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Pedagogical Approaches in Islamic Education: A Study of Teaching and Learning Methodologies[1]

Abstract:

The teaching and study of Islamic education have faced criticism over the past century for certain techniques, particularly for not adequately addressing the challenges posed by the demands of the modern world. Considering Islam's following among one-fifth of the world's population, Islamic education must innovate its teaching methods and strategies to keep pace with modernity and the demands of a globalized world. Islamic scholars have been diligently studying this issue since the late 1970s, offering various ways to improve the areas of deficiency. This paper examines the diverse perspectives (Islamic modern approaches, development of Islamic civilization, Quranic critical thinking, upcoming inventions, and their Islamic solutions, new Islamic pedagogical techniques) of Islamic scholars on the topic and provides recommendations to enhance the presentation and understanding of Islamic studies.

Keywords: Islamic education, pedagogical Techniques, Modern world

Introduction:

Ideally, Islamic education should address the theoretical and practical challenges posed by modernity. Grounded in the fundamentals of the Qur'an and Sunnah, Islamic studies should be developed as applicable for teaching and learning to meet the demands of the contemporary world. Pedagogical approaches in Islamic education need to evolve in line with current trends and adapt to the global modern context. A sense of pride in the brilliance of Islamic history, combined with a lack of innovation in applying new ideas, hinders the relevance of Islamic education in today's world. Islamic studies must uphold all tenets of Islam and inspire people to coexist peacefully in contemporary society. Unluckily, the present condition of the Muslim Ummah reflects the inadequate response of Islamic education to these issues, leaving Muslims anchored in the past.

According to scholars, Islamic studies have failed because Islamic education did not foster students' critical thinking (Rosnani, 2005; Ramadan, 2004). It also failed to prepare students for the challenges of the modern world. Several Muslim academics, such as Abduh (1905) and al-Afghani (1897), have proposed innovative teaching and learning approaches for Islamic studies as a solution to these failures since the late 1970s. In 1977, a meeting (First Islamic Conference on Education) was organized in Mecca to identify the primary issues and provide resolutions. Despite the implementation of some of the conference's resolutions,

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such as the establishment of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, the condition of the Muslim Ummah stays unchanged.

The objective of this article is to discuss how to improve the methods used in Islamic studies education.

Challenges Faced by the Scholars of Islamic Education:

Introducing Islamic education to non-Muslim populations led to the expansion of civilization, culture, and refinement of society . It propelled the Muslim world to the forefront, Competing against the foremost political and economic powers of the era. This era witnessed the development of thinkers and scientists who significantly enriched human society and well-being in various domains including mathematics, geography, astronomy, medicine, optics, physics, theology, philosophy, and encyclopedia collections.

During the Medieval period, Islamic education flourished, resulting in notable advancements. It was backed by at least 60 key academic hubs across the Islamic Empire, from Baghdad and Isfahan in the east to Cordoba in the west (Hilgendorf, 2003). Spain, in particular, was a hub of Islamic culture and housed several universities. The educational standards at Cordoba University were exceptional. Europe adopted this educational legacy, along with its guiding principles, practices, and curriculum, from these Muslim institutions.

The Latin translations of Muslim writings on science, philosophy, and other subjects, especially from Spain, enriched Western curricula. The scientific experimental technique was adopted by the Muslims. The West was first exposed to the Arabic decimal and notation system. (Folkerts,1970). Translated writings, particularly those by figures like Avicenna in medical texts, were used in higher education until the middle of the 17th century. By introducing European philosophy to Greco-Persian thinking, Muslims invigorated it and contributed to the Renaissance. During a period when Europe rejected pagan cultures, Muslims preserved Greco-Persian thought. European students were introduced to innovative teaching techniques at Muslim universities, enriching Europe's knowledge in areas such as food, cleanliness, and hospitals. (Al-Attas, Naquib,1977)

However, in today's context, Islamic education has lost its popularity among the public. It has failed to produce individuals capable of meeting the demands of modern society. Rosnani Hashim (2005) highlighted these issues, pointing out that the Islamic curriculum, teaching methods, and education system fall short of producing scholars and students capable of addressing contemporary issues. She argues that Islamic education had "lost its heart and mind" and had become a breeding ground for extremists and militants, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11.

She also mentions that access to education, poverty, and illiteracy are challenges faced by developing Muslim countries. Additionally, wealthy and economically developed Muslim nations face societal issues exacerbated by modernization, such as drug addiction, hedonism, criminal activity, and

unconventional sexual behavior (including adultery, premarital sex, lesbianism, homosexuality, and the associated infections such as STDs, HIV, and AIDS). Even abandoned newborns have become a part of Muslim culture. (Rosnani, 2005) Islamic education has failed to address these problems and has become ineffective in responding to the queries of modern society. There are various reasons for this situation, including a failure to encourage debate in Islamic thought and a reliance on traditional approaches to studying classical texts without addressing contemporary challenges called for a reassessment of Islamic education in light of several major concerns(Hashim, 2005):

Has Islamic education in the 21st century succeeded in producing critical and creative thinkers among its students?

Has it been successful in producing students who maintain Islamic principles and have good moral character?

Have Muslim youth received a quality education and are they prepared to face the challenges of the modern world?

What changes to the curriculum and teaching methods in Islamic education are required for the twenty-first century?

Developmental Phases in the History of Islamic Education:

The development of Islamic education is best understood through a historical lens. Its goals and vision have been maintained over time through a dialogue between innovation (modernity) and tradition (the past). While modernization fosters adaptability, tradition ensures the cultivation of a lasting identity. (Niyozov and Memon,2011).

Islamic education has witnessed both continuity and change across five distinct historical periods(Niyozov and Memon, 2011). These periods are:

1. **The Revelation and Promise Period:**

This phase marked the assurance of Islamic education. As the Quran had not yet been completely revealed, knowledge was derived from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Learning took place in various settings, including the Prophet's home, the mosque's corner (suffa), and learning circles (halaqa). The educational objectives during this era were to overcome tribal racism, unify Arabs based on the principle of Tawhid, clarify the differences and ties between Islam and other religious doctrines, overcome tribal racism, and redefine prevailing ideas and traditions. (Niyozov & Memon, 2011).

Under Umar bin Khattab's rule, the curriculum also included swimming, horsemanship, poetry, and well-known Arab phrases, alongside the study of the Quran and Hadith (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). As Muslims expanded their territories and established new cultural and educational institutions, new academic fields rooted in the Quran emerged, such as jurisprudence (fiqh) and grammar (nahw).

2. **The Medieval Period:**

This era laid the foundation of Islamic education based on the premise (I mean basic assumption) of revelation. Knowledge was fostered by renowned educational institutions like Al-Qarawyin in Morocco, Dar al-Hikmah and Al-Azhar in Egypt, and Dar al-Ilm and Nizamiyyah in Iraq and Persia (Daniel, 1989). During the Medieval period, two types of learning centers existed:

Educational institutions for the elite and royal families, where privileged children received instruction. Regular learning centers, where others were educated Intellectuals and scholars of this period, according to al-Ghazzali's classification, authored books and Teaching methods such as Nazar, Munazara, Jadal, and Mubahala were employed, and student-teacher interactions were both rewarded and punished (Hilgendorf, 2003).

3. **The Colonial Era:**

Overcoming challenges was paramount during this period, with the West introducing concepts like the nation-state, secularism, rationalism, humanism, and modernization. To adapt, the ruling classes of countries like Iran and Turkey sent their children to Western nations for military and administrative schooling. As a result, traditional learning centers were gradually replaced by Western-style schools. (Hilgendorf, 2003). The governing elites funding the madrasas, saw their curricula become increasingly denominationally focused as the Islamic Empire started to fall apart. The sciences started to lose favor, sponsorship, and societal backing because they didn't yield much economic advantage. Consequently, the madrasas resorted to harder and more severe religious schooling that became a goal in and of itself to carry on the educational process (Hilgendorf, 2003, p 63-75). Due to the diminishing state support, Islamic scholars decide to temporarily shut the door of ijtihad to safeguard against deviation.

Hilgendorf (2003) elaborated that it was decided by traditional scholars to close the 'Gate of Ijtihad,' or knowledge derived from reason. The scholars all agreed that earlier research had done a sufficient job of defining the Islamic way of life. There could be no more excuses for reasonable thought or autonomous judgment (Hilgendorf, 2003n).

The failure of the Western-based educational system to end colonialism in the Muslim countries resulted in a questioning of its legitimacy. Some scholars viewed colonialism as an outcome of educational and cultural failures, while others saw it as divine punishment for deviating from Islamic teachings. This debate resulted in educational dualism: traditional education through kuttab and madrasas coexisted with the Western model of modern schools and universities. In the traditional system, Islam is central, serving as an ethical and epistemological basis, whereas in the Western model, Islamic study is taught as a course or incorporated into the language, literature, history, and social studies syllabus (Niyozov & Memon, 2011).

The conflict between traditional and modern systems led to the progressive decline of the former, diminishing its attractiveness and resulting in its sidelining by the elite in Muslim countries.

4. **The Post-Colonial Period (1940–1970):**

This period addressed the acceptance or rejection of the Western educational model. Figures like Hamidou Kane of Senegal and Kamal Ataturk of Turkey embraced Western education while marginalizing Islamic education. In contrast, Syed Qutb and Abul A'la Mawdudi opposed Western education.

5. **The Islamization Era:**

Emerging as a result of debates on the adoption and modification of Western education, this phase is based on the belief that all knowledge should be interpreted from an Islamic perspective. We will delve deeper into this era in the following section.

5.1. Islamization of Islamic Education:

When asked what is considered "Islamic" in Islamic education, two distinct stances emerged among the Islamizers. One group of Islamic academics placed greater emphasis on the ontological and epistemological aspects of knowledge, while another group focused more on the pragmatic and ethical dimensions. To critique Western education and lay the groundwork for their projects, both groups employed criticisms of Western education and society. They argued that the secular education system in the West, fragments knowledge, reduces reality to its material components, and lacks the skills necessary to comprehend moral and spiritual dimensions. For these reasons, they claimed that Western education contradicts the principle of Tawhid in Islam (Niyozov & Memon, 2011).

However, by implementing the Western educational system, they inadvertently drew attention to the societal failures and educational regression of the Muslim world. According to Al Attas and Al-Faruqi (2004), power, unity, and cultural identity have continued to decline due to Western secular education. After 1970, critics of the Islamization effort pointed out its shortcomings, stating that it failed to move beyond rhetoric and engage with Muslim and non-Muslim diversity, multiplicity, and critical alternatives. Tariq Ramadan (2004) defined the Islamization project as follows:

After more than 20 years of testing, one might ask, 'Are we furnishing students with the means to live righteously, fulfilled, and mindful of their obligations?' Merely scattering Islamic teachings and memorizing verses, without forging raises a firm faith, heightened consciousness, and lively and questioning minds questions about the authenticity of Islamic teaching. (p.132).

Ramadan (2004) ascribed the lack of success in the Islamization project to traditional approaches in Islamic studies education, which have not equipped students with the skills required to face the modern world. He emphasized the

project's failure in Madrasas to foster critical thinking, develop values, and address societal issues. Therefore, he questioned the project's worthiness if the educated students were unable to meet the demands of modern Muslim culture. Studies on madrasas conducted in the United States and Canada, as cited by Niyozov and Memon (2011), showed that its graduates were struggling to integrate into society. To train Muslim youngsters to effectively interact with, contribute to, and profit from the world at large, they called for a significant boost in Islamic studies.

Rosnani (2005) explored the purpose and objectives of Islamic studies in an attempt to identify a reformation system. She stated:

The primary goal of Islamic education is to cultivate sincere individuals who will find ultimate happiness, or saadah, in both this life and the Hereafter. When everyone becomes devoted servants (abd) and representatives (Khalifah) of Allah, this pinnacle of happiness will be attained. To purify their spirits and improve their character, real slaves must engage in ritual devotion, or {ibadah, in the fullest sense for their well-being. As His vicegerents, they must protect and preserve the cosmos, which was made for their benefit, and, above all, promote the teachings of Islam—peace—by promoting equality and impartiality. The ability to think (aql), which sets humans apart from other creatures, has been bestowed upon humans to accomplish this mission. Prophet Muhammad PBUH is described in Hadith literature as having excellent morals (khuluq al-azim) and living an ideal life (al-insan al-kamil). He was the embodiment of the Qur'an. According to one hadith, the Prophet PBUH emphasized faultless moral character (akhlaq). Thus, Islamic education should aim to shape Muslims into people who are living examples of the Qur'an. (p. 137).

Rosnani criticized the current educational system and its educators, suggesting that they should focus more on preparing students to internalize Islamic principles rather than merely preparing them for exams. She argued that, like other disciplines, Islamic studies often emphasize the cognitive domain, leading to a divergence from the teachers' actual intention (niyyah) for imparting the material. Another aim of Islamic education, according to Rosnani, is to establish a close bond between God and humanity. However, she claimed that Islamic education has not succeeded in building this bridge.

Regarding the curriculum's substance, Rosnani emphasized that Islamic studies curricula should stimulate both intellect and emotions. She observed that modern Islamic education has failed to nurture either the intellect or the heart. She pointed out that, although Islamic studies students study the Qur'an as a subject, they often focus on memorization and recitation. Rosnani's main concern lies in the teaching methods employed in Islamic studies. She believes that due to poor teaching techniques, young people in Muslim society are more susceptible to the influences of Western culture. She states:

The greatest barrier to the character and knowledge development of Muslim students is the inadequate teaching techniques used in Islamic sciences. This vulnerability likely explains why Muslim youths and students are so readily influenced by Western cultures and ideals that are in opposition to Islamic culture and values. This occurrence indicates underlying character flaws (p. 140).

Rosnani argued that Islamic studies students are not taught critical thinking, how to analyze and evaluate events, or how to think about religious beliefs. She highlighted a 2002 incident at a Saudi school where girls died in a fire because the religious police (Matawwa) did not exercise critical thought. These girls were not allowed to flee the fire without their hijabs. Rosnani (Year) questioned the rationale behind this decision and emphasized the tragic consequences of the lack of critical consideration. Another concerning approach in teaching Islamic studies is the emphasis on Allah's sternness (intiqam) rather than His mercy (al-Rahman). Lastly, she claimed that Islamic educators lacked originality and creativity in presenting theory or facts, frequently relying on lecture-based or memorization methods. Rosnani suggested selecting teachers based on their professional experience and moral qualities to set an example for students in conduct, beliefs, and thinking. In terms of pedagogy, she recommended focusing more on Allah's mercy than His punishment, believing that this would foster a love for Allah and bring students closer to Him. To help students develop critical thinking skills and avoid radicalism, as exemplified by the incident with the Mutawwa, Rosnani proposed teaching moral or ethical reasoning.

The Models in Islamic Education: A Survey

A study of the current models for teaching Islamic studies could be beneficial in this context. To highlight the shortcomings and difficulties of current Islamic education methods, a symposium was held in Kuala Lumpur in July 2002. Many academics from around the world, including those from the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and Pakistan, attended this conference. The conference's primary objective was to assess the direction, role, and potential for advancing Islam as a suitable solution to contemporary issues in the modern world (Musa, et al., 2004).

At the conference, experts looked at how Islamic studies are taught in universities around the world, both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Many were not happy with the way Islamic education is currently structured. They felt that Islamic studies are often taught separately from other subjects (Muda, 2004; Baba, 2004) or only cover basic and theoretical ideas (Badawi, 2004).

The following paragraph is copied from another source. The text is inside a box which needs to be removed. In the 1972–1980 Education Policy, "Islamiyat" became a compulsory subject for Muslim students in grades 9 to 12. All textbooks and courses were required to emphasize the cultural and moral values of Islam (Nazir, 2010). The National Education Policy and Implementation Program (1979)

stated that education should instill a "firm and lasting dedication to Islam." To ensure that the curriculum adequately covered Islam and the ideology of Pakistan, a comprehensive review was conducted. As a result, Arabic and Islamiyat subjects were made compulsory up to the university level. In addition, the Nazira Quran was taught in mosques and Maktab schools, with students expected to complete it by the end of the school year. The policy on Islamic religious education remained consistent from 1992 to 1998 and from 1998 to 2010. In 1992, the Nazira Quran became mandatory, with a focus on the Quran in secondary and advanced classes.

Despite these efforts to strengthen Islamic education in Pakistan, there has been criticism that these policies have not achieved their intended goals. Many educators and experts argue that the Islamic education curriculum often remains disconnected from modern educational frameworks and lacks practical application in students' lives. Additionally, some critics believe that the emphasis on rote memorization, particularly of the Quran, has limited the development of critical thinking and analytical skills among students. As a result, there is an ongoing debate about the effectiveness of these policies and the need for reforms to make Islamic education more relevant, engaging, and beneficial for students in Pakistan.

In his 2004 study, Zaki Badawi examined the position of Islamic studies in British colleges and universities, emphasizing that teaching Islamic studies should focus on helping students develop critical thinking skills and become devout Muslims rather than merely providing an in-depth understanding of Islam. Muda (2004) analyzed Malaysia's current educational models and identified a type of dualism that has isolated Islamic education from contemporary issues. He emphasized the importance of integrating Islamic teachings with modern disciplines to enhance career prospects and strengthen Islamic commitment.

According to Taha Jabir al-Alawani's (1989) classification in his book, the current models of education can be divided into three categories:

a. The Classic Approach:

This perspective presents the Ummah almost exactly as it is or with minimal change, as it is traditionally believed to be self-sufficient. This methodology is referred to as the authenticity approach.

b. The Modernist Approach:

This perspective holds that Western ideas and worldviews are essential for the development of a systematic civilization in the modern world. This perspective is frequently referred to as modernistic.

c. The Eclectic Approach:

This method integrates both modernist and traditional perspectives on education, advocating for the selection of what is most sound from traditional beliefs and what is considered accurate from modern contemporary philosophy.

The majority of madrasas, which teach Islamic Studies based on fiqh (فقہ) exemplify traditional Islamic educational methods. These institutions have a

subject-centered curriculum and a traditional, mostly memorization-based teaching methodology. In these Madrasas, the curriculum often includes the study of Quranic recitation and its meanings, the traditional interpretation of the Sunah, Islamic theology, jurisprudence, the history of Islam focusing on the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and basics of arithmetic and logic (Roshani, 2006).

These educational establishments aim to produce morally upright Muslims who adhere to religious precepts. Islamic studies that have limited relevance to modern society.

Post-colonial schools and colleges have adopted a representational modernist approach to Islamic education. Islam is taught as a subject in these schools without much in-depth analysis, and the curriculum and teaching methods are predominantly secular. These schools offer the majority of Islamic courses to meet education ministry criteria, leading to an understanding of Islam that is similarly out of touch with modern society.

Sidek Baba (2004) suggests that the mixed methodology is a fresh and unique approach to studying Islam. This approach was also proposed by Taha Jabir Al-Alawani (1989) as a feasible way to link traditional and modernist approaches to Islamic education. This method combines current studies with Islamic instruction. Sidek Baba believed that the most effective way to achieve educational objectives was to combine modernism with classical teaching methods.

According to his perspective, "integrating the two is vital to create an intellectual foundation that will serve as the basis for meeting the desired objectives" (p.17). Numerous Islamic institutions and universities, including the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), the Muslim Student's Association in the USA (MSA), and the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), have reportedly adopted this approach in their teaching methodology, as indicated by Sidek Baba (2004). This underscores the effectiveness of this approach in disseminating Islamic knowledge. While traditional or Western secular education systems are included, Islam forms the basis of this system. This system was developed by the International Islamic University Malaysia, and many other Malaysian universities currently use it. "The curriculum is uniquely designed in this system." Islamic scholars at this university's law faculty teach traditional laws alongside modern laws. Students in the economics department learn about Islamic economic systems as well as conventional ones. Psychology, sociology, and Islamic educational philosophy are taught by the education faculty alongside conventional disciplines. Every university faculty offers master's and doctoral degree postgraduate programs, and each faculty provides an integrated approach to their analyses and research (Noorani and Khairul, 2011: 116).

With graduates playing an active role in society, Sidek Baba (2004) assessed the method's effectiveness in educational philosophy. He said that these graduates

would play a significant role in addressing the socioeconomic issues facing society. He declared: "Human resource development in the Muslim world will be different with the new theoretical foundation (epistemology) in Islamic education." Muslims who apply this eclectic technique can contribute positively to the nation-building process (p. 61).

As a result, Sidek Baba (2004) recommended that Muslim educational institutions adopt this strategy to develop scholars with a thorough understanding of Islam who can address the socioeconomic issues facing society from both an Islamic and modern perspective. This invitation was warmly accepted by numerous Islamic organizations and universities throughout the Muslim world, including Malaysian colleges.

Noorani and Khairul (2011) claim that this approach is successful. They measured its success by examining the increase in Malaysians' acceptance of this plan. "More Muslim parents have come to believe that sending their children to an educational institution that meets both the environment and the subject matter requirements of education is a better option," the statement says. It's interesting to note that even non-Muslims are attracted to study and work at universities like Malaysia's International Islamic University (p.116). However, assessing this method's effectiveness as the number of supporters increases remains challenging. A scientific study is required to assess the graduates' Islamic upbringing, their dedication to Islam, and the demand for them in the Malaysian and international job markets.

The Daud Tawhidi tarbiyyah initiative was introduced by Sarfaroz and Nadeem (2011). This approach aims to create Muslim students who are capable of interacting with society, making original decisions, and overcoming obstacles. Tawhidi highlighted the importance of practical application in this project by incorporating Islamic ethos and spirit into both the extracurricular and curriculum areas of Islamic education. It emphasizes students' personalities, characters, their actual needs, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

However, as described by Al-Zeera (confused), Islamic education is "fundamentally integrative, where: (i) learning is achieved through various human faculties (e.g., intellect, emotion, and spirit); (ii) knowledge domains are interconnected and harmonized, serving consistent human and divine goals; and (iii) education should reconcile contradictions into unity.

Conclusion:

Islamic education should ideally be all-encompassing, drawing knowledge from both human experience and revelation, as well as from multiple human faculties such as the mind, heart, and soul. This comprehensive approach aims to produce the Khalifah, an individual capable of ruling the world in a just and peaceful manner. Such an approach should guide the development of Islamic

studies, its curriculum, the transformation of knowledge, and the educational process. Incorporating modern science teaching methodologies into the existing paradigms of Islamic studies education is crucial.

The effectiveness of an eclectic method of teaching Islamic education, which allows learners to choose between majoring in Islamic education and minoring in social sciences or another subject, needs to be evaluated through scientific study. To fully understand the success and feasibility of the lived practice method, further research is essential. Knowledge, cognitive, and affective domain success can all be assessed using the taxonomy, a current set of criteria used in education to gauge instructional effectiveness. Taxonomy can also be a tool to assess the development of soft skills. However, it's crucial to evaluate emotional and spiritual growth to assess practical life and the level of Islamic commitment.

Modernizing Islamic studies with a problem-based learning approach is necessary. This approach provides students with the opportunity to tackle contemporary issues and discover solutions, much like how Imam Abu Hanifah (699-767M), Imam Ghazzali (1058-1111M), and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198M) did. For instance, teaching Hadith should involve more than just reading traditional texts and theories; it should also incorporate modern critical and logical thinking. To achieve this, students should:

1. Fully understand the hadith without consulting classical texts.
2. Refer to the classical texts to identify various approaches to understanding specific hadith.
3. Compare their understanding of the hadith with that of traditional ulama and identify any similarities or differences.
4. Study its implications in various historical contexts.
5. Formulate a conclusion and apply it to the modern world.
6. Simply reading hadith from classical texts limits one's ability to critically analyze its relevance to various historical contexts, making the learner unaware of its significance in modern life. Therefore, this supplementary structure should be considered when improving Islamic education.

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