




**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

## The Educational Thoughts in Islam and Confucius School

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article History:</b>                      Received: 19 November 2022                      Revised: 01 February 2023                      Accepted: 13 February 2023</p>		<p><b>SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES:</b> Education has a special place in the perspective of Islam and the school of Confucius. Although there are some differences in both schools, in terms of goals and motivations of education, the numbers of the audience and the methods of creating motivation, the two schools are significantly similar. It is through the comparison of the education in both schools that the reader will be enlighten to judge about the importance of education and acquire the deeper knowledge.</p> <p><b>METHOD AND FINDING:</b> The author first the different understandings and goals of the term education in both educational systems, then he begins the article with exploring the ways in which these two schools treat the educated audience; Finally, it elaborates the status of morality in the implementation of education. Both schools of thought believe that not any science is not suitable for teaching. While Islam emphasizes that education is obligatory for every man and woman, the Confucian school, believes that the content and method of education cannot be the same for everyone; but education should be designed based on the talent and interest of learners.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION:</b> Islam and the school of Confucius consider the study of thoughtless sciences to be worthless and harmful. They see asking questions as the key factor to awareness. However, addressing issues related to education in Islam and the Confucian school will lead to a better understanding of the various dimensions of education and consequently mutual understanding of Islamic civilization and Chinese educational culture.</p>
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## **Introduction**

In today's world, the importance of science and education has become a kind of public consensus. All countries around the world see education as an important way to improve the quality of knowledge among the public and to promote and develop the economy.

Throughout human history, great civilizations have always attached special importance to education, and education has played an important role in the development of these civilizations. This article focuses on educational thoughts in Islamic and Confucian civilizations.

The relationship between China and Persia has a long history, the two countries attach a great importance to education and knowledge. They both play a significant role in the world's scientific and cultural development.

Confucianism is also known as a religion called Confucianism by some scholars. The Banning a hundred schools of thoughts and exclusive dedication to Confucianism era began since the Western Han Dynasty Empire, it has always been the feudal society of orthodox ideology, and it still has an important impact on Chinese people ideology in China and its surrounding areas. Confucianism refers to the Confucian school of thought; it was founded by Confucius, the great thinker of Spring - Autumn Dynasty.

Confucian school, according to history promotes the theory of "Education without discrimination.

Based on both schools' point of view, this article discusses some issues such as the goals of education, the scope of education audiences, the importance of thinking and learning simultaneously, the relationship between knowledge

and practice, the definition of the teacher and the importance of scientists, the place of ethical principles in education, and the importance of practicing the learned science.

The ambiguities and the questions arising from the two schools' point of view and practical reactions regarding different aspects of science learning and education have been answered in the article. Some questions such as:

- If the position and purpose of learning science is sacred or does it merely include material aspects?
- Does the audience of education include men and women?
- If the different social classes are in the same rank, or are there any classifications and conditions in this regard?
- To which extent does the educational content serve

material needs and how much attention is paid to spiritual needs?

- Do these two schools believe in teaching science without restrictions to anyone with any conditions, or do they consider the conditions, needs, merits and qualifications of the target audience in education?

According to each of these schools, is learning always valuable or it is valuable merely under certain conditions, if there are some conditions, what are these conditions?

## **Theoretical Foundations of Research**

### **1. Giving Importance to Knowledge and Acquiring Knowledge**

The texts and orders left over from Islam and the Confucian school show that both schools, attach great importance to acquiring knowledge and thinking.

Education is not only about improving the conditions of individual life; but also about social stability, national welfare and development, as well as human civilization and progress.

Islam respects logic, pays special attention to education, and always emphasizes that Muslims should strengthen their Islamic culture and try to know God through thinking, so through learning they are able to recognize the legitimacy of their affairs. *(Imam Khamenei, 2011)*

Islam leads people from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge and disappear the ignorance and savage habits to appear the promotion of cultural knowledge, so education is the only way to achieve this goal. Through culture and education, man becomes civilized. *(Jordac, 1959)*

## **2. The Beginning of The Quran and Command to Read**

Allah in the first verse declared to the prophet emphasizes on the knowledge and the promotion of learning. In Holy Quran God states:

*“Proclaim! [Or read!] In the name of your God and Creator, He Who created \* Created man, out of a [mere] clot of congealed blood \* Proclaim! And your God is Most Bountiful \* He Who taught [the use of] the pen \* He taught man that which he knew not”. (Quran, 96: 1-5)*

The manifestation of this passage urges human beings to study and receive education in the first verse of Quran declared to the Prophet. During the Prophet era (AD 610-632), the content of the knowledge that the Muslim is mainly concentrated on is the Quran and Sunnah learning

practice, the understanding of the principles of Islam. The Quran also requires people to keep learning.

Islam's educational philosophy is not to remember the Quran's text by heart; but to encourage people to understand the content deeply and thinking over the great meaning of the verses.

The Holy Creator in another Verse states:

*“Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed”. (Quran, 39: 9)*

### **3. Training to Achieve Self-Construction Goal**

Confucianism also attaches great importance to education. The Confucianism not only affects the development of Chinese civilization; but also had an impact on other civilizations, which includes

other national thinking and educational thinking.

The doctrine of the Confucian school is a comprehensive system of thought based on the foundations of a civilization that is the essence, concept and heritage of the Xia, Shang and Chu dynasties.

The basis of Confucianism consists of two aspects: “sacred inward” (内圣) and “royal appearance” (外王). That is, one should hold the virtues of a holy man and behave like a noble king. In other words, it refers to internal and external self-construction, including science and ethics. *The original Text is:*

是故内圣外王之道，暗而不明，郁而不发。

### **4. Giving High Status to Educators and Learners**

Islam attaches great importance to the status of educators and the scholars

because they have the obligation to impart knowledge to others. In education, scholars play a very important role. Therefore, Islam attaches great importance to the status of scholars.

The prophet once said:

*“The scholars are the successor of the prophets”.*  
(Kuleini, 1968, Vol. 1: 34)

This not only shows the importance of scholars in the Muslim community; but also indirectly requires the Muslim to respect the scholars. Islam also emphasizes the reward that scholars and researchers will receive in the present life and in the later world, as the prophet says:

*“The scholar and the learner share in the reward. There are two rewards for the scholar and one for the learner, and there is no benefit for others who do not engage*

*in learning”.* (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 1: 174)

Confucianism emphasizes the unity of humanity and seeking of knowledge; both have a common logic and principles that educate people for their daily lives.

Moderation is one of the key subjects in Confucianism. Exaggeration in any matter is like excessing; one must strive to reach the equilibrium point in any matter in order to be able to make the right choice and minimize the losses. The role of both in the development of science and culture in the world is undeniable.

## **5. Contribution of Scholars in Achieving Goals**

Islam and the school of Confucius defines a special and high position for scholars and whom seeking knowledge. In order to reach high spiritual

and material positions, one must pass through the channel of learning science.

Zi Xia who was a Literary disciple of Confucius states:

*A skilled scholar can be in charge of an official. (Yang, 1980, Part. 19, Chapter. 13)*

Zi Xia who was one of the Confucius disciples generalized and collected Confucius basic purpose of education. The understanding of this statement has always been controversial in the history of Chinese culture. But the traditional understanding is still in such a way that Confucius believe that for educational purposes, the learning and the official system are contacted up or even they are closely related.

The basic meaning that can be acquired from the above statement is the importance of seeking the high official rank. If one has the spare capacity

to learn; so, he must seek learning, and if he has more spare capacity, he must seek to get a high official rank.

The idea of “A good scholar can become an official” later became the Chinese feudal society’s general concept among people. This concept has been presented in the construction of social and political system and to pursue the imperial examination system for thousands of years.

During the time, the countless ordinary Chinese civilians through reading and imperial examinations embark on carrier with the official fame. The outstanding scholars in pursuing the practice of Confucius’ self-cultivation, family harmony, country management and world peace (The original text is:

欲治其国者，先齐其家。)

hoped to be able to complete the ideal of Inheriting the

Sage's knowledge, initiating peace and security for all ages. (The original text is: “为往圣继绝学，为万世开太平。”)

Some people pursued different goals in practicing Confucius lessons such as making their own superior life or bringing the honor to the ancestors or the family name. However, the intention of Confucius is that the knowledgeable people after acquiring knowledge should use their own knowledge to contribute the development of the society. (*Fang, 2012: 146*)

## **6. Negation of Tribalism and Emphasis on Meritocracy**

In Confucian concepts, being successful in learning or higher learning (学而优) is achieved when one attains the position of “gentleman” (君子 : Junzi) (Means Man of honour ; Man of noble Character),

a good understanding of religious etiquette (礼而:Li) and know how to lead the country and people with the rites of religion and morality (道之以政), in the hope that society will be in balance (和 : Harmony) and people can experience security and prosperity (小康: Xiaokang) (Confucian near-ideal state of society) to achieve the goal of appointing government officials from trained scholars (学而优则士).

It goes without saying that such criteria for selecting officials objectively lead to a confrontation between the learners of mental work and the physical workers, and also lead to the logical and the real conclusion that mental work is superior to physical work.

Like the despicable notion that is reflected based on a famous statement, “all jobs are despicable and the only



right way for choosing a deserved job is based on the amount of knowledge applied in the job” (The Original Text is: 万般皆下品唯有读书高：所有行业都是低贱的，只有读书入仕才是正途。It means: Nothing is more important than learning) The notion that has influenced the people’s choice of life in China from ancient times to the present day.

### **Material and Social Goals**

The purpose of Islamic education is not only including the moral and spiritual aspects; but also it contains the social and material aspects of the life. Islam gives very much emphasis on the importance of ethics and its significance for the development of ideas, ethical principles, and all aspects of life. (*Dodhiya and Ghanbari, 2022: 138*)

Islam attempts that Muslims through education can follow an independent social life without relying on others. As The Quran says:

*“And mobilize as much as you can from the ready forces and horses, you may frighten the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them whom you do not know, and God knows them. And whatever you spend in the way of God, the reward will be returned to you, and you will not be wronged”. (Quran, 8:60)*

Allah will never allow his enemies to have any way to control us, so we must be educated so that we can be independent in all respects of life. The ultimate goal of Islamic education is to shape the perfect personality, so close to Allah to make human become the best of Allah's creature.

Generally, in Islam, the goal of education is to cultivate knowledgeable people in order to maintain, advocate and promote Islam, while at the same time understanding the human's ability to be competent as Allah's ruler on the earth (Calipha). At this point, it is clear that Islamic education has a clear religious point of view in the concept of education.

In addition to the general sense of human produced knowledge and life related knowledge, Islamic education is directed to the inner world of human, so through the concerns of the inner world of human, education leads human to what is beyond the faith.

### **1. The Reaction of People to Learning Science is not The Same**

Confucius believes that the people are divided into several levels in terms of

learning and acquiring knowledge: The highest level includes those people who have been wise from the birth (生而知之者). A level lower includes those who try to find a way to acquire knowledge, they learned it and then became a scientist (学而知之者). Again, a level lower includes those who encountered problems during their own career, so they inevitably sought to acquire knowledge (困而学之者), and the lowest level includes those who due to lack of knowledge face difficulties; but they are still not willing to acquire knowledge (困而不学者); (Yang, 1980, Part. 16, Chapter. 9) But Confucius says of himself:

*I was not among the first level, I was not a wise man from birth; but I was very interested in ancient culture, so I tried to learn it.*

*(Yang, 1980, Part. 7, Chapter. 20)*

## **2. The Limitation of Learning Science Before Confucius Reformation with The Idea of Public Education**

Throughout history, Confucius was one of the first promoters of public education for all categories of society. His students were not divided into noble and rich nor the poor. His only condition for teaching was the learner's desire to learn.

Confucius states:

*There should be no social distinction in attaining education. (有教无类). (Ibid, Part. 15, Chapter. 38)*

The object of education is training a group of people who are educated.

Confucius lived in the era of the Spring-Autumn Period, when China was in the era of slavery society, the broad

masses of the lower classes of the community worked very hard for survival every day, and are subject to the oppression of slave owners and nobles. Even if these civilian children eager to learn; but learning is limited to the nobles of the government (The original Text is: 学在官府 : Learning in the feudal official), there is no school for common people, there is no teacher, only the noble children are allowed to receive education.

In Confucius era in which it had already ended the Spring and Autumn period, the number of the official schools decreased and the private schools were about to break out.

Confucius issued a declaration of "provide education for all people without discrimination". Chinese history has different interpretations of this concept;

but in general it is said that people who receive education should not be classified as different classes.

Confucius was pioneer in establishing private school, in face of social reality, he changes the idea of education for governmental officials into education for common people, so widely received disciples and refused nobody to join him. Any person who was willing to study, regardless of being rich or poor, or even come from any other country, had the right and the opportunity to receive education.

Confucius states:

*Whoever is willing to give me ten or more pieces of dried meat, I've never refused to teach him. (Yang, 1980, Part. 7, Chapter. 7)*

So with such a tolerant master who was willing to

teach, there was an endless stream of the learners.

Finally, Confucius trained more than three thousand disciples throughout his life. Anyone who was willing to study in good faith, regardless of his past experience and performance, Confucius accepted him and even treated all disciples equally.

### **3. Obligatory Learning in Islam for Men and Women**

Islam not only does not oppose women's education; but also emphasizes that learning is their duty. Prophet Muhammad states:

*“Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim man and woman”. (Kuleini, 1968, Vol. 1:30)*

Here the Muslims, including men and women. The particular emphasis is on learning regardless the learners are men or women and even their

vocation. Thus, Islam regards education as the basic right and duty of mankind.

In the early days of Islam appearance, the Islamic legal rules confirm the equal rights of women and men in enjoying education. This contrasts sharply with educational ethics such as “women have no talent” and “women are the source of evil”. Apart from the education of secular knowledge in general sense, Muslim women also have to receive religious education and study the Islamic doctrines and law.

So in the history of Islam, there have been many famous female scholars. Islam emphasizes not to impart knowledge to those who are not suitable to acquire knowledge. As the Holy Prophet said:

*“The teacher who tries to teach knowledge to the incompetent is like one who hangs jewels, pearls and*

*gold on the necks of pigs”.*  
*(Ibn Majah, 2013, Vol. 1: 224)*

The Quran says about these people:

*“And like the disbelievers (in hearing the words of the prophets and while do not understand the meaning) he likes an animal to be called and he does not understand the meaning and hears nothing but a cry), the disbelievers are deaf, dumb, and blind; because they do not think over what they hear”.* (Quran, 2: 171)

In addition, learning should not be restricted by other factors such as ethnicity, gender, religion, etc. Imam Ali said:

*“Wisdom is the lost object of the believer, so seek wisdom even if it is from the hypocrites”.* (Nahj al-Balagha, Wisdom. 80)

Such a claim allows Muslims not to deprive themselves of learning from others and to respect the Master regardless of religion or ethnicity.

### **Difference in Achieving Educational Objectives: How to Encourage Scholars?**

Islam emphasizes both present life and the later life at the same time. It encourages the believers to seek knowledge with the goal of salvation to the later life. But it does not mean that we should give up the present life and only care about the happiness of future life. The happiness of present and future life must be linked together. If you do not pay attention to the happiness in present life, it is absolutely impossible to get happiness in the later life. According to the prophet Mohammed: *“The present life is to be cultivated for later life”*.

It means that the present life is like a land farmed by peasants but the later life is the harvest season for peasants. If you do not build your life, you will not be able to build a happy life for your future life.

Imam Hasan said:

*“Live for the present life as if you will be immortal and think about for your hereafter as if you will die tomorrow”*. (Hur Ameli, 1979, Vol. 12: 49)

In another example, Imam Sadegh said:

*“One who leaves the present life for the sake of the Hereafter and one who leaves Hereafter for the sake of present life is not our real follower”*. (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 75: 321)

Thus, the ultimate goal of Islamic education is to be saved and blessed in both

lives. In order to achieve this goal, Islam has constructed a system of reward and punishment for both present and future lives. In particular, the award of later life will obviously surpass the present life.

### **1. Defining Rights and Responsibilities Between Teacher and Student to Advance Education**

The rights of teachers and students and the relationship between them is a matter that is of particular importance in both the schools of Islam and Confucius. The expression of these duties and rights in these two schools can be aimed at creating motivation in teaching and learning and promoting it as best as possible. Especially in Islam, the mutual rights of teachers and students are mentioned in accurate detail, which can be referred to the book of

“Risalat al-Huquq” of Imam Sajjad In part of this treatise, it is stated:

*“And the right of him to guide you to acquire knowledge (The master of teaching science) is to honor him and to respect his session and to listen well to his speech and to turn (pay attention to) to him and help him for your own benefit so that he can teach you the knowledge you need. You should never answer anyone who asks him about something, in order that he may be the one who answers”. (Imam Sajjad, 2022: Chapter. 16)*

Confucius did not hide any part of his knowledge in teaching students, and he had no knowledge to withhold from them. He considered this issue as his duty to the students. This was the remarkable character of Confucius. This

behavior led to a very close relationship between him and his followers and students.

Today, many developed countries with high levels of science and technology do not follow this principle at all, on the contrary, they resort to all different ways to hide their information and knowledge, in order to colonize other countries.

## **2. Encouraging Learning Through Self-Motivating and Being a Role Model**

The best way to motivate students to learn is for the teacher to be a practical and ideal model for the seekers of knowledge. Because the first role model for students is the teacher himself. Confucius as a model of the great masters, never satisfied in acquiring knowledge, he never felt bored in teaching others.

Confucius himself affirms this kind of moral character, says:

*“Silence and consolidation of knowledge, unceasing learning and never feel satisfied, teaching without fatigue and laziness, I will have no need other than these three”. (Yang, 1980, Part. 7, Chapter. 2)*

Confucius even somewhere, by describing his tirelessness in learning science, implicitly calls students to follow this valuable path. When Ye Gong, who was a politician in Confucius period, asks ZILU, one of Confucius student about Confucius' behavior, as he was unable to describe a great man like Confucius, kept silent. Confucius, who witnessed the incident, told ZILU:

*Why didn't you describe me as I tell you now? He becomes so engrossed in effort that he forgets to eat*



*and drink, he feels a joy in endeavor that he forgets all the problems and worries, he even forgets that old age and gloom will overwhelm him soon. That is all. (Yang, 1980, Part. 7, Chapter. 19)*

### **3. Establishing a System of Reward and Punishment**

Islamic culture's educational target is very close to the Confucian goal of education. Both are seeking happiness and social stability by educating people, acquiring high ideals, and cultivating fine morality (*Ibid, Chapter. 6*) to create a good quality of life. As far as Confucianism is concerned, Confucianism also has its own methods and means to reach the goal of education.

The effect of encouraging disciples to be benevolence is achieved through a comparison of the ways in which people

behave themselves and their consequences, as well as the employment of gentlemen and villains. Confucianism also requires that people should use benevolence as a model to restrain their own words and deeds.

Zi Xia said:

*A gentleman must get trust from others first and then makes them do something, or they'll think you ill-treat them. He must get trust from others first and then admonishes them, or they'll think you slander them. (Ibid, Part. 19, Chapter. 10)*

It means that the gentleman must first obtain the trust of the common people and then appoint them. If they are not trusted to appoint them, the common people will think that they are mistreating by them. Gentleman first to obtain the trust of the monarch and then into the remonstrance;

without trust to go remonstrance, the monarch thinks it is slander themselves. In explaining the characteristics of good leaders, this chapter clearly shows what happens if we do not pre-empt people by letter or remonstrate the monarchs and leaders.

Thus, we can see that in the system of reward and punishment, what people do, in Confucian education is mainly based on the present-day; but Islam serves people with current and future lives to restrain people.

On the other hand, Both Islam and Confucianism pursue the joy of heaven, as Confucius said:

*If I do something wrong, let the heaven condemn me!  
Let the heaven condemn me.  
(Yang, 1980, Part. 6, Chapter. 28)*

In the same way, the Holy Quran also rewards education with current or future punishments,

and it encourages the followers to do what Allah orders. This can be illustrated in the following scriptures.

Holy Quran states:

*“Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto thee beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and has rewarded them with a near victory. And much booty that they will capture. Allah is ever Mighty, Wise. Allah promises you much booty that you will capture, and has given you this in advance, and has withheld men's hands from you, that it may be a token for the believers, and that He may guide you on a right path”.*  
(Quran, 48: 18-20)

## **Juxtaposing Education, Morality and Thinking**

In both schools, the same emphasis is placed on education and moral principles, and students are asked to both learn and teach others, meanwhile, they should not hide their knowledge.

Imam Ali says:

*“O seeker of knowledge! There are three signs for the wise man: knowledge, patience, and silence”.* (Kuleini, 1968, Vol. 1: 37)

Confucius says:

*Silence, consolidation of knowledge, unceasing learning and never being satisfied, educating without feel of tiredness, for me there will be no need other than these three.* (Yang, 1980, Part. 7, Chapter. 38)

## **1. Through Thinking Avoid Blindly Accepting**

Both schools demand equal attention to learning and thinking. Both avoid blindly accepting matters that may be fed to man under the name of science and knowledge. Islamic culture believes that the root of all deviations is lack of thinking as well as lack of learning.

Islam attaches great importance to religious cultural heritage and has always considered high importance for culture. Islam has always viewed education as a means of improving the level of knowledge with its own special educational philosophy. This educational philosophy has been the basis for creating a cultural system. Therefore, the religion of Islam considers meditation as one of the highest acts of worship,

which is even more valuable than prayer and fasting.

Imam Reza states:

*“Worship is not praying and fasting too much. Worship is thinking too much about God's commands”.* (Kuleini, 1968, Vol. 2: 55)

Confucius believes that not only thoughtless education is not useful; but also it leads to deception and misguidance. Confucius states:

*If I do not eat anything all day and do not sleep all night and only think; but thinking is not accompanied by teaching and learning, there is no benefit in thinking. Learning and teaching are better than not eating all day and not sleeping all night and thinking in person. The two must be together.* (Yang, 1980, Part. 15, Chapter. 31)

Confucius, therefore, emphasizes that both learning and thinking must go hand in hand in order to be useful and to guide man. He says:

*Acquiring knowledge without thinking causes deception, on the contrary, thinking without knowledge leads to confusion and doubt.* (Ibid, Part. 2, Chapter. 15)

## **2. Applying Acquired Knowledge in Practice**

In the relationship between knowledge and practice, both parties believe that we should apply our acquired knowledge in practice. The aims of the Confucian school point out that knowledge should be benefit to the country and should be used for the benefit of the country.

The view of the school of Islam is reflected in what the Holy Prophet of Islam says:

*“The science that does not benefit is like a treasure*

*from which they do not spend". (Deilami, 2015, Vol. 1: 15)*

In regard to paying attention to the requirements and rules of ethics, teachers are required to be models for others. Both teachers and learners are asked to maintain good teacher-student relations.

The first point that teachers are required to observe is their own behavior is that they should never express boredom in teaching, and the other requirement is that teaching through practice is more important than teaching by words, that is, the teachers must be a real educational model through behavior and practice.

The Holy Quran states:

*"Enjoin your righteousness upon mankind while you yourselves forget (to practice it)? And you are readers of*

*the Scripture! Have you then no sense?" (Quran, 2: 44)*

Confucius says in this regard: *If the rulers themselves are righteous, even if they do not issue orders, the masses will be eager to get things done; but if the rulers are not righteous, even if they issue orders, the masses will refuse to obey. (Lu, 2011: 55)*

### **3. Who Can Be Our Teacher?**

Both schools in interpreting teacher and his characteristics consider a wide range of interpretation. Anyone can be a teacher by himself. Luqman- He was a wise man after whom Surah Luqman, in the 31<sup>st</sup> sura of the Quran, was named- was asked: Where did you learn gentleness from? He said:

From the rude. I looked carefully to rude behavior I avoided whatever I thought

was displeasing to me. (*Saadi Shirazi, 2013, Chapter. 2, Wisdom. 21*)

Confucius also did not have a specific teacher. There was always a master for him among those who were in intercommunicate with him. says Confucius:

*If three of us travel together, one of them should be able to be my teacher, and I should choose and follow his good behavior and use it to correct myself by recognizing his flaws.. (Ref: Kadkhodaei and Zeng, 2020: 22)*

The meaning of his wisdom is that there are always valuable points to learn in the words and deeds of others. The good behavior of others should be chosen and learned, and if we see inappropriateness and deficiency in the behavior of others, we should think in ourselves whether the same

inappropriateness exists in our soul or not, if there is, we try to correct it.

#### **4. The Importance of Asking Question**

Both schools pay great attention to the matter of asking question and consider asking question as the key factor to acquiring knowledge. In the teachings of the Islamic school, students are usually encouraged to ask questions; but it is necessary to pay attention to three points:

- When to ask a question?
- What kind of questions to ask?
- What does one mean by asking question? That is, by asking the question, what do we want to achieve?

Students should not ask nasty questions, in which case they will disrespect the teacher by disrespecting science and knowledge, and deprive themselves of the opportunity

to progress. As Prophet Mohammad says:

*“Science is a treasure and the key is the question. So, ask! May God have mercy on you; because the question rewards four people: the questioner, the teacher, the listener and the one who answers the question”.* (Isfahani, 2011, Vol. 3: 192; Hakim, 2009, Vol. 7: 155)

Confucius asked others about anything and did not feel inferior because of it. He believed that what causes human inferiority is not questioning; but not asking others when not knowing. he says:

*One who is intelligent and eager to learning should not be ashamed of asking questions of a lower position.* (Yang, 1980, Part. 5, Chapter. 15)

In addition to emphasizing the importance of questioning, both schools seriously put great emphasis on the importance of education through acknowledging ignorance and avoiding to do something without acquiring prerequisite knowledge. As the Holy Quran strongly forbids undocumented speech, and states:

*“When you welcomed it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge, you counted it a trifle. In the sight of Allah it is very great”.* (Quran, 24: 15)

Confucius with special emphasis considers someone wise who can say the word “I do not know”, and he says in this regard:

*If you know, say I know. And if you do not know, say I do not know. Only then you can be considered wise.*

(Yang, 1980, Part. 2, Chapter. 17; Xie, 2003: 76)

continue teaching. (Qian, 2011: 156)

## **5. The Right Time to Start Training: Who Deserves to Learn?**

Among the specific teaching methods, Confucius introduces a special teaching method which is based on the innate talents and desires of the learners, it is the method of heuristic induction. He says:

*In teaching students, I should teach only when the learner is well-thought-out for learning and expressing new ideas, and at the same time he is incapable of understanding it, as long as they do not want to say something while they are unable to explain it, enlighten the matter. I will reveal an aspect of the matter to the learner, so if he is not able to deduce other aspects of the same matter, I will refuse to*

On the subject of studying, Confucius emphasizes that studying should be done in such a way that when a problem is discussed in one dimension, you will find it in other dimensions as well, he emphasized creative and practical studying, applying the lessons in life. (The original text is: 举一反三、活学活用、学以致用, 反对灌输知识的方法。) and not using the injection training method means large volume training without the opportunity to think and understand.

Confucius completely knew the personality of each of his disciples and commented on some of them. When answering his students' questions and doubts, he answered the same



question differently because the questioner was different.

Section Yan Yuan (Section 12) of Lun Yu mentions this matter: Yan Yuan, Zhong Gong, and Sima Qian all asked Confucius about the concept of REN (Ren (Chinese: 仁) is the Confucian virtue denoting the good feeling a virtuous human experiences when is altruistic. Ren is under the normal adult's protective feelings for children. It is considered the outward expression of Confucian ideals), and Confucius' answered in three different ways. Even Zilu and Ran You, followers of Confucius, both asked Confucius the same question: Should action be taken immediately upon hearing something?

But Confucius' response was quite different from what was expected, which aroused the curiosity of Gong xihua.

Because Zi Luo had a courageous but thoughtless temperament, he was inevitably reckless in doing things, so Confucius asked him to consult his father and brother first and then take action. But Ran You; because of his overly cautious and calm temperament, often retreated in the face of problems, so Confucius asked him to take action immediately upon hearing something. In this way, Confucius had a proper training for his disciples by driving them make the best decision in the same situation based on their own personality, so that they would not go to extremes. (Qian, 2011: 265)

There is a similar theory in Islamic thought, which means that it is necessary to teach any knowledge to a person who is qualified to acquire that knowledge. Because

many people do not have the ability to understand and accept any knowledge. It also emphasizes that knowledge should not be taught to inappropriate or incompetent people.

### **Educational Content**

In terms of educational content, these two schools are different. The educational content in the Confucian school is mainly based on the “Six Arts”. says Confucius:

*Set lofty ideals, try to make a high moral character, develop kindness and compassion in your mind, and create beautiful feelings by learning the six arts. (Yang, 1980, Part. 7, Chapter. 6)*

The educational content of Islam includes almost all categories, and all knowledge that is useful to human beings can be taught and learned as

the educational content. Educational content in Islam is mainly based on reason. Although most of these reasons may be seem simple but profound, they have benefited ordinary people and intellectuals alike. The doctrine of speaking is not limited to the special scope of educational content; but gives full scope to all kinds of imagination including the Quran and Sunnah. For example, when the Quran banned believers in the dispute:

*“Obey God and His Messenger, and do not dispute with one another, lest you become weak, and your love be lost, and be patient, for God is with the steadfast”. (Quran, 8: 46)*

Another example is when the Prophet and Imam address the public about health care used the following reasonable approaches. The prophet said:

*“Eat dinner, even if it is a handful of dates; because leaving it makes a person old”. (Ibn Majah, 2013, Vol. 2: 1113)*

Imam Bagher states:

*“If people know the benefits of brushing, they will take the toothbrush to bed at night”. (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 76: 130)*

Islamic educational content is based on developing conscious people, so that they can preserve, promote and spread Islam, and at the same time, by knowing God, they can be the successor of the Creator of the universe on earth, develop morality according to God's will, and live a balanced life in the material world. In this way they can achieve their material, spiritual, personal and social goals. (Zein al-Din, 1982)

## **6. Learning Motivations Basis**

In terms of motivations for learning, the Confucian school sets the ideal goal for all learners: First self-improvement, then family reformation, then country governance, and finally world peace; But education in Islam is not only a guide to the Hereafter but also a source of morality in the material world.

Imam Ali says:

*“Ask for understanding and learning, not for harassment and seeking the teacher's mistakes; because the ignorant who is eager for learning is like the wise. And indeed, the unjust wise is like the ignorant who seeks the excuse”. (Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah. 320)*

He also says:

*“It is up to the student to be polite and try to learn the etiquette of studentship*

*and not to get tired of learning and not to consider himself wise enough to cease learning". (Tamimi Amadi, 1986, Vol. 4: 316)*

Imam Reza also says:

*"Indeed, one who learns knowledge to argue with the ignorant or to praise the teacher or who wants to draw people's attention to himself to be considered great, he will be in the fire in Hereafter". (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 2 :31)*

Significantly Confucius's educational thinking and Islamic educational thought from the macro educational perspective to most of educational details such as educational methods and tools are in the same direction.

If, in view of the above-mentioned analysis, we make fundamental ideological differences between the two schools, it is

inevitably difficult to reach at a common point in the details as well. But by studying and examining separately the thought of teaching in both schools of Confucius and Islam in the previous sections, it can be clearly seen that the purpose of teaching in the two schools is the same, albeit through different paths.

What we mean by the world in our discussion is not the world of the Hereafter; but it is the material world. The meaning of this world is the transferring the knowledge, the civilization, norms and moral standards of the family, governing society, enlightening the conscience of human beings and other fields to the next generations. Although it is tried to be induced in this way, the school of Confucius and Islam have nothing in common with regard to the

Hereafter; but many similarities can be found in the material world.

This is not a simple event that can be described; but the common goal of the wisdom in these two ancient civilizations is in giving importance to the

heart of man, society and the world, although it is achieved in different ways.

At the end, the educational perspectives of both schools are briefly brought to readers.

**Table. 1: Educational Views of Islam and the Confucius School**

Row	Compared Item	Commonalities	Differences
1	The importance and the status of education	Both schools believe that seeking knowledge a learning science is the mere and real work among any other kind of works.	The main goal of education in Islam is to be independent of enemies in all aspects of life so that not to be controlled by them. Confucius school on the other hand believes in society's security and welfare (小康: Xiaokang).
2	The goal of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educating people for a suitable daily life.</li> <li>- Contributing the maintenance and development of the society.</li> <li>- Emphasizing the self-cultivation and morality.</li> <li>- Negating tribalism and emphasizing on meritocracy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In Confucius school the final goal is that human attains the position of gentleman (君子 : Junzi); but in Islam being away from the evil, and becoming the best of creatures to be competent Allah's ruler on the earth (Calipha) is the final goal of education.</li> <li>- Islam emphasizes on both present life and later life as the object of education; but</li> </ul>

			Confucius more emphasizes on “Xiaokang” and present life.
3	Ways to achieve educational goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They see asking questions as the key factor to awareness.</li> <li>- Teachers must have no knowledge to withhold from students.</li> <li>- Applying Acquired Knowledge in Practice.</li> <li>- Thinking along with learning has been greatly emphasized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Islam emphasizes the reward that scholars and researchers will receive in the present life and in the later world, and Confucius school encourages the scholars to seek knowledge to acquire the higher-level official positions by bringing up the idea of “A good scholar can become an official”.</li> <li>- Islam by bringing the idea of “science makes you dominate” and Confucius by changing the idea of “education for governmental officials” into “education for common people” led their followers to pursue science.</li> </ul>
4	Range of Educational Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both have believed in non - discrimination in receiving public education.</li> <li>- Despite both schools' emphasis on public education, there are also some certain groups that both reject teaching them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Although Confucius has emphasized breaking the monopoly of education from courtiers and blueblood nobles to ordinary people, it is not like Islam that emphasizes women's education just like men.</li> <li>- Islam considers teach knowledge to the incompetent is like one who hangs Pearl Necklace on the necks of pigs and Confucius believes teaching such human beings</li> </ul>

			like whitewash the wall made of dung and dirt, is useless and impossible.
5	The principles and Content of Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both believe that not any science is not suitable for teaching.</li> <li style="padding-left: 2em;">- In both schools, following moderation and avoiding extreme are common content.</li> <li>- In both schools, religious education content is along with governmental education content.</li> <li>- There is a kind of personal and social education content in both schools.</li> <li style="padding-left: 2em;">- Along with teaching materialistic content, the spiritualistic content is also emphasized in both schools to cultivate ethics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The educational content in the Confucian school is mainly based on the “six arts”. In Islam the doctrine of speaking is not limited to the special scope of educational content; but gives full scope to all kinds of imagination including the Quran and Sunnah.</li> <li>- Theological content, especially self-learning through theology, is the characteristic of Islamic educational content, which is rare in Confucianism.</li> </ul>
6	The relation between Teacher and Student (Position of teacher and student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers have high spiritual value in both schools.</li> <li>- Both not have a specific teacher In Islam, it is permissible to learn from atheists and pagans, just as in Confucianism, anyone who can correct our behavior can be my teacher.</li> </ul>	While Islam holds a prophetic status for the teacher, Confucius emphasizes the generality status of the teacher by saying: One in three people must play teacher of others.

## **Conclusion**

Based on what was discussed above on the educational thinking in the Confucian school and the thinking in Islamic education separately, these two schools in educational principles, educational methods, educational content, educational field (scope) even educational time and place, and other minor issues as well, in the larger case, the differences are relatively trivial.

For example, regarding the wide range of education audiences in these two schools, we can say that although the Confucian school believes in the principle of education for all strata of society; but this principle does not include women, while the explicit belief of the Islamic school

is that all men and women should seek knowledge for the rest of their lives.

In addition, both schools seriously put great emphasis on the importance of education, both on acknowledging ignorance and on avoiding to do something without acquiring prerequisite knowledge.

Can be the principle of educating each person according to his or her talents and interests (因材施教) used in the modern education system?

Looks like it is still usable. We just have to look at how it fits in new system of education. Different generations inevitably have different needs as well.



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