



Southern Theory: Ibn Khaldun's Discussion of Education in the '*Muqaddimah*'

Dr Vegneskumar Maniam¹

¹*University of New England*

Raewyn Connell in her discussion of southern social science theories considered that Ibn Khaldun's contribution to an understanding of civilisation and education was so rich and important that it is still relevant today. This paper builds on Connell's introduction to Ibn Khaldun's work by looking particularly into the discussion of education in the '*Muqaddimah*' and how far it is used in teaching and research today. Ibn Khaldun was a Muslim scholar born in what is now called Tunisia, North Africa in 1332. His writings, which encompassed history, philosophy of history, sociology, education and pedagogy, are best exemplified in his greatest work, '*Muqaddimah*', written as an introduction and commentary on his universal history. Ibn

Khaldun provided a formal discussion of the concept of education and pedagogy in Chapter Six of '*Muqaddimah*'. His classification of knowledge according to classical Islamic tradition is a valuable guide to the range of sciences in existence at the time. He also provided his views on educational issues, such as learning capacity, memorisation, the curriculum, teachers' strictness and breadth versus depth of knowledge in education. He was a keen observer of the relationship between education and society and recognised that education had multiple objectives. This paper also investigates historical and contemporary evidence of the use of Ibn Khaldun's ideas, both in mainly Muslim societies and in mainly non-Muslim societies. In the current global context where there is much misunderstanding of Muslim religion and culture, it is very important to explore a Muslim scholar's work in the area of education and understand the extent of its influence.

