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Ethics in Muslim Writing and Research Methodology: The Case Ibn Khaldun's Scholarly Writing

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Abstract

This study examines the concept and practice of scholarly writing among Muslim scholars, with a special reference to 'Abdul Rahman Ibn Khaldun (d.1406). The research draws on a textual analysis of Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah and other early Muslim works regarding the craft of writing while addressing the broader, wider context of writing ethicality and its influence on social consciousness. This study discusses the worldview and ethics of writing, concepts, and terminologies, sources and objectives, investigation, and styles of presentation according. This research demonstrates that Ibn Khaldun's writing methodology and style continue to stand as a prime example for scholarship in the social sciences and that his spiritual beliefs and value system served to further enhance the originality and rigor of his writing and conceptual schemes. Further research across a larger body of Muslim literature will bring about interesting insights on the relationship between spirituality and research writing, as well as the historical contribution of Muslim authors to the advancement of universal knowledge.

Keywords: Ibn Khaldun, Muslim scholarly writing, Writing Ethics, Muqaddimah

Introduction

With the advent of Islam, Arabs who had previously relied on their oral traditions and poetry to preserve traditions and culture were initiated to a writing culture, spurred by the Qur'anic commandment: "Read!". Believing that God made the pen as a tool with which to glorify and exalt Him,"[1] writing took on great importance with the geographical expansion and rapid development of the Islamic civilization. The development of Islamic writing culture is entwined with the story of Islamic civilization, where the development of its methods, styles, and experiences of scientific writing was the direct result of political and historical challenges affecting the polity. In this sense, many scholars continue to view Islamic writing experience as a genuine and naturally occurring phenomenon, especially given the possibility of its momentum transferring its inborn rationality and scientific experiences to Dark Age Europe.[2] Exploring the Muslim understanding of writing is of intellectual and methodological value and carries a particular structural pattern of epistemological and conceptual value inexorably tied to power. It is no coincidence that in some of the early secretaries' handbooks devote their first chapter to the subject of the sultan (endorsement of power), followed by sections on morals and prescribed etiquette for courtiers."[3]

One of the earliest and most extraordinary Muslim writing experiences is the compilation of the final text of the Qur'an, the meticulous method of which marks diligence in research echoed in all aspects of spiritual and social codes. While this undertaking marks the advent of Muslims' engagement with scientific writing, its development by no means ends here. The Islamic literary corpus is full of books on writing ethics and techniques, as well as various forms of novel synthesized literary and research techniques derived from pre-existing scholarly literature during the 8th-century translation movement during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun (d. 833). While the quality of translation has been criticized by many contemporary studies, it is acknowledged that the rigorous revision process carried out by the scholars at the House of Wisdom and the scholarly maturity achieved was partly due to the flexibility and resourcefulness of the Arabic language, which Turner noted was "capable of accommodating new concepts, procedures, and the details of science as well as of philosophy."[4]

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[1] Adrian Gully (2008), *The Culture of Letter-Writing in Pre-Modern Islamic Society*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 68.
[2] Jonathan Lyons (2009), *The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western* Civilization? New York: Bloomsbury Press, p. 20.
[3] Gully (2008), *The Culture of Letter-Writing*, p. 56.
[4] Howard R. Turner (2009), *Science in Medieval Islam: An illustrated Introduction*, Texas: University of Texas Press, p. 29.

A distinct school of scholarly writing by Muslim authors emerged as a result of these circumstances, showcased in many works on the craft of writing and editing (*sina'at al-kitabah*) across various fields, perhaps especially in those fields pertaining to secretariats and official documentation as is the case of Ibn Qutayba (d. 1484 AD) "*Adab al-katib*", Abul 'Abbas Ahmad al-Qalqashandī (d. 1418 AD) "*Subh al-a'sha*", Ali Ibn Khalaf (d. 1046 AD) "*Mawad al-bayan*", al-Suli Muhammad Ben Yahya (d. 947 AD) "*Adab al-katib*", Musa bin Hassan al-Mawsili (d. 1301 AD), "*Al-burd al-muwashi fi sina'at al-insha'*". In their efforts to better organize and improve the process, methods, and proficiency of learning, early Muslim scholars have engaged extensively in the field of that "science of writing" under the fold of public administration. Makdisi notes that "the craft of writing was promoted by many prominent secretaries as the highest form of communication. Some secretaries proclaimed writing as the noblest of ranks after the Caliph" (Makdisi, 1981). As one of the foremost literary critics of the pre-modern Arabic heritage and himself a highly influential Chancery secretary, Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) characterized writing as the noblest of crafts for it 'brings together the foundations of power and sets its rules'.

The urgent need for Muslim society to write, record, and manage its affairs has played a significant role in those early works on the techniques of writing, which laid the ground for literary culture, and style that represented the most cherished possession one may hold to, dedicate to or gift to others. Al-Jahiz's (d. 868) following description illustrates this point well:

> The book, what a treasure and helpful means it is! What a great companion and support! What a pleasant object of leisure and recreation. [...] The book is a receptacle filled with knowledge, a container crammed with good sense, and a vessel full of light-heartedness and earnestness. [...] Where will you find a companion like a book?[5]

The development of Muslim writing culture mirrors Islamic historical and political developments and reveals in detail those rapid developments through changes in the text. Examples of such works include works written during charged political events or explorations as is the case of travelogues (*Kutub al-Rihla*), chief among the famous work of Ibn Battuta (d. 1369 AD) (*Rihlat Ibn Battuta*), or early biographies such as that of Ibn Khaldun including 'The trip of Ibn Khaldun to the West and East') (*al-Ta'rif bi-Ibn Khaldun wa-rihlatuh gharban wa-sharqan*). This study examines Ibn Khaldun's concept of writing, principles, skills, objectives, and challenges. It also examines the Muslim's experience in a much broader context of ethicality and social responsibility. Ibn Khaldun's experience is taken as a reference of a discussion of writing issues and experience, skills, and processes of scholarly writing from an Islamic perspective.

On Ibn Khaldun

This section discusses the significance of Ibn Khaldun's early writing experience, especially given that he held different administrative and political positions. Born in 1332 in Tunisia, North Africa, Ibn Khaldun is considered one of the most influential Muslim intellectual figures. A social scientist, historian, politician, and jurist, his thoughts and works continue to attract a global audience of researchers, scholars, and social scientists today. Ibn Khaldun started his early education with the memorization of the Qur'an, and the study of Arabic grammar, jurisprudence, Hadith, rhetoric, poetry, and philosophy. At the age of twenty, he was appointed as seal-bearer (*katib al-'alamah*) in the chancellery of the Tunisian ruler Ibn Tafrakin. His assignment included producing introductions of gratitude to God and His Messenger with beautiful handwriting and eloquent expressions corresponding to the content of the letters.[6]

However, Ibn Khaldun did not find his active political engagement and services of various courts and tribe leaders satisfactory. Hence, in 1375, he turned to a life of scholarship and writing. He withdrew to the Fort of Ibn Salamah under the protection of the Awlad ʿArif tribe near what is currently the town of Frenda in Tiaret, Algeria. He completed the first draft of his magnum opus, the Muqaddimah, which was written in an unconventional form and style (*nahw gharib*).[7] Fromherz described Ibn Khaldun as one who "sometimes chose solitude, such as when he divorced himself from all worldly and political

[5] Sebastian Gunther (2018), "Al-Jahiz: In Praise of Books," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 138, No. 2, p. 427.
[6] Wahid Abdul Wafi (1984), *Ibn Khaldun*, 2nd Edition, Riyadh: Sharikat Maktabat Akad li-Nashr wal-Tawzi, p. 43 & 131.
[7] Ibn Khaldun (1979), *al-Ta'rif bi Ibn Khaldun wa Rihlatuu Gharban wa Sharqan*, Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani li Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr, p. 145.

concerns to write his masterpiece, the Muqaddimah at the remote tribal fortress of the Banu Salama, a type of intellectual hermitage. More often, however, solitude was forced upon him by plague, by shipwreck, or by the political uncertainty that characterized his time."[8]

However, the novelty of Ibn Khaldun's intellectual composition is not limited to differences of form and style only; he also managed to develop original methods for scientific expression, organization, and presentation of knowledge. His new historiographical, conceptual, and methodological contributions to the domain of scholarly writing allowed him to scrupulously analyze and study the discipline of human association (*al-'umran al-bashari*) by adopting new approaches to the discussions of functions, subjects, methods, and applications in such a way that distinguished it from other pre-existing logics, philosophies, politics, and rhetoric.[9]

Ibn Khaldun sought to revive early writing styles, which he described as simple and meaning-focused. Contemporary Khaldunian studies consider Ibn Khaldun among the most prominent scholars of Arabic literature and the Muslim revivalists (*mujaddid*) of the writing style ('Abdul Wafi). When he was appointed secretary by the ruler Abu Salim ben Abul Hassan, Ibn Khaldun wrote with simplicity, clarity, precision, accurate factual expression, strong argumentation, coherence, selection of sound and proper words, and avoidance of restrictions of assonance of the rhythm (*saj' wa-badi'*).[10]

Ibn Khaldun's attachment to scholarship did not abate following his removal to Egypt and the events which lead to the death of his family members, nor did his judicial engagements affect his writing career. He rigorously continued his research on universal history. He was able to add his autobiography, which Fromherz describes as "the most detailed autobiography in medieval Muslim literature.[11] Ibn Khaldun's learning and writing career provide us with a good opportunity deserving attention and analysis. In addition, given his remarkable scholarly contribution, his experience may represent an interesting yet rich case of scholarly writing. In the following section we will address the Khaldunian perspective on various components of scholarly writing and the general framework of writing.

Ibn Khaldun's Writing

Why should any focus be made on Ibn Khaldun instead of numerous other Muslim writers who have produced influential works on the craft of writing? The answer to this question finds a justified response in the multi-disciplinary character and rich experiences of Ibn Khaldun and his essays and reports on the human association, society, or belle-Lettres inspired by his political career exhibited in the Prolegomena. In his, we find evidence of rigorous objectivity, neutrality, validity, ethical considerations, rationale and critique, novelty, and creativity, all of which qualify him as a model scholarly author, especially in the fields of human and social sciences. In the following section, we will address the salient features and components of Ibn Khaldun's scholarly writing. These include the author's philosophy and ethics, writing concepts and terminologies, sources and objectives, investigation, style, and presentation.

Writing Philosophy

As sets of perceptions and answers for fundamental questions of life and existence, worldviews profoundly shape life perceptions, meanings, and actions whilst providing writers with powerful spiritual, cognitive, and emotional direction. For Naugle, worldviews are deeply interweaved in the philosophy, theories, and investigations of the social sciences.[12] Worldviews affect perceiving, thinking, and writing expressions. Conscious or otherwise, worldviews provide and justify life assumptions, motivations, endeavors and largely underly writing investigative and methodological processes. Moreover, they organize knowledge, establish validation and relevance, set ethical norms, and prepare authors with the necessary fundamental concepts, frames of reference, and tools of interpretation required during a scholarly investigation.

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[8] Allen James Fromherz (2010), *Ibn Khaldun: Life and Time*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 40.
[9] Abdu Rahman Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, F. Rosenthal (trans.), N. J. Dawood (ed.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 39-42.
[10] Abdul Wafi (1984), *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 131.
[11] Fromherz (2010), *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 39.
[12] David K. Naugle (2002), *Worldview: the history of a concept*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 211.

Worldviews are developed and perceived as human self-experience. Under the pretext that "man is the measure of all things," some argue that worldviews are primarily the work of the human heart and reason in its essential operations.[13] Experiences can be established through "commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being."[14]

In our relevant context of discussion and concerning Ibn Khaldun, worldview is primarily a divine perspective on fundamental questions of God, life, the universe, and the unseen and the result of human consciousness and life experience. Specifically, Ibn Khaldun's worldview is demonstrated by his writing motivations, approaches, philosophy, methodology, and style. The distinctly Islamic worldview acknowledged by renowned orientalist Hamilton Gibb was characterized by his life story. For him, "Ibn Khaldun was not only a Muslim but as almost every page of the Muqaddimah bears witness, a Muslim jurist, and theologian, of the strict Maliki school. For him, religion was far and away from the most important thing in life . . . the *Shari'a* the only true guide."[15]

Ibn Khaldun remains deeply faithful to his *tawhidic* worldview, which revolves around the perception of the divine existence and attributes, meaning and purpose of life, human nature and society, existence, and related order. The reader of the Muqaddimah can easily see clear traces of the author's worldview shown through expressions, thoughts, interpretations, and analysis. In his preposition about the existence (being), human nature, human association, social dynamics, change, and order, Ibn Khaldun excludes the possibility of human knowledge outside the frame of worldview. Out of free will, which in turn is part of human nature, people may always decide which worldview best suits their convictions, experiences, and contexts. At the beginning of his Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun openly shares his view of life and its definite purpose, all centered around the Creator and Sustainer.[16]

Ibn Khaldun's analysis is interwoven with his Islamic worldview. Almost every topic, statement, interpretation, judgment, critical evaluation, or conclusion, echoing the Tawhidic worldview, cannot be oversight. One of the many examples is seen in him announcing his writing intentions that, above all, only the pursued divine rewards matters. His worldview is also manifested in other thesis and presuppositions whether on human nature and its potentials or human organization and associations, scientific concepts, thoughts, interpretations, critique, theory of knowledge, theory of the *'umran*, rise and fall of civilization, learning, and education philosophy, governance, and politics. In politics, for example, while fully supporting and appreciating both the letter of al-Ma'mun's general, Tahir ben Hussein, sent to his son 'Abullah ben Tahir when the Caliph al-Maʾmun (d. 833) in year 821 appointed him as a ruler of al-Raqqa (situated northeast bank of the Euphrates River, Syrian) and Egypt, he concluded that the governance system of the *khilafah* is the most suitable. He also provided professional governing rules and tips; the letter also represents a piece of spiritual reminder, inspiration, and admonition about his responsibilities towards God, fear from God and trust in him, and pursuit of assistance from Him.[17]

Ibn Khaldun also places central focus on the concept of *fitrah* (innate human nature). He argues that humans are created according to inborn constitutions known as *fitrah*, embracing the spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. He believed that fitrah is endowed with full potential and ability to meet its diverse needs and potential to discharge its responsibility and achieve life's highest goals. He perceives *fitrah* perse as a cradle of ideation, perceptions, potentials, and skills. Perhaps, communications and its associated writings skills represent parts of the human nature. For him, humans should target excellence in what they do. Acquiring professions starts with simple yet gradual learning, repetitive experience, developmental professional habit, achieving excellence (*hadhq/ihkam*), which not only end at the level of personal needs' fulfilment, but reach out to others

[13] Naugle (2002), *Worldview*, p. 291.
[14] James W. Sire (2009), *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview*, 5th Edition, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, p. 20.
[15] Hamilton Gibb (1933), "The Islamic Background of Ibn Khaldūn's Political Theory," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 23-31.
[16] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 4.
[17] AbduRahman Ibnu Khaldun (2005), *Al-Muqaddimah*, A. Cheddadi (ed.), Vol. 2, Morocco: Dar al-Funun wal-'Ulum wal-Adab, pp. 111-122.

through gradual learning. This implies that the limitation of human ability is caused mainly by a lack of effort and inappropriate learning methods instead of human nature itself.

The implications of *tawhid* on writing philosophy fall within the scope of the theory knowledge in general and its related epistemological questions such as what can I know? What do I know? How should I know it? And how do I know what I know is true and right. In the case of Ibn Khaldun's writing experience, the implications of tawhid can be found in various elements of writing work, whether related to its form, content, style, method, key concepts, arguments, and purpose. The purpose of writing for example, highlights the meaning of '*ihtisab*' (seeking with determination the reward of God) as one of the highest motives supporting the writing activity. In addition, Ibn Khaldun also highlighted the criteria of the need for effective learning and pedagogy to serve the public welfare and interest (*maslaha*).

Writing Ethics

In Islam, ethics is as the cornerstone of this education, learning, and development, and thus learning is also embedded in the discipline of the self (*adab al-Nafs*). The latter, according to Al-Attas "assures the recognition and acknowledgment of one's proper place about one's physical, intellectual and spiritual capacities and potentials; the recognition and acknowledgment of the reality that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically according to their various levels (*maratib*) and degrees (*darajat*).[18] Early Muslim scholars opted firmly for the integration of knowledge and ethics. For them, knowledge resembles a tree with many roots, growing because of ethical values. Core values such as pure intention, piety, patience, and humility head others.[19] Knowledge is also viewed as the fruit of both thinking and reflection on the divine signs and spiritual states, both leading to nearness from the divine (*qurba*). In contrast, knowledge is not just a pursuit of information causing oversight of the heart and feelings.

In his discussion of ethical based writing, Ibn Qutaybah noted that writing is not only about skills, but also concerns authors' traits, which before the tongue need of attention to self and character, refining of morals before words, as well as protection from spiritual diseases such as backbiting, lie, cheating, deception, mockery, vulgar talk, and other forms of ill words.[20] Nawawi (d. 1277) also drew attention to the ethics of writing. He reminds teachers and students of the need to exhibit values such as humility, read others' works as an act of humbleness, and avoid writing only after being qualified; otherwise, writings may cause harm to one's faith, knowledge, reputation, and dignity. For him, authors should not hasten to publish their work; instead, they need to revise, review and repeat reading.[21] Ethics-based writing tradition also survived among later Muslim scholars. In his *al-Mu'id*, 'Almawi (d. 1573) relates success in writing with ethics. He stressed ethics such as purity of intention and sharing of knowledge. He argues that both good intentions of seeking the pleasure of God as well as sharing of good ideas and thoughts would render writing to charity and act of worship.[22]

Ibn Khaldun's attention to writing ethics continues alongside the same line. Ibn Khaldun's writing shows that ethics, learning, and writing are inseparable. His idea is that irrespective of how vast the amount of knowledge, wisdom, and experience one may acquire, his share would still be insignificant devoid of ethics. Ibn Khaldun's appears to be faithful to his notion of ethics in writing as he demonstrates close attention to ethics, both implicitly and explicitly, in his reported acts and method of thinking. This is especially true given his declared motives, assumptions, principles, analysis, argumentation, hypotheses, theories, and critiques. In the introduction of his Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun humbled down by acknowledging that no matter the presumed greatness and creativity associated with one's work, one is always prone to imperfections. He stated that his efforts are below the standard of perfection and completeness and require further reviews of other scholars. The reader can see that Ibn Khaldun did not try to champion his abilities, instead draws on the help of God who endowed him with

[18] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1999), *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, p. 11.
[19] Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (2010), *Ayyuha al-Walad*, 4th edition, Beirut: Dar al-Basha'ir al-Islamiyah; Burhan al-Islam Zarnuji (1947), *The Instruction of the students: The Method of learning*, New York: King's Crown Press.
[20] Abu Muhammad Abdullah Ibnu Qutaybah (1981), *Adab al-Katib* (The book of the Secretary's Guide), Muhammad al-Dali (ed.), p. 14.
[21] A. Yaḥya ibn Sharaf Al-Nawawi (1987), *Adab al- 'Alim wal-Muta'alim* (The behavior of the teacher and his student), Egypt: Maktabat al-Sahabah, pp. 32-33.
[22] A. b. Musa Al-'Almawi (1930), *Al-Mu'id fi-Adab al-Mufid wal-Mustafid* (A guide for a teacher and learner), Damascus: al-Maktabah al-'Arabia, p. 130.

intellectual abilities and blessings, describing how he became aware of things with God's help and without the instruction of Aristotle or the teachings of the Mobedhan.[23]

The presence of ethics in the writing of Ibn Khaldun is demonstrated in many ways and forms, including his criticism of the epistemological foundation and utility of certain branches of knowledge like philosophy, logic, dialectic theology, and mysticism. Ibn Khaldun acknowledged the benefits and merits of those disciplines and those engaged in them. For example, in his critical assessment of Sufism, he adhered to the path of the rigorous investigator (*muhaqqiq*) to avoid the influence of the prevailing mainstream opinion and vague generalization. As a Malikite jurist, Ibn Khaldun sought moderate application of the famous juristic maxim of "obstruction of the means to harm and evil" known as *sadd al-dhara'i'*, rather, he highlighted the ills of Sufism but also accommodated all relevant aspects of Sufism and regarded it as established yet meritorious scholarly discipline deserving attention in the development of human association (*'umran*). This Khaldunian chirurgical approach provided researchers the opportunity of multiple readings and interpretations described by some as a multifaceted criticism.[24]

Moreover, Ibn Khaldun used the techniques of periodization and classification to draw nearer to the Sufi experience. He divided the development of Sufism into two distinct periods. The first relates to that of early generations led by scholars like al-Abul Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 1073 AD) in his al-Risalah (*The treatise*) and al-Harith al-Muhasibi (d. 857 AD) in the al-Ri'ayah li-Huquq Allah (Observing the Rights of God); those focused on the discipline of self-purification and asceticism (*mujahada*). The second is of later generations affected by philosophy as is the case of the works of Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), Ibn Barrajan (d. 1141), Ibn Sab'in Abdul-Haq (d.1271), Ibn Qussiy (d.1151), Ibn al-Farid (d.1234), and many others. As far as classification is concerned, Ibn Khaldun sought to identify four areas of interest, including the purification of the soul through the exercise of efforts (*mujahadah*), knowledge and insights obtained from the realm of unseen (*mukashafat*), exercising of supernatural acts (*karamat*), and outwardly obscure utterances and states (*shatahat*). Ibn Khaldun endorsed the first and third categories, rejected the second, and displayed a tentative demeanour to the fourth.[25]

Concepts and Terminologies

In this section, we highlight the importance of Ibn Khaldun's linguistic proficiency and skills; and how he managed to build a linguistic base for his work by borrowing most of his core concepts from Qur'an. Words and terms mirror ideas and thoughts, while concepts carry human objectives. However, when misused, those intended objectives would not be expressed appropriately, forget about fulfilling their goals or entertaining the listeners. They rather cause stagnant meanings leading, and even worse, collapse and death of "empty concepts". Ibn Khaldun regarded as necessary the prerequisite of the conceptual building of scholarly works. This is because original, authentic, well-defined, and relevant concepts help capture the set objectives and bring out the expected change. The anticipated simple use and composition of concepts are gauged according to initial purposes and intents of writing, domains of application, and the intellectual levels of the reading audience. Concepts are expected to justify their potential presence and position. For Ibn Khaldun, the negligent craft of concepts and definitions of patterns causes writing severe hindrance, unnecessary troubles, learning discord, and confusion, disturbs the flow of knowledge sharing, and further reduces scholarly cooperation.

A case in point is the Maliki legal treatise of (*al-Mudawwanah*) and the commentaries made by Ibn Yunus Abu Bakr Muhammad bin 'Abdullah (d. 1059AD) (*al-Jami'*), al-Lakhmi Abul Hasan (d. 1086 AD) (*Kitab al-tabsirah*), Ibn Bashir Abu Tahir Ibrahim (d. 1132 AD) (*Tanbih 'ala mabadi' al-tawjih*), and Ibn Rushd Abul Walid (d.1198 AD) (*Muqadimat al-bayan wal-tahsil*). The study of those commentaries requires students to demonstrate not only a ready knowledge of their legal and juristic content but also the ability to distinguish between the approaches of diverse schools such as the Cordovan, Qayrawanian, Baghdadian, and Egyptian. Ibn Khaldun argues that the differences found in those works are not helpful to students' learning as they fall into repeating the same thing, however, with different concepts and expressions. Those works would result in learners' spoiling their lives just

[23] Ibnu Khaldun (2005), *Al-Muqaddimah*, p. 59.
[24] James Winston Morris (2009), "An Arab Machiavelli? Rhetoric, Philosophy and Politics in Ibn Khaldun's Critique of Sufism," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, Vol. 8, p. 251.
[25] Semih Ceyhan (2008), "Ibn Khaldun's Perception of Sufis and Sufism: The Discipline of Tasawwuf in Umran," *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 36, No. 3-4, p. 505.

to acquire the terminology needed before studying the subject matter. Ibn Khaldun describes this problem that turns to "an evil that cannot be cured because it has become firmly ingrained through custom, and in a way, it has become something natural, which cannot be moved or transformed."[26] Hence, the selection of authentic terminology is vital to sound argumentation, analysis, expression, and presentation. For Ibn Khaldun, the spirit of speech and expression lies in the way and format they are used to convey ideas and thoughts. When eloquent communication is not well established, the expression turns into a barren/dead land.[27] Before Ibn Khaldun, other scholars proposed relevant guiding principles on the subject. Ibn Qutaybah for instance advised writers to establish comprehension as a bridge to reach out to their audience through proper elucidation of words (*yunazzil alfazahu*), the balance between the levels of scholars (authors) and readers while avoid addressing lay people with highly sophisticated nor using naïve language to communicate with learned people.[28]

Ibn Khaldun appreciation of the intimate relationship between words and meanings led him to avoid the use of crowding words, conjunctions, and shallow expressions. Concepts should be used and built coherently to better express abstraction, capture all possible subject details and to prevent a surplus of concepts over meanings. It is for this reason perhaps that Ibn Khaldun relied carefully on his fine selection of concepts such as *fitrah* (innate human nature), *'umran* (human association), and *khalifah* (vicegerenship). For example, the use of 'kinship' (*'asabiyyah*) helps satisfy the effective writing of the Muqaddimah and better illustrates the studied phenomena and pertinent theory on the rise and fall of Muslim dynasties. Concepts are also used to clarify meanings and establish good communication with the reader. Their dynamicity is gauged against their conveyed meanings, perspectives, inclusiveness, and proper applications to human thinking and life.

Some concepts, however, play specific roles in writing but yield no actual progress outside. They are only dormant or dead cells and lose their functions, especially following the conquest of other concepts. For this reason, Ibn Khaldun construed well-defined functions for concepts and connected them to the dynamic fields of inquisitive thinking. Both the function and dynamicity are about the subsequent meanings; the concepts would continually add to the topic at hand. They explain and boost human knowledge, enrich understanding of life experience, and help increase writers' intellectual abilities. Scholarly writing is one of the best crafts which increases intelligence and develops the habit of intellection; it provides additional insight into the affairs of human association.[29] Proper use of concepts is checked against their strength, validity, relevance, and influence of conveyed meanings. Al-Qashaqandi (d. 1418) illustrated the relationship between words, conceptions of expression, and generated meanings as follows:

> The position of meaning with respect to the words which express them like the position of the human body with his/her clothes. The terms are to follow the meanings. Beautifying the terms should be for the sake of excellent presentation and expression of the meanings. This is because the meaning is the soul of the term and its objectives for which they are coined and built. The need of the writer to hit or achieve the right meaning is more important than beautifying the words he uses. If the meaning is sound and the chosen words are not eloquent, the expression looks like a living human with an ugly form/face. But if the meaning is not sound, it will look like a dead human (no soul) no matter how good is his/her looking.[30]

Proper terminology alone is, however, not enough for persuasive writing, especially when parts are not linked to one another clearly and coherently to produce the intended meanings. The ability of expression, Ibn Khaldun noted, depends either on the perfection or deficiency of the expression habit. Thinking skills are established at the level of complex expression consisting of more than one word. He stated:

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[26] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 415.
[27] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 453.
[28] Ibnu Qutaybah (1981), *Adab al-Katib*, p. 18.
[29] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 331-332.
[30] Ahmed Al-Qashaqandi (1913), *Al-Subh al-'a'sha fi-sina'at al-insha'* (The book of literal composition craft), Vol. 2, Cairo: Matba'at al-Amiriyyah, p. 184.

> A speaker who possesses a perfect (linguistic) habit and is thus able to combine individual words to express the ideas he wants to express, and who is able to observe the form of composition that makes his speech conform to the requirements of the situation, is as well qualified as is (humanly) possible to convey to the listener what he wants to convey.[31]

Ibn Khaldun's careful selection of words and terms is also shown in his sophisticated theoretical framework, not to speak about his linguistic mastery. His use of key terms and naming his work as *Kitab al-'ibar wa-diwan al-mubtada' wal-khabar* is highly representative. In their efforts to interpret the meanings of these keywords, some contemporary studies have assumed that the purpose of coining this concept is not simply to describe universal rules, but rather to distinguish the way the universal is related to the particular, the way the specific manifestations of history are related to general laws, both natural and divine."[32]

More importantly, however, is Ibn Khaldun's ability to effectively borrow Qur'anic terms and concepts as shown for instance with fundamental concepts like *'ibar* (lessons), *'umran* (human association or civilization), *fitrah* (innate human nature), *'asabiyyah* (social cohesion), *mulk* (political authority), *khilafah* (vicegerency), *ma'ash* (livelihood), *kasb* (earning), *'ilm* (knowledge), *ummah* (community), *kharab* (destruction), *fasad* (corruption), *millah* (religion), *badawah* (nomadic life), *hadhara* (sedentary life), *zulm* (oppression), *taraf* (indulgence in luxury), *tughyan* (transgression), and so forth. Those were instrumental to his theorizing exercise, intellectual flexibility, inquisitiveness, adaptation to new contexts and emerging issues, comparison, and evaluations. His original selection of words and concepts did not impede his bridging with current scholarship. However, unlike Greek philosophers, Ibn Khaldun chooses the *'umran* as a proper description of the physical space of human society, and without reducing their merits, made reference to their concepts such as "city" (*madinah*), and "society" (*mujtama'*) "civilization" (*hadhara*). His preference of the *'umran* seems more relevant, appropriate, original, inclusive, accurate, and rich, especially when it relates perfectly to the making of human association according to the divine Revelation.

Sources and Objectives

Ibn Khaldun's investigation techniques helped him reach his writing goals. His experience demonstrates the highest scholarship achievement, reflecting the quality of his sources, perspective, observation, analytical tools, and methodology. Ibn Khaldun sees writing as an effective expression echoing what is in people's souls. For him, writing enables the innermost thoughts of the soul to reach out to those who are far and absent and perpetuates in books the results of thinking and scholarship.[33] He also views it as a noble craft distinguishing man from others and allowing the diffusion of thoughts to the welfare of individuals and communities. Writing benefits following generations and acquaints them with the sciences, wisdom, and experiences of earlier ones. Humans have the potential to learn and acquire the skill of writing.[34] Earlier on, Ibn Hazm (d. 1064) considered writing the fourth level of expression (bayan), following being human perception and vocal expression.[35]

People have different motives for writing whether related to their persons, human association, culture or arising needs. Ibn Khaldun argued that writing could be viewed and explained according to the personal traits and intellectual needs of a given field of knowledge and society. Personal motives are related mainly to personal reasons developed throughout the various periods since the early days of people's lives.[36] Ideas evolve gradually through learning, acquaintances, experiences, events, and societal influence. This motive is developed through answering questions about whether one fits to contribute to family, society, and community. Ibn Khaldun is aware that the make-up of human association depends mainly on the various roles individuals play through the cooperation of multiple levels, including the contributions of scholarly writing to meet their needs and those of society at large.

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[31] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 438-439.
[32] Fromherz (2010), *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 116.
[33] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 319.
[34] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 327.
[35] Abu Muhammad Ali Ahmed Ibn Hazm (2008), *Taqrib Hadd al-Mantiq* (Defining the Scope of Logic), Annotated by Abdul-Haq bin Mulahiqi al-Turkmani, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, p. 314.
[36] Ibn Khaldun (1979) *al-Ta'rif bi Ibn Khaldun wa Rihlatuu Gharban wa Sharqan*, pp. 64-65.

As with regards to the intellectual needs, Ibn Khaldun and other Muslim scholars called the ranks of honor (*maratib al-sharaf*) summarizing the many objectives of writing, such as completion (*tatmim*), correction (*tashih*), explanation (*sharh*), summary (*ikhtisar*), establishing correlations (*jam'*), and organization (*tartib*). Ibn Hazm argues that writers vary in their writing engagement according to their levels of diligence, contribution, merits, thankfulness (*shukr*), and pursued spiritual merits.[37] The objectives of writing are also subject to the arising needs of human association. Ibn Khaldun and some other early Muslim scholars identified the following goals for writing: the invention of new knowledge, explanation of difficulties in any domain of expertise, review, and correction of mistakes of the early scholars, Contribution to current disciplines by elaborating more on its details and addressing sure of its problems, responses to questions, developing new coherent organization settings of the textbooks contents by further building its clarity and adding to its new sub-topics, tackling news issues in a discipline and pushing for the establishment of new one through establishing intellectual leaps.[38]

Ibn Khaldun identified three references related to the use of concepts. Those embrace the rules of the truth of Revelation, sound language, and facts of human association. The strength of ideas and concepts is then established through reference to Revelation. The reader of the Muqaddimah quickly notices the frequent references made to Revelation. Ibn Khaldun sought his utmost to keep Revelation as the inspiring source for his writing whenever possible. In his discussion of different issues and questions of human association, he actively sought to maintain a clear presence of Revelation. As for the third rule, Ibn Khaldun recommended using verification tools or what he called conformity with facts (*mutabaqah*). For Ibn Khaldun:

> If the student knows the nature of events and the circumstances and requirements in the world of existence, it will help him distinguish the truth from untruth in investigating the historical information critically. This is more effective in the critical investigation than any other aspect that may be brought up in connection with it.[39]

On another note, Ibn Khaldun perceives knowledge as a divine gift for humankind which by nature transcends time, space, and culture. This led him to appreciate the contributions made by earlier scholars irrespective of their contexts or affiliations. References represent the raw materials need for crafting ideas and thought. Relevance, quality, variety, and adequacy, however, represent some of the most significant prerequisites for the proper use of references. However, in the context of Islamic discussion, the Revelation represents the fundamental source of knowledge. In his Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun used more than 400 references, 113 of which are written books. Observation of human association is yet another vital source of knowledge gathered across various positions, public functions, travels, contacts, and access to royal libraries. His observation consists of the investigation of historical events, reports, and documents, in addition to immediate intellectual reflection on phenomena.[40] The human association is also viewed as both sources of knowledge and a reference for verification. This helps explain his perspective concept of civilization [*'umran*] in its (various) conditions, as embracing (different) elements to which historical information may be related and with which reports and historical materials may be checked using the rule of conformity.[41]

Ibn Khaldun draws on various primary sources from other faith groups, whether philosophical, religious, or scientific.[42] His idea is that the use of non-Muslim sources should not always be for criticism, rebuttal, or refutation. Intentions of transmission, learning, exploration, borrowing, connection, and appreciation of the efforts and contributions of ancients regardless of their religious and civilizational background are worthwhile. In all these, the author needs to ensure fairness towards sources. Ibn Khaldun uses a form of "phenomenology," allowing for the technique of "the probable good intention and thought" while giving priority to the evidence rather than the authors themselves. Adhering to the rules of objectivity and neutrality in his treatment of foreign sources has gained Ibn Khaldun high respect among contemporary thinkers. For example, Fischel highlighted the sort of detachment Ibn Khaldun maintained in his use of foreign sources. He said:

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[37] Ibn Hazm (2008), *Taqrib Hadd al-Mantiq*, p. 314.
[38] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 413-414.
[39] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 36-36.
[40] Abdul Wafi (1984), *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 224.
[41] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 38.
[42] Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali and Jaffary Awang (2017), "Ibn Khaldun's Religionswissenschaft: Exploring the Sources in the Muqaddimah," *UMRAN- International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 67–79.

> Ibn Khaldun managed to detach himself from the fetters of his own faith and penetrate the theological and doctrinal differences of another religion… Indeed, among the Arab-Muslim scholars who attempted such a study, it was Ibn Khaldun, the great Muslim thinker of the fourteenth century, who achieved astounding scholarly objectivity regarding the various non-Islamic religions.[43]

Investigation

Ibn Khaldun intellectual journey brought to the front discussion core research skills such as investigation (*taftish*), examination (*tahqiq*), demonstration (*burhan*), and arrangement of evidence (*tartib al-adillah*). The lack of any of those may cause corruption and weakened state of knowledge. Ibn Khaldun argues that investigative analysis is needed in all forms of scholarly writing. Generalized claims and weak analysis weaken the quality of writing. Drawing on the field of historiography, Ibn Khaldun believed that despite the rich content of human knowledge, it is losing importance and is turning into an entertaining business of fictional stories and unfounded historical reports and dominating flawed methodologies. With little verification of narrations, history felt into a sort of mythology that is rather entertaining than informing and persuading. Lak of verification also caused fatal problems affecting rigorous scholarship, including for example, occurrence of errors (*ghalat*), illusion (*wahm*), imitation (*taqlid*), ignorance (*jahl*), dependence/parasitism (*tatafful*).[44] Ibn Khaldun also drew attention to the problems afflicting historical information and shortcomings of traditional historical methods and models such as the collection of apocryphal and untrue gossip, inventions, false statements, discredited reports, inattention to causes, nonsensical stories, error, poor revision, weak assumptions, blind trust, mere dictation, and imitation.[45]

The laws, facts, and patterns of the *'umran* represent some of the key references Ibn Khaldun used to check the validity of statements, data, reports, and views. He noted that, in establishing truth and sound judgments regarding the various states of the *'umran* and their happenings, one needs to consider the ratio of conformity existing between reported information and what occurred or would occur. This, however, needs a dose of personal criticism and checking against external evidence.[46] In history, Ibn Khaldun advised the use of various thinking tools and processes for better refinement of scientific works. For instance, understanding the nature of human association (*'umran*), one would use both convergence and divergence (*jam' wa-tafsil*), proposing alternative methods of arrangement (*tartib*), taxonomy of thoughts and events (*tasnif/mabadi' al-ahwal wa-maratibiha*), introducing of original thoughts and ideas (*istihdath*), search for in-depth interpretation (*ghaws*), retracing of true causes (*mu'ayanat al-asbab/usul al-hawadith*), correcting (*tashih*), and exercising independent thinking (*ijtihad*).

Ibn Khaldun does not champion one method over another. His investigation is rather defined according to the fields of inquiry and their current conditions. However, what remains clear is the objective of the investigation, which should not divert from the truth nor sacrifice human life or its meaning. For Ibn Khaldun, scholarly writing should not start in the author's mind only. Examination of other works should represent the first step in scientific inquiry. Constructive criticism for current ideas justifies the change. Ibn Khaldun engaged in the critical evaluation of Muslims' scholarly writing in various domains of knowledge, particularly history. He criticizes the styles of Muslim authors who exaggerated the reduction of historiography to mere reporting of events of kings and rulers, as is the case of Ibn Rashiq's *Mizan al-'Amal* (Criterion of Action).

Ibn Khaldun also made direct references to works of famous Muslim historians such as Ibn Isḥaq (d. 767), al-Ṭabari (d. 923), Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 819), al-Waqidi (d. 822), al-Azdi (d. 945), and al-Mas'udi (d. 956) setting them all on equal footing.[47] He made frequent references to the literary masterpiece of *Muruj al-Dhahab* (The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems) of al-Masʿudi (d. 956) to explain that stories should not be accepted as true as is the case of the "Brass City". This is based on the idea that history is not a mere reporting of events but rather a branch of knowledge belonging to rational sciences

[43] Walter J. Fischel (1967), *Ibn Khaldun in Egypt: His Public Functions and Historical Research*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p. 137.
[44] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 5.
[45] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 35-38.
[46] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 38.
[47] Salah Machouche and Benaouda Bensaid (2015). "The roots and constructs of Ibn Khaldūn's critical thinking," *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 201-228.

in need of high verification skills.[48] Likewise, history should not be limited to the superficial reading of events and passing meanings of reports and narratives. It should rather be approached as a carrier of deep meanings in need of critical examination and analysis. Ibn Khaldun stated:

> The inner meaning of history… involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. (History) therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of (philosophy) [hikmah].[49]

The merits of Ibn Khaldun's criticism are not only limited to their revealing of serious historical errors; they also provide fresh outlook for the study of history. His methodology sought to move history forward to levels of intellectualism using questioning and analysis of data according to conformity, adhesion, and reference to facts and laws (scriptural and physical) of the human association (*sunan Allah fil-'umran*). For him, the highest scholarly value of academic works rests on their perfection, creativity, value, impact, and benefits to society. In his work, creativity takes the form of deep thinking and the pursuit of hidden and far causes of events. Ibn Khaldun argued that the truth is not always explicit; in many cases, it is to be found beyond the surface of events and phenomena. The more one dives into the examination of hidden factors, causes, and implications of human association, the closer he would draw to the real causes of the problems.

The exercise of questions and answers triggers the search for facts and is better seen in the motives for writing his *shifa' al-sa'il* (Remedy of the questioner), which discusses the relevance of the master to learn and apply mystical teachings. His deep concern with the move of Muslim civilization following the destructive plague to an age of stagnation and retrogression is a good example which he described as: "Calamity that swallowed up many of the good things of civilization and wiped them out. It overtook the dynasties at the time of their senility when they had reached the limit of their duration. It lessened their power and curtailed their influence. It weakened their authority."[50]

For him, the mere description of what happened is not satisfactory to the discharge of scholarly responsibility. Practical actions are needed to make profound reforms in the fields of education, economy, politics, and so forth. His creativity is also manifested in his developing persuasive presentation of his ideas to positively change to the Muslim intellectual life. His idea was that his writing approach would lead him to produce a unique, creative, and outstanding work. Informing the reader about his work excellence, he said: "As a result [of methodological steps he followed and the arrangement he adopted], this book has become unique, as it contains unusual knowledge and familiar if hidden wisdom."[51]

Style and Presentation

Ibn Khaldun describes scholarly writing as constructed on a well-defined pattern allowing for familiarization and enabling the reader to grasp ideas and thoughts smoothly. This pattern is echoed across his scholarly works, whether related to language styles, ideas, concepts, argumentation styles, content organization, review, or criticism. His *Shifa' al-sa'il li-tahdhib al-masa'il* (*Remedy for the questioner in search of answers*) is praised for its fine organization and presentation, moderate judgments, accurate argumentation, demonstrated philosophical, juristic, and religious knowledge.[52] The human thinking ability for Ibn Khaldun is a blessed mental tool bestowed to him to perceive the divine order in the existing.[53]

Effective transmission of knowledge is required, whether about reported narrations (*akhbar*) or expressed thoughts (*insha'*). The power of ideas lies not only in the quality of their content but also in their styles of presentation, their inter-connection for better meanings, in addition to their smooth and clear transmission to others. In Ibn Khaldun's writing, one cannot escape his clarity of meanings. For him, the abstraction or complexity of issues (*masa'il*) should not be used as a pretext for confusing styles. Complexity is to be simplified using different linguistic mediums and techniques. Preceding

[48] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 35.
[49] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 5.
[50] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 30.
[51] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 9.
[52] AbduRahman Ibnu Khaldun (2005), *Al-Muqaddimah*, A. Cheddadi (ed.), Vol. 1, Morocco: Dar al-Funun wal-'Ulum wal-Adab, p. xxxiv.
[53] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 334.

scholars like Nawawi (d. 1277) argue that the author should balance abstraction and simplification. The author should also:

> Make his statements clear, concise without exaggeration of explanation; otherwise, they turn weak and poor in meaning (*rakaka*). He should not render his statements too brief; otherwise, they become difficult, close (*istighlaq*), or confusing. His interest in writing should be very fresh, should be capable of spotting new areas, ideas, styles, and objectives. Furthermore, he should not reproduce an existing work. However, if he decided to write something similar, he should produce new features to the content, style, or organization. He should add something which is really needed so he can attain a greater benefit and serves a broader audience.[54]

Choosing appropriate yet clear concepts, adopting gradual methods of explanation, moving from abstract to concrete are all recommended writing techniques needed for good presentation of ideas and thoughts. Good presentation of writing content is held through editing, which early Muslim scholars took as a priority. 'Almawi argued that good writing should pass through the stage of revision, including comparison and contrasting (*muqabalat al-kitab bi-aslin sahih mawthuq bih*). He also argues that writers should observe other techniques to make changes to the written text no matter how perfect the author thinks his work is required.[55] On this occasion, Ibn Khaldun summarized his writing experience as follows:

> I corrected the contents of the work carefully and presented it to the judgment of scholars and the elite. I followed an unusual method of arrangement and division into chapters. From the various possibilities, I chose a remarkable and original method. In the work, I commented on civilization, urbanization, and on the essential characteristics of human social organization, in a way that explains to the reader how and why things are as they are and shows him how the men who constituted a dynasty first came upon the historical scene. As a result, he will wash his hands of any blind trust in tradition. He will become aware of the conditions of periods and races that were before his time and that will be after it… Thus, (this work) contains an exhaustive history of the world. It forces stubborn stray wisdom to return to the fold. It gives causes and reasons for happenings in the various dynasties. It turns out to be a vessel for [wisdom] philosophy, a receptacle for historical knowledge.[56]

Attention to presentation should not however, detract from the quality of content, contributions, and ethics. Ibn Khaldun reminds writers to focus on the substance of their thoughts. Although writing requires detailed discussion, providing unnecessary information only distracts the reader's attention. To better deal with this problem in history, for example, Ibn Khaldun advised historians to dive into the meanings and substance and search for the real causes and implications of human association instead of providing mere descriptions of historical events. This, he argues, is because history has an outer surface (*zahir*) embracing events and reports, but also inner meanings, essence, substance, and reasons (*batin, asbab 'amiqah*).[57] He also gave little credit to ideas presented in a "dark slide" causing readers' confusion, as shown in his criticism of philosophical mysticism. Although granting it special intellectual status, Ibn Khaldun for example, addressed the way later Sufis used philosophical terminology to explain their mystical, ecstatic experience and ascension modes from spiritual stations to another and their perceptions of the Oneness of God. The confusion of their "adopted" concepts has led to serious conflicts with other scholar communities, especially with orthodox Muslim jurists and theologians. Ibn Khaldun proposed using a different approach to better accommodate their thought instead of judging them through methods of speculation and argumentation.[58]

Ibn Khaldun's theses did not follow the general approaches and forms of writing and opted for creative style, whether in the fresh re-arrangement, presentation, or interdisciplinarity of human knowledge. In his analysis of the human phenomenon, the domains of social, economic, political, educational, and

[54] Al-Nawawi (1987), *Adab al- 'Alim wal-Muta'alim*, pp. 32-33.
[55] Al-'Almawi (1930), *Al-Mu'id fi-Adab al-Mufid wal-Mustafid*, p. 135.
[56] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 8.
[57] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, p. 5.
[58] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, 363.

cultural are presented in the light of *Tawhidic* worldview. For example, in his discussion of knowledge and its related pyramid of perception, Ibn Khaldun invites the reader to consider reflecting on the unseen and domain of supernatural perception identified as the perfect knowledge granted to Angels and Prophets. His selected specific ways of knowing applied to Angels and Prophets rather than common ways of perception can be generalized and applied to all humans.[59]

Ibn Khaldun was also concerned with developing proper writing skills (*malakat at-ta'lif*) which is possible when writing adheres to appropriate rules and styles, established patterns, well-defined structure, and organized presentation. The faculty of writing (*malakah*) is developed through repetitive practices up until the writer acquires some levels of fineness and excellence (*hadhq wa-rusukh*). Proper early education, however, is a prerequisite for excellence in academic writing and scholarship. Ibn Khaldun also encouraged developing thinking skills-focused learning and promote skills development in learning while discouraging imitation and blind memorization. For him, students of early stages should be granted needed intellectual freedom and should not be discipline with excessive violence.[60] Ibn Khaldun also criticized the writing methods of Berber students for their inaccuracy. He argues that the principal collections and writings were copied in Bedouin script. He describes this writing state of affairs: "They were copied by Berber students in such bad handwriting, with so much corruption and so many clerical errors that they cannot be understood. They remain incomprehensible to those who examine them critically. Only very rarely are they of any use."[61]

Conclusion

As showcased in Muslim literature on writing methods, approaches, skills, aids, formats, and styles, scholarly writing was given due diligence in Muslim scholarship. Muslim contributions to writing and research ethics highlighted relevance, objectivity, ethics, and impact. Ibn Khaldun's works provide case example for holistic research and writing ethics as a noble task in the development and advancement of holistic human relationships, and ultimately of civilization. His approach highlights the author's awareness of the nature of man and its potential for perfection, ethical ideals, as well as the attention to the inter-disciplinary mode of scholarly inquiry. Critical to this approach is the necessity of drawing on revelation-based terminology for the proper analysis and diagnosis of human association. In addition, the written content proves more effective when the intellectual presentation of ideas is carried with style, art, and creativity. The study of Ibn Khaldun as a case for research and writing ethics showcases the need for evaluating various problems encountered by other classical and contemporary writers, their styles as informed by their Islamic knowledge, and cultural imperatives informing their written ethic.

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[59] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 70-74.
[60] Ibn Khaldun (1967), *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 416-420.
[61] Ibnu Khaldun (2005), *Al-Muqaddimah*, Vol. 2, p. 322.

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