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## RELEVANCE OF ISLAMIC TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF AL-QARAWIYYIN UNIVERSITY

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### ABSTRACT

The University of Al-Qarawiyyin is renowned as the most ancient and historic academic institution in the world. This university offers a conventional teaching method in the present day, which presents a significant challenge in the 21st century. How is this pedagogy still advantageous for human beings? How does it contribute to mental or intellectual development? This study report intends to investigate the efficacy of conventional teaching for human beings. For this paper, I want to engage in discussions with others, with the aim of exchanging and acquiring information via research articles. Traditional pedagogy promotes the development of close relationships between instructors and students, fosters the acquisition of skills and critical thinking, emphasizes memorization and spoken communication, and enhances attention and group debate. Al-Qarawiyyin University adheres to a traditional pedagogy

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in order to impart religious teachings and promote the authentic principles of Islam.

**KEYWORDS:** Islamic Pedagogy, Pedagogical strategies, 21<sup>st</sup> century, University of Al-Qarawiyyin.

## INTRODUCTION

The University of Al-Qarawiyyin is widely acknowledged as the most ancient and continuously functioning educational establishment globally. It has a rich heritage deeply anchored in the traditions of madrasah-style instruction. Throughout the ages, the notion of the university has undergone substantial transformations, adjusting to shifts in both time and geographical context. However, it has constantly maintained its fundamental objective of seeking truth via the examination of evidence. The university's dedication to truth continues to be a fundamental aspect of its character, despite its evolving role in pursuing larger functional objectives in the contemporary day (Ali, 2016).

Al-Qarawiyyin University has the challenge of maintaining its traditional teaching techniques while also adapting to the requirements of modern education. The university's goal, centred on the search for evidence-based truth, now encompasses a broader responsibility of promoting critical thinking, innovation, and global involvement. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a university is defined as a "corporation of teachers and students established to provide and receive instruction in a specific range of subjects that goes beyond what is offered at a school." An institution of higher education is a recognised establishment that provides courses and research opportunities mostly in non-vocational disciplines. It has established authorities and privileges, including the authority to grant degrees. Modern universities, such as Al-Qarawiyyin, have a wider range of obligations that go beyond vocational training. They are expected to provide a complete education, encourage intellectual exploration, and contribute to the progress of society (Hoque & Md. Faruk Abdullah, 2021).

As Al-Qarawiyyin University progresses, it must include contemporary teaching methodologies and technology while maintaining its

dedication to conventional principles and the pursuit of knowledge. This entails revising its curriculum to include current fields of study, cultivating an all-encompassing and varied academic atmosphere, and promoting research and advancement. By doing this, Al-Qarawiyyin not only pays tribute to its historical function as a stronghold of education but also adjusts to the difficulties and possibilities of the 21st century, guaranteeing its continued importance and relevance as an institution in the worldwide academic sphere. Al-Qarawiyyin University acts as a conduit between its historical legacy and the progressive future, persistently imparting knowledge and motivation to successive cohorts of global students (Hardaker et al., 2013).

### **CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS**

The present educational system has seen major developments that result in the founding of many colleges and educational institutions. It does not, however, help students to develop with a complete and balanced set of character qualities. Students nowadays are dealing with a variety of problems including stress, poor critical thinking ability, and low emotional intelligence. These issues not only influence individual students but also have wider consequences for society as a good education system loses the possibility to benefit everyone (Gottfredson et al., 2004).

Academic corruption is one of the most serious issues. Schools and universities now abound in instances of academic lying including plagiarism and cheating. Forced by pressure to get good marks, students may turn to dishonest methods, therefore compromising the integrity of the educational system. The convenient access to knowledge available on the internet has aggravated this issue by allowing students to replicate work without appropriate credit easier. This not only undermines real academic success but also stunts students' growth in ethical behaviour and critical thinking (Berkley Center for Religion, 2015; Mohrman et al., 2011).

Important issues within the educational system also include respect and discipline. The respect kids have for classmates and instructors has clearly dropped. Common in schools are more instances of disruptive behaviour, bullying, and disrespect of authorities. This contempt disturbs the learning

process and generates a poisonous environment unfit for the expansion of education. Overwhelmed with disciplinary problems, teachers may struggle to maintain a calm and efficient classroom (Berkley Center for Religion, 2015).

Critics claim that these problems belong to the educational system. Previous researchers have tackled many issues including antiquated teaching methods, a dearth of qualified teachers, and delayed availability of curricular resources. Furthermore attacked for failing to meet the many learning demands of children and stifling of creativity is the emphasis on standardised testing. Further aggravating these issues are insufficient mental health care, a dearth of practical life skills instruction, and few chances for personal development (Mizikaci, 2006).

Furthermore, the digital gap is becoming increasingly noticeable, therefore many pupils lack access to required technical tools. This disparity in educational chances helps to maintain social and financial inequalities. Therefore, the educational system has to be completely reformed to handle these many difficulties so that it not only provides intellectual knowledge but also guarantees well-rounded, emotionally aware, and socially conscious people. Developing an education system that not only discourages academic dishonesty and fosters respect and discipline but also gives students the tools and values they need to succeed in a world fast changing (Huang et al., 2018; Lindsay, 2005; Reisdorf & Rikard, 2018).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Historical Role of Islamic Universities**

Table 1 is a comprehensive summary of the prominent Islamic colleges that have played an important part in history. It includes information on their founding, geographical location, and noteworthy contributions and influences. The “University Details” column consolidates the university’s name, founding date, and country of location. The “Notable Roles and Impacts” section showcases the significant achievements of each institution in several subjects, including philosophy, medicine, and religion. It also emphasises their impact on both the Islamic world and worldwide intellectual traditions. This approach

provides a succinct but thorough examination of the historical importance of these major educational institutions.

*Table 1: Historical Role of Islamic Universities*

University Details	Notable Roles and Impacts
Al-Qarawiyyin University, 859 CE, Morocco (Hoque & Md. Faruk Abdullah, 2021)	Played a vital part in the translation movement, safeguarded information from ancient writings, and had impact on subjects such as medicine, philosophy, and religion. It is the oldest educational institution that has been running without interruption.
Al-Azhar University, 970-972 CE, Egypt (Mohamed Abdel Fattah, 2019)	Renowned for its extensive program including Islamic law, theology, and sciences. It emerged as a prominent establishment in the Islamic realm, exerting influence on religious and scholarly ideas.
University of al-Andalus, Late 9th century, Spain (Daud, 2014)	During the Islamic Golden Age, this place had a crucial role as a hub for intellectual and cultural interchange. It made substantial contributions to fields like as philosophy, medicine, and the arts.
Nizamiyya (Baghdad), 1065 CE, Iraq (Hardaker et al., 2013)	Founded by Nizam al-Mulk, it had a significant impact in disseminating Sunni Islamic doctrines and legal principles. The institution drew renowned academics and played a crucial role in defining Islamic education.
Al-Mustansiriya School, 1227-1233 CE, Iraq	Served as a prominent hub for several academic fields, making substantial contributions to Islamic research

University Details	Notable Roles and Impacts
	and legal studies. Additionally, it had one of the first hospitals dedicated to medical education.
Al-Nizamiyya of Nishapur, 11th century, Iran	Significantly contributed to the development and widespread dissemination of Islamic law and theology. It was a component of the wider network of Nizamiyya institutions that influenced the education system in mediaeval Islamic societies.

### History of Al-Qarawiyyin

Founded by Fatima Al-Fihri in 859 CE in Fez, Morocco, Al-Qarawiyyin institution is the oldest continually running institution in the world. Originally from Tunisia, Fatima was a rich lady who built a mosque from her fortune; subsequently, the mosque housed the university's headquarters. The university's emphasis moved over time from religious studies to include a broad spectrum of disciplines including astronomy, medicine, languages, grammar, mathematics, and music. Al-Qarawiyyin therefore developed into a gathering place for academics from all across the globe, thereby promoting a rich intellectual climate. Furthermore, the institution was very important in translating Greek books into Arabic, therefore supporting the European Renaissance. Scholars such Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Arabi, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), and Moses Maimonides studied there, therefore influencing many spheres of knowledge (Ali, 2016; Hoque & Md. Faruk Abdullah, 2021).

Al-Qarawiyyin University also received assistance from Fatima's personal fortune, sultan contributions, and a Waqf system wherein individuals paid money or property to help the university. Later, this kind of financing affected the creation of endowment systems at European colleges such as Oxford. Al-Qarawiyyin institution is now acknowledged by UNESCO and the Guinness World Records as the oldest institution worldwide. The institution, with Fatima Al-Fihri's legacy spanning millennia as evidence of the value of

education and intellectual development, still running as a hub of knowledge despite its ancient beginnings (Hardaker et al., 2013).

### **Traditional Pedagogical Methods in the Past**

Traditional teaching has several advantages that make it relevant in contemporary times. It has a lengthy track record of effectively transmitting information and skills from one generation to the next. This approach offers a distinct framework, facilitating pupils' concentration and maintaining their organization. Furthermore, conventional teaching methods often include cultural aspects, which help to uphold traditions and foster a sense of individual and collective identity. The familiarity of these strategies fosters a conducive and reassuring learning environment. Additionally, the focus on rote memorization cultivates a solid basis of information. Teachers provide direct guidance to pupils, delivering prompt comments and assistance (Lovtsova et al., 2021).

Memorization is a fundamental element of conventional teaching methods. Students often commit information, formulae, and language to memory. Although this strategy may not consistently foster profound comprehension, it is beneficial in disciplines such as mathematics, language acquisition, and history. In these regions, the process of committing information to memory serves as the fundamental foundation for acquiring more intricate knowledge. Furthermore, conventional teaching methods promote the development of deep connections with literature. Engaging in active reading, participating in conversations, and completing writing projects contribute to the enhancement of comprehension (Mccarthy, 2011).

In addition, conventional teaching methods foster critical thinking by integrating a range of tactics. These methods include inquiry, Socratic discourse, and problem-based learning. These strategies promote students' ability to critically analyse, assess, and integrate knowledge. By engaging in this process, students develop the aptitude required to address intricate problems and provide well-informed judgements (Mascolo, 2009).

Conventional teaching methods can provide a well-organized educational setting. This framework helps pupils in comprehending the content effortlessly. The package comprises explicit lesson plans, concise topic introductions, ample practice opportunities, and comprehensive review materials. This approach guarantees that students acquire essential principles prior to on to more complex subjects. Traditional pedagogy is characterised by teacher-centered education. Teachers serve as the main purveyors of information and oversee the whole of the learning process. This method, albeit organized, enables prompt elucidation of ideas (Chakera et al., 2020).

Traditional techniques provide a sense of familiarity for both students and instructors, ensuring a consistent learning experience. Additionally, they contribute to the preservation of cultural values and customs, ensuring their transmission from one generation to the next. Conventional evaluations, such as quizzes and examinations, are well-suited to these instructional approaches. They provide transparent assessment standards and valuable feedback on student advancement. This alignment guarantees that the objectives of education are achieved efficiently (Lovtsova et al., 2021).

### **Shortcomings of the Traditional Pedagogical Methods**

Table 2 presents the main flaws of conventional teaching strategies along with a thorough explanation of every one of them. Although it works well in certain situations, traditional education sometimes stresses rote memorization and a teacher-centered approach, which could impede the development of critical thinking abilities and lower student involvement. While overemphasizing memorization might lead to superficial knowledge rather than deep comprehension, the rigidity of conventional approaches may not fit the many learning styles and demands of all pupils. Furthermore, conventional teaching might show cultural prejudice, therefore marginalizing many points of view and restricting inclusiveness. Furthermore, limiting possibilities for interactive and creative learning experiences are the low utilization of technology in these approaches. Finally, emphasizing more memorization than on the application



and synthesis of information, old tests often coincide poorly with current educational goals.

*Table 2: Shortcomings of the Traditional Pedagogical Methods*

<b>Shortcomings</b>	<b>Description</b>
Lack of Critical Thinking Development (Saleh, 2001)	Conventional teaching approaches may give rote memorization top priority above the growth in critical thinking ability. This method reduces pupils' capacity for analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of data—qualities necessary for tackling difficult situations and guiding choices.
Teacher-Centered Approach (Jory, 2011)	With conventional approaches emphasizing the instructor as the main source of information, pupils may have a passive learning experience. This strategy may discourage active engagement and restrict chances for students to take responsibility for their learning given little student input and interaction.
Limited Student Engagement (Nces, 2023)	Because of their typically strict and one-size-fits-all attitude, traditional educational approaches might produce poor student involvement. Particularly if the content is not delivered in a manner that is relevant or meaningful to the students, students may get bored or disengaged, therefore lowering their general learning results and motivation.
Inflexibility	Many times, traditional teaching is rigid and unadaptable to satisfy the various demands of students. For pupils who need a more customised or unique approach to learning, it may not fit various learning styles, speeds, or talents, therefore less successful.

<b>Shortcomings</b>	<b>Description</b>
Overemphasis on Memorization (Chakera et al., 2020)	Although memorising is a fundamental part of conventional education, too much focus on rote learning might result in a surface-level knowledge of ideas. While students may be able to remember facts and statistics, they may find it difficult to apply this information in useful or real-world circumstances, therefore impeding more thorough understanding and critical application of abilities.
Cultural Bias	Conventional approaches might unintentionally support certain cultural standards, beliefs, or viewpoints, therefore marginalising pupils from many origins. Lack of representation and inclusion in the curriculum resulting from this might make it more difficult for every student to see themselves reflected in their education and have a feeling of belonging.
Limited Use of Technology (Ramdhan et al., 2025)	Modern technology is often underused in traditional teaching methods, which might restrict chances for interactive and creative learning environments. These approaches could overlook improving student involvement, cooperation, and access to a wider spectrum of knowledge and viewpoints by not completely merging digital tools and resources.
Assessment Misalignment	Conventional tests and quizzes, for example, often place more emphasis on memorizing and recall than on comprehension, application, and synthesis of information. This may cause a mismatch between what is taught and assessed, therefore limiting the assessment of student learning and development.

### **Application of Current Methods in Teaching Learning**

Table 3 shows some contemporary teaching and learning strategies extensively used in modern education. These techniques stress a change from conventional teacher-centered approaches to more student-centered, participatory models.

While Blended Learning and the Flipped Classroom mix digital resources with conventional education, giving flexibility and deeper interaction with the content, Student-Centered Learning emphasises specific student needs and promotes active involvement. Through integrating students in real-world projects and group work, Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Collaborative Learning foster critical thinking, creativity, and cooperation. Gamification gives the learning process game components, therefore increasing its appeal and motivational power. Encouragement of inquiry-based learning helps students to be curious and autonomous explorers, therefore empowering them to assume leadership of their education. While Technology-Enhanced Learning uses digital technologies to improve engagement and provide individualised learning experiences, Differentiated Instruction guarantees that various learning requirements are satisfied by customising methods to particular individuals. By addressing the many requirements of today's students, these approaches taken together reflect a more dynamic, inclusive, and interesting approach to education.

*Table 3: Application of Current Methods in Teaching Learning*

<b>Current Method</b>	<b>Application in Teaching and Learning</b>
Student-Centered Learning (Mascolo, 2009; Shanmugavelu et al., 2020; Trabelsi et al., 2023)	Student-Centered Learning Emphasizes pupils' needs, interests, and preferred learning approaches. Promotes ownership of the learning process, teamwork, and active involvement. Teachers guide students in investigating subjects and enhancing their critical thinking abilities, therefore acting as facilitators.

<b>Current Method</b>	<b>Application in Teaching and Learning</b>
Blended Learning (Hennessy et al., 2022; Kilipiris et al., 2024; Rabbi et al., 2018)	Blended Learning Mixes online learning with conventional classroom training. gives pupils freedom to study at their own speed and access to a large spectrum of digital materials. This approach may be customised to fit each student's particular requirement and facilitates customised education.
Flipped Classroom (Kilipiris et al., 2024; Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2022)	Flipped Classroom Delivers teaching materials—often online—outside of the classroom, therefore reversing the conventional learning setting. Hands-on activities, conversations, and knowledge application during classroom time let students really interact with the content and work with teachers and classmates.
Project-Based Learning (PBL) (Trust et al., 2023)	Project-Based Learning Engages pupils in practical projects requiring them to use knowledge and abilities to address challenges. promotes cooperation, critical thought, and invention. Often leading to a more meaningful educational experience, PBL gives students chances to pursue their interests and participate actively in their learning.
Collaborative Learning (Borthwick & Gallagher-Brett, 2014; Davis et al., 2016; Hong & Sullivan, 2013)	Collaborative Learning invites students to cooperate in small groups towards shared objectives. This approach improves coordination, communication, and ability to solve problems. Through student learning from one another and developing a feeling of

Current Method	Application in Teaching and Learning
	community, cooperative learning helps to create a supportive classroom.
Gamification (Hossain & Rahman, 2023; Kilipiris et al., 2024; Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2022)	Gamification includes point scoring, leaderboards, and rewards—game components—into the educational process. Gamification makes learning enjoyable and engaging, therefore boosting engagement and drive. It may also inspire pupils to aim for both intellectual and personal development and foster fair competition.
Inquiry-Based Learning (Khalaf & Zin, 2018; Tezcan-Unal et al., 2018)	Inquiry-Based Learning invites students to probe subjects in great detail, ask questions, and do research. This approach increases knowledge of the topic, critical thinking, and curiosity. Through inquiry-based learning, students may participate actively in their education and grow in ability for autonomous research and analysis.
Differentiated Instruction (Jordan & McGhie-Richmond, 2014)	Teachers use tools and approaches based on the varied demands of their pupils. Differentiated teaching guarantees that every student has access to the curriculum and may realise their full potential by allowing several learning styles, talents, and interests. It usually calls for many strategies, including flexible groups and tiered tasks.
Technology-Enhanced Learning (Khalaf & Zin, 2018; Shrestha, 2013)	Technology-Enhanced Learning incorporates into the learning process digital technologies and resources. This approach improves involvement, teamwork, and information availability.

Current Method	Application in Teaching and Learning
	Personalised learning experiences—where students may investigate subjects, practise skills, and get immediate feedback via applications, simulations, and online platforms—are made possible by technology.

## DISCUSSION

### Relevance of Al-Qarawiyyin University in 21<sup>st</sup> century

Al-Qarawiyyin University is very relevant in the twenty-first century as it is the oldest continually running educational institution in the world with great historical heritage. The institution struggles to properly integrate technology into its instructional system as it tries to modify its conventional pedagogical approaches to current needs. Improving the educational process and guaranteeing that students are ready to negotiate a world becoming more and more digital depend on this integration. Al-Qarawiyyin can create a dynamic and adaptable learning environment by fusing modern tools such online learning platforms, digital materials, and interactive technology with conventional teaching approaches. This strategy not only protects the cultural legacy of the school but also satisfies the many demands of the modern global students, thereby arming them to succeed in many spheres of work and study.

Another important component of Al-Qarawiyyin University's development is changing the syllabus to stay current in the contemporary society. The institution has to reconcile keeping its historical concentration on religious and cultural studies with adding modern disciplines such science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Furthermore included are approaches like Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Inquiry-Based Learning, which help to develop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities—qualities necessary to meet difficult worldwide problems. Equally crucial is encouraging inclusion and diversity in the curriculum and student

population so that the educational resources are easily available and mirror a broad spectrum of viewpoints. This inclusion not only enhances the academic atmosphere but also helps students to have a better awareness of world problems, therefore arming them to significantly contribute to a linked world.

Al-Qarawiyyin University has to additionally concentrate on educational quality, accessibility, and faculty growth if it is to remain a top educational institution. Programs for ongoing professional development may provide teachers with contemporary pedagogical approaches, therefore improving their capacity to give excellent, student-centered education. By giving scholarships, financial assistance, and technology-enhanced learning tools to help students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, the institution should also encourage accessibility and equality. Maintaining the school at the forefront of global education depends on supporting research and innovation, therefore promoting a culture of intellectual curiosity drawing academics from all across the globe. At last, improving community involvement helps Al-Qarawiyyin to match its educational initiatives with modern society demands, thereby giving students chances to use their knowledge in practical settings. By means of these initiatives, Al-Qarawiyyin University may keep carrying out its historic role while developing to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, thereby linking its rich history with a creative future.

## CONCLUSION

Al-Qarawiyyin University is evidence of the continuing value of education as it combines its rich historical history with the needs of the present society. The university has to include technology, change its course, and promote diversity as it negotiates the difficulties of the twenty-first century to make sure it stays relevant and successful in the global scene of today. Al-Qarawiyyin may keep fostering among its pupils critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities by keeping a dedication to educational quality, accessibility, and ongoing professional development. Moreover, the university may go beyond the classroom by supporting research, creativity, and community involvement, thus answering modern society demands and supporting the worldwide information sharing. By means of these initiatives, Al-Qarawiyyin University

not only pays tribute to its historical significance as a lighthouse of knowledge but also presents itself as a crucial institution for next generations, thereby bridging the gap between legacy and modernity.

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