianism by examining how each tradition conceptualizes education for cultivating individual virtue and maintaining social harmony in the context of significant global shifts. This study is crucial to understand how necessity of the historical and philosophical underpinnings of diverse educational systems. In Islamic education, the foundation is built on divine revelation as articulated in the Qur'an, Hadith, and centuries of scholarly discourse (Arjmand, 2017). This tradition advocates for a holistic approach that interweaves spiritual, intellectual, and moral dimensions to foster personal growth and communal well-being. Conversely, Education was something which according to Confucius essential continued as long as one lives and as a result it has been made clear that life has to be spent in the pursuit of knowledge and reflection on ethical values.

The central argument of this study is that the educational disruptions and innovations witnessed have highlighted the critical need to reassess and integrate traditional educational philosophies with modern practices. While both Islamic and Confucian educational models aim to cultivate morally upright, socially responsible individuals, they do so through distinct frameworks that bear unique implications for contemporary curriculum design and pedagogical strategies (Kadkhodaei et. al., 2023). The rationale for this study is to compare similarities and correspondence of these traditions and educational systems. This study revisits the philosophical underpinnings of Islamic and Confucian educational traditions, contextualizing their relevance in addressing contemporary challenges.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objective is to analyze and compare the textual references related to education in both contexts, thus stressing their distinct visions for individual development, moral cultivation, and societal well-being. The



findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on educational attitude by elaborating how foundational religious and philosophical texts shape educational standards. The emphasis on moral and ethical development in both Islam and Confucianism underscores the universal recognition of education's role in fostering virtuous societies. However, the differing approaches to integrating secular and religious knowledge reveal the diverse pathways through which societies navigate the balance between tradition and modernity. The study underscores the following objectives:

- i. Identifying the core educational values emphasized in Islam and Confucianism and analyze how these values shape individual character development and societal progress.
- ii. Examining the differing roles of educators in Confucian and Islamic educational attitudes and evaluate their impact on teaching methodologies and student outcomes.
- iii. Exploring how Confucianism integrates nonspiritual knowledge while Islam integrates religious and knowledge within their curricula and assess the influence of this integration on contemporary educational practices in their respective societies.

## 2. Literature Review

Islam was introduced to China in the seventh century. Muslims who came to China through the "Silk Road" and the "Maritime Silk Road" were mainly merchants, envoys, and travelers. Official contacts between the Tang Dynasty and the Arab Empire began in the second year of Yong Hui, 651 A.D. (Wang, 2022). The nexus of education and philosophy within Islamic and Confucian contexts has been the subject of extensive scholarly inquiry. Islamic educational principles, grounded in the Quran and enriched by Hadith literature, emphasize the pursuit of knowledge (*ʿilm*), the development of moral character (*akhlaq*), and the seamless integration of religious and worldly education. In contrast, Confucian educational philosophy, primarily derived from seminal works such as the Analects (Lun Yu), Mencius, and the Great Learning, underscores the cultivation of moral virtues, the significance of ritual propriety, and the pivotal role of education in achieving social harmony and effective governance.

### 2.1 Confucian Educational Philosophy

Confucianism posits education as essential for nurturing moral virtues and maintaining societal harmony. Confucius (551–479 BCE) advocated for the cultivation of *ren* (benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), and *li* (proper conduct) through diligent study and self-cultivation, as articulated in the Analects. Further elaboration is found in the Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean, which detail the processes of self-improvement and the importance of ethical leadership. Confucian education focuses on personal virtue cultivation as a pathway to societal harmony, highlighting its role in moral and ethical development (Yong, 2007). Confucius is one of the most famous and influential philosophers and teachers in ancient China. His



teachings have greatly shaped China's educational system and the political, social, and cultural development of China (Tan, 2018; Zhao, 2017). Confucius is seen as one of the most representative figures of Chinese civilization (Kajawo, 2019; Balbo, A. & Ahn, J. 2020). His contribution to education and culture may boil down to two main points: sorting out and preserving ancient classics, initiating private and independent teaching, accumulating abundant educational experience, and establishing a complete systematic education theory. Confucius established schools, composed books, and developed education theories, contributing much to Chinese culture and education (Chan, 2000; Tan, 2007), (Bahtilla & Xu, 2021).

## 2.2 Islamic Educational Philosophy

In Islam, education is regarded as a divine mandate integral to both personal and communal life. The Quran emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge to comprehend God's creation and fulfill one's duties. Complementing the Quranic directives, Hadith literature provides practical guidance on education, ethical behavior, and the responsibilities of educators and learners (Nasr, 2009). (Abou El Fadl, 2005) contends that Islamic education harmonizes spiritual and temporal knowledge, promoting a holistic understanding of life that aligns personal conduct with divine will.

## 2.3 Core Educational Values

The Quran underscores education as a pathway to understanding Allah's creation and fulfilling communal responsibilities (Ma & Zulkifli, 2024). Islamic education prioritizes the pursuit of knowledge (*'ilm*) (علم) as a divine obligation, encompassing values like (*taqwa*) (تقوى), (*akhlaq*) (الأخلاق), and (*adab*) (الأدب). (Nasr, 2009) emphasizes that Islamic education aims to develop individuals who are morally upright and capable of contributing to both personal and communal well-being. Confucian education centers on the cultivation of moral virtues such as *ren* (仁) (benevolence), *yi* (义) (righteousness), and *li* (礼) (proper conduct). Education is seen to develop the *Junzi* (the ideal gentleman), who embodies ethical integrity and contributes to societal harmony (Confucius, *Analects*). (Yao, 2000) notes that this emphasis on self-cultivation and ethical behavior aligns with the fulfillment of social roles.

Both backgrounds place a high value on moral and ethical development, though they frame these within different cultural and religious contexts. While Islam emphasizes knowledge to spiritual and communal excellence, Confucianism, on the other hand, focuses on virtues promoting social harmony and personal integrity, seeking to shape individuals who contribute to the well-being of society through ethical behavior (Abou El Fadl, 2005; Yong, 2007).

## 2.4 Role of the Teacher and Student

Islam considers teachers (*ustadh*) as guides who facilitate both spiritual and intellectual growth. The relationship emphasizes mutual respect, with teachers imparting wisdom and students demonstrating



dedication and humility. Education is seen as a collaborative effort towards spiritual and intellectual advancement (Nasr, 2009). On the contrary, Confucianism considers the teacher-student relationship as hierarchical yet reciprocal. Teachers act as moral exemplars and mentors, guiding students in both intellectual and ethical realms (Confucius, *Analects*). Students are expected to display respect, diligence, and a willingness to learn, with the teacher's role extending beyond mere knowledge transmission to fostering moral development (Confucius, *Analects*). Teachers are pivotal in the educational process, embodying moral and ethical standards. However, Confucianism places a more explicit emphasis on moral cultivation, while Islamic education integrates spiritual guidance alongside intellectual instruction (Halstead, 2004; Yao, 2000).

## 2.5 Curriculum Content

Islamic education offers a comprehensive curriculum that integrates religious studies (Quran, Hadith, Fiqh) with subjects such as mathematics, science, and literature. This balance fosters a holistic understanding of life and the universe, aligning spiritual and worldly knowledge (Iqbal, 2013). Confucian education traditionally includes the study of classical texts, literature, history, and philosophy, with an emphasis on rote memorization, moral lessons, and the application of learned principles to daily life. The objective is to produce well-rounded individuals capable of ethical leadership (Confucius, *Great Learning*). (Li & Xue 2020) explore China's educational reforms, emphasizing globalization's impact, Confucian traditions, regional disparities, and innovative policy efforts. While both backgrounds advocate for a broad-based education, Confucianism emphasizes classical and philosophical studies with a strong moral component (*Analects*), whereas Islamic education more explicitly integrates religious and secular disciplines (Zaman, 2014).

## 2.6 Moral and Ethical Development

Moral education is paramount in both traditions. Confucianism focuses on self-cultivation and the development of virtues, viewing education as a pathway to personal enlightenment and societal betterment (Confucius, *Analects*). Islamic education integrates moral teachings with knowledge acquisition, emphasizing the development of *akhlaq* to live in accordance with divine commandments and societal norms. Both education systems aim to develop individuals who uphold moral standards and contribute positively to society. In Confucianism, ethical behavior promotes social harmony and personal dignity, contributing to the well-being of both individuals and the community, while Islam integrates ethical teachings with religious obligations (Yao, 2000; Nasr, 2009). (Angle, 2012; Halstead, 2004) highlights that ethical education in both traditions is intended to be practiced in daily life, ensuring that learned virtues translate into societal actions. Islamic text encourages Muslims to be decent and honest in their relationships with one another and to keep a consistent sincerity toward God through ritual practice, as this is how they might get closer to God. In both Islam and Confucianism, sincerity has dual ontological and methodological value. From its original



philosophical and religious significance, it has evolved into the link between man and heaven (God). Learning by investigating, sincerity is realized in ritual or moral behavior. Muslims and Confucians are strongly encouraged to be sincere in their interactions with God and with one another (Ningjie & Hussin, 2023).

3. Methodology

This study employs a comparative approach to analyze the religious texts to find the similarities and correspondence between the educational systems of both traditions. The texts were selected based on specific inclusion criteria to ensure relevance and reliability from original texts. The selection process considered texts that (1) A close reading of primary sources, including the Holy Quran along with relevant Hadith for Islam, and the Analects, Mencius, and Great Learning for Confucianism, (2) Including, identifying, and categorizing key educational themes such as moral development, teacher-student relationships, and curriculum content, (3) Identifying parallels and emphasizing distinctions between the educational principles of Islam and Confucianism.

3.1 Scope of the Study

This study is constrained by its reliance on textual analysis, which may not fully capture the practical implementation of educational principles in contemporary settings. The focus on primary texts may overlook the diversity of interpretations and practices within Islamic and Confucian educational settings. Future studies could incorporate empirical studies to examine how these educational values are applied in various cultural and institutional contexts.

Table 1: Elicited Educational Principles from Islamic and Confucian Texts: A Comparative Analysis

| Dimension               | Confucianism   | Islam  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Core Educational Values | <i>"Is it not a pleasure, having learned something, to try it out at due intervals? Is it not a joy to have friends come from afar?" (Analects 1:1)</i>  | <i>"Recite in the name of your Lord who created - Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous." (Quran 96:1-5)</i> |
| Role of the Teacher     | Teachers are moral exemplars guiding students in ethics and learning: <i>"When I walk with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, and their bad qualities and avoid them" (Analects 7:22)</i> | Teachers guide spiritual and intellectual growth: <i>"The best of you are those who learn the Quran and teach it." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, 5027)</i>     |



|                                     |  |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Curriculum<br>Content               | Confucianism places more emphasis on classical ethics and morality, while Islam tends to integrate both religious and secular knowledge in its curriculum. <i>"The superior man is not concerned with satisfying his appetite or seeking comfort in his dwelling. He is diligent in his work and careful in his speech. He seeks to associate with those who possess the Way to correct his own conduct. This may be said to be the love of learning."</i> (Analects 1:14) | Integration of religious and secular knowledge: <i>"Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"</i> (Quran 39:9)  |
| Educational<br>Objectives           | Developing the <i>Junzi</i> (ideal gentleman): <i>"Going too far is as bad as not going far enough."</i> (Analects 11:15)  | Harmonizing personal and communal obligations: <i>"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you."</i> (Quran 5:3)  |
| Moral and<br>Ethical<br>Development | Confucianism does not have a strong religious component and focuses more on ethics and philosophy.<br><br><i>"The superior man is concerned with the root; when the root is established, the Way will grow,"</i> highlighting how Confucian education integrates ethics with secular behavior.   | Islamic moral education, as Confucianism emphasizes inner self-cultivation and moral perfection, while Islam places greater emphasis on demonstrating "righteousness" through religious faith and actions, i.e., <i>"Development of akhlaq"</i> (moral character): <i>"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets, and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their</i> |



Integration of Religion and Secular Knowledge

Religion plays a less explicit role, with a focus on ethics and philosophy for societal harmony. *"Respect ghosts and spirits, but keep them at a distance"* (Analects 6:22)

*promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is they who are the righteous."* (Quran 2:177)

The spiritual rewards and significance of pursuing knowledge: *"Whoever travels a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise."* (Sahih Muslim, 2699)

Cultural Sensitivity

Respect for family and societal roles: *"A person who is filial and respectful to their elders is rarely one to offend their superiors, and one who does not offend their superiors is unlikely to cause disorder. The superior man devotes himself to the root. When the root is established, the Way will grow. Filial piety and respect for elders—are they not the root of virtue?"* (Analects 1:2)

Unity in diversity through the concept of Ummah (community): *"We made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another."* (Quran 49:13)

Table (1) illustrates the Islamic and Confucian elements enhanced character of education, promote ethical leadership, and ensure that education systems are responsive to cultural and religious contexts. This is particularly pertinent in multicultural and multi-religious societies where educational policies must accommodate diverse value systems. The educational ideologies of Islam and Confucianism offer valuable visions for modern multicultural and multi-religious societies. Integrating moral and ethical education, promotion of respectful teacher-student relationships, and balancing religious and secular knowledge are areas where these traditions provide enduring lessons.

### 3.2 Data Collection Method

The main sources of data were mainly the Holy Quran supplemented by authentic Hadith collections (*Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim*) and Confucian classics (*Analects, Mencius, Great Learning*). The analysis follows a thematic approach, drawing on Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to extract educational themes relevant to both traditions. A comparative analysis is then conducted to identify points of convergence



and divergence, informed by contextual interpretations from both Islamic and Confucian perspectives. This process involves:

- Identifying key educational themes, such as moral and ethical development, the role of educators, and curriculum content.
- Categorizing the extracted data for systematic comparison and analysis.
- Examining educational principles in their historical and cultural contexts to understand their evolution and application.
- Synthesizing findings to highlight both similarities and differences and exploring their implications for modern education.

#### 4. Findings

##### 4.1 Core Educational Values

Islamic education, core values are derived from the Quran and Hadith, emphasizing knowledge 'ilm, *taqwa*, *akhlaq*, and *adab* (العلم والتقوى والأخلاق والأدب). These values aim to foster both individual piety and the responsibility to serve society. The pursuit of knowledge is considered a divine obligation, and moral and spiritual integrity is fundamental. In the other hand, Confucian education core values focus on the cultivation of moral virtues such as *ren* (benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), and *li* (proper conduct), however, both civilizations prioritize ethical and moral development, and these values guide individuals to live harmoniously within society and contribute to its well-being. Education in Confucianism is aimed at developing *virtuous* individuals who can promote social harmony, but Islam stresses *taqwa* (awareness of God) as a central value, while Confucianism centers on virtues like *ren* and *yi* to foster social harmony through human-centered values, as Table (2) clarifying:

Table 2. Core of educational values of Islam and Confucianism

| Islam   | Confucianism  |
|---|---|
| Quran, Surah Al-'Alaq 96:1-5 – " <i>Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.</i> " | Analects 2:15 – " <i>The Master said, 'Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.'</i> " |
| Quran, Surah Ash-Shu'ara 26:83-84 – " <i>My Lord, grant me authority and join me with the righteous. And grant me a reputation of honor</i> "   | Analects 17:6 – " <i>The Master said, 'The gentleman is not a utensil (is not limited to</i>                                |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Core of educational values of Islam and Confucianism | <p><i>among later generations."</i></p> <p>Quran, Surah Al-Ahzab 33:70-71 – "<i>O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment."</i></p> <p>Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat 49:13 – "<i>O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."</i></p> <p>Hadith (Sahih Muslim, 2634) – "<i>Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave."</i></p> <p>Hadith (Attributed to Prophet Muhammad) – "<i>The best among you are those who have the best manners and character."</i></p> <p>Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:177 – "<i>Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler,</i></p> | <p><i>one function)."</i></p> <p>Doctrine of the Mean, Chapter 20 – "<i>Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety."</i></p> <p>Analects 1:2 – "<i>Yu Tzu said, 'In practicing the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized. In the ways prescribed by the ancient kings, this is the excellent quality, and in things small and great we follow them."</i></p> <p>Analects 9:23 – "<i>The Master said, 'Isn't it a pleasure to study and practice what you have learned? Isn't it also great when friends visit from distant places?"</i></p> <p>Great Learning – "<i>The point where to rest being known, the object of pursuit is then determined; and, that being determined, a calm unperturbedness may be attained to."</i></p> <p>Analects 3:4 – "<i>The Master said, 'If a man is not humane, what can his ritual be like? If a man is not humane, what can his music be like?"</i></p> |
|--|--|---|



*those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves;  
[and who] establishes prayer and gives  
zakah..."*

Quran, Surah Ar-Rum 30:21 – *"And of His  
signs is that He created for you from  
yourselves mates that you may find tranquility  
in them; and He placed between you affection  
and mercy."*

Quran, Surah An-Nisa 4:59 – *"Obey Allah and  
obey the Messenger and those of you who are  
in authority; but if you dispute over anything,  
refer it to Allah and the Messenger..."*

Quran, Surah Sad 38:29 – *"This is a blessed  
Book which We have revealed to you, [O  
Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its  
verses and that those of understanding would  
be reminded."*

Analects 1:2 – *"Filial piety and brotherly  
respect are the root of humanity (Ren)."*

Analects 13:13 – *"The Master said, 'If the  
ruler himself is upright, all will go well even  
though he does not give orders."*

Analects 2:15 – *"The Master said, 'When  
you meet someone better than yourself,  
turn your thoughts to becoming his equal.  
When you meet someone not as good as  
you are, look within and examine your  
own self."*

Islam and Confucianism emphasize the pursuit of knowledge, ethical conduct, and the cultivation of moral character. Islam, through the Quran and Hadith, stresses obedience to divine guidance, justice, and righteousness, while Confucian teachings highlight propriety, self-cultivation, and social harmony. These traditions uphold the importance of wisdom, humility, and respect for authority, advocating for continuous learning and self-improvement. These values serve as a foundation for personal growth and the betterment of society, demonstrating that education and morality are universal pillars of human excellence.

#### 4.2 Role of the Teacher

The role of teachers in Islam serves as both spiritual guides and intellectual facilitators. They are responsible for teaching knowledge, but also for helping students understand their religious duties and align their conduct with Islamic principles. Teachers in Islam are viewed as having a key role in shaping both the intellectual and spiritual growth of their students. In Confucianism, the teacher's role is primarily that of a



moral exemplary. Teachers are expected to guide students not only in academic subjects but also in their moral and ethical development. The teacher-student relationship in Confucianism is characterized by deep respect, founded on the belief that the teacher's role extends beyond teaching knowledge to nurturing personal virtues such as *Ren* (benevolence) and *Yi* (righteousness). Teachers model these virtues through their own behavior, helping students internalize these qualities and apply them to their own lives, thus fostering social harmony and personal integrity.

**Table 3**

*The role of teacher in Islam and Confucianism*

|                     | Islam  | Confucianism   |
|---------------------|--|--|
|                     | <p>Quran, Surah Al-Mujadila 58:11 – <i>"Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees."</i></p> <p><i>Teachers are honored for their knowledge and role in guiding the community spiritually and intellectually."</i></p>                      | <p>Analects, 7:8 – <i>"The Master said, 'If a student is not eager, I do not teach him, and if he is not struggling with himself to understand, I do not explain. When I have presented one corner of a subject to him and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.'" This highlights the Confucian expectation for students to be proactive and reflective in their learning process."</i></p> |
| Role of the Teacher | <p>Hadith (Sunan Abu Dawood 3643): – <i>"The Prophet said, 'The best of you are those who learn the Quran and teach it."</i></p> <p>This hadith emphasizes the noble status of those who not only learn but also teach the Quran, showcasing the importance of passing on religious knowledge.</p> | <p>Analects, 2:11 – <i>"The Master said, 'The teachers of old first got themselves in order and then went about teaching others.'" This suggests that teachers must first embody the virtues they wish to impart, indicating a strong moral responsibility in their role.</i></p>  |
|                     | <p>Hadith (Attributed to Ali, fourth Caliph): – <i>"I am the servant of whoever teaches me a single letter of the alphabet."</i></p> <p>This illustrates the deep respect and humility towards</p>   | <p>Analects, 15:39 – <i>"The Master said, 'In teaching there should be no distinction of classes.'" This expresses the idea that education should be inclusive and accessible to all students, reflecting a teacher's duty to be fair and non-discriminatory.</i></p>  |



teachers, recognizing their profound impact on personal development.

*"He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been granted wisdom has certainly been given much good."* (Quran 2:269)

The Master said: *"The wise delight in water; the benevolent delight in mountains. The wise are active; the benevolent are tranquil. The wise find joy; the benevolent find longevity."* (Lunyu 6:22)

*"Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward similar to that of the one who follows him, without diminishing their reward in the least."* (Sahih Muslim 2674)

The Master said: *"The gentleman promotes what is beautiful in others and does not promote their faults. The petty man does the opposite."* (Lunyu 12:16)

As Table (3) clarifies that Islam and Confucianism emphasize the pivotal role of teachers in shaping individuals and society. In Islam, teachers are highly honored for imparting knowledge, especially religious wisdom, and are seen as guides who elevate both themselves and their students. Confucianism similarly maintains the teacher's role but places significant responsibility on students to be proactive in their learning. These traditions stress the moral character of educators, the importance of wisdom, and the inclusive nature of teaching. They highlight that true education extends beyond knowledge—it involves virtue, discipline, and a lifelong commitment to learning and self-improvement.

#### 4.3 Curriculum Content

The curriculum in Confucianism is traditionally centered around classical texts, literature, philosophy, and history. It includes a strong emphasis on moral philosophy and social ethics. The study of these subjects helps shape individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also virtuous and capable of effective leadership. In Islamic education, the curriculum integrates religious knowledge (including Quranic studies, Hadith, Fiqh) with secular subjects like mathematics, science, and literature. Education is holistic, aiming to develop both the spiritual and intellectual capabilities of students. In Islam, knowledge of both the material and the divine world is seen as equally important.

**Table 4**

*Curriculum Content of Islam and Confucianism*

|                                 | Islam   | Confucianism   |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Curriculum Content of Islam and | Quran: <i>"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah."</i> - Surah Al-Baqarah | Analects of Confucius: <i>"Is it not a pleasure, having learned something, to try it out at due intervals? Is it not a delight after all to have friends come from</i> |



Confucianism 2:2

Hadith: "*Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.*" - Sunan Ibn Majah, Introduction 224

"*He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever has been granted wisdom has indeed been given abundant good.*" - Surah Al-Baqarah 2:269

"*O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of authority among you.*" - Surah An-Nisa 4:59

Islamic Golden Age: "*Read in the name of your Lord who created.*" - Surah Al-'Alaq 96:1, which encourages the pursuit of knowledge, which historically included sciences like astronomy, mathematics, and medicine.

"*So recite what is easy [for you] from it [the Quran].*" - Surah Al-Muzzammil 73:20, which has inspired the flourishing of Islamic calligraphy as a form of art.

*afar? Is it not gentlemanly not to take offense when others fail to appreciate your abilities?" - Analects 1:1*

*"What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others."* - Analects 15:23

*"If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame."* - Analects 2:3

Confucian Views on Practical Knowledge: While direct texts on science are scarce in Confucian scriptures, emphasis on practical application of knowledge can be inferred, like in the importance of calendar keeping and rituals.

*"Therefore, the gentleman visits men of worth and esteems learning, so as to fix the good in his mind."* - Analects 19:9

The Islamic curriculum deeply integrates the study of the Quran and Hadith, which are the foundational texts for all forms of knowledge in the Islamic tradition. This includes detailed studies on law, ethics, and an encouragement towards scientific inquiry as seen during the Islamic Golden Age. Confucian educational content heavily focuses on the Analects and the classical texts such as the Five Classics and the Four Books. These guide the moral, ethical, political, and social teachings and practices. The emphasis is on philosophy, governance, and the role of literature in moral education, Table (4).



#### 4.4 Educational Objectives

The primary objective of Confucian education is to develop the Junzi (the ideal gentleman or noble person). This involves cultivating wisdom, ethical integrity, and a sense of responsibility. The goal is to produce individuals who can contribute to societal harmony and governance through personal virtue, leadership, and respect for social roles. Confucian education aims at fostering an individual who not only excels academically but also acts as a moral leader in society. Table (5) shows the objective of Islamic education is to create individuals who are devout and virtuous, fulfilling their religious duties while contributing to the welfare of their community. Accordingly, Table (5) shows that Education in Islam aims at developing a balanced person who is not only knowledgeable in religious teachings but also capable of fulfilling both personal and communal responsibilities. The goal is to achieve a harmonious society based on justice, compassion, and ethical behavior, all grounded in divine guidance.

**Table 5**

*Educational Objectives of Islam and Confucianism*

|                        | Islam   | Confucianism   |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Educational Objectives | <p><i>"Indeed, Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion..." - Surah An-Nahl 16:90.</i></p> <p>This verse encapsulates the Islamic educational objective of cultivating moral virtues like justice, goodness, and generosity.</p> | <p>Analects of Confucius: <i>"By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart."</i> - Analects 17:2.</p> <p>This statement underscores the Confucian goal of shaping moral character through education and habitual practice.</p>                |
|                        | <p><i>"Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make a path to Paradise easy for him." - Sunan Ibn Majah, Introduction 224.</i></p> <p>This hadith emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge, which is an intrinsic objective in Islamic education,</p>  | <p>Great Learning: <i>"The extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things."</i> This suggests that for Confucians, education should lead to the expansion of knowledge and understanding, ultimately leading to self-improvement and societal betterment.</p> |
|                        |   |  |





leading not only to worldly benefits but  
also to spiritual rewards.

*"You are the best nation produced [as  
an example] for mankind. You enjoin  
what is right and forbid what is wrong  
and believe in Allah..."* - Surah Al-Imran  
3:110.

This verse highlights the Islamic goal of  
preparing individuals to serve and lead  
their communities by enjoining right  
and forbidding wrong.

*"Say: Are those who know equal to  
those who do not know? It is only men  
of understanding who will remember  
[i.e., get a lesson from Allah's Signs and  
Verses]." - Surah Az-Zumar 39:9.*

Islamic education strives to cultivate  
individuals who excel both in spiritual  
and worldly affairs, encouraging a  
constant reflection on divine signs as a  
path to self-betterment.

Analects of Confucius: *"The gentleman aims at  
harmony, and not at uniformity."* - Analects 13:23.

This indicates that Confucian education seeks to  
foster individuals who can contribute to societal  
harmony through ethical leadership and balanced  
judgments.

Analects of Confucius: *"To be able under all  
circumstances to practice five things constitutes  
perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of  
soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness."* -  
Analects 17:6.

Education in Confucianism is geared toward  
achieving these virtues, thereby developing a well-  
rounded and ethically sound individual.

Islamic educational objectives are deeply intertwined with the religion's core tenets, aiming to produce individuals who are well-rounded in their knowledge of the religion and the world, who act with integrity and contribute positively to their communities. Confucianism focuses heavily on the moral and ethical development of the individual, aiming to create a society where harmony prevails through the proper conduct of its members, guided by ethical leaders who are products of its educational system. These backgrounds aim to create well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to society, but while Confucianism focuses on leadership through virtue and social harmony, Islam emphasizes divine obligation and the fulfillment of both spiritual and societal duties.



#### 4.5 Moral and Ethical Development

Confucian education places a strong emphasis on the cultivation of virtues such as *ren* (benevolence), *yi* (righteousness), *li* (proper conduct), and *zhi* (wisdom). Moral development is achieved through education, self-reflection, and the practice of these virtues in everyday life. It involves internalizing ethical principles and acting upon them to contribute to societal harmony. Moral and ethical development in Islam is focused on the cultivation of *akhlaq* (moral character). The ethical teachings in Islam are derived from the Quran and the Hadith, and they guide individuals to live according to divine will. The aim is to align one's conduct with Islamic teachings, which promote justice, compassion, honesty, and integrity illustrated in Table (6).

**Table 6**

*Moral and Ethical progress of Islam and Confucianism*

|                               | Islam  | Confucianism   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Moral and Ethical Development | Quran, Surah Al-Isra 17:23-24: " <i>And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say, 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.'</i> " This passage emphasizes respect and compassion, particularly towards parents, as a fundamental ethical teaching. | Analects 4:1: " <i>The Master said, 'It is by the Odes that the mind is aroused. It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established. It is from Music that the finish is received.'</i> " This verse highlights the holistic approach to moral education, where literature, etiquette, and music each play a role in shaping and refining a person's character. |
|                               | Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat 49:11: " <i>O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule another people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule other women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the</i>  | Analects 15:23: " <i>The Master said, 'Will it not be like taking complete advantage of the situation, if one should use his full strength when fighting with a woman?'"</i> This statement criticizes unfairness and promotes gender respect, aligning with a broader moral teaching that emphasizes  |



*name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then those are indeed the wrongdoers."* This verse promotes respect and discourages slander or ridicule among people, reinforcing the value of harmony and respect.

propriety and fairness in all interactions.

Islamic teachings provide clear directives on specific behaviors that foster moral and ethical virtues, such as respect, mercy, and humility. These are often expressed through duties towards others, including parents and neighbors, and prohibitions against harmful behaviors. The curriculum often includes these verses as part of character education, integrating them with stories from the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, which serve as practical examples. Confucian moral education is more implicitly woven through the study of classical texts, rituals, and the modeling of behavior by teachers and elders. It emphasizes internalizing virtues that manifest in external behaviors. The focus is on continuous self-improvement and the cultivation of a balanced and harmonious character through lifelong learning and reflection on classical teachings. Education systems both deeply integrate moral education into their curricula but do so through different mechanisms reflecting their unique cultural, philosophical, and theological contexts. The Quran often provides explicit instructions on moral and ethical behavior, whereas Confucian texts tend to emphasize the development of internal virtues that express themselves through proper social conduct.

#### 4.6 Integration of Religion and Secular Knowledge

While Confucianism does emphasize the importance of moral and ethical education, it traditionally maintains a clear separation between religious teachings and secular knowledge. Confucianism is primarily concerned with human affairs—ethical principles and the pursuit of social harmony—rather than direct engagement with religious beliefs or the divine. Islamic education integrates religious and secular knowledge, seeing both as complementary. Learning is viewed as a form of worship, and education is meant to help students understand God's creation and their place in the world. Knowledge is regarded as fulfilling one's religious obligations and contributing positively to society. The key difference is that Islam explicitly integrates both secular and religious knowledge, considering both realms as interconnected and equally important for individual growth and societal well-being. Confucianism, while ethical in focus, tends to maintain a separation between moral teachings and religious concerns. Confucian education is deeply rooted in cultural traditions that emphasize respect for family, elders, and societal roles. Education encourages individuals to understand and fulfill their role in society, which is largely based on traditional cultural values such as filial piety and



respect for authority (Tanggok, 2017). While Confucianism stresses the goodness of life on earth, Islam emphasizes this aspect and extends it to achieving goodness in the hereafter, integrating spiritual and worldly pursuits within its teachings (Abdullah et al., 2011). In Islam, cultural sensitivity is understood through the concept of the Ummah, the global Muslim community. Islam promotes unity among people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, emphasizing mutual respect and understanding. The Quran encourages the recognition of cultural diversity, as reflected in the verse: "We made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another" (Quran, 49, p 13).

Table 7

*Religious teachings and nonspiritual knowledge of Islam and Confucianism*

|  | Islam  | Confucianism  |
|--|--|---|
| Religious teachings and nonspiritual knowledge | Quran, Surah Al-Alaq 96:1-5: "Recite in the name of your Lord who created - Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen - Taught man that which he knew not." This passage underscores the divine command to pursue knowledge, highlighting the value placed on literacy and learning, which encompasses both religious and secular education. | The Great Learning: "The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families..." This text connects the cultivation of personal virtue to broader social and political responsibilities, illustrating the seamless integration of moral philosophy and practical governance. |
|  | Quran, Surah Al-Mujadilah 58:11: "O you who have believed, when you are told, 'Space yourselves' in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, in degrees." This verse places those with knowledge in high esteem, encouraging the                       | Analects 13:5: "The Master said, 'Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.'" Confucius stresses the importance of critical thinking in learning, not just in moral instruction but also in the practical application of knowledge to governance and social conduct.  |



pursuit of understanding across all fields.

Hadith (Sahih Muslim 2699): "*He who travels in the search of knowledge, to him Allah shows the way to Paradise.*" This tradition encourages movement and exploration in the pursuit of knowledge, highlighting the respect for scholars who seek understanding, whether in religious law, natural sciences, or philosophy.

Analects 6:21: "*The Master said, 'I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there.'*"

Confucius portrays himself as a lifelong learner, emphasizing the virtue of earnest pursuit of knowledge, thereby encouraging respect for scholars who dedicate themselves to learning.

Table (7) clearly shows that Islam explicitly commands the acquisition of knowledge, both religious and secular, as a form of worship. This is evident in the Quranic verses that exhort believers to read, learn, and elevate their status through knowledge. The educational approach in Islam often involves a comprehensive study that includes theology, natural sciences, mathematics, and philosophy. Teachers and scholars are given a high status in society, and their roles are seen as vital to the spiritual and intellectual growth of the community. Confucianism emphasizes a holistic education where moral and ethical teachings are intertwined with civic responsibility and political theory. While it may not distinguish as clearly between 'spiritual' and 'nonspiritual' knowledge, the entire spectrum of learning is directed towards the development of virtuous leadership and moral rectitude. The respect for learned individuals is also pronounced in Confucianism, with a focus on the continuous development of wisdom and understanding, highlighting the role of the teacher as a model of ethical and intellectual authority.

## 5. Discussion

The analysis reveals that both Confucianism and Islam place significant emphasis on the moral and ethical dimensions of education, viewing it to cultivate virtuous individuals who contribute to societal harmony and effective governance. However, their approaches exhibit notable differences. Islamic education explicitly intertwines religious and secular knowledge, viewing both as complementary paths to understanding Allah's creation and fulfilling human responsibilities. Historical institutions like Madrasas exemplify this integration by serving as centers for both religious and scientific learning (Iqbal, 2013). Confucian education traditionally maintains a clearer separation between ethical/philosophical teachings and secular studies, focusing more on humanities and classical studies rather than a synthesis with religious doctrine (Tu, 1998). However, Taiwan's science education reforms aim for critical thinking, but face resistance

due to traditional methods and Confucian values. In addition, Confucianism emphasized collectivism, harmony in family and community, which conflict with the notion of individualism in Western cultures. This mentorship model emphasizes character development alongside academic learning as in *Confucius – Analects* (Huang & Asghar, 2016). In Islam, teachers also serve as religious guides, facilitating both spiritual and intellectual growth. The Islamic model integrates spiritual mentorship with intellectual instruction, fostering a collaborative and respectful teacher-student relationship (Halstead, 2004; Nasr, 2009). Emphasizes classical studies, literature, history, and philosophy with a strong focus on rote learning and moral lessons aimed at producing individuals capable of ethical leadership as in *Confucius, Great Learning* (Bahtilla & Xu, 2021). Encompasses a broader spectrum, integrating religious sciences with secular subjects to foster a comprehensive understanding of life (Abou El Fadl, 2005; Iqbal, 2013). Aims to develop the Junzi (the ideal gentleman) for societal harmony, emphasizing lifelong moral and intellectual excellence as in *Confucius, Analects* (Yao, 2000). Seeks to produce individuals who fulfill their religious duties and contribute positively to their communities, integrating spiritual fulfillment with societal responsibilities (Nasr, 2009).

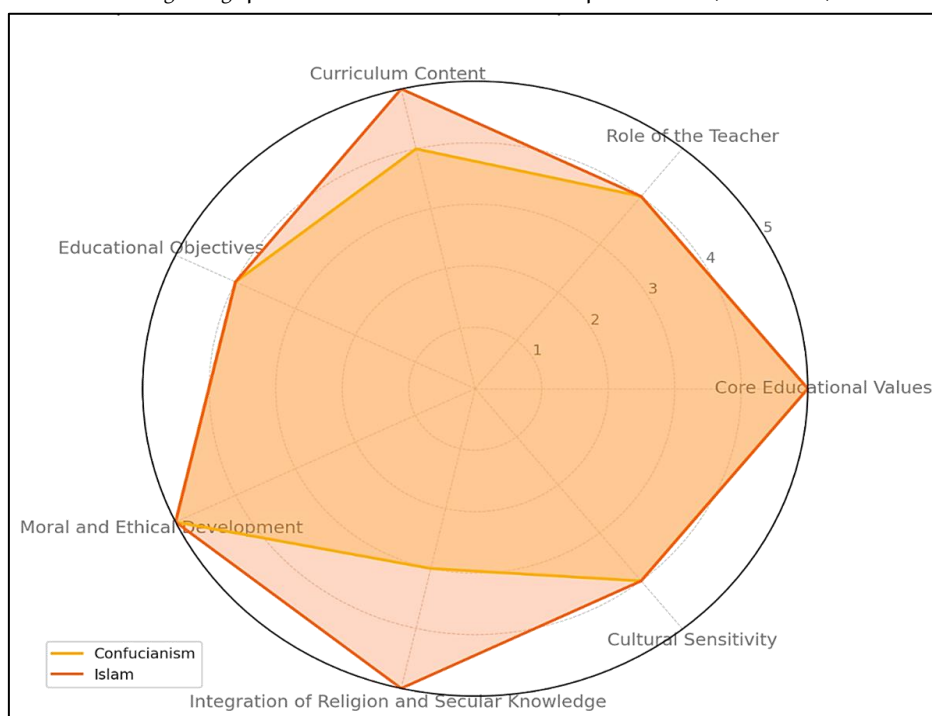


Figure 1. A comparative Radar figure showing Educational Principles in Confucianism and Islam (a contextual comparison)

The author compared and designed comparative data of both contexts, the findings were used to create the above radar figure (1) illustrating the comparative strengths of Confucianism and Islam across seven key

educational dimensions, which aligns with a study with (Ma Yunpeng & M.Y. Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, 2024). These educational systems exhibit a strong emphasis on Core Educational Values and Moral and Ethical Development (at score 5). This underscores their shared commitment to fostering virtuous individuals and harmonious societies. While educational systems highly value the Role of the Teacher, Islam demonstrates a slightly broader Curriculum Content integration, particularly in blending religious and secular knowledge. This is further emphasized in the Integration of Religion and Knowledge dimension, where Islam (scores a 5) compared to Confucianism (scores 3), highlighting a more comprehensive educational approach. Confucianism and Islam both maintain a commendable level of Cultural Sensitivity, ensuring that educational practices respect and incorporate diverse cultural and philosophical backgrounds.

**Table 8**

*Quotes from Islam and Confucianism contextualize the themes of education and the morality of education*

|   | Islam   | Confucianism  |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Surah Az-Zumar (39:9): " <i>Are those who know equal to those who do not know?</i> " highlights the value of knowledge.                   | Analects 7.8: " <i>The essence of knowledge is to apply it...</i> " stresses actionable knowledge and humility.                 |
| 2 | Surah Taha (20:114): " <i>Say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge!'</i> " encourages the pursuit of knowledge.                            | Analects 15.30: " <i>The Master said, 'Is it not a pleasure to learn and practice what you have learned?'</i> "                 |
| 3 | Surah Al-Baqarah (2:151): " <i>We have sent among you a messenger... teaching you the Book and wisdom...</i> " emphasizes moral teaching. | Analects 12.1: " <i>To master oneself and return to propriety is humanity.</i> " connects learning to moral self-regulation.    |
| 4 | Surah Al-Jumu'ah (62:2): "... to recite His verses to them, purify them, and teach them the Book and wisdom..." links education.          | Analects 6.23: "When you see a person of virtue, think of becoming like them." links education to moral aspiration.             |
| 5 | Surah Al-Isra (17:36): " <i>Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge...</i> " warns against ignorance-driven actions.            | Analects 13.3: " <i>If one learns without thinking, one will be bewildered.</i> " stresses critical reflection in learning.     |
| 6 | Surah Al-Kahf (18:65-66): " <i>Moses said, 'May I follow you to learn what you have been taught?'</i> " highlights humility in seeking.   | Analects 1.1: " <i>Is it not a pleasure to study and practice what you have learned?</i> " encourages engagement with learning. |
| 7 | Surah Yunus (10:101): " <i>See what is in the heavens and the earth...</i> " promotes learning through                                    | Analects 16.8: " <i>The object of the superior man is truth.</i> " aligns learning with the pursuit of                          |



|    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
|    | observation and reflection.  | truth.   |
| 8  | Surah Fatir (35:28): "... <i>only those fear Allah who are knowledgeable...</i> " connects education with moral accountability.              | Analects 2.15: " <i>The Master said, 'Learning without thought is labor lost.'</i> " promotes mindful education.                     |
| 9  | Surah An-Nahl (16:43): "... <i>ask those who have knowledge if you do not know.</i> " promotes seeking guidance from scholars.               | Analects 14.27: " <i>The wise find joy in water; the virtuous find joy in mountains.</i> " associates education with virtues.        |
| 10 | Surah Luqman (31:12-19): Luqman advises his son on morality, showing the role of moral education in parenting.                               | Analects 14.29: "The gentleman studies to improve himself." highlights personal growth through education.                            |
| 11 | Surah Al-Mujadila (58:11): " <i>Allah will raise those who have believed and those who were given knowledge...</i> " exalts the learned.     | Analects 7.22: " <i>The Master said, 'Shall I teach you what knowledge is?'</i> " encourages knowledge with moral clarity.           |
| 12 | Surah Al-Ankabut (29:43): "... <i>but none will grasp them except the knowledgeable.</i> " associates understanding with learning.           | Analects 3.23: " <i>A scholar without proper manners is like a jewel unpolished.</i> " links knowledge with behavior.                |
| 13 | Surah Sad (38:29): "... <i>that they may give thought.</i> " encourages deep reflection as part of learning.                                 | Analects 9.18: " <i>The Master said, 'Study as if you cannot catch up with others.'</i> " promotes diligence in education.           |
| 14 | Surah Al-Imran (3:79): "... <i>Be devoted to the Lord because of what you have taught of the Book...</i> " stresses teaching with sincerity. | Analects 19.6: " <i>The wise delight in water; the virtuous delight in mountains.</i> " connects education to environmental virtues. |
| 15 | Surah Taha (20:54): "... <i>indeed, in that are signs for those of reason.</i> " highlights critical thinking in learning.                   | Analects 2.11: " <i>If a man takes no thought about what is distant, he will find sorrow near at hand.</i> " emphasizes foresight.   |
| 16 | Surah Yusuf (12:22): " <i>And when he attained his full strength, We gave him wisdom and knowledge.</i> " highlights education as a gift.    | Analects 7.26: " <i>The Master said, 'To love learning is to be near to wisdom.'</i> " equates love of learning with wisdom.         |
| 17 | Surah Al-Anfal (8:29): "... <i>He will grant you a criterion to judge...</i> " emphasizes moral discernment through knowledge.               | Analects 4.17: " <i>The superior man seeks what is right; the inferior man seeks what is profitable.</i> "                           |

As shown in Table (8), The Quran and Confucian teachings both emphasize the critical role of education in shaping moral and spiritual development, connecting knowledge with virtue and personal growth. In Islam, education is



considered a divine command, as seen in Surah Al-'Alaq (96:1-5), where "*Read in the name of your Lord who created...*" highlights the sacred nature of learning. This notion is echoed in Confucianism, with Confucius' statement in Analects 2.4: "At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning," reflecting a commitment to lifelong education for moral cultivation. Both traditions stress the continuous pursuit of knowledge, with Islam linking it to spiritual responsibility, and Confucianism to moral self-improvement. The Quran underscores the value of knowledge as a distinguishing factor, exemplified in Surah Az-Zumar (39:9), "*Are those who know equal to those who do not know?*" which emphasizes the superiority of the learned. Confucianism similarly values knowledge, emphasizing its practical application in Analects 7.8: "*The essence of knowledge is to apply it,*" highlighting the importance of actionable knowledge that leads to humility and ethical behavior. Both teachings suggest that knowledge should not be merely academic but should be used to guide one's actions. Wisdom is another central theme in both traditions. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:269) links knowledge to divine wisdom, stating, "*He grants wisdom to whom He wills,*" while Confucius, in Analects 4.16, emphasizes moral wisdom, stating, "*The superior man understands righteousness,*" positioning knowledge as a vehicle for ethical living. In both traditions, true knowledge is not only intellectual but also moral and spiritual, serving as a foundation for ethical decisions and behaviors.

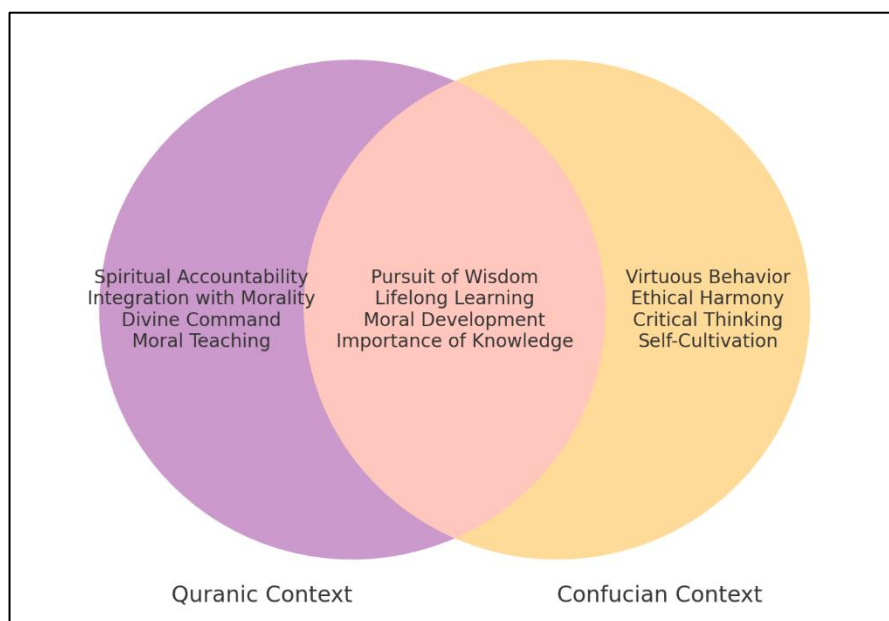


Figure 2. A comparative Venn figure showing Quranic and Confucian Contexts on Education & Morality (a contextual comparison)

In this study, the author designed Venn Figure (2) – according to the deep logical analysis of both contexts – visually representing the overlapping and distinct educational and moral philosophies between the Qur'anic and Confucian contexts. On the left, the purple circle labeled "Qur'anic Context" includes values such



as "Spiritual Accountability," "Integration with Morality," "Divine Command," and "Moral Teaching," emphasizing the religious and ethical framework that characterizes Islamic teachings. The right, represented in orange as the "Confucian Context," focuses on "Virtuous Behavior," "Ethical Harmony," "Critical Thinking," and "Self-Cultivation," highlighting Confucianism's emphasis on personal and societal morality through continuous learning and self-improvement. The overlap in the center, shaded in a blending of the two colors, lists "Pursuit of Wisdom," "Lifelong Learning," "Moral Development," and "Importance of Knowledge," indicating shared values in the pursuit of knowledge and moral development, underlining the universal aspects of human development found in both philosophies. This diagram effectively illustrates how both religious and philosophical systems converge on the importance of learning and ethical conduct, while also maintaining their unique principles.

The Quran repeatedly encourages the pursuit of knowledge, as shown in Surah Taha (20:114), which says, "*Say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge!'*" This echoes Confucius' sentiment in Analects 15.30, where he highlights the joy in learning and practicing what one has learned, linking the pursuit of knowledge to personal growth and moral development. Both texts recognize that education is essential for fostering self-discipline, reflection, and ethical conduct. Moral teachings are integral to both Islam and Confucianism. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:151) emphasizes the role of the Prophet in teaching moral values, while Confucius, in Analects 12.1, links education to self-regulation and propriety, viewing learning as a means of cultivating personal virtue. Both traditions view education as a pathway to moral perfection, whether through divine guidance in Islam or through personal cultivation in Confucianism. Furthermore, both civilizations stress the importance of critical thinking. Surah Al-Isra (17:36) warns against acting on ignorance, while Confucius, in Analects 13.3, advises that "*if one learns without thinking, one will be bewildered,*" illustrating the necessity of reflection in learning. This shared emphasis underscores the importance of thoughtful engagement with knowledge rather than passive absorption. Both Islam and Confucianism also value humility in the pursuit of knowledge. Surah Al-Kahf (18:65-66) shows Moses humbly seeking knowledge, while Confucius, in Analects 1.1, celebrates the joy of engaging with learning and practicing acquired knowledge, indicating that humility is key in the educational journey.

The pursuit of knowledge in both backgrounds is linked to a broader moral responsibility. Surah Yunus (10:101) encourages learning through observation of the world, while Confucius, in Analects 16.8, emphasizes that the pursuit of truth should guide one's learning. These teachings suggest that education is not solely for intellectual development but for cultivating moral clarity and ethical behavior. In conclusion, both the Quran and Confucianism view education as intrinsically linked to moral and spiritual growth, Figure (2). While the Quran emphasizes knowledge as a divine mandate and spiritual tool, Confucianism focuses on the practical



application of knowledge for virtuous living. They advocate for continuous learning, reflection, and humility, stressing that true knowledge leads to moral wisdom and ethical conduct.

### 5.1 Influence of Confucianism and Islam on Modern Education

(Tan & Ibrahim, 2017) provide a comparative analysis of Confucian and Islamic education through the lens of humanism. The study highlights how both traditions emphasize the cultivation of moral character, ethical conduct, and lifelong learning. Confucian education prioritizes *ren* (benevolence) and *li* (rituals), which align with the goal of creating morally upright individuals who contribute to societal harmony. Islamic education, on the other hand, stresses *ilm* (knowledge) as a divine duty and incorporates both religious and secular learning. The authors argue that these humanistic principles remain relevant in contemporary educational reforms, particularly in multicultural societies that seek to balance tradition with modern pedagogical approaches. (Gutmann, 2019) examines how Confucian and Islamic educational traditions have been adapted in response to modernity. The dissertation explores how these traditions negotiate the tension between religious and secular knowledge in educational systems. It identifies a trend where modernization efforts, particularly in East Asia and the Middle East, have selectively integrated Western educational models while maintaining core values from their respective traditions. Gutmann's work is crucial in understanding how Confucian and Islamic values persist despite globalization and secularization. The study also discusses the role of state policies in shaping educational curricula that blend traditional and contemporary methodologies. (Jianfu, 2009) offers a historical perspective on how Confucian educational principles have influenced European civilization, particularly during the Enlightenment period. The study reveals that European thinkers, including Voltaire and Leibniz, were inspired by Confucian ideals of meritocracy, moral responsibility, and education as a tool for societal progress. The paper argues that the Confucian emphasis on self-cultivation and moral governance had a profound impact on the development of modern European educational thought. Jianfu also draws parallels between Confucian and Islamic educational frameworks, noting their shared emphasis on ethics and scholarship.

Confucianism's impact on modern education can primarily be observed in East Asia, where its values continue to shape educational systems, particularly in China, South Korea, and Japan. These systems emphasize academic rigor, discipline, and respect for authority, which are deeply rooted in Confucian teachings.

#### *Emphasis on Discipline and Respect for Authority*

Confucianism places significant importance on discipline, respect for teachers, and the maintenance of hierarchical relationships (Confucius, 2006). These principles are commonly reflected in East Asian educational contexts, where students demonstrate notable deference to their instructors and other educational authorities (Li, 2012). Confucian thought highlights the moral dimensions of education and its role in fostering social harmony, thus positioning teachers as moral and intellectual exemplars (Fu & Chen, 2012). In nations such as South Korea and China, students learn to honor their teachers, who serve not only as academic guides but also as role models for ethical conduct (Kim, 2012). Contemporary classrooms continue to embody these values through strict codes of conduct and a strong focus on teacher-student respect (Li,

2012). Figure (3) illustrates a classroom environment in which students exhibit respect and discipline, in alignment with Confucian ideals.



Figure 3. Classroom Environment in Confucian-Inspired Education, Dongying, Shandong province (China Daily, 2017)<sup>1</sup>

### ***Focus on Moral Education and Character Development***

Central to Confucian education is the notion that learning should nurture virtue and cultivate a student's moral character (Confucius, 2006). Confucius emphasized that the ultimate purpose of education is to produce individuals capable of contributing to societal harmony and responsible governance (Li, 2012). In modern East Asian societies, moral education remains integral, focusing on ethics, civility, and social responsibility. For instance, Singapore's educational framework incorporates Confucian values such as respect, filial piety, and integrity alongside core academic subjects, offering a holistic educational experience (Kim, 2012).

### ***Meritocracy and Academic Rigor***

Confucianism's meritocratic ideals, wherein individuals are rewarded according to academic achievement and moral virtue, exert a substantial influence on East Asian educational practices (Fu & Chen, 2012). Historically, Confucius advocated for a competitive scholarly atmosphere, prioritizing both academic ability and ethical conduct over hereditary privilege (Confucius, 2006). China's imperial examination system, which promoted officials based on scholarly and moral excellence, exemplified these principles (Li, 2012). Today, the system's legacy persists in China's rigorous entrance exams, particularly for university admissions, reflecting Confucian notions of merit and accomplishment (Kim, 2012).

### ***Holistic Education and Self-Cultivation***

Confucian philosophy underscores self-cultivation, portraying education as a lifelong endeavor to enhance one's character, intellect, and moral standing (Confucius, 2006). This perspective permeates

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2017-09/19/content\\_32185735.htm](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2017-09/19/content_32185735.htm)



contemporary East Asian schooling, where students are encouraged to develop their inner virtues while excelling academically (Li, 2012). In Japan, for example, educational policies emphasize self-discipline and personal responsibility—both integral to self-cultivation (Kim, 2012). School programs commonly promote group activities, civic engagement, and ethical responsibilities in tandem with scholastic success, mirroring the holistic, virtue-oriented ethos of Confucian thought (Fu & Chen, 2012).

## 5.2 Islam's Influence on Modern Education

In numerous Muslim-majority countries—such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, and Malaysia—Islamic educational philosophy has profoundly shaped contemporary schooling practices (Hussain, 2019). These education systems commonly integrate religious instruction with secular subjects while emphasizing moral and ethical behavior, reflecting core Islamic values and principles. One of Islam's most notable contributions to modern education is the seamless blending of spiritual and worldly knowledge (Hussain, 2019). Islamic teachings encourage believers to study both the Qur'an and the natural world, thereby recognizing divine wisdom in all fields of inquiry. Historically, during the Islamic Golden Age, scholars merged religious studies with disciplines such as science, mathematics, and medicine (Morgan, 2017). In Malaysia, for example, madrasas typically offer Qur'anic and Islamic studies alongside modern subjects like science, mathematics, and literature, with the goal of shaping individuals who are both spiritually grounded and equipped to engage in contemporary society (Razak, 2020).

### *The Obligation of Education*

Islam holds that the pursuit of knowledge is not merely a privilege, but a divinely mandated duty "*Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim*". This principle is reflected in many Muslim communities, where education—both religious and secular—is accorded high esteem (Hussain, 2019). Saudi Arabia, for instance, invests heavily in its education sector, striving to equip students with religious principles alongside modern scientific understanding. The country aims to develop citizens capable of meeting spiritual obligations and contributing to societal progress and graduates with a firm grasp of both realms (Al-Sharif & Hammad, 2021).

### *Character and Ethical Education*

A central aspect of Islamic education is the cultivation of *akhlaq*, or moral character, considered vital for living in harmony with divine guidance. Instruction in the Qur'an and Hadith provides ethical grounding, while integration of these principles across the curriculum supports the development of virtues such as honesty, compassion, and justice. In nations like Pakistan and Indonesia, Islamic schools embed moral teachings within broader academic programs, ensuring that students learn subjects such as mathematics and history within an ethical framework (Rahman & Basri, 2018).

### *Universalism and Inclusivity*

Islam emphasizes education as a universal right, promoting equality in access to learning across genders and social classes (Razak, 2020). The concept of the Ummah, or global Muslim community, underscores the belief

that knowledge should serve the collective good (Hussain, 2019). In countries such as Egypt and Jordan, efforts have been made to expand educational opportunities for girls, providing them with both religious and secular instruction in alignment with Islamic principles (Al-Sharif & Hammad, 2021). Figure (4) illustrates a mixed-gender classroom, exemplifying Islam's inclusive vision of education in western context.



Figure 4. Inclusive Education within a Muslim community, Al-Manarat Islamic Schools, Toronto, Canada<sup>2</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

This comparative study highlights the profound influence of Confucian and Islamic educational principles on their respective societies. Education systems of both contexts advocate for the cultivation of moral virtues and the role of education in achieving societal harmony and effective governance. However, they differ in their integration of religion and knowledge, the role of educators, and specific curricular emphases. Understanding these similarities and differences enriches the discourse on global educational philosophies and offers valuable insights into contemporary educational practices. The study highpoints the importance of moral and ethical development in education, a common thread that binds both Confucianism and Islam. While Confucianism emphasizes virtues that promote social harmony, Islam integrates ethical teachings with religious obligations, aiming to align personal conduct with divine will. These educational paradigms have significantly shaped the educational systems and societal values in Confucian and Islamic cultures,

<sup>2</sup> <https://almanaratacademy.com/islamic-schooling-in-the-western-world-part-1/>



respectively. Incorporate moral and ethical education into curricula by drawing on Islamic virtues and Confucian ethics to foster character development. Recognize and support the multifaceted roles of teachers as both intellectual facilitators and moral guides, providing professional development that enhances these capacities. It's crucial to strive for a balanced curriculum that includes both religious and secular studies, ensuring that students receive a holistic education that prepares them for both personal and societal challenges. In addition, develop culturally sensitive educational policies that acknowledge and respect the diverse philosophical and religious backgrounds of students, promoting an inclusive educational environment.

Future studies could explore the practical applications of Islamic and Confucian educational principles in modern educational systems by examining case studies from different countries. This would provide a deeper understanding of how these philosophies influence teaching practices, curriculum design, and student outcomes. Comparative studies involving other educational philosophies, such as those from Western traditions, could offer a more comprehensive perspective on global educational paradigms and their interconnections.

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

The comparative study of Islamic and Confucian educational philosophies carries significant pedagogical implications for contemporary educational practice. These traditions emphasize the cultivation of moral character and ethical reasoning, which suggests that educational curricula should integrate moral and ethical dimensions across all subjects. Embedding core virtues—such as *akhlaq* (moral character) in Islam and *ren*, *yi*, and *li* (benevolence, righteousness, and proper conduct) in Confucianism—can transform lessons in language arts, social studies, and even science into opportunities for students to develop ethical awareness and practical wisdom. Narratives, case studies, and examples drawn from these rich traditions can be utilized to illustrate moral dilemmas and exemplary leadership, thereby helping students connect abstract principles to real-world situations. These systems view of education as a means to cultivate individuals who are responsible citizens. Involving students in community projects and service initiatives, schools can create practical opportunities for learners to apply virtues such as benevolence and justice in real-life contexts, thereby reinforcing the connection between personal growth and civic responsibility. Finally, by weaving together the moral tenets of Islamic and Confucian traditions, educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers can foster a more general educational environment—one that balances rigorous academic standards with a deep commitment to ethical and cultural values. Such an approach prepares students to face personal and societal challenges with wisdom, integrity, and a sense of global responsibility.

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