An Impact of Discussion Method in the Teaching of Islamic Studies' at Secondary level in Quetta District: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Islamic studies are the integral part of education at different level in Pakistan. The basic purpose of teaching of Islamic studies is to inculcate the good qualities in the Muslim youth, who are the future of the Islamic republican country. The objectives of the teaching of Islamic studies can be achieved through an effective communication of the Islamic concepts. Communication based on teaching methods. There are so many methods to assist the teaching learning process. This study was going to find out the impact of the discussion method of communicating the Islamic concepts. This research study was conducted by formulating the objectives: To identify the teaching methods in practice, to measure the impact of discussion method of teaching of Islamic studies, to suggest the strategies for effective use of discussion method of effective teaching of Islamic studies. Objectives were achieved through the research questions, what teaching methods are in practice for teaching of Islamic studies? What is the impact of discussion method in teaching of Islamic studies? And how this method can be used effectively to enhance the learning of Islamic concepts? The major findings of the study were, reading method is a common practice to teach the subject, Islamiat, some teacher shares stories of Islamic heroes, but not discuss the themes hidden in these stories, students were engaged in just memorization of the Islamic concepts without in-depth understanding of those concepts. Furthermore the discussion method has great impact on attracting the students' interest towards the subject of the Islamiat, not only this, it assist in enhancing the learning of Islamic concepts and removing the misconceptions in the mind of the students. Discussion Method enables the students to remove their misconceptions by their own.

Keywords: Discussion Method, Islamic Studies, Secondary level, Comparative study.

Introduction:

Pakistan is an Islamic country. Pakistan's ideology has its roots in Islam. It came into being with the purpose of acquiring living style according to the Islam. Education has a prominent place in Islam. Koran Pak has emphasized the value of the Knowledge at different places. E.g.

Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists)[1]
"O my Allah! Increase me in knowledge"[2] , "So write as Allah has taught"[3]

"Allah will raise the status of knowledge full peoples".[4] , "And Allah will equip him with knowledge".[5]

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[1] Al-Qur'ān, Al-Alaq:1
[2] Al-Qur'ān, Tahā:114
[3] Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah:282
[4] Al-Qur'ān, Mujādila:11

Pakistan being a muslim country also focused to spread Islamic principles of the nation through education. Policy 1958-1969 recommended the Islamiat as compulsory subject at the elementary level. Later in the policy 1977-1988 given a significant value to the teaching of Islamiat. And this subject was made compulsory from elementary to higher level of education, even in professional (medical, engineering, bureaucracy and military education). The main objectives of the teaching of Islamiat were, to transfer Islamic concepts, to equip the youth with good character, to enhance the social maturity; cooperative attitude, manners of the students, etc. though the efforts are doing to achieve the objectives, but still the objectives are not achieved in accordance.

Pakistan exhibits a number of evils, corruption, terrorism, nepotism, etc. If the teaching of Islamiat is done in an effective manner, it will give fruitful results for eradication of all the existing issues in Pakistan. Effective teaching of Islamiat may be possible if the content is communicated through suitable pedagogy. The student should be engaged in solving the different issues in the light of Islam.[6]

Education process always depends on instructional and teaching approaches. So efforts are also made to invent innovative and interactive pedagogies to enhance the teaching – learning process. Different content needs different teaching pedagogies for its transfer. If contents are transferred by using appropriate teaching method, the objectives of the teaching can be achieved at maximum level. This research study is going to find out the impact of discussion method in transferring Islamic knowledge to the students.

Objectives:

The objectives of this research study were:

- To identify the teaching methods in practice.
- To measure the impact of discussion method on teaching of Islamic studies.
- To suggest the strategies for effective use of discussion method for the effective teaching of Islamic studies.

Research Questions:

Objectives were achieved through the research questions:

- What teaching methods are in practice for teaching of Islamic studies?
- What is the impact of discussion method of teaching of Islamic studies?
- How this method can be used effectively to enhance the learning of Islamic concepts?

The results of this study will highlight the relation of discussion method to teaching of Islamiat. The results of this study may support to develop a policy to achieve the objectives of Islamic education, results will also be beneficial for all stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, curriculum developers).

Literature Review:

The basic purpose of the teaching of Islamiat is to enable the children to understand the basic principles of Islam and apply this Islamic principal to their daily routine life matters for constructing a stable Islamic society which follow the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

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[5] Al-Qur'ān, Al-e-Imraan:48

[6] *Amin Valliani "Teachng Islamiat". Dawn, November 7th, 2014.*

The teaching of Islamiat support the humanities. As an element of humanity is continuously reducing in the environment, so there is greater need to focus on the teaching of Islamiat. The central to Islamic education is too focused on the development of the total personality.[7] The child's' mind is to be considered as a white blank sheet, when anything has been written on it, it becomes hard to add more new thing or remove any mistake about it.[8] It is a common fact that the people try to remain stuck with their own ideas and avoid to accepting any new idea.[9] Teaching of islamiat at our schools just allowing students in memorizing of the concepts rather than engaging them in analytical and critical thinking. Islamic values, e.g. compassion, kindness, love and selflessness can be developed through engaging students in processes of spiritual training. Discussion method as a teaching method can engage the students in analytical and critical thinking, not only this, it will provide the students with opportunity of interacting and cooperating in investigating and solving the issues.[10]

What is Discussion Method:

The discussion method nurtures the students' analytical thinking, understanding and problem solving skill.Discussion method, provide a platform for the students to exchange their ideas, share multiple point of views. It is an effort to indepth understanding of the matter by reflecting their own ideas and responding to the other ideas. Discussion may focus on the topic, problem, or any issue. Discussion may occur in small groups or in the whole class. It may be student or teacher-led.[11,12.]

Discussion versus Recitation:

Recitation is a traditional teaching method in which teacher is engaged in talking about the whole class time or students are engaged in reading of the text. In recitation the teacher is the only interpretive authority, while the discussion method is an interactive teaching method in which teacher presents a topic, issue or question to the students and allow the students to share their views about it. In discussion method the teacher controls the discussion and evaluate the response of the students and teacher is the ultimate interpretive authority.[13] The three types of discussions on the basis of content as:[14]

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[7] Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Al-Naquib. Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education, (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979).

[8]Tibawi, Abdul Latif.. "Islamic Education". (London: Luzac. Bradley J. Cook, 1972).

[9]Al-Zarnüji, Burhän Al-Din. "*Ta'alim al-Muta'allim: Tariq al-Ta'allum"* (Instruction of the student: The method of learning), trans. Gustave Edmund von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel. (New York: Kings Crown Press, 1972).

[10] Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. "The Islamic Philosophers' Views on Education." Muslim Education Quarterly, 1984, 2 (4), 5–16

[11] Tharp, R. G., & Gallimore, R. Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in social context. Cambridge, (England: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[12] Newmann, F. Higher order thinking in teaching social studies: A rationale for the assessment of classroom thoughtfulness. *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 1990, *22*, 41–56

[13] Cazden, C. B. *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001).

[14] Roby, T. Models of discussion. In J. T. Dillon (Ed.), Questioning and discussion: A multidisciplinary study Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1988, 163–191

1. **Problematical discussions:** This discussion try to find out the solutions of the simple or complex problems, in this discussion teacher plays a dominant role to control the mode of the discussion.
2. **Dialectical discussions:** This type of discussion, help the students to compare, refine and express their views, in this type, the student are the controlling body for the discussion.
3. **Informational discussions:** This discussion focused on controversial issues and the students has the freedom to discuss the issues in an accepting environment.

Impact of Discussion Method of learning:

The discussion method helps to a high level in the text comprehension, analytical reasoning, critical thinking, metacognition, argumentation around and about the text.[15]

The procedure for effective discussion are as under:[16,17.]

1. Conducting Effective Discussion:

i) Define the objectives of the discussion group:

- Make clear to the students that they will share their observations and point of views.
- Acknowledge the students' confusions, nervousness and fear.
- Ensure the students that this is not graded discussion, so be feel easy and discuss the topic just to enhance the understanding.

ii) Explain the discussion format to the class:

- Before engaging the students in discussion process, tell them a particular theme or provide reading material.
- To maintain the interest of the students frequently changes the discussion format.

iii) Define terms and state assumptions:

Assumptions and terms must be defined before starting the discussion so that each student starts from the same point.

- The Instructor should explain all the terms and assumptions e.g.
- Discussion on the need of fundamental of Islam, the term 'fundamental' should be defines and assumption 'need' should be explained to the students.

2. Maintaining the Discussion:

i) Control excessive talkers:

In group discussion some students may dominant the discussion, so it is the instructor duty to control the discussion process and motivate the nontalkers on talk.

[15] Murphy, P. K., Wilkinson, I. A. G., Soter, A., Hennessey, M. N., & Alexander, J. F. Examining the effects of classroom discussion on students' high-level comprehension of text: A meta-analysis. Unpublished manuscript. State College, (PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2007).

[16] Cashin, William E. and McKnight, Philip C. "Improving Discussions." IDEA #15, Center for Faculty Evaluation & Development, (Kansas: State University, 1986).

[17] Peter J. Frederick. The Dreaded Discussion: Ten Ways to Start, Improving College and University Teaching, 1981, 29 (3), 109-114

ii) The discussion that goes off track:

If the discussion goes out of track, the instructor should interfere in discussion and re-focus the group on the assign theme of the discussion.

3. Instructor's Role as Group Leader:

- The instructor must be aware about the educational experiences of the students and engage them in a common experience.
- Not focus on the contribution of the prticipants, just focus the discussion points to make a judgement.
- Don't question a single student for too long.
- The instructor should share their own experiences to moderate the discussion.
- Ask the students to elaborate, clarify, expand, explain, explore, etc.

4. Concluding the Discussion:

- At the end of the discussion, instructor must summarize it, compare the ideas, draw conclusion, and come to the same point.
- Tell the students, the purpose of the discussion and the learning that they have learned through discussion.

Methodology:

This research study was conducted through mixed Method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected for in-depth insight of the research issue. The data collection instruments were:

- A semi structured observation tool:
  This tool assisted to observe the classes of Islamiat classrooms to identify the teaching methods in practice.
- Pre-test and post-test design:
  These tools were used to find out the impact of discussion method on teaching – learning process of the subject 'Islamiat'.
- An interview with experts:
  The interviews were conducted to highlight the ways, remedies, solutions for effective use of the discussion method in teaching – learning process.

Sampling Procedure:

Stratified sampling techniques were used. At first, 15 male and 15 female secondary schools were selected through simple random sampling technique. At 2nd stage 02 teachers were selected for observing their classes through purposive sampling technique. (60 teachers).

On 3rd stage 06 schools (03 male and 03 female) and a sample of 120 students (20/school) were selected through simple random sampling technique to conduct the teaching through discussion method. 20 experts (10 Islamiat subject specialists, 10 teacher educators) were selected through convenient sampling procedure. (N#200)

Results:

Data were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS by using paired sample t-test.

Paired Sample Statistics:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pre-test	120	24.6	7.53	.68
Post-test	120	37.8	7.20	.65

Paired Sample Test:

To find out the impact of discussion methods on the achievement level in the teaching of Islamiat, a paired-sample t-test was conducted. There was a statistical significant increase in marks of post-test (M = 37.83, SD = 7.20) than marks of pre-test (M = 24.6, SD = 7.53), t (119) = -36.51, p =.000.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2 – tailed)
Pair 1 pre-test – Post-test	-13.233	3.969	.362	-36.516	119	.000

The results of the 'observations' indicates that:

- The teaching of Islamiat is taken as easy as simple.
- Teachers considers the subject of islamiat just to transfer the written information in the textbooks.
- Most of the classroom practices just show the reading of the subject matter in islamiat textbooks. This reading may be by the teachers or the students.
- Some teachers were showing interest in teaching Islamiat, but they just share some stories of the Islamic heroes and tell the students moral in these stories.
- Few of the teachers were using a question answer method, but again, they were just focused on asking memorizing concepts.

The results of the 'interviews' with experts generated the following themes:

Theme 1: Removing misconceptions:

Results indicate that the discussion method is an appropriate method for teaching Islamiat as it helps the students to remove the misconceptions by their own. The discussion involved to justify their point of views with the solid evidences, if students cannot justify their point of views, they become agree with the points which are supported by good empirical data.

Theme 2: Independent Learner:

When students are engaged in group discussion, they feel them as independent learners. Because in discussion method the students explore and share their ideas in the light of teachers' instructions, this practices make them independent learner.

Theme 3: Increasing students' confidence level:

The majority of the respondents responded that discussion method is very important in increasing the confidence level of the students, because discussion method provide the opportunity to the students to share their ideas in front of other class fellows and the teachers.

Theme 4: Enhancing the different skills:

In discussion method the students critically analyse the information and then try to communicate their point of views in an effective way through oral communication. Thus discussion method assist the students in raising, the analytical skills; critical thinking skills; speaking skills; communicating skills; etc.

Theme 5: Social development:

Discussion method assist in social development of the students as it brings the student closer to each other; they learn cooperation, willpower to accept good ideas, ways of social interaction, etc.

Discussions and Recommendations:

The results of this study highlight that almost all the Islamic studies classroom shows passive teaching-learning environment. When interventions were made to teaching through discussion method, students were actively participating in learning and discussing Islamic concepts. Student were really enjoying discussion as they have Islamic background and practices of Islamic principles in their homes. So it is recommended that for effective teaching of Islamiat at different levels of education following provisions should be made.

Use of Interactive Pedagogies:

Transfer of knowledge should be done through the pedagogies which enhance the student's analytical and critical skills, enable them to bring out the hidden abilities, motivate them for acquiring knowledge and attract the students' interest towards the learning and in-depth understanding of the Islamic concepts.

Use Discussion Method in an effective way:

Conduct discussion by dividing the whole class into small groups or engaging the whole class as a large group in discussion. It is the teacher responsibility to prepare a plan before teaching through discussion method. This plan should focus on selecting the appropriate theme which can be communicated through discussion. Discussion should be controlled through a leader, whether it is in small group or large group. At the end of the discussion, topic must be concluded by integrating all, the point of views of the whole class.

In-service and Pre-services Trainings:

Trainings should be provided to the teachers. These trainings should equip the teachers with different pedagogical skills and trained them in using different pedagogies in relation to different themes, learner experience and educational backgrounds.

Incorporating Pedagogies to the Textbook of Islamiat:

Guidelines should be provided to transfer the knowledge of different Islamic concepts in the textbook of Islamiat. Different topics should be grouped under the same pedagogy, which best suited to their communication.

Space and Sitting Arrangement of the Classroom:

Sitting arrangement of the classroom should be in such a way that facilitates interaction and discussion among the students. There must be a suitable space for facilitating group discussion. Trained teachers cannot use their skills to engage the students in group discussion or any other interactive pedagogies, if the space and sitting arrangement not facilitate the use of these pedagogies

Discussion between students and Islamic scholars:

Discussion session should be organized in which students share their point of views with the Islamic Scholars and ask about their queries to Islamic scholars. This session should organize once in a month. This will increase the students' learning regarding Islam and will assist in achieving the objectives of teaching of Islamiat at maximum level.