

Establishment of Education Sciences as a Discipline in Iran: Social Demands and Western Influences

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Abstract: «Education Sciences» was established as an academic field of study in Iran in September 1932 by the Iranian graduates who came back to the country from Europe. Here, the main question is whether they merely reproduced what they had learned in the West or they established the discipline taking into consideration the historical factors and according to domestic necessities. To answer this question, this study used a historical method. The results revealed that education sciences was established in Iran based on the historical and socio-cultural developments, which were categorized into three main factors: a) The establishment of Dār ul-Funun (The first modern institution of higher education in Iran) and its major role in prompting the statesmen to establish a modern Western-style educational system, b) Socio-cultural developments occurring between the establishment of Dār ul-Funun and the establishment of constitutionalism in Iran (e.g. widespread perceptions about inefficiency of the traditional system of education and the need to establish a new Western-style educational system), and c) Constitutionalism, which promoted the idea that education paves the way for establishment of new civic institutions and thus it must be reconsidered. It is discussed that all these factors prompted some Iranian graduates of Western universities to establish education science as a discipline in Iran through using the Western-style contents and curriculum for training teachers and providing the manpower needed for new schools.

Keywords: academic discipline; education sciences; historical context; Iran.

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1. Introduction

Iran, also called Persia, was a military and economic superpower during much of the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736). This status, however, changed dramatically from the late 17th century onward for two major reasons. The first reason concerns the country's internal political collapse and accordingly its exposure to constant invasions for a great part of the 18th century. The second reason concerns the new mode of societal evolution that emerged in Western Europe from the late 16th

century onward. Scientific, technological, economic and political revolutions brought about significant changes to the semantics of European society and introduced more European powers to the centre of an increasingly globalising society. Iran remained fairly unaware of most of these changes (Alavi, 2013). However, establishment of the first western-style public schools by Haji-Mirza Hassan Roshdieh (Khoshraftar Somee Sofla, 2015) and the first Western-style college, Dār ul-Funun (lit. school of skills, or polytechnic) in 1851, as the most important education milestone in 19th century, can be considered as Iranians' early attempts to get acquainted with modern Western sciences. Naser al-Din Shah's first premier, Mirza Taghi Khan Farahani, better known as Amir Kabir, was the main driving force behind the creation of Dār ul-Funun. He founded this institution to ensure that a new generation of the Iranian youth, primarily military officers, be trained in the useful sciences (Ekhtiar, 2001). Given the long history of the teaching of literature, wisdom, and philosophy in Iran, what seems to have motivated Amir Kabir to found Dār ul-Funun was lack of a school offering technical, military, medical, and industrial training to meet the new industrial and occupational needs of the country. As a result, eight disciplines came to be taught: engineering, pharmacy, medicine, surgery, artillery training, infantry training, cavalry training, and mineralogy (Towfigh, Yousefi & Heydari, 2020). Amir Kabir relied on European instructors, including Jacob Edward Polak, the Austrian professor, and John Louis Schlimmer, the Dutch professor, among others (Parghoo & Matanaq, 2016). However, it was not until the establishment of Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli (lit. Central Teacher Training School) that the academic teaching of education sciences began in Iran (Statute and Curriculum of Dar al-Mo'allemin-e Markazi, 1924). In other words, education sciences have been introduced to Iran as an academic discipline by Isa Sedigh at Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli in October 1932. Sedigh's adoption of the same curriculum he was offered in America raises the suspicion that the teaching of education sciences in Iran was a mere copy of that in the West. Undoubtedly, the establishment of academic centers by modelling the West or at least under its influence had the potential to affect the values of higher education in Iran (Shabani Varaki, et al., 2021).

Factors such as establishment of the modern schools in Iran by Christian missionaries and establishment of the first Iranian university, which was based on French Model and not the traditional religious school's manner, reinforced this hypothesis (Fereshteh, 1994). However, during about the eighty years, from the opening of Dar ul-Funun in 1851 to when education sciences began to be taught in 1932, many historical and cultural changes took place in Iran, and the relationship of these changes in modern education and the teaching of education sciences in the country calls for an investigation. Therefore, this study makes attempts to identify the preliminary role of historical and cultural changes in 19th century Iran in the establishment of education science as an academic discipline. The study also intends to shed light on the influence of the West in this regard.

2. Background of Establishment

Many historians and scholars of social sciences argue that the process of disciplinarization is deeply related to the social world (Blanckaert, 1999, cited in

Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2002). A series of historical, social, and cultural changes could be credited with laying the groundwork for introducing the universities, in general, and a discipline in the field of education sciences, in particular, into the Iranian society. These changes can be studied under four headings: 1) the establishment of Dār ul-Funun, 2) the changes during the period between establishment of Dār ul-Funun and the Persian Constitutional Revolution, and 3) the Persian Constitutional Revolution. Below, it is discussed how each of these events prepared the ground for the establishment of education science as a discipline.

1) Establishment of Dār ul-Funun

Dār ul-Funun marked the Persian government's first direct attempt in establishing a school and making policies for education. Officially established in 1851, the school's objectives, wide range of responsibilities, variety and number of disciplines, and high standard of education made it much more than a conventional «school» (Zargarinejad, Sefatgol & Vosoughi, 2018). Dār ul-Funun's preparatory roles in establishment of education science as a discipline are as follows:

1-1) Dār ul-Funun was influential in introducing a new class of Iranian intellectuals. Comprising of the school's graduates, teachers and directors, these intellectuals formed a new stratum in the Iranian society, and they held modern views on different issues, including education. They mostly came from influential families and social strata and, soon after graduation, were hired as government officials; this enabled them to influence administrative decisions and policies. The number of Dār ul-Funun students grew from 100 in its first year to 387 in 1928 (Aghazadeh & Armand, 2017). Myriad of graduates went on to play an influential role in leading some of the era's cultural and educational changes that led to the inception of primary and secondary education and new educational programs, which were adopted from those offered in European institutions (Sedigh, 1975).

1-2) During his time as Iran's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Amir Kabir ordered the compilation of an encyclopedia on the geography, history, urban characteristics, and political affairs of numerous countries from across continents. The book entitled *Jahan Nama-ye Jadid* (lit. The New World Atlas), was finished in 1857; it also featured some information about European educational institutions and the number of students and graduates in Europe. For instance, it noted Frankfurt for its «splendid buildings, among which are . . . a library, and two schools—one for doctors and surgeons, and the other for teaching sciences,» (Jahan Nama-ye Jadid, 1857, p. 32-33), or described England as having:

a grand academy, which is the constellation of many sciences and crafts and holds 7,446 students; thirty-eight libraries, the crown of which being the Royal Library, with its more than a million books on different sciences; and also three schools, in which 225,500 educated people constantly teach and learn (Jahan Nama-ye Jadid, 1857, p. 186).

The state of knowledge in Europe, as reflected in the book, may have been another factor that prompted Amir Kabir to take steps towards the establishment of Dār ul-Funun and academicisation of sciences in Iran. Amir Kabir was not alone in being impressed by the industrial and scientific advancements in Western and, especially, European countries; this attraction was also prevalent among all of his fellow statesmen. This prepared the ground for the establishment of modern educational systems in Iran.

1-3) The establishment of the European-styled and government-supported Dār ul-Funun may reflect a then-growing understating of the need for education and be perceived as part of a series of greater reforms (Ringer, 2002). Although the disciplines initially offered at Dār ul-Funun represented Amir Kabir's aim of having a vocational, military, medical, and industrial school to fulfill the country's needs in those areas, and reflected a disregard—with consequences in the long run—for the humanities, the establishment of the school in itself implied doubt about the efficiency of traditional sciences, and indicated the necessity of disseminating new scientific principles (Alam & Biseda, 2012). In other words, Dār ul-Funun was established to promote knowledge of and teach modern sciences to Iranians, thereby putting Iran on the path of progress and development. The establishment of this institution would allow the central government to oversee public education for the first time, thus paving the way for the development of public knowledge and awareness and the expansion of new fields of study in society (Azizi, 2018).

1-4) Dār ul-Funun's teachers and graduates pioneered translating and authoring textbooks in Iran. Among their works are the following: natural science, mechanics, calculus, and geography textbooks by Mirza Zaki Mazandarani; books on teaching French and a French–Persian dictionary by Mirza Ali-Akbar-Khan Mozayyan ul-Dawlah; and calculus, geometry, geography, and natural history textbooks by Mirza Abdul-Ghaffar-Khan Najm ul-Dawlah (Sedigh, 1975). These books were influential in popularizing European culture and modern science in Iran and revisiting traditional education.

1-5) It was not until the establishment of Dār ul-Funun that teachers were recognized as government employees, which compelled the government to organize its human resources for an educational expansion—that is, training teachers—and, in turn, to establish education science discipline as a scientific field.

1-6) The scientific attitude—to look at phenomena through the lens of natural science—present at Dār ul-Funun could not be indifferent about education. For instance, the medical teachings at Dār ul-Funun emphasized hygiene conditions in traditional Islamic elementary schools (the *maktab*) and the relationship between pupil health and learning quality. Therefore, this attitude rejected the state of education in Iran at the time, and sought to develop a new system that enabled not only the teaching of modern science, but also the establishment of education science as a new field.

2) Socio-Cultural Changes during the Period between the Establishment of Dār ul-Funun and the Constitutional Revolution

Dār ul-Funun opened in 1851, and the first Persian Constitution was proclaimed on August 5, 1906, ordering the establishment of the National Consultative Assembly (the Majlis). The fifty-five years between the two events included a series of far-reaching changes; in the following, these changes and how each prepared the ground for the establishment of education sciences in Iran are mentioned:

2-1) Qajar diplomat and thinker Mirza Malkam Khan wrote his book *Daftar-e Tanzimat* (lit. Book of Arrangements), also known as *Ketabcheh-ye Gheybi* (lit. Mystical Handbook), between 1858 and 1860. The book was a proposed collection of 174 laws that Malkam Khan composed to address what he saw as a dangerous decline of the Iranian government and a pressing need to establish law and order. In the 41st proposed law, he emphasizes compulsory public education and recommends to Naser al-Din Shah Qajar that three types of education—namely primary, secondary, and higher education—be established in Iran under the supervision of an independent Ministry of Education (Asil, 2009). In addition to the three-stage system, Malkam Khan also proposed the establishment of a series of schools specializing in military training, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), mineralogy, industries, painting, and teacher education—which later became known as education sciences (Khorram-Ruee, 2012). This shows that before education sciences became an academic field in the country, methodical teacher training was already conceptualized by some Iranian intellectuals.

2-2) In this period, especially during the years leading up to the proclamation of the Persian Constitution of 1906, numerous efforts were made towards national enlightenment, and newspapers would run stories on the cultural changes and scientific and industrial advances of the West, which were fascinating to the general public. Zeyn al-Abedin Maragheh and Fatali Akhundzadeh (Akhundov) were among those who focused especially on the inefficiency of Iran's educational system. Maragheh harshly criticized the old and inefficient educational system of that era and in his book *Travel Diary of Ebrahim Beg*—published during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah in 1895—made the public aware of the deplorable state of the Iranian society, culture, and economy and how these were responsible for the decline of science and reason.

Akhundzadeh (1972) viewed progress as dependent on change of mindsets, both on individual level and social level—that is, he put transformation of education in focus—believing that the backwardness of education at the time stemmed from outdated teaching methods, false beliefs about knowledge and reason, and the ignorance and illiteracy plaguing women, particularly mothers. He maintained that triumph in reason and science is contingent on the development of the educational system, which in turn could be realised through expansion of universal education and the eradication of illiteracy in the society (Khorram-Ruee, 2012). Thus, there was an ongoing effort to inspire social demand for a change in traditional education, and it goes without saying that such a change required the training of those in charge of education with the help of modern methods.

2-3) Just before entering the 50th year of his reign, Naser al-Din Shah was assassinated by Mirza Reza Kermani in May 1896, leaving the throne to his successor, Mozaffar ad-Din Shah. The new Qajar king lifted the restrictions on critical newspapers, such as *Akhtar* and *Ghanoon*, and, encouraged by Prime Minister Amin al-Dawla, supported the execution of a universal education system and establishment of national schools. Thus, with the approval of the Shah and the help of Amin al-Dawla, the first modern school in Tehran was opened by Mirza Hassan Roshdieh, who had founded another school in Tabriz a year or two earlier. But it was the establishment of the Iranian Society for the Establishment of National Schools, later renamed the Association of Education, that ushered in a series of systematic efforts to found modern schools (Mahboobi Ardakani, 1991)—efforts which, according to some accounts (Nazem al-Islam Kermani, 1998), managed to found at least 49 new schools across the country during the rule of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah.

It is worth noting that this did not end with establishment of new elementary schools, but rather the idea of founding institutions for higher education was also taken into consideration and eventually led to the establishment of the Tehran School of Political Science in 1899, continuing what was started by Dār ul-Funun earlier, during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah. New schools were continuously founded until the Majlis ratified the Persian Constitution of 1906, which made primary education compulsory for all Iranians, requiring every parent to register their children for primary school once they reached the age of seven. The establishment of new public schools and the passing of the law for compulsory education elucidated the necessity of training teachers for the newly founded schools. Moreover, establishment of institutions such as the Tehran School of Political Science sparked the idea that a series of schools and an academic discipline—education science—could also be dedicated to teacher education; an idea that was eventually realized around a decade later through establishment of Danesh-sara-ye Āli (lit. Grand Academy), the birthplace of the education sciences.

3) Persian Constitutional Revolution

The success of the Persian Constitutional Revolution (*Mashrūtiyyat*) was the beginning of a new chapter in many respects, including the attitudes towards children and how they were supposed to be educated. Following the Constitutionalist victory, modern approaches to education were taken into consideration by the Majlis—itsself born out of the Revolution— and intellectuals to tackle the backwardness plaguing the country; however, the cornerstone of such consideration was laid years before in the works of figures like Malkam Khan, Maraghei, Akhundzadeh, Kashani, Talibov, and Yousuf Khan Mostashar al-Dowleh.

3-1) The special attention given by later governments to modern schools and the allocation of budget to modern education gradually caused *maktabi* education to fade, and highlighted the establishment of modern schools. The passage of the law on compulsory primary education for all seven-year-old and older Iranian children—girl and boy—led to a rise in the number of students and even establishment of all-girls schools. Increase in the number of students along with

the modern educational approaches undoubtedly made it essential to train teachers based on the novel scientific knowledge. However, there were only a handful of teachers who had expertise in modern teaching methods—only 360 throughout the country in 1928— while 5000 teachers were needed if every 30 students were to be taught by one teacher (Amouzegar, 1928, cited in Yazdani, 1999). Therefore, establishment of an institution to train teachers became a necessity, which in turn required establishment of the discipline of education sciences.

3-2) The Persian Constitutional Revolution conveyed an important message: To achieve progress, and compensate for backwardness, it is not enough to merely disseminate European knowledge—as was done in Dār ul-Funun and the later efforts— rather, it is also necessary to establish modern civil institutions such as rule of law. The intellectual foundation behind the idea of establishing such institutions necessitated a modern public education system, which had been conceptualized by people like Malkam Khan and Aliqoli Mirza Qajar before the Constitutional Revolution, but had not yet been realized. The Constitutional Revolution provided the grounds for that to be realized. It should again be emphasised that a modern national education system would have been impossible without teaching the education sciences in the first step.

3-3) Following the Constitutional Revolution, the legislative body passed a law, mandating half of the students be dispatched abroad to receive teacher training courses. This bears witness to the fact that the Revolution placed Iran among countries where every action was regulated by the law. The passage of a law on such an issue means that dispatching the students abroad was only the first step, and that what truly mattered was the sources of advanced knowledge to be brought into the country. Put simply, the Constitutionalist outlook gave birth to the idea that moving the source of scientific growth from overseas to Iran would be possible through increasing the number of educational professionals.

3-4) Success of the Persian Constitutional Revolution brought this message that the continuation of the decree of law depends on the level of public awareness.

3. Development of education as a discipline in Iran

A few months before the establishment of the Rousseau Institute by Édouard Claparède in Geneva in 1912 (Kestere & Ozola, 2011), Dar ul-Mo'allemin-e Markazi (lit. «Central House of Teachers») was founded in Iran in 1911. According to Articles 3, 4 and 16 of Dar ul-Mo'allemin-e Markazi's charter, which was signed by the National Consultative Assembly (the *Majlis*) on December 24, 1923, the curriculum of Dar ul-Mo'allemin-e Markazi was that of the secondary education with the addition of several new subjects, and the students would receive an official secondary school diploma upon graduation. The additional subjects were Ancient and Modern Logic and Philosophy, Self-Knowledge, Ethics, and Principles of Education. In the course Principles of Education, the students not only learnt the secondary school teaching methods, but also studied early childhood moral education and primary school teaching (Charter of Dar ul-Mo'allemin, 1923).

Based on this, teaching the education sciences in Iran may be argued to have begun in 1919 at Dar ul-Mo'allemin-e Markazi. A few years later, it was decided that

the secondary school teachers must have higher education, and holding a secondary school diploma was made a requirement for teaching at Dar ul-Mo'allemin-e Markazi. Subsequently, the school was renamed Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli (lit. «Grand House of Teachers») in 1928 (University of Tehran Guide, 1938).

In March 1931, around three years before establishment of the University of Tehran, Isa Sedigh, who had recently graduated in Education Sciences from an American university, was elected as the head of Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli. Sedigh (1975) states that although Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli specialized in teacher education, education sciences were not taught there until that year. Understanding the need for such a discipline, he worked to initiate a scientific discipline dedicated to the study of education sciences. Accordingly, teaching the education sciences as an academic discipline in Iran commenced at Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli in October 1932 and by the efforts of Isa Sedigh; «It has been three years since we established the discipline of education sciences at Danesh-sara-ye Āli (lit. 'Grand Academy'),» said Sedigh in a speech (University of Tehran Faculty of Theology and Islamic Studies Guide, 1936).

In accordance with a set of regulations issued by the Ministry of Culture, beginning on September 24, 1932, six subjects began to be taught at the institute, each for two hours a week: Educational Psychology, Educational Sociology, Philosophy of Education, Basics of Secondary Education, Principles of Education and Educational Institutions, and History of Education. Thereby, an education science, as an academic discipline, was born in Iran (Sedigh, 1975; University of Tehran Guide, 1935). Two years later, on May 29, 1934, the Charter of the University of Tehran was issued by the Majlis. Article 2 of this charter recognized Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli, which was then renamed Danesh-sara-ye Āli, as the primary core of the university, leading its Department of Science and Department of Literature to become the University of Tehran Faculty of Science and Faculty of Letters, respectively.

As a result of this transition, the program Literature and Philosophy, offered by the Faculty of Letters, was divided into two separate programs: Literature, and Philosophy and Education Sciences. Thus, the discipline of education science(s) was transferred, under the title «Philosophy and Education,» from Danesh-sara-ye Āli to the University of Tehran, and students were recruited through a competition. The University of Tehran's first professors in the field were Isa Sedigh, Asadollah Bijan, Aliakbar Siassi, Sadegh Rezazadeh Shafagh (professor of Philosophy, History, and Pre-Islamic Persian Literature), Seyyed Mohammad-Kazem Assar (professor of Introduction to Ancient Philosophy), Mohammad-Hossein Fazel, Wilhelm Haas (professor of Modern Philosophy), and Mohammad-Bagher Houshyar. The official list of the professors also includes other people such as Fatollah Amir-Houshmand, Mehdi Jalali, Gholam-Hossein Sedighi, and Mohammad Khansari.

It took education sciences over three decades to go from being taught at Danesh-sara-ye Āli, beginning in 1932, to have a faculty of its own, namely the University of Tehran Faculty of Educational Sciences, established in 1965. In the course of these three decades, education science(s) was taught, as an academic discipline, under the title «Philosophy and Education Sciences.» By around the same time, the University of Tehran administrators had also found that economic and industrial development is possible only when the education system is revised and developed. Accordingly, from 1963, the university officials decided to establish an institute dedicated to

teaching the education-related fields, so as to train professionals for the careers in social work and, especially, school teaching and administration. Consequently, a plan for establishing the Faculty of Educational Sciences was proposed to the Central Council of Universities and, upon approval, put into effect in 1965 (Mahboobi Ardakani, 1971, p. 395).

The Faculty of Educational Sciences Guide (1971) introduces the faculty members at the time as the following: Khosrow Mohandes, Gholam-Hossein Shokoochi, Zohreh Sarmad, Nikchehreh Mohseni, Ghasem Ghazi, and Azarmeydokht Dehdashti at the Department of the Basics of Education; Salim Neysari, Mohammad-Ali Toosi, Fereydoon Bazargan, Mohammad Borhan-Manesh, and Hadi Sharifi at the Department of Primary and Secondary Education; and Ebrahim Rashidpoor, Sa'eed Khadiri, Parvin Ata'ee, Mansour Khoddam-Hazrati, Espandiyar Sattari, and Mahmoud Zamani at the Department of the Methods and Programs of Education. Succeeding the members of the Danesh-sara-ye Āli's Department of Philosophy and Education Sciences, the mentioned faculty members were the second generation of university teachers in the field of education sciences in Iran.

After the University of Tehran's Faculty of Educational Sciences was opened and the discipline was separated from philosophy, a new curriculum, substantially different from its forerunner, was formulated and put into effect. The new undergraduate curriculum consisted of 140 course credits, divided into four categories: general or basic courses (40 credits); primary or major courses (60 credits); secondary or minor courses (30 credits); and optional courses (10 credits) (Faculty of Educational Sciences Guide, 1971). Giving education science(s) its identity as a separate academic discipline (one that is particularly independent from either philosophy or psychology), the curriculum had two fundamental features, which distinguished it from its forerunner: First, it divided courses into four categories for the first time; and second, it changed the credit value of courses from hours per week to units per semester, and the program duration from three years to four years (eight semesters) (Faculty of Educational Sciences Guide, 1971; University of Tehran Guide, 1965).

According to the application booklet of the first Iranian University Entrance Exam (the *Konkur*), held in 1969, 130 students were admitted to the University of Isfahan and the Literacy Corps Grand Academy, in Education Sciences Program and Educational Counselling Program—they were the second series of students to be admitted to study education sciences, following those formerly admitted to the University of Tehran. This continued until the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Although political instability and the Iran–Iraq War during the first post-revolution decade inhibited the further development of education sciences, the discipline, like many other disciplines, began to progress further qualitatively and quantitatively as the war ended in 1988 and many young people in the country returned to schools and colleges.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the pieces of evidence discussed, it may be argued that in Iran, education science(s) was established in response to the social demand for modern education and the need for training workforce for the new education system. More

precisely, teacher training was actually the foremost goal for establishment of education sciences discipline; this is to the extent that this goal is explicitly stated in the objectives of the University of Tehran's Faculty of Psychology and Faculty of Educational Sciences as well as Dar ul-Mo'allemin-e Markazi and Dār al-Mo'allemin-e Āli. The University of Tehran Guide (1966, p. 67) states these objectives as follows: «training competent teachers for all educational levels, helping to form expertise-based unions for qualified teachers, and training educational experts for education-related jobs.» Another piece of evidence for this claim is the co-occurrence of the changes in education and the university-level teaching of education sciences; for instance, until 1965, education system in Iran consisted of a six-year primary stage and a six-year secondary stage, but it was replaced that year with a new system, which introduced a five-year elementary school, a three-year middle school, and a four-year high school. These changes made it necessary to train teachers for each specialized middle-school and high-school subject; therefore, the University of Tehran Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences was founded that year (i.e. 1965) to fulfill that very need. This explains why the curriculum for the university's program Secondary School Teaching, a sub-discipline of education sciences, corresponded to that of the secondary education, formulated by Ministry of Education. In the program, students both studied the relevant theoretical basics and gained hands-on secondary school teaching experience as part of the courses Teaching Methods and Teaching Internship. In other words, the education sciences taught at universities were as impactful in terms of preparing workforces as those taught at Danesh-sara-ye Āli, with the curriculum planners intending to provide future graduates with essential skills so as to fulfill the growing need for educators.

It is worth noting that although the social demand for modern education seems to have domestic origins, the Western influences and the efforts towards a Western-style modernization are explicitly and implicitly evident, and the demand itself was answered by Iranian graduates of Western universities. This claim may be supported by the two following points:

First, dispatching a group of 42 students to Europe in 1858 was followed in 1911 by a second group, 14 of whom went to receive teacher training courses. More importantly, among them were Isa Sedigh and Ali-Akbar Siassi, the founders of education sciences in Iran (Hazeri, 1993). In 1927, the Majlis passed a law requiring around a hundred high school graduates to be dispatched to Europe every year for six years to receive training in various fields. Interestingly, 35 students in each series were to receive subject-based teacher training (Navaee & Malek-Zadeh, 2003). The 1927 law was almost completely put into practice. Among the students dispatched abroad, there were people like Mohammad-Bagher Houshyar, Fatollah Amir-Houshmand, Mehdi Jalali, Ali Kani, Ali-Gholi Heshmati, and Ahmad Ali-Abadi, who either went on to become influential education sciences teachers in Iran or simply studied «pure education,» today known as education sciences (Ministry of Sciences, Endowments, and Fine Crafts Annual, 1933-35).

Second, establishment of Dār ul-Funun, dispatching the students abroad, and establishing the modern schools (e.g. the Roshdieh schools) were the efforts to make good use of the scientific and cultural gifts of Western civilization—they were the efforts of modernization. The first curriculum of education sciences, as taught

in Iran as a discipline, well reflects those efforts. This curriculum did not challenge its Western counterpart, and the most significant thing about it may be that it was created by those who had been trained at Western universities—which explains why its subjects, objectives, and contents were based on what the creators had learnt overseas (Kiaee Jamali et al., 2018). The similarities become crystal clear through a comparison between the books *Psychology of Education* by Siassi (1938)—originally published as handouts given to Danesh-sara-ye Āli students—and *The Principles of Psychology* by William James (1890). Similarly, Houshyar (1956) mentions in the introduction of his book *The Principles of Education* that it was inspired by *Theorie der Bildung* (lit. Theory of Education) by Georg Kerschensteiner. Siassi's book *Psychology of Education* and Houshyar's book *The Principles of Education* served as the main textbooks for two similarly-named courses offered initially at Danesh-sara-ye Āli and later at the University of Tehran.

As a conclusion, it may be claimed that educational science(s) as a discipline in Iran did not emerge from the heart of traditional schools; rather, it was established in Western style and in response to a social demand for modernization of education. This establishment was made possible by efforts of the students who had returned from the West, influenced by what they had learned there.

Isa Sedigh was in charge of teaching courses such as «the history of education» and «principles of education» at Danesh-sara-ye Āli (Teacher Training University) (where the first curriculum of the education sciences program was developed before the establishment of the University of Tehran). About his motivation to teach the history of education, Sedigh explicitly stated, «... while studying at École normale supérieure de Versailles, I learned the history of Europe in detail, which I found helpful and effective in understanding the history of Western education and how to teach it» (Sedigh, 1975). In his book, *Practical Principles of Education Sciences* (1928), Sedigh discussed in detail certain topics such as the place of board in the classroom, correction of assignments, the location of the school, school yard, the teaching room, desks and benches, and methods for teaching mathematics, history, geography, natural sciences, etc. based on his observations in the West. He later elaborated on these issues in his book, *The New Method in Education* (1956), which was an important source for the course «principles of education.» The book contains a wealth of images from Western schools and provides the reader with many examples of these schools to explain the educational issues. For example, describing the characteristics of school environment, he writes, «In developed countries, the best gardens and lawns are used as schools. In the United States, boarding schools are often located in the foothills of mountains with pleasant climate and attractive and nice sceneries» (Sedigh, 1956, p. 200). He describes textbooks as follows: «In highly-civilized countries, textbook authors and sellers have brought about the development of excellent textbooks. In the United States, major bookstores always hire a few education specialists to check the textbooks» (Sedigh, 1956, p. 222). He also writes about the use of teaching aids, «In the American and European schools, there are thousands of collections of photographs on glass and filmstrips about geography, history, natural sciences, etc., from which the teachers could choose to use» (Sedigh, 1956, p. 252).

The similarities were not only in the content and educational materials, but also in the curriculum; this was to the extent that some experts have called it an imitative curriculum. Actually, the University of Tehran was an exact copy of French higher education institutions; even its schools were designed by French designers. The university used a consultative management style, as was the case in the western universities, which was at odds with the procedures followed in the Iranian organizations of the time (Azizi, 2018; Shamekhi, 2020).

In Iran, although education science(s) was established as an academic field of study following the rejection of traditional education and with no reliance on the rich theosophical and philosophical heritage of Iranians, the fact that its establishment provided new jobs and numerous job opportunities made its conflicts with the traditional education more tolerable in the traditional Iranian society of the time. Had it been established in a different way, it might have faced more resistance. Moreover, other schools had previously been established to supply professional human resource; these schools included the School of Law and Political Science in 1873, the School of Agriculture and Rural Industries in 1886, and the Great School of Trade in 1886, which had actually been established to provide the manpower needed by government organizations. This promoted the idea that new schools and new specialized fields of study (e.g. education sciences) could be established for teacher training as well; this was actualized around a decade later through establishment of *Danesh-sara-ye Āli*, where education science(s) was initiated as an academic field of study. Furthermore, an important feature of such schools is that they were the first institutions to have been developed far beyond imitating the military and technical aspects of Western education (Menashri, 1992) and paved the way for modern education. However, the new Western-style education (which, as mentioned above, paved the way for the establishment of education sciences program in universities) was criticized by some traditional scholars (see Menashri, 1992), while others who favored modernism played a role in development of the new Western-style education. For example, Roshdīeh, one of the founders of modern schools in Iran, was supported not only by statesmen, but also by some religious scholars such as Mirza Sayyed Mohammad Tabatabai, one of the leaders of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (Bagheri, 2019). Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn Asadābādī also emphasized the need for innovation and reform in education system in his works. Although he believed in acquiring new ideas in various fields, including education, he advocated the traditional approaches as well (Ghasemi Pouya, 2004).

It can be also concluded that the expanded political, economic and cultural relations between Iran and Europe in the Safavid era led Iranians to become more familiar with European knowledge. However, no significant changes occurred until the establishment of *Dār ul-Funun*. Following the dispatch of *Dār ul-Funun*'s graduates as well as other students to Europe, and the development of the discourse of modernity, the traditional sciences were challenged, which paved the way for the establishment of new Western-style schools. The adoption of the Compulsory Education Act by the constitutional parliament led to a significant increase in the number of students and, consequently, the need to train teachers for these schools increased. Since the modern schools had not come out of the traditional educational institutions, those who had graduated from foreign universities in education sciences and had

recently returned to Iran played a major role in designing and implementation of the curriculum for teacher training. Therefore, education science(s) was developed as an academic field of study in Iran based on the curriculum, content and approach of Western universities, irrespective of the theological and philosophical heritage of Iranians.

5. References

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