An Examination of Practical Teaching Methods in the Holy Quran

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Abstract

Introduction: Education and training are among the fundamental pillars of the Islamic intellectual and value system. The first verses revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) began with the word "Iqra" (Read), which itself signifies the paramount importance of education in Islam .This article aims to examine and scientifically analyze the educational methods derived from the Holy Quran with a pedagogical approach.

research methodology: Utilizing a descriptive-analytical methodology based on library resources, this study seeks to clarify these methods and explore their applicability within formal educational systems.

Findings: As the fundamental source of Islamic education, the Quran encompasses a variety of instructional methods such as modeling, admonition, affection, consultation, rationalism, storytelling, and moral lessons.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that the Quran, emphasizing individual differences, proposes diverse approaches that align with contemporary psychological principles. Finally, the article offers strategies to integrate these methods into both formal and religious education.

Key Words: Holy Quran, teaching methods, Islamic education, pedagogy, religious instruction.

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Introduction

Education and training are among the fundamental pillars of the Islamic intellectual and value system. The first verses revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) began with the word "Iqra" (Read), which itself signifies the paramount importance of education in Islam (Al-ʿAlaq: 1–5). This emphasis illustrates that education is not only an individual matter but also a social and divine mission within the Islamic framework (Noor al-Din, 2024).

Islam presents the process of teaching and learning as a platform for guiding humanity towards perfection, excellence, and success in both this world and the hereafter. The Holy Quran, as the primary epistemological and educational source for Muslims, not only conveys ethical and theological content but also encompasses precise, diverse, and human-centered methods of instruction (Mirsai, 2009). These methods are grounded in wisdom, human nature, and psychological and social principles.

Despite this vast capacity, comparative and empirical studies indicate that educational systems in Islamic countries, especially Iran, have not significantly utilized Quranic pedagogical methods, and these approaches are often overlooked in official educational policies (Mesbah al-Jannah et al., 2023). This issue may stem from one of two reasons: either Islamic scholars have insufficiently elucidated and extracted these methods from the Quranic verses, or the executive mechanisms to implement these approaches have not been adequately established.

The Holy Quran, employing methods such as storytelling, metaphor, question and answer formats, jidal ahsan (the best discourse), admonition, and gradual stages, provides a comprehensive and coherent model for effective teaching. These methods maintain cohesion in purpose and content while offering the necessary flexibility to address individual and cultural differences among audiences (Sumarjoko, Brahmaya Baratollah et al., 2023).

This article, through an analytical approach and thematic interpretation of the verses, seeks to answer the question: What are the practical teaching methods in the Holy Quran, and how can they be utilized in formal and informal education?

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology. Data were collected from library sources, including authoritative Quranic exegeses, works by Islamic educational thinkers, and relevant research studies (Naderi, 2020). The core of the analysis is a conceptual examination of Quranic verses related to education and training, which formed the basis for identifying the teaching methods.

1. Practical Teaching Methods in the Quran

Teaching methods refer to the strategies that teachers or instructors employ to present new information or experiences, assess learners' prior knowledge, facilitate performance demonstrations, and support other learning activities (Hassaneh Nashahin, 2022). Therefore, it can be concluded that a teaching method is a specific approach to delivering educational content aimed at achieving particular learning objectives (Moghadam Khairuddin, 2023).

The importance of employing appropriate teaching methods stems from the fact that methods are essential components of the educational process; they function as tools for realizing goals, are supported by instructional aids, and serve as integrative instruments within the educational system.In the following, the practical teaching methods presented in the Quran will be examined.

1-1. Modeling Method

The modeling method involves presenting exemplary behavioral and ethical models to students. This approach is emphasized by educators because it helps to instill noble character traits in learners. Teachers consistently demonstrate virtuous behavioral examples (Uswah Hasanah) to their students, whether in performing religious rituals, daily life practices, or other matters (Asiyeh & Sari, 2025).

One of the educational methods, the modeling approach—also referred to as role-modeling, exemplification, or pattern-setting—is a concrete and practical method of teaching and nurturing that deeply influences the hearts and minds of learners. During early childhood, individuals model their character based on parents, relatives, friends, and educators. Therefore, caregivers, parents, and those around the child must exhibit desirable and constructive behavior in interactions with students to facilitate their transformation (Beheshti et al., 2012).The modeling method is an external pattern based on the principles of teachability and imitation, influencing the behavior of the learner and attracting them (Sharifi, 2019).

An "Uswah" (exemplar) is a state that a person attains when following someone else, and depending on whom they follow, the exemplar may be either good or bad for the individual. In this method, the educator strives to practically present desirable behavioral and ethical examples to the learner, thereby changing the learner's social context and encouraging imitation, which cultivates positive traits consistent with the exemplary behavior. This state of the learner is called "Uswah," which depends on following that behavior; thus, it can be said that this behavior constitutes a good model for the individual (Bagheri, 2021).

In the Holy Quran, Allah says in verse 21 of Surah Al-Ahzab: *"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often."*(Quran 33:21)Therefore, it can be inferred that the educator serves as a model and exemplar, and the more worthy this exemplar is, the deeper the impact, since the language of action is more eloquent than any other language.

2-1. Encouragement and Punishment Method

Encouragement linguistically means to inspire eagerness, motivate, praise someone's work, and strengthen their resolve. **Punishment** means to awaken, alert, or make someone aware of an issue. In education and training, encouragement and punishment refer to familiarizing the learner with correct and proper behaviors, recognizing incorrect behaviors, and explaining the consequences of committing wrong actions (Mirsaei, 2009).

In Islamic education, encouragement is the primary method because the foundation of education rests on ease, love, and gentleness. Through encouragement, a learner's motivation and desire to perform desirable actions increase, and their innate inclination toward love, appreciation, and trust is engaged (Beheshti et al., 2012). Islam accepts the principle of encouragement and punishment since it does not see good and evil as equal and does not give the same reward or punishment to the virtuous and wrongdoers.

Allah states in verses 7 and 8 of Surah Al-Zalzalah (The Earthquake):*"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."*(Quran 99:7-8)Al-Jahiz pointed out several key points about encouragement and punishment:

1. Encouragement and punishment should be applied in their appropriate and rightful contexts.
2. They must correspond in quantity and quality to the person's proper or improper behavior.
3. Encouragement and punishment are like two wings of a bird—just as a bird cannot fly with only one wing, education cannot succeed without both.
4. Encouragement and punishment are essentially good and beneficial, not harmful, as their result is the growth and development of education and training (Arafi et al., 2012).

3-1. Affection Method

Humans need love and kindness throughout all stages of life. Applying this method in the educational process is essential at every stage. To create a deep and rooted connection, the first step is to attract the child's attention so that they gain a heartfelt assurance that the commands, prohibitions, advice, and admonitions of the parents are out of genuine concern (Sharifi, 2019).

Love and affection are natural and fundamental human needs. A young child desires to be held, carried around, and accompanied. Psychological research shows that after the first year of life, having someone to accompany the child and actively participate in their play significantly contributes to their psychological development. However, just as excessive affection can harm the learner, deprivation of affection may also cause abnormalities (Beheshti et al., 2012).

Allah says in verse 159 of Surah Al-Imran:*"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you."*(Quran 3:159)

In human upbringing, Allah uses love as a central binding element:*"O you who have believed, whoever among you should revert from his religion - Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing."*(Quran 5:54)

In this verse, "He will love them" precedes "and they will love Him," indicating that the expression of God's love comes before the expression of human love toward God. This shows that the educator's expression of love directs the learner's attachment, leading to a profound affection for the educator. Once this affection emerges, the educator can encourage certain behaviors through love and discourage others by withholding affection (Bagheri, 2021).

4-1.The Method of "Goodly Admonition" (Maw'izah Hasanah)

Admonition (maw'izah) refers to offering advice and exhortation as a reminder of truth and goodness, which resonates in the heart and motivates action (Asiyah & Sari', 2025). However, admonition and preaching have sometimes been viewed critically, with certain educational schools of thought cautioning educators against their use. Undoubtedly, admonition can occasionally evoke resistance or even stubbornness in the listener (Baqeri, 2021).

Maw'izah hasanah (goodly admonition) is an accepted method in Islamic education. It entails measured and timely speech that arises from the heart, aimed at imparting awareness and inviting individuals to righteousness. It must be expressed gently, rooted in sincere belief, benevolence, and compassion. The role of maw'izah hasanah is to dispel negligence, subdue anger and desires, remove hardness from the heart, and replace it with polish, softness, and tenderness (Beheshti et al., 2012).Allah states in Surah An-Nahl (16:125):"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly admonition, and argue with them in a manner that is best."

5-1. Counseling Methods

One of the accepted techniques in education is counseling. Counseling is an intellectual and insightful interaction between the client and the counselor aimed at facilitating change and transformation in the client. Through increased self-awareness and proper insight, the client can make rational decisions and resolve their problems. Thus, counseling is a process that goes beyond mere advice-giving and preaching (Beheshti et al., 2012).

In the Holy Quran, Allah emphasizes the importance of consultation in Surah Āl-ʿImrān (3:159), stating:"And consult them in the matter."Similarly, in Surah Ash-Shūrā (42:38), it is mentioned:"And whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves."

This method is one of the most effective educational approaches because it centers on student engagement. In this method, information is not directly delivered by the teacher; rather, the teacher provides necessary guidance and recommendations regarding the procedure, while students actively engage in the learning process. Finally, students discuss and reflect on their activities.

6-1. Methods of Learning from Lessons (Ibrat-Amozī)

The root of the word *'ibrat* (lesson) comes from the notion of "passing through" (*'ubūr*), and the term *'ābir* refers to someone who passes along a path. However, the words *'ibrat* (lesson) and *i'itibār* (consideration) have come to be specifically associated with a state in which one transitions from observable phenomena to unseen truths. Thus, deriving a lesson (*'ibrat*) requires a discerning eye, a sound intellect, and an awakened heart (Baqeri, 2021).Learning through lessons is a well-established method in Islamic education and upbringing. It is a process by which a person reflects on well-known events, evaluates them, derives deeper meanings, and applies these insights to guide their own life, thereby avoiding the repetition of mistakes (Beheshti et al., 2012). God says in the Holy Qur'an, in Surah Al-Imran, verse 13:"Indeed, there was a sign for you in the two armies that met—one fighting in the cause of Allah and the other disbelieving. They saw them as twice their

number with their own eyes. But Allah supports with His victory whom He wills. Surely in this is a lesson for those with insight."And in Surah Yusuf, verse 111, God says:"Indeed, in their stories there is a lesson for those of reason."

7-1. The Method of Storytelling

In the Qur'an, individuals are drawn to ethical principles and truths through the narration of stories. Sometimes, it is through storytelling that moral and spiritual education is achieved. Story-based education proves beneficial at various stages of personal development. Since this type of education is indirect in nature, the educator must consider elements such as the story's appeal, its moral and educational purpose, and its potential to promote growth and advancement (Shari'atmadari, 2024).

Storytelling is a powerful educational method that holds unique appeal and influence. Through it, one can illustrate life's truths and realities in beautiful ways and witness its impact on learners (Beheshti et al., 2012). God states in Surah Hud, verse 120 of the Qur'an:"And each story of the messengers We relate to you—of them We make your heart firm. And there has come to you in this the truth and an admonition and a reminder for the believers."One way to foster strategic abilities in learners is to encourage them to retell a story aloud. In doing so, they expand their perspective, strengthen their imagination, and prepare themselves for life ahead. The key feature of creative storytelling is that it draws the learner's mind into imagination and mental visualization. While listening to stories, learners experience themselves in different times, places, and emotional states (Yousefi & Oveisi, 2007).

A story is a message conveyed through narrative—either in verse or prose, oral or written. The transmitter of this message is called a storyteller, who may use all available media to present the story. While in the past, limited means were available to the storyteller, the rapid advancement of science and technology today allows them to utilize or combine various media for storytelling (Mahjoor, 2004).

Using storytelling as an educational tool remains an effective method in teaching Islamic values. Teachers can cultivate students' moral and spiritual understanding through Qur'anic narratives and prophetic traditions (hadiths). The benefits of this approach include: establishing a meaningful connection with instructional content, making complex topics more age-appropriate, strengthening empathy and deep thinking among learners, and fostering deeper emotional bonds with religious teachings (Inuwa, 2024).

Trowatan (2018) argues that Muslim educators must go beyond conventional educational models and develop pedagogical methods that reflect classical Islamic thought and culture, including spiritual approaches. Islam emerged in an oral culture, and storytelling forms a foundational dimension of the

educational methods used in both the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (Ahmad, 2014; Sahin, 2021). The stories of the prophets in the Qur'an are described as "the best means for soothing and strengthening the human heart" (The Holy Qur'an). Nearly half of the Qur'an consists of stories (Sinaga et al., 2020), and some scholars estimate that it includes over twenty distinct narratives. The biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) presents a model of exemplary moral character and lifestyle.The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used stories from the past (e.g., previous nations) and the future (e.g., the Day of Judgment) as opportunities for moral upbringing (*tarbiyah*), teaching (*ta'lim*), and refinement of character (*ta'dīb*). His storytelling served as a tool for holistic education—transforming the heart, mind, and soul. Yet, in liberal and neoliberal educational systems, the potential of storytelling remains underutilized. Even teachers in Islamic schools, under the lingering influence of colonial educational legacies, make limited use of this method.A deeper examination of the concept of Islamic education and the challenges facing Islamic schools in its absence reveals that Islamic pedagogy is a complex philosophy—one that requires instruction from experts trained in both theoretical and practical dimensions.

8-1. The Method of Parable (Tamthīl)

Parables (*tamthīl*) are used to clarify meaning, bring abstract ideas closer to the audience's understanding, and help visualize the concept in the learner's mind. The power of parable reflects the greatness of thought, the breadth of intellect, and a fertile and creative spirit (Beheshti, 2012).

This method involves the creation of analogies and comparisons through presenting parables that make abstract concepts more tangible. The aim is to achieve specific learning objectives by drawing meaningful lessons from these comparisons. The use of parables facilitates easier comprehension of complex subjects or issues, enabling students to develop the competencies needed to understand religious education content (Asieh & Sari', 2025).

God says in Surah An-Nur, verse 39:*"As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty one assumes to be water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing. Instead, he finds Allah there, and He will settle his account in full. And Allah is swift in reckoning."*

Activities such as role-playing, scripted dramatizations, presentations, and puppet shows are effective tools in developing children's emotional intelligence. These methods allow children to express their feelings and enhance their capacity for empathy. Often, it is easier for children to express themselves freely when assuming a character's role. Drama connects with emotional intelligence when it encourages children to follow events from multiple emotional perspectives (Abdollahi, 2022).

9-1. The Practical Method

In this method, learners engage directly and experientially with the topic under the guidance of the teacher in order to develop the necessary skills. The goal is not merely to receive knowledge theoretically but to actively practice and internalize it.Allāmeh Ṭabāṭabā'ī describes this method as foundational in Islamic education. He states:*"The method employed by the Noble Qur'an in teaching and upbringing is the practical method. In Islamic education—especially in the domain of religious instruction—this method is among the most self-evident principles. God did not suffice with stating abstract rational principles and general laws; rather, from the moment Muslims accepted Islam, they were called to action."*(Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1985, Vol. 6, as cited in Armand & Mehr-Mohammadi, 2009).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the infallible Imams embodied complete integrity of character. They practiced what they believed and preached. In other words, their words and actions were in full harmony. Consequently, their actions, alongside their teachings, were considered authoritative and served as sources of Islamic rulings (Shari'atmadari, 2024).

10-1. The Rational Method

The terms *thinking* and *reasoning* are often used interchangeably, but what is meant here is **guided thinking**. While all reasoning is a form of thinking, not all thinking qualifies as reasoning. Therefore, the principle of reasoning (*taʿaqqol*) implies that human thought and reflection must be continuously and purposefully guided (Baqeri, 2021).This method is based on stimulating the learner's moral discernment between right and wrong, rational judgment, and the capacity to make correct choices (Rahbar & Rahimian, 2013).

Islam is a religion that advocates for reason and places strong emphasis on the intellect—not only does it not oppose human reasoning, but it consistently seeks its support and confirms it as a source of validation (Motahhari, 2021).God says in Surah al-Naḥl, verse 125:*"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best."*And in Surah al-Ṣaff, verses 2–3:*"O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do."*

In today's world, Islamic education must adopt a more rational face than ever before. In an age of communication and the rapid exchange of ideas, the legitimacy and authority of religion can easily be questioned. Therefore, educational principles must be firmly grounded in rational foundations (Baqeri,

2021).At each developmental stage, a person is capable of engaging in specific types of thinking but not others. Thus, early stages form the basis for later cognitive development (Yousefi & Oveisi, 2007). This method strengthens the learner's cognitive domain, encouraging them to use their intellect to seek answers and then share their reasoning with others. Accordingly, the teacher should pose thoughtful questions that prompt students to articulate their ideas and propose rational solutions (Yousefi & Oveisi, 2007).

Discussion and conclusion

The Holy Qur'an places special emphasis on individual differences in the process of education and addresses this issue by presenting a variety of teaching methods. Educators must be familiar with the diverse instructional approaches emphasized in the Qur'an and apply them with consideration for students' individual differences.

Teachers should not focus solely on the cognitive domain but also attend to the psychological, physical, spiritual, and social dimensions of their students. An educator must recognize that no single teaching method is universally effective; rather, instructional strategies should be selected based on the subject matter and specific educational goals.

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