

Pedagogical Practice, Educational Thoughts and Contributions of Eminent Early Muslim Scholars (699-855)

Maryam Mushtaq

maryammushtaq086@gmail.com

PhD Scholar (Education), Ibadat International University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Dr. Aftab Ahmed

Assistant Professor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

Dr. Ishaq

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: * Maryam Mushtaq maryammushtaq086@gmail.com

Received: 06-11-2025	Revised: 21-11-2025	Accepted: 12-12-2025	Published: 24-12-2025
-----------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------

ABSTRACT

This study explores the pedagogical skills, educational thought, and contributions of three eminent early Muslim scholars Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (699–855 CE). While widely recognized for religious leadership, their intellectual and educational innovations remain understudied in modern discourse. This research examines their innovative and collaborative teaching methodologies, which helped globalize education and laid foundations for the modern world. Using a qualitative historical approach, the study employs replication, adaptation, skimming, and scanning techniques to analyze relevant literature. Data is synthesized through inductive, deductive, comparative, and discourse analysis, with source materials evaluated via external and internal criticism. The thesis is structured across five chapters: introduction, literature review, data synthesis, data evaluation, and report writing. Ultimately, this work aims to illuminate how the scholars' pedagogical legacy continues to inform and benefit contemporary education systems. This study concludes that Aima (Three Great Academic Leaders): Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal are amongst the most influential and eminent early Muslim scholars at tertiary level. Through their innovative & collaborative research based teaching methodologies they have established their schools of thoughts. Their educational thoughts and contributions enlighten the dark ways of life; their teachings opened new chapters in world history and introduced new concepts, and led the world toward research, discoveries and inventions. It is true that everyone in the world owe a debt of gratitude towards them.

Keywords: Pedagogical Practice, Educational Thoughts, Contributions, Eminent, Early Muslim Scholars

INTRODUCTION

When the whole world was asleep in ignorance and there was no system for any aspect of life. The girls were being buried alive and it was impossible for women to leave their houses alone (Al-Sharqawi 1993; Azmi 2015). When the world was a killing field and there was the rule of power everywhere (Azmi 2015). When the world was deprived of the light of knowledge and in every direction there was darkness of oppression (Mubarakpuri, 1990). At that time, Islam has brought to the world luminous light (Ira 2014 & Naqvi, 1982). In such era, after the establishment of Al-Madina Al-Munawwara: the world's first mega city of wisdom and knowledge in Arabia by The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad S.A.W.W in 622 A.D, Hazrat Umar bin Al-Khitab R.A, one of the most imminent companions of The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad S.A.W.W and second Caliph established Kufa: the world's second Educational and first research city in Iraq in 638 A.D under the headship of Hazrat AbdULLAH bin Masood R.A (Azmi, 2015; Hussain, 2010).

Before the completion of a century, this centre of knowledge and wisdom gave the world such kind of personalities who illuminated the world with the light of education and Research like the bright cluster of stars (Al-sharqawi 1993, Azmi 2015, Bakr 1997; Mubarakpuri, 1990). In 762, Abu Ja'far Al-Mansoor built a new city Baghdad in Iraq and transferred all of the institutions, libraries, and research centres from Kufa to the newly built city under the headship of Imam Muhammad, one of the most prominent students of Imam Abu Hanifa R.A (Shah, 2004).

If, in the history of Muslim there was a series of caliphate, monarchy and victories, on other hand, the world's renowned teachers continued an endless stream of knowledge, led from Al-Madina to Kufa, Kufa to Baghdad, Baghdad to Egypt and Spain, and spread to enlighten all over the world (Azmi, 2015; Naqvi, 1982).

Although there are many Muslim academics leaders in history who had endowed their lives to education but this study is limited to the pedagogical skills, educational thoughts and contributions of selected eminent early Muslims scholars i.e Aima Arba.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The eminent early Muslim Scholars, (Three Great Academic Leaders): Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal are known for their leading role in religious aspects of life. The modern world knows them as the founders of their schools of thoughts but is unaware of their pedagogical skills: teaching methodologies, educational thoughts, and contributions.

Great Academic Leaders: the three most influential teachers and researchers of the world were in the relation of teacher disciple with each other i.e. Imam Abu Hanifa: the founder of Hanafi School of Thoughts was the teacher of Imam Malik, Imam Malik: founder of Maliki School of Thoughts was the teacher of Imam Shafie, Imam Shafie: founder of Shafie School of Thoughts was the teacher of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal: founder of Hanbali School of Thoughts (Muabarkpuri, 1990). Their focus was not only on verbal teaching and learning processes but properly moulded their students' personalities according to the need of society (Azmi, 2015; Haddad, 2007; Muabarkpuri, 1990 ;). They were the first who used different tools and types of assessment to continuously assess their students' over all development in every aspect of life (Azmi 2015, Qasmi 2016). They were such great, resourceful and influential teachers and researchers whose teaching and researches are still illuminating the ways of billions of peoples all around the world (Azmi 2015; Haddad, 2007).

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the following questions in the most appropriate way.

- What were the pedagogical practices of selected early Muslim scholars?
- What were their educational contribution?
- What were their educational thoughts?

Although there are many Muslim academics leaders in history who had endowed their lives to education but this study is limited to the pedagogical practices, educational thoughts and contributions of selected four eminent early Muslims scholars i.e. (Three Academics Leaders):

1. Imam Numan bin Sabit (699 - 767) A.D, commonly known as Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam Azam (Great academics leader).

2. Imam Malik bin Anas (711-795) A.D, commonly known as Imam Malik or Imam Dar ul Hijrat.
3. Abu AbdULLAH Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal (780-855) A.D, commonly known as Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and analysis are important aspects of any sort of study. This thesis persuaded it by using: The techniques of “Replication” and “Adaptation”, “Skimming” i.e a technique use to select and read intended materials only for generating general idea, and “Scanning” i.e a technique use to search for specific information has been used from relevant literature. Data collected has been synthesised by following inductive & deductive, comparative analysis and discourse analysis (Soiferman, 2010; Wahid 2016). The authenticity of source materials have been tested through “External criticism” by asking “is it genuine?” While the worth and accuracy of the evidences has been analysed through “Internal criticism” by putting questions:

1. What does the evidence mean?
2. What does the author trying to say?
3. What idea the author want to convey?
4. How can the words be interpreted?

The paper is comprised of five major chapters. Chapter 1: Introduction; Chapter 2: Data collection or literature review; Chapter 3: Data synthesis; Chapter 4: Evaluation of collected data, and Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

FINDING

The aim of the study is to explore pedagogical skills, educational thoughts and contributions of eminent early Muslims scholar: Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, and Imam Ahmad ibn e Hanbal. It is purely a qualitative: exploratory study where a range of complementary methods have been used by the researcher. The study has explored its research objectives and has answered research questions in scientific way.

This study concludes that three great academic leaders Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, and Imam Ahmad ibn e Hanbal, are some the most influential and eminent early Muslim scholar at tertiary level. They were have revolutionised the world with research and modern education systems. They have moulded individuals personalities according to the needs of society and gave the world such kinds of great personalities who contributed the humanity in the most appropriate ways, who continued their struggle for an educated world. Their teachings have everlasting impacts on human lives, even by passing twelve centuries they have still been followed by billions of people all over the world. They have formalised and globalised the education through their innovative & research based teaching methodologies. Their educational thoughts enlighten the dark ways of life, and their innovative and research based teaching methodologies laid the foundation of modern world. Their pedagogical skills and thoughts led the world toward research, discoveries and inventions. It is true that everyone in the world owe a debt of gratitude towards them. Through this study it is proven that this modern and scientific world is one of the most prominent contributions of their teachings.

CONCLUSION

Three great academic leaders

The four most influential teachers and researchers of the world were in the relation of teacher disciple with each other i.e Imam Abu Hanifa: the founder of Hanafi School of Thoughts was the teacher of Imam Malik, Imam Malik: founder of Maliki School of Thoughts was the teacher of Imam Shafie, Imam Shafie: founder of Shafie School of Thoughts was the teacher of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal: founder of Hanbali School of Thoughts. Through their innovative, collaborative and research based teaching methodologies they revolutionised the world with research and education. They have introduced research by conducted thousands researches, compiled their research journals and taught research to their students. Their focus was not only on verbal teaching and learning processes but on overall behavioural development of students. They had used different tools and types of assessment to continuously assess their students' over all development in every aspect of life. They were such great, resourceful and influential teachers and researchers whose teaching and researches are still illuminating the ways of billions of peoples all around the world.

They used different types of leadership styles in their classrooms i.e Imam Abu Hanifa was used to used democratic, laissez fair, bureaucratic, paternalistic and autocratic leadership styles in his classroom while Imam Malik was used to used autocratic in the class, Imam Shafie was used to use democratic, bureaucratic and autocratic leadership styles, while Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was used to use democratic and autocratic leadership styles in his classrooms.

They had always created best learning environment, and motivated their students to ensure teaching learning processes effectively by using different motivation strategies; moreover, they had always treated their students being parents. They all were fully aware of all the characteristics of their students. Imam Shafi would always be taking attitude and aptitude tests for granting admission that would be mainly comprised of language fluency & proficiency and command over subject matters.

First session of their teaching would usually be followed by remedial lesson that would hold at evening while students would be doing their revision through discourse analysis at night.

Aima Arba would always be focused on overall development of their students; their teaching would be integrated with physical development, psychological development, general life experiences, interpersonal skills development, and Islamic values. They were true academic leaders who are still role models for humanity. They were the men of strong interpersonal skills. Before establishing their School of Thoughts, they prepared all of their lessons and research problems; it means that they had developed the world's first curriculum.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Mawjood, S.A. (2006). *The Biography of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal*. USA: Darussalam New Yark.
- Abu Zahra, I.M. (2007). *The Four Imams: their lives, works and schools of thoughts*. Egypt: Dar ul Fikr Al-Arbi.
- Aiziz. (2013). *Imam Shafi'i's interpersonal skills*. World Applied Science. Malaysia. 23(7).
- Al Razi, F.M. (1986). *Manaqeb Al Imam Al Shafi'e*. Cario: Maktabah Al Ilmiyyah.

- Al Shafi'e, A. (1309). *Al Risalah*, Shakir Ahmad Muhammad. Beirut, Lebanon: Al Maktabah Al Ilmiyyah.
- Al Shafi'e, A. (1993). *Al Umm*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al Marifah.
- Al Sharqawi, A. (1993). *Aimmah Al Fiqh*, Maktab Al Ulammah. Beirut, Lebanon: Al-Islamiya
- Ayyaz, Q. (1998). *Tarteeb al Madarik*. Lebanon: Dar al katob al ilmiya.
- Azmi, M.A. (2015). *SeeratAimaArba*. Lahore: Akbar publishers.
- Baiqi, A., & Muhammad, A. (1969). *Diwan Al Shafi'e*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar ulFikr.
- Baghdadi, K. (1997). *Tarekh e Baghdad*. Labnan: Dar Al Kotob Al-ilmiya.
- Diga. (2015). <http://slideshare.net/historical-method-written-report>.
- Haddad,G.F. (2007). *TheFour Imam and Their Schools*. London: Muslim Academic Trust.
- Ira, M. (2014). *A History of Islamic Societies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson. (2006). *Fifty key figures in Islam*. Taylor & Francis.
- Janin, & Hunt. (2006). *The Pursuit of Learning in Islamic World*. McFarland & Co.
- Jawzi. A. (Ed.). (1969). *Sifat Al Safwah*, DarulWayi'e. Beirut, Lebanon: Halb
- Hussain, S. (2010). *Hazrat Umar Farooq kay Halaat e Zindagi*. Pakistan: Islamic Book Services.
- Marquis, & Leslie. (1985). *Arbian Contributors to Determatology*. International Journal of Dermatology.
- Meliyana, & Marwiya. (2013). *Skimming and scanning*. Retrieved from <http://slideshare.net>
- Mubarakpuri,Q.A. (1990). *Seerat Aima Arba*. Pakistan: Idara Islamiyat.
- Nadvi, S.S. (1917). *Hayat Imam Malik*. Pakistan: Majlis Nashriyat e Islam Karachi.
- Naqvi, M. (1982). *Seerat Al-Nabvi*. Pakistan: Universty press.
- Nasar, & Sayyed. (2006).*Islamic Philosophy from its origin to the present: Philosophy in the land of Prophecy*. USA: Stat University of New Yark Press.
- Numani, Sh.A. (1892). *Seerat Ul Nu'man*, India, Matba Mufeed Aam, Agra.
- Qasmi, A.A. (2016). *Abu Hanifa: Sawanih o Afkar*.Delhi: Educational Publishing House.
- Robinson, & Francis. (2010). *Islam in South Asia*. Oxford Bibliographies Online Research Guide.Oxford University Press.

- Shah, A. (2004). *Tareekh e Islam*. Lahore: Maktabah Khalil.
- Smith, & Davis. (2007). *The Psychological Detective: An introduction to conducting research in Psychology*, 4th Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Setiyanto, D.A.(2016). Imam Malik bin Anas. *Al-Ahkam Ilmu Syariah Dan Hukum*2(2).
- Rhil & Salih S.F 2007. *Islamic belief: Imam Malik's doctrine of faith and practice*, University of the Western Cap
- Soifermam, I.K. (2010). *Inductive and Deductive Research Approaches*. University of Manitoba.
- Taha. (2013). Imam ash-Shafi'i. Retrieved from <https://sunnahmukkah.com>
- Usmani M.T. (2008). *Islam aur Jadeed Ma'ashi Masa'il*, Lahore, Idarah e Islamia.
- Wahid, A. (2016). *The contribution of Imam Shafi'i in Arabic Language and Literature*. Malaysia: Sultan Zainul Abidin University, (11), Pp547 -550