

# Utilising Dialogical Pedagogy as a Mode of Instruction with the Purpose of Improving Future Islamic Education through the Study of Qur'anic Principles

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## Abstract

This paper examines the significance of questioning and rote learning as pedagogical strategies in Islamic education. Within Islām, there is a strong emphasis on pedagogical competency during the process of teaching and learning. This aligns with the larger framework outlined in the Al-Qur'ān, where one of the initial revelations from God pertains to educational processes and pedagogical competence. Contrary to some existing research that suggests an incomplete understanding of Qur'anic values through studying Islamic education alone, this study argues that Islām's teachings extend comprehensively across various aspects of human existence. One such example is oral pedagogy, also referred to as *Halaqah*, which has been deeply ingrained within Muslim practice and has evolved over time to make authentic and lasting contributions. Rote learning, which involves memorising facts, ideas, concepts, or information through repetitive practice and recitation, has been a long-standing method in education. Throughout history, it has been recognised as an initial step for mastering different fields of study. It focuses on presenting new information to facilitate the learners' encoding of new knowledge and recalling previously acquired knowledge. *Halaqah* (study circles) and rote learning are considered integral components of dialogical pedagogy in Islamic education. The research concludes that fostering autonomy among Muslim students is crucial and suggests concrete strategies to enhance rote learning within classroom contexts.

**Keywords:** Dialogical Pedagogy, Islamic Education, *Halaqah* and Rote Learning.

## Introduction

The Muslim educational programme placed a significant emphasis on nurturing the intrinsic desire for learning, inquiry, and knowledge. This was attributed to the belief that both human beings and nature possess an inherent "rational character" that should be

explored and comprehended. The cognitive ability of reasoning or rationality (referred to as *aql*, literally “that which binds”) played a crucial role in interpreting complex human experiences and generating coherent knowledge and meaning essential for human existence. However, the heart (*qalb, fuad, lubb*) is where wisdom, insight, and intuition originate. The very first verses of the Qur’ān attest to the fact that the Islamic conception of God is novel and are found in Surah Al-Baqarah. God is portrayed as a compassionate, caring, and loving Educator par excellence (*al-Rabb/al-Wadūd*) as asserted by (Sahin, 2021). The Qur'an encourages individuals to treat others with hospitality, following the principle of treating others as they would like to be treated. This emphasis on kindness and respect towards others fosters a disposition for pedagogical learning from diverse perspectives. The pedagogical approach advocated by the Qur'an is influenced by its dialogical notion of *ta’aruf*, which encompasses an attitude of openness and willingness to learn from one another (Abdullah Sahin, 2021).

It is ironic that Islamic higher education institutions, which have the responsibility of putting the strategic value of the learning and teaching process into practice to achieve the institution's objectives, often face challenges in doing so. These institutions find it difficult to produce the required resources that can maintain the quality of their educators. The theoretical framework that shapes education is a critical factor contributing to this situation (Nanang et al., 2020). To attain spiritual enlightenment, one must practice diligence, introspection, and a scientific approach. Educators understand the value of prophetic characteristics in nurturing and realising students' potential. They also recognise the challenges that come with running an educational institution. As a result, they believe that everything they do is necessary to carry out God's mandates, which leads to gratitude. This gratitude is considered a form of prophetic or spiritual well-being, which contributes to professional fulfilment. Spiritual well-being is an expression of appreciation for God and is closely linked to job satisfaction (Nanang et al., 2020).

Dialogical Pedagogy is adopted in the *halaqah* curriculum, which is dedicated to the practice of Prophet Muḥammad’s sunnah. *Halaqah* is a traditional oral pedagogy that these schools adopted in order to produce authentic and sustainable Muslim contributions to a multicultural society in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. *Aqlīyah* (intelligence), *tadabbur* (spiritual reflection), and *akhlāq* (excellent character) are traditionally fostered through *halaqahs*. Both schools incorporate *halaqah* into their regular curriculum with the goal of shaping each student’s *shakhsīyah Islāmīyah* (Muslim identity/personality/character). Leaders and educators at the school argue that the children's agency and sense of self are strengthened as they collectively address difficult challenges related to their hybrid identities as Muslim Britons in the context of a *halaqah* (Ahmed, 2017).

Besides that, Islamic pedagogy is distinguished by sincere exchanges between teacher and learner through vocal dialogue, aiding memorisation, and a didactic approach to sacred scripture. Their work demonstrates that Islamic teaching in the madrasah is primarily a spiritual process in which knowledge exists in the hearts of the learners and progressively manifests in the shape of embodied acts. Interestingly, a maximalist explanation of learning does not fully dismiss rote learning but rather views learning as a process of decision (*shurā*). This indicates that learning occurs when opinions are debated in the classroom and justified evidence is presented in support of specific viewpoints (Al-Burhān, 2020).

**Dialogic Pedagogy in Education**

Hill (2020) stressed that a dialogical approach would enable students to draw on their experiences and expertise to comprehend unfamiliar texts and establish connections with those they already know and love. The stagnating rise in understanding rates over the past few years of the National Assessment of Educational Progress highlights the importance of adopting an approach that promotes both engagement and comprehension (NAEP). Educators should critically reflect on the moral rationales that underlie the significance of dialogue, both in general and specifically within educational contexts. It is important for teachers to recognise that education encompasses not only instrumental goals but also ethical considerations. In support of this argument, Alexander puts forth seven distinct justifications for dialogue: communicative, social, cultural, political, psychological, neuroscientific and pedagogical perspectives. Furthermore, dialogic teaching framework consists of four essential components: justifications, principles, repertoires, and indicators. The heart or core aspect lies within their repertoires which are comprised of a diverse range of methods and strategies for promoting effective dialogue between teachers and students. The principles act as guidelines while the indicators offer ongoing assessment tools. With these elements in place, the justifications provide an intellectual foundation from which dialogic teaching can be launched (Alexander, 2018). In addition to this, the act of instructing in words is a crucial component. Comparative research conducted in classrooms has identified a more limited range of communication strategies that are pertinent to teaching, including repetition, recitation, guiding instructions, presenting information formally, engaging in discussion, and fostering dialogue (Alexander, 2018).

Alexander (2018) advocated that fostering a school-based professional development programme rooted in dialogic principles offers an effective approach to bridging the gap between theory and practice. This can be achieved by granting teachers a significant level of autonomy over their professional growth, thus facilitating the integration of dialogic pedagogy within classroom instruction. Current research on teacher development emphasises the importance of providing educators with ample opportunities for reflection and experimentation with novel ideas and innovative strategies. It is preferable for these experiences to occur within a collaborative environment where feedback from peers as well as more experienced practitioners can be obtained, thereby enabling teachers to refine their instructional practices through collegial collaboration (Hardman, 2019).

The aim of elucidating the interpretive frames that guide this study is to underscore the blended and syncretic character of analysing and applying Islamic concepts in contemporary times and diverse locations. Additionally, it should be noted that extracting pedagogical ideas from the Qur'an and hadith through analytical techniques inherently involves interpretation and subjectivity. Pedagogy is depicted as a deeply interconnected interaction between individuals, centred on compassion for one's own uniqueness as well as for others within sacred social relationships, based on accounts of Muḥammad's teaching methods. The distinct objective of Islamic education lies in assisting students in becoming "good Muslims," which necessitates fostering moral-ethical inclinations, nurturing interpersonal relational abilities, and promoting ethical reasoning. Consequently, effective pedagogical strategies entail prioritising the establishment of mutually beneficial connections between educators and learners while implementing various forms of instructional differentiation (Alkouatli, 2018).

In the Islamic tradition, it is widely acknowledged that teachers hold a position of great importance and reverence by virtue of their possession of sacred knowledge. However, within

the realm of classical Islamic education, students are empowered to choose their professors based on various criteria such as competence, character, intellectuality and more. This indicates that it is ultimately the perspective and evaluation from the student's standpoint that determines the authority bestowed upon a particular teacher. Furthermore, classical Muslim scholarship has offered diverse perspectives concerning the agency afforded to students in their learning process. This highlights the potential for engaging in profound critical inquiry and dialogic research across all levels of education with learners spanning different age groups (Ahmed, 2017).

### **Halaqah**

Ahmed (2017) asserted that by conceiving of the Muslim *shakh* as a dialogical self, the *shakhshīyah Islāmiyah* draws on both the element of agency inherent in the Qur'ānic discourse and the holistic conceptualisation of the individual human as part of a broader whole. By "dialogical," we mean a self-formed, grown, and developed a connection to another. Furthermore, by combining the self-conscious personal/individual quality of the term *shakhshīyah* with the worldview/state of being implied in the term *Islāmiyah*, "*shakhshīyah Islāmiyah*" becomes a self in conversation with its worldview. The Qur'ān alludes to three dialogical connections in which the Muslim actively participates and shapes her being: relationship with self, relationship with Allāh, and interaction with the rest of creation, which includes other humans, animals, the natural environment, and the universe. This can be deduced from the fact that Prophet Sulaimān (PBUH) was granted a privilege in relation to the ability that he possessed, which enabled him to exert dominion over jinn and the wind. According to Surah *Saba'* verse 12-13, Surah *Al-Anbiyā'* verse 82, and Surah *Ṣad* verse 37-38, Prophet Sulaimān (PBUH) can command both good and evil jinn to perform various tasks for him. Three verses in three different surahs iterate Sulaimān's submission to the wind, which he uses for various purposes. Allāh says in Surah *Sad* verse 36, "*And we made the wind subject to him; it ran gently at his command, wherever he directed.*" The wind could be as strong, gentle, and swift at Prophet Sulaimān's command. It could be used for conquest, trade, and transportation by Prophet Sulaimān. He could, for example, fly one month's journey in the morning and another month's journey in the evening (Al-Garallah, 2016).

Furthermore, the concept of choice applies only when a person has the ability to choose, which involves the ability to think, imagine alternatives, and be conscious of one's own sentiments; in other words, to have a mind that is aware of itself has experienced, and has beliefs about the universe. One may make the case that the new believers the Prophet (PBUH) educated in the early days of Islām were already capable of making their own decisions in light of their newfound faith and way of life. A variety of current Muslim philosophers have reflected on these concerns, as do all educational communities. It is possible to argue, at least in theory, that the purpose of Islamic education is to facilitate the flourishing of the human being's autonomy until she, as an active agent, chooses to be a Muslim; hence, as is the case with any educational process, the possibility of a conclusion that was not intended is inescapable. That is to say, she has the ability to reject Islām through the exercise of her free will. This is based on the Islamic belief that individuals will be held accountable in *akhīrah* (afterlife) for their actions (Ahmed, 2017).

Teachers believe that increasing autonomy is inextricably linked to developing *shakhshīyah*. *Shakhshīyah* is an Arabic term that means personality, figure, character, persona/personage, individuality, spirit, and subjectivity. Teachers interpret it to signify a strong, devoted, personal/individual, Islamic character. Critical thinking; reflexivity; active and

autonomous learning that is deliberate and action-oriented (practising and connecting what has been learned); and a strong sense of morality and spirituality are all characteristics of such a person. By engaging in self-aware dialogue with others, he plans to educate himself and discover new paths for personal development. *Shakhṣīyah Islāmiyah* also entails a strong dedication to the Islamic way of life and embodies the definition of the name Muslim, which is to achieve peace by submitting to Allāh's will and rule (Ahmed, 2017).

### Rote Learning

Al-Burhān (2020) explained that the process of learning facts, ideas, concepts, or information through rote memory is referred to as rote learning. This type of learning is accomplished through memorisation. Memorisation through rote practice has traditionally been regarded as the initial stage in acquiring a variety of academic disciplines. It puts a focus on delivering new information to make it easier for the students to remember previously learned facts, ideas, or information as well as to encode new facts, ideas, or information. In relation to the dichotomy of Memorised versus Scripted Knowledge in Islamic Pedagogy, an acceptable appraisal of the tradition of memorising the Qur'an must be linked to the whole Muslim intellectual culture. Both orality and aurality are classic Arab-Islamic characteristics that are strongly rooted in pre-Islamic traditions and life conditions. Furthermore, memorised knowledge was frequently thought to be of exceptional quality. In addition, Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr (d. 72/691) is quoted as saying, "the finest knowledge is what is received from academics" mouths, for they usually memorise the best of what they hear and proclaim the best of what they memorize. (Ayyad, 2022)

The verse in the Qur'ān alludes to the natural phenomenon of renewal encourages reflection as to how Allāh creates and recreates everything in the universe. It also advocates travelling for discovery as a concept of scientific reasoning that is applied throughout data gathering. Al-Zarnūjī emphasises the significance of repetition and dictation, in addition to mentioning teaching through practice and application (Al-Burhān, 2020). Teaching methods have a significant impact on the soul and validate the knowledge being imparted. Research demonstrates that activities and practices are closely connected to all aspects of learning. It is not feasible to isolate learning activities from the course content and objectives, as these activities themselves stem from motivation and contribute to it. Moreover, creativity plays an essential role in the process of generating ideas. When presented with a problem, learners are prompted to develop multiple solutions. For example, students may be assigned the duty of generating different ways in which an educational institution, or any corporate presence, can fulfil the *maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* (Islamic legal objectives) such as the preservation of religion, life, intelligence, progeny, and money (Al-Burhān, 2020).

### Conclusion

Dialogic pedagogy is playing a significant role in shaping the future of Islamic education. This teaching approach, which emphasises dialogue and active student involvement, has been exemplified by Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) himself as he effectively engaged students in their own learning. Within this framework, two types of instructional techniques are employed: *ḥalaqah* discussions and rote learning. It is crucial for Muslim learners to experience a sense of autonomy and recognise that practical measures can be taken to enhance rote learning through collaborative efforts between teachers and students within educational settings.

Ultimately, the article has addressed a significant need in Islamic education by noting the insufficient integration of Qur'ānic stories into the current curriculum, particularly in the setting of modern technology. It also emphasised the lack of a preliminary investigation of the curriculum's comprehensiveness and subtle patterns. To bridge this gap, the study drew inspiration from classical and medieval Islamic ādab literature and examined the subject through the lens of dialogic pedagogy. This qualitative study used textual analysis, drawing on the Qur'ān, ḥadīth, and qīṣaṣ genres, to build a pedagogical model that integrates universal teaching principles found in the stories of the Qur'ānic Prophets to modern teaching methods.

The Qur'ānic Prophets Pedagogy Model is the result of this research, and it provides a novel and decisive approach to Islamic education. This model not only solves the shortcomings of the current curriculum but also serves as a significant resource for educators and policymakers seeking to improve the quality and relevance of Islamic education in the age of modern technology. This research contributes considerably to the growth of Islamic education and its adaptation to the problems and opportunities of the twenty-first century by merging timeless teachings from the Qur'ān with contemporary pedagogical methodologies.

Further research should focus on an in-depth exploration of Qur'ānic prophets' pedagogy, encompassing verses from qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' related to education and encompassing various aspects such as basic concepts, goals, values, commands, universal rules, groups, and proofs from Qur'ānic exegesis, with particular attention to the limitations identified in this study, including the examination of pedagogical insights from five selected Prophets which are Prophet Nūh A.S, Prophet Ibrāhīm A.S, Prophet Yūsuf A.S, Prophet Mūsā A.S and Prophet 'Īsa A.S, one tradition-based exegesis (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr), one reason-based exegesis (Mafātīh al-Ghayb of al-Rāzī), one hadith commentary (Fath al-Bāri Sharh Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri), and one pedagogical literature (al-ādab al-'ālim wa al-muta'allim) for a comprehensive understanding.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no competing interests, either financial or personal, in the writing of this work.

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