

## Environmental Intelligence and Globalization: Redefining Educational Paradigms through an Iranian Perspective

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Original Article</p> <p>Main Object: Education</p> <p>Received: 19 March 2025 Revised: 19 April 2025 Accepted: 20 April 2025 Published online: 27 April 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> environmental intelligence, experiential learning, globalization, holistic education, human-environment relationship, virtual education.</p>	<p><b>Background:</b> Despite advancements in environmental policies and education, many individuals remain disconnected from nature, leading to ecological neglect and unsustainable behaviors.</p> <p><b>Aims:</b> This study explores the institutionalization of environmental intelligence in education, emphasizing an Iranian perspective within the context of globalization. It argues for an educational paradigm that integrates traditional ecological wisdom with contemporary learning models, fostering a holistic, experiential, and culturally grounded approach.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Using literature synthesis and philosophical interpretation, this research draws on the spiritual and ethical teachings of Attar and Rumi alongside modern educational theories, including experiential, interdisciplinary, and quantum education.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> The study examines how globalization and urbanization have reshaped traditional environmental perceptions, particularly in Iranian culture, where mountains once held deep ecological and cultural significance but have become overlooked in modern urban life. Additionally, it investigates the role of global communication and virtual education in shaping environmental consciousness. Rather than proposing a replacement for existing environmental education, this study introduces a complementary framework that blends Iranian philosophical heritage, contemporary pedagogy, and digital learning. By fostering spiritual, ethical, and ecological awareness, this paradigm encourages a collective, participatory approach to sustainability.</p> <p><b>Conclusions:</b> It envisions an education system where cultural wisdom and modern innovation work together to cultivate deep, empathetic connections between people and the environment.</p>

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### 1. Problem statement

Despite an unprecedented wealth of knowledge about environmental preservation and the urgent need for sustainable practices, modern human behavior often disregards this understanding, resulting in environmental destruction that defies common sense. This disconnect is evident in urban environments where natural elements lose their significance in public consciousness— a phenomenon exacerbated by digital environments that increasingly mediate human-nature relationships through algorithmically-structured experiences (Zamani et al., 2021). A phenomenological study on the Alborz Mountains reveals that while Tehran's residents recognize the mountains as sources of tranquility and fresh air, their relationship with them has weakened over time (Dariush & Dastyar, 2020). The study highlights a decline in collective engagement with nature and an increasing indifference towards environmental conservation, emphasizing the urgent need for renewed public awareness and policy interventions. This contradiction is not due to a lack of theoretical or scientific solutions— numerous disciplines have addressed ecological challenges extensively— but a global systematic gap persists. Humanity appears increasingly incapable of recognizing the link between its actions and their environmental consequences. Such disconnects are exacerbated when institutional power structures normalize exploitative relationships with nature through controlled knowledge systems (Sarfi et al., 2021). This detachment is particularly evident in the diminishing role of mountains in cultural and urban landscapes. Research on the Alborz Mountains, for instance, highlights how their historical significance has been eroded over time, leading to their neglect and degradation despite their crucial ecological and cultural functions (Dariush et al., 2019). The study attributes this issue to a reduced mental and objective connection between people and their surrounding natural elements, exacerbated by urban expansion and a one-dimensional approach to environmental planning. This phenomenon is often described as environmental ignorance or indifference, reflecting a deeper societal issue.

In contrast, ancient societies demonstrated a more rational and harmonious relationship with their environment, characterized by preservation, protection, and even a deep reverence for nature. They seemed to possess a capacity for evaluating their actions, learning from outcomes, and anticipating long-term consequences. However, this connection has eroded in modern times, as evidenced by behavior in culturally rich countries like Iran and highly developed nations alike. To explain this disconnection, the hypothesis of "Environmental Intelligence" (Barati et al., 2020) suggests that humanity's irrational approach to environmental stewardship stems from a deficit in "collective/public intelligence"— a shared understanding and responsibility regarding ecological systems. The role of environmental features, such as mountains, in shaping cultural and ecological identity

has also changed. Research suggests that the function of mountains in Persian culture has significantly shifted due to modernity, affecting their meaning in poetry and public perception (Dariush & Motedayen, 2019). This transformation reflects a broader pattern in which traditional environmental elements lose their historical significance as modern infrastructure and technologies redefine human interactions with nature.

Environmental education (EE) has emerged as a critical pathway to addressing this crisis. According to the Belgrade Charter (UNESCO/UNEP, 1975), EE aims to cultivate an informed and motivated population capable of addressing environmental challenges through collaboration. By fostering critical thinking, as outlined by Wals et al. (2014), EE empowers individuals to question, analyze, and act on ecological issues. Global communication plays a crucial role in shaping environmental awareness and fostering protective behaviors. Studies indicate that increased access to digital media and information channels enhances public knowledge and encourages proactive environmental engagement (Mousavi & Dariush, 2019). As seen in pandemic coverage, media narratives can strategically frame societal issues to influence public perception, amplifying specific political or ideological perspectives (Kharazmi & Mohammadi, 2020). The globalization of communication not only facilitates the exchange of environmental theories but also strengthens cooperative efforts towards sustainable development, as rising awareness directly correlates with a heightened sense of environmental responsibility.

Palmer (1998) further emphasizes that EE not only imparts knowledge but also instills values that promote sustainable behaviors, helping learners understand the interdependencies of natural systems and human activity (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

## 2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, combining literature synthesis and philosophical interpretation. It systematically analyzes Eastern philosophical traditions, particularly the ethical and spiritual teachings of Attar and Rumi, and integrates them with contemporary environmental education models.

- The research follows a multi-layered approach, including:
- Content analysis of Persian literature and historical records, focusing on how environmental awareness has evolved within Iranian cultural narratives;
- Exploration of interdisciplinary educational models, including experiential, interdisciplinary, and quantum education, to develop a novel framework for environmental intelligence;
- Synthesis of academic literature, environmental policies, and digital communication trends to assess how traditional ecological

wisdom can be incorporated into modern education systems for sustainability.

This approach ensures that historical wisdom is scientifically examined within an educational framework, making traditional ecological perspectives relevant to contemporary environmental education.

### 3. Discussion

A key challenge in this study is the transformation of qualitative literary works— particularly the spiritual and ethical teachings of Attar and Rumi— into structured educational elements within modern environmental education paradigms. While this approach connects philosophical traditions with contemporary pedagogy, it raises questions about methodological rigor and theoretical justification.

#### a) Bridging literature and Quantitative education models

The process of extracting educational principles from literary and mystical texts requires a careful hermeneutic analysis to ensure accuracy and relevance. Unlike scientific data, which follows quantifiable methodologies, literary works convey abstract ideas that require contextual interpretation. The study, therefore, employs philosophical interpretation and qualitative synthesis to bridge this gap. A crucial aspect of this transformation is defining key educational principles derived from Eastern wisdom and aligning them with modern environmental education models. By integrating concepts from experiential, project-based, and quantum education, the study ensures that these spiritual and ethical insights contribute meaningfully to ecological consciousness and sustainable behavior formation.

#### b) The role of environmental intelligence in contemporary education

This research also raises important discussions about how environmental intelligence can complement existing EE efforts. While modern environmental education emphasizes scientific literacy, it often neglects cultural and philosophical dimensions that shape human-environment relationships. The proposed paradigm does not replace existing EE approaches but rather enhances them by offering a deeper cultural and philosophical dimension to sustainability education.

#### 3.1. Holistic education: A comprehensive framework for learning and sustainability

Holistic education is an educational philosophy that emphasizes the comprehensive development of individuals by addressing their intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and ethical needs. It aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are knowledgeable, empathetic, and actively engaged with their communities and the environment (Hare, 2006). This whole-learner approach proves most effective when



integrating multiple stakeholders, as demonstrated in studies of behavioral change across educational domains (Hosseini et al., 2025). This approach integrates academic learning with personal growth, relationship-building, and a commitment to social and environmental responsibility, making it an essential framework for modern education.

At the heart of holistic education lies the principle of whole-person development, which goes beyond academic achievement to nurture cognitive, emotional, social, and physical aspects of students. By addressing these interconnected dimensions, students gain resilience and adaptability to navigate life's challenges (Martin, 2003). Holistic education also emphasizes interconnectedness, encouraging learners to understand their roles within their communities and the environment. This approach fosters respect for the natural world and a sense of social responsibility (Smuts, 1987). Additionally, experiential learning is a cornerstone of this philosophy, involving hands-on activities that allow students to engage with real-world contexts and deepen their understanding of complex issues (Marshman, 2010).

Holistic education places a strong emphasis on relationships, viewing them as fundamental to the learning process. Strong connections between students, teachers, and the community create a supportive environment where collaboration and mutual respect thrive (Hare, 2006). Furthermore, personal reflection and self-discovery are encouraged, enabling students to explore their identity, purpose, and aspirations. This focus on mental health and wellbeing ensures that education addresses the full spectrum of a student's needs, preparing them for both personal fulfillment and meaningful contributions to society (NCCA, 2022).

### **3.1.1. Benefits and Challenges of holistic education**

The holistic approach has been shown to enhance both academic and personal outcomes. Research indicates that students engaged in holistic education exhibit improved academic performance, driven by higher levels of engagement and intrinsic motivation (Martin, 2003). In addition, this philosophy fosters the development of social-emotional skills such as resilience, empathy, and interpersonal communication, equipping students to navigate both personal and professional contexts effectively (Hare, 2006). Holistic education also promotes a sense of community responsibility, inspiring students to actively contribute to the well-being of society (Marshman, 2010).

However, implementing holistic education presents challenges. Designing curricula that integrate academic learning with personal growth and sustainability requires careful planning and resources (Martin, 2003). Furthermore, traditional assessment methods often fail to capture the diverse learning outcomes associated with holistic education, necessitating the creation of innovative evaluation strategies that reflect the philosophy's multifaceted goals (NCCA, 2022).

### 3.1.2. Holistic education and Environmental stewardship

Holistic education extends beyond individual growth to encompass environmental sustainability, recognizing the interconnectedness between human actions and ecological systems. This approach integrates environmental literacy into the educational framework, teaching students about biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable practices. By understanding the impact of human actions on the environment, students are empowered to adopt behaviors that promote ecological preservation (UNIS Hanoi, n.d.).

Experiential learning in nature, such as gardening, community clean-ups, and outdoor exploration, fosters a deeper connection to the natural world while promoting teamwork and responsibility (NCCA, 2022). In addition to hands-on environmental engagement, virtual education has emerged as a powerful complementary tool in holistic learning. Studies highlight that virtual platforms enhance accessibility, foster experiential learning through simulations, and promote cross-cultural collaboration in addressing sustainability challenges (Dastyar et al., 2023). By integrating digital resources with traditional environmental education, learners can gain a broader and more interactive understanding of ecological issues, empowering them to become proactive environmental stewards.

Holistic education also incorporates sustainability principles across disciplines, demonstrating how environmental issues intersect with various fields of study. This interdisciplinary approach nurtures informed global citizens who are capable of making sustainable choices and addressing ecological challenges (Diva Portal, 2015). Additionally, educators play a critical role in fostering environmental ethics by introducing students to concepts of conservation, climate justice, and their responsibilities as stewards of the Earth (St Nicholas School, n.d.). In summary, holistic education represents a transformative framework that prepares students for the complexities of modern life by integrating personal growth, community engagement, and environmental responsibility. By addressing the interconnected needs of individuals and society, it equips learners to thrive academically and contribute meaningfully to a sustainable future.

### 3.2. Methods based on changing educational structures in environmental education

Environmental education (EE) employs diverse approaches to foster awareness, engagement, and action regarding ecological challenges. These approaches are rooted in five distinct educational structures: informal education, combined (interdisciplinary) education, experimental education, project-based education, and quantum education. Each structure offers unique benefits and methodologies,

emphasizing experiential, collaborative, and systems-oriented learning to address environmental issues effectively.

### **3.2.1. Informal and Interdisciplinary education**

#### **a) Informal education**

Informal education plays a critical role in environmental education by providing learner-driven, flexible opportunities outside of traditional classroom settings. This structure includes nature walks, community workshops, and volunteer programs, which foster direct engagement with environmental issues. A defining characteristic of informal education is its emphasis on experiential learning, where participants interact directly with nature, such as through visiting wildlife sanctuaries or participating in clean-up events. These experiences create personal connections to the environment, enhancing ecological understanding and promoting stewardship (Hassan & Pudín, 2011).

Informal education is adaptable and often tailored to meet diverse community needs, engaging people of all ages. The effectiveness of such community-based learning approaches is evidenced across generations, demonstrating how adaptive methods can overcome barriers to participation (Sakhaei et al., 2024). Programs led by non-governmental organizations or community groups frequently address local environmental challenges, fostering public awareness and action (Gutierrez, 2022). Research highlights its success in promoting lifelong learning and sustainable behaviors, as participants continuously adapt to evolving environmental issues (Fordham, 1993). However, challenges like limited funding and reliance on volunteers can restrict program scalability, emphasizing the need for partnerships with schools, local governments, and businesses (Hsu et al., 2013).

#### **b) Combined (Interdisciplinary) education**

Interdisciplinary education integrates insights and methodologies from multiple disciplines, such as natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, to address complex environmental challenges. This approach recognizes the multifaceted nature of ecological problems, enabling students to analyze the interconnections between human activities and natural systems. For example, urban pollution studies may combine environmental science, public health, sociology, and urban planning to develop comprehensive mitigation strategies (Semerjian et al., 2004).

Interdisciplinary education promotes critical thinking and creativity by encouraging students to collaborate across disciplines and develop innovative solutions (Moirano et al., 2019). Programs often include project-based learning and sustainability-oriented coursework to prepare students for careers in environmental governance. Despite its benefits, interdisciplinary education faces challenges such as institutional barriers and curriculum integration issues. However,

fostering collaboration among departments and engaging stakeholders can address these obstacles, enhancing its impact (Hsu et al., 2013).

### 3.2.2. Experimental, Project-based, and Quantum education

#### a) Experimental education

Experimental education emphasizes learning through direct, hands-on experiences. In environmental education, this approach engages students in activities such as tree planting, nature conservation, or community clean-up efforts, fostering both ecological understanding and emotional connections to nature (Adkins, 2009). Such engaged learning models demonstrate equal importance in digital literacy development, where active participation builds essential critical capacities (Arsalani et al., 2022). Experiential learning follows a cycle of active engagement, reflection, conceptualization, and application, allowing participants to translate real-world experiences into deeper knowledge (AEE, 2002). However, integrating such programs into broader curricula requires careful planning to ensure sustained impact.

#### b) Project-based education

Project-based education (PBE) involves students in investigating real-world environmental problems through collaborative projects. By addressing issues like climate change or biodiversity loss, learners develop problem-solving skills and a sense of environmental stewardship (Genc, 2015). These hands-on approaches require careful consideration of both innovative solutions and potential unintended consequences, a balance equally critical in technological implementations (Soroori Sarabi et al., 2023). For example, students might assess the impact of plastic waste in local waterways, presenting solutions to their community. While PBE fosters critical thinking and engagement, its implementation requires alignment with curricular standards and access to resources, which can be achieved through partnerships with local organizations (Yousefi, n.d.).

#### c) Quantum education

Inspired by quantum theory, quantum education emphasizes interconnectedness and the dynamic relationships within ecosystems. This approach encourages learners to view environmental issues as part of larger, complex systems, fostering empathy and ecological literacy (Gough, 2006). By integrating experiential learning and collaborative problem-solving, quantum education prepares students to address global challenges with a holistic perspective. However, its implementation demands innovative pedagogical frameworks and professional development for educators (Anthesis Group, n.d.).

Environmental education benefits from employing diverse educational structures—informal, interdisciplinary, experimental, project-based, and quantum—that collectively enhance ecological



awareness and promote sustainability. These methods emphasize experiential, collaborative, and systems-thinking approaches to equip learners with the skills and perspectives needed to address complex environmental challenges. By integrating these frameworks into educational programs, society can foster informed, engaged citizens committed to ecological preservation and sustainable development.

### **3.3. Methods in environmental education: Intersections with citizenship, self-concept, and social environment**

Environmental education (EE) serves as a vital tool in addressing ecological challenges by fostering awareness, engagement, and proactive behavior. It intersects with various key concepts, including environmental citizenship, self-concept, and the social environment, offering a multidimensional approach to sustainability. By connecting these concepts with education, EE cultivates informed and empowered individuals capable of contributing to environmental stewardship at local, national, and global levels. Similar competency gaps emerge in professional domains adopting transformative technologies, where effective implementation requires balancing innovation with ethical training (Tomraee et al., 2022).

#### **3.3.1. Environmental education and Citizenship**

Environmental education plays a crucial role in fostering environmental citizenship, a concept centered on the rights and responsibilities of individuals toward their environment. As environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution escalate, the need for engaged and informed citizens becomes critical. Environmental citizenship emphasizes both individual and collective action, advocating for sustainable policies and civic engagement to address ecological issues (Hadjichambis & Paraskeva-Hadjichambi, 2020). Contrary to assumptions that national pride might hinder cooperative values, recent studies show strong community affiliation can coexist with collaborative environmental action (Webster & Sabbar, 2023). This synergy is particularly evident in experiential learning opportunities, such as community service projects or participatory decision-making processes, which enhance individuals' sense of agency and responsibility.

Education for environmental citizenship equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to critically engage with environmental problems. The European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC, 2018) highlights the importance of cultivating competencies that enable individuals to act across local, national, and global levels. Through this lens, environmental education not only promotes critical thinking about complex ecological issues but also encourages behavioral changes aligned with sustainability, such as resource conservation and policy advocacy (Anthesis Group, n.d.).

Moreover, active participation in environmental governance is a cornerstone of environmental citizenship. Experiential learning opportunities, such as community service projects or participatory decision-making processes, enhance individuals' sense of agency and responsibility (Clarke & Agyeman, 2011). By fostering intergenerational justice—ensuring that current actions do not jeopardize future generations—EE empowers citizens to engage in meaningful sustainability efforts (De Coster et al., 2012).

### 3.3.2. Environmental education and Self-concept

Environmental education significantly influences self-concept, particularly in shaping individuals' environmental identity and sense of efficacy. Self-concept refers to the perception individuals have of themselves, encompassing their beliefs, values, and attitudes. In the context of EE, self-concept is closely tied to environmental self-identity and personal efficacy in addressing ecological challenges (Werff et al., 2023). These identity-forming processes are increasingly influenced by digital environments, where mediated interactions shape self-perception and social belonging (Nosraty et al., 2021).

A strong environmental self-identity motivates individuals to engage in pro-environmental behaviors, such as recycling, conservation, and participation in community initiatives (Hsu et al., 2013). These identity formations are profoundly shaped by societal norms and cultural values, which can either support or undermine sustainable self-perceptions (Nosraty et al., 2021). Self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to effect change—is equally critical. Research shows that educational programs enhancing self-efficacy lead to increased engagement in sustainable practices. For instance, outdoor education programs involving hands-on experiences, such as planting trees or cleaning parks, boost learners' confidence in addressing local environmental issues (Baierl et al., 2022).

Environmental education fosters a positive self-concept by connecting learners personally with nature through experiential learning. Activities like field trips, nature immersion, and community projects encourage emotional connections with the environment, enhancing empathy and a sense of responsibility (Anthesis Group, n.d.). As students engage with real-world ecological challenges and collaborate on solutions, they develop a sense of agency that reinforces their identity as capable and responsible environmental stewards (Gray Group International, n.d.).

### 3.3.3. Environmental education and the Social environment

The relationship between environmental education and the social environment is essential for understanding how societal contexts influence ecological behaviors and attitudes. Recent research has shown how institutional infrastructures critically mediate these

relationships (Mohammadi & Kharazmi, 2021). The social environment encompasses cultural norms, community dynamics, and institutional structures that shape individuals' interactions with their surroundings. These perceptions are often unconsciously internalized, as evidenced by studies showing how external narratives reshape self-identity (Sabbar et al., 2023). By integrating EE with an understanding of the social environment, educators can empower learners to address environmental challenges within their communities.

Environmental education enhances awareness of how societal behaviors contribute to environmental issues and fosters civic engagement in addressing these challenges. Programs emphasizing collaboration, such as community gardening or waste management initiatives, help individuals recognize the power of collective action in achieving sustainable outcomes (Velempini, 2025). Additionally, EE encourages critical thinking about societal norms and values, challenging paradigms that contribute to environmental degradation while promoting alternative perspectives on sustainability (Breiting et al., 2007).

The concept of social responsibility is central to this intersection. By highlighting the connections between individual actions and broader societal impacts, EE inspires learners to adopt sustainable practices and advocate for equitable access to resources. This hands-on, community-oriented approach cultivates a commitment to fostering healthier environments and advancing social justice (Zarillo, 2016).

Environmental education intersects with the concepts of citizenship, self-concept, and the social environment to provide a comprehensive framework for fostering ecological awareness and action. By cultivating environmental citizenship, EE empowers individuals to engage in sustainability efforts at all levels. Through its influence on self-concept, it shapes individuals' environmental identities and efficacy, motivating them to take meaningful action. Finally, by addressing the role of the social environment, EE highlights the importance of collective responsibility and systemic change. As society grapples with pressing ecological challenges, these multidimensional approaches to environmental education will be critical in preparing informed, empowered citizens dedicated to building a sustainable future.

### **3.4. A Holistic paradigm based on eastern perspectives in education: Insights from Attar and Rumi**

Education rooted in Eastern philosophy offers a transformative approach that integrates spirituality, self-awareness, and social harmony, drawing deeply from the teachings of Attar and Rumi. These perspectives emphasize holistic development that transcends materialistic pursuits and cultivates spiritual growth, ethical understanding, and unity with the divine. This paradigm, grounded in

the Sufi traditions of Iran, provides profound insights into the educational process, blending self-reflection, collective learning, and transcendental goals.

#### 3.4.1. Attar's collective and individual approach to education

In *The Conference of the Birds (Mantiqu't-Tair)*, Attar illustrates a profound educational method rooted in the Sufi concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of existence). Through a symbolic narrative, Attar demonstrates how collective and individual introspection can guide learners toward self-discovery and divine unity. The journey of the birds, led by the hoopoe (the teacher), reflects a collaborative quest for truth, symbolized by the Simorgh.

Attar's educational framework emphasizes the interplay between collective dialogue and individual reflection. In his method:

#### Dialogical Learning and Self-Reflection

Attar poses collective questions that provoke individual introspection. Through continuous dialogues— at least seventeen are introduced between the hoopoe and the seekers— learners confront their personal flaws, expand their self-awareness, and consciously choose their paths. These exchanges foster critical thinking and self-determination while guiding learners toward philosophical and spiritual enlightenment (Panahi, 2011).

- **Illustrative stories for transformation.** Attar enriches his teachings with illustrative stories that reveal divine truths and encourage learners to overcome internal and external obstacles. These narratives inspire empathy, mutual understanding, and collective purpose.
- **Inclusive and Equal opportunities.** Attar's pedagogy prioritizes collective flourishing, fostering a culture of collaboration that transcends individual egos and promotes gender equality in learning opportunities. The emphasis on shared objectives, spiritual empowerment, and social awareness encourages learners to participate fully in the collective quest for divine unity.

Through these methods, Attar establishes a framework that integrates empathy, introspection, and spiritual growth, creating a holistic educational paradigm rooted in the pursuit of truth.

#### 3.4.2. Rumi's spiritual framework for education

Rumi, a mystic renowned for his insights into human development, presents a comprehensive spiritual framework that emphasizes transcendence, self-transformation, and unity with God. His approach integrates formal education with spiritual objectives, offering intermediary and ultimate goals that align with individual capacity, age, and potential.

**a) The ultimate goal: Unity with God (Fana wa Baqa' Billah)**

Rumi identifies unity with God as the pinnacle of human perfection. This involves passing through stages of divine unity in actions (*tawhid al-af'ali*), attributes (*tawhid al-sifati*), and essence (*tawhid al-dhati*). Achieving *fana* (self-annihilation) requires detachment from material desires, while *baqa* (subsistence in God) signifies spiritual renewal and integration with the Divine. These principles guide educational efforts toward transcending materialistic pursuits and nurturing God-consciousness.

**b) Intermediary goals: Pathways to transcendence**

- **Development of universal reason.** Rumi contrasts partial reason (*'aql juz'i*), which focuses on material concerns, with universal reason (*'aql kulli*), which seeks spiritual insights and transformative knowledge. By integrating mystical and religious content into education, Rumi fosters intellectual growth that connects learners to higher truths (Norouzi et al., 2014).
- **Self-transformation.** Education, for Rumi, must liberate individuals from existential conflicts such as ignorance, egoism, and attachment to material desires. This transformative process guides learners toward their divine origin.
- **Experiential knowledge (Shuhud).** Rumi prioritizes unveiling (*kashf*) and intuitive insight over acquired knowledge. Experiential learning, rooted in universal reason, provides enduring and transformative understanding that brings individuals closer to the divine.
- **Divine grace (Barakat).** Recognizing divine blessings and distinguishing them from worldly temptations is central to Rumi's philosophy. Incorporating this principle into education cultivates gratitude and deeper spiritual awareness.
- **Voluntary death (Maut Ikhtiyari).** Rumi's concept of voluntary detachment from the material world represents a transformative step toward unity with God. This principle inspires educators and learners to focus on transcendent goals, fostering self-realization and spiritual growth.
- **Love as a transformative force.** For Rumi, love is the ultimate means of spiritual development. Whether directed toward a spiritual guide (*pir*) or the ultimate Beloved (God), love serves as the driving force that connects individuals to divine truth. This focus on love encourages renewal, spiritual nourishment, and a deeper connection with the infinite.

The educational philosophies of Attar and Rumi offer a profound, holistic paradigm that integrates spirituality, ethics, and self-awareness. Attar's emphasis on collective learning and introspection complements Rumi's framework of transcendental and intermediary goals, creating a



comprehensive approach to education. These Sufi teachings highlight the importance of collaboration, self-reflection, and spiritual growth, offering an Eastern perspective that enriches modern educational practices.

By addressing material detachment, experiential knowledge, and divine unity, this paradigm empowers learners to transcend superficial goals and engage with deeper, transformative pursuits. Integrating these principles into contemporary education can cultivate empathetic, self-aware, and spiritually enriched individuals who are prepared to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader world.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study explores the institutionalization of environmental intelligence within education by integrating Iranian philosophical traditions, particularly the teachings of Attar and Rumi, with modern sustainability and educational models. It identifies a critical gap in environmental awareness, where despite scientific advancements and environmental policies, individuals often fail to recognize the impact of their actions on ecological systems. This disconnect is attributed to a broader cultural and philosophical detachment from nature, exacerbated by urbanization, environmental degradation, and globalization.

By juxtaposing ancient ecological wisdom with contemporary educational methodologies, this research advocates for a paradigm shift that emphasizes critical thinking, emotional intelligence, sustainability, and participatory learning. The study examines Attar's and Rumi's educational and spiritual philosophies, emphasizing their focus on self-awareness, collective responsibility, and ethical consciousness. These principles align closely with holistic, interdisciplinary, experiential, and quantum education models, which foster collaboration, ethical awareness, and a deep ecological connection.

Furthermore, environmental education is framed as a means of cultivating environmental citizenship, strengthening self-concept, and fostering social responsibility. The study highlights the role of civic engagement, interdisciplinary learning, and digital education in shaping environmentally responsible societies. Digital technologies, including virtual education and global communication platforms, serve as powerful tools in enhancing accessibility and cross-cultural collaboration on environmental sustainability efforts (Dastyar et al., 2023).

A key contribution of this study is its call for a reassessment of existing educational paradigms, emphasizing the need for an integrative model that restores cultural, emotional, and spiritual connections to nature. The historical reverence for nature in Persian culture, particularly the symbolic significance of mountains, has eroded over time due to modernization and shifting values (Dariush & Dastyar, 2020). By embedding Attar's dialogical and collective learning with Rumi's transcendence-based self-transformation, this study proposes

an enriched educational approach that merges spiritual, ecological, and ethical perspectives.

Importantly, this proposed paradigm does not seek to replace existing environmental education frameworks but rather complements them by introducing a deeper cultural and philosophical perspective. By blending ancient wisdom with modern pedagogical strategies, this research envisions an educational model that goes beyond material knowledge acquisition, fostering a profound, empathetic connection between individuals and the environment.

Ultimately, this study advocates for an education system that serves as a bridge between modern knowledge and traditional wisdom, one that reinstates ecological consciousness as a fundamental aspect of human identity. Through community-based learning, ethical renewal, and participatory environmental engagement, education can empower individuals to become active, informed stewards of the planet, ensuring a sustainable, spiritually enriched future for generations to come.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

### **Authors' contributions**

All authors contributed to the original idea, study design.

### **Ethical considerations**

The authors have completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc. This article was not authored by artificial intelligence.

### **Data availability**

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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