

## The Evolution of Classical Islamic Education Institution

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### ABSTRACT

The evolution of classical Islamic education institutions is a long and intricate journey, reflecting the transformation from a golden age to the modern context. Classical Islamic education has deep roots in scholarly and religious traditions, commencing in early Islam with a focus on the teachings of the Quran, hadith, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), usul al-fiqh (principles of jurisprudence), and aqidah (theology). Over time, these institutions have evolved and adapted to the demands of society. Modern classical Islamic education now encompasses the integration of scientific knowledge, technology, management, and other practical skills. The advancement of information technology and globalization has shaped contemporary classical Islamic education. Access to Islamic knowledge has widened through digital platforms and distance learning. International collaboration is increasingly embraced, enabling the integration of new ideas and modern approaches to teaching. This enhances the openness and flexibility of classical Islamic education institutions to meet the educational needs of contemporary society. The combination of traditional values and contemporary progress is key to the evolution of classical Islamic education, empowering future generations with knowledge, ethics, and skills relevant to their time

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### A. INTRODUCTION

The Evolution of Classical Islamic Education Institutions is a long historical journey that illustrates the changes and adaptations in the Islamic education system throughout time. Classical Islamic education has deep roots in scholarly and religious traditions, forming a fundamental foundation for Islamic civilization. Since the early

emergence of Islam in the 7th century CE, classical Islamic education has been a cornerstone in imparting and preserving religious, cultural, and knowledge values.

Initially, classical Islamic education institutions focused on understanding and interpreting Islamic scriptures such as the Quran and Hadith. Religious sciences like fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), usul al-fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), akidah (belief), and tafsir (exegesis of the Quran) formed the core of the educational curriculum during that time. Education institutions like madrasahs and pesantrens played a central role in educating generations of Muslims with strong religious knowledge.

However, over time and due to various social, technological, and mindset changes, classical Islamic education has undergone significant changes and developments. The modern era brings new challenges that necessitate the integration of scientific knowledge and technology into the curriculum of classical Islamic education. Modern classical Islamic education also includes learning about general sciences, management, and other practical skills to prepare the Muslim generation to face contemporary global challenges.

In this ever-changing global context, tracing the evolution of classical Islamic education institutions provides insights into how the tradition of Islamic education has adapted and evolved to remain relevant and effective in meeting the needs of modern society.

## **B. METHODS**

The methodology used in exploring the evolution of classical Islamic education institutions involves a historical and comparative approach. This approach comprises the following key steps:

**Literature Review:** Conduct an extensive review of relevant literature, scholarly articles, books, and historical texts related to classical Islamic education, its history, principles, and evolution.

**Historical Analysis:** Analyze historical documents and texts to understand the origins, development, and changes that occurred in classical Islamic education institutions throughout different periods.

### **C. CLASSICAL ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND**

Classical Islamic educational institutions refer to traditional educational establishments that grew and flourished during the golden age of Islamic civilization, especially in the Middle Ages. These institutions played a crucial role in preserving, developing, and disseminating Islamic knowledge and other sciences. Some well-known classical Islamic educational institutions include:

- a. **Madrasah:** Madrasah is a traditional Islamic school that provides education in various Islamic disciplines, such as tafsir (interpretation of the Quran), hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), aqidah (beliefs), and the Arabic language. Madrasahs may also teach secular sciences such as mathematics and astronomy. They are typically led by a scholar or Islamic scholar.
- b. **Universities:** At the peak of Islamic civilization, there were various renowned universities like Al-Qarawiyyin University in Fes, Morocco, and Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. These universities were centers of learning that explored various sciences, including religious studies, science, medicine, mathematics, philosophy, and literature.
- c. **Baitul Hikmah:** Baitul Hikmah (House of Wisdom) was an intellectual institution that focused on research, translation, and the development of sciences. This institution played a vital role in collecting and interpreting

knowledge from various cultures and involved thinkers and scholars from diverse backgrounds.

- d. **Maktab:** Maktab are elementary schools that teach the basics of Islamic religion and the Arabic language to Muslim children. They are the early educational institutions that provide religious foundations to the younger generation.
- e. **Kuttab:** Kuttab are simple Islamic educational institutions usually located in villages and small towns. They provide basic education in reading, writing, and memorizing the Quran.
- f. **Pondok Pesantren:** Although more common in Indonesia, pondok pesantren are traditional Islamic educational institutions that provide religious and academic education. They are typically led by a scholar or kiai and accommodate students (santri) who live and study there.
- g. **Makarim al-Akhlaq:** These educational institutions focus on ethics and morality in Islam. They promote moral values and good behavior within the Muslim community.

These classical Islamic educational institutions played a central role in the development of knowledge and culture in the Islamic world. They were crucial in disseminating knowledge and preserving the intellectual traditions of Islam. While some of these institutions still exist today, many have undergone changes and adaptations to meet the demands of the changing times.

#### **D. FIGURES OF CLASSICAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION**

Classical Islamic education has many important figures who played a key role in the development of education and knowledge in the Islamic world. Some prominent figures in classical Islamic education include:

- a. **Al-Farabi (872-950 CE):** Al-Farabi is known as the "Second Teacher" (Al-Imam Al-Thani) after Aristotle in the Islamic world. He was a philosopher, scientist, and

political thinker who integrated classical Greek thinking with Islamic thought. His works on education and ethics were highly influential in the Islamic educational tradition.

- b. Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037 CE): Ibn Sina was a polymath who made significant contributions in various fields including medicine, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and science. He also wrote about education and learning methods, including the book "Kitab al-Shifa" discussing science and philosophy.
- c. Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 CE): Ibn Khaldun was a historian and philosopher renowned for his monumental work, "Kitab al-Muqaddimah" (The Introduction). This work discusses various aspects of society, including education. He introduced the concept of historical cycles that influenced thinking about societal development and education.
- d. Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE): Al-Ghazali was an Islamic scholar known for his efforts to reconcile religion and philosophy. His most famous work is "Ihya Ulum al-Din" (Revival of Religious Sciences), which discusses spiritual and moral education in Islam.
- e. Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198 CE): Ibn Rushd was a philosopher, jurist, and physician who harmonized Aristotelian thought with Islamic tradition. His works in philosophy and Islamic law had a significant impact on the development of thought and education in both Europe and the Islamic world.
- f. Al-Biruni (973-1048 CE): Al-Biruni was a versatile scientist, explorer, and scholar. He conducted extensive research in geography, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. His works included studies of various cultures and religions, and he made significant contributions to the development of science and education.
- g. Al-Khawarizmi (780-850 CE): Al-Khawarizmi was a mathematician and astronomer known for his contributions to algebra. His contributions to

mathematics greatly influenced the development of science and education in the Islamic world and later worldwide.

These individuals represent a small portion of the many important scholars and thinkers in the tradition of classical Islamic education. Their contributions across various scientific fields and education have left a highly valuable intellectual legacy for both the Islamic world and the world at large.

#### **E. THE PERIOD OF CLASSICAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION.**

The evolution of classical Islamic education refers to the development of the Islamic education system from the early days of the emergence of Islam to the early Islamic period up to the Middle Ages. Classical Islamic education possesses unique characteristics that have influenced the thought, culture, and education system in the Islamic world for centuries. Here are some main stages in the evolution of classical Islamic education:

- a. Early Islamic Era (7th to 9th centuries CE): Islamic education began with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. During this period, the primary focus was on understanding the Quran and Hadith (traditions related to the teachings and actions of the Prophet). The first Islamic schools, known as Madrasahs, were established during this time, teaching the teachings of Islam, the Arabic language, and basic sciences.
- b. Education during the Caliphate Era (7th to 13th centuries CE): During this period, Islamic learning centers such as Baghdad, Kufa, and Cordoba gained prominence. Islamic universities like Al-Qarawiyyin University in Fez, Morocco, and Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, were established during this time. The educational focus included religious studies, natural sciences, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy.

- c. Advancement of Sciences (9th to 13th centuries CE): During this period, Muslim scholars such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Ibn Khaldun laid the foundations of science and philosophy. They merged classical Greek teachings with Islamic tradition, contributing to the development of science, logic, and rational thinking in the Islamic world.
- d. The Past Period (14th to 19th centuries CE): This period is termed the "past" because the Islamic world experienced a decline in education and the advancement of knowledge. Many factors contributed to this, including political and social conflicts, oppression of scholars, and lack of support for education.
- e. Modern Education (Early 20th century to the present): With the advent of colonialism and globalization, Islamic education underwent significant changes. Many Muslim countries began adopting modern educational systems that included secular curricula alongside religious education. Modern universities were established, offering a range of academic disciplines.

Although Islamic education has evolved over centuries, the tradition of classical Islamic religious education is still valued and practiced in many places throughout the Islamic world. Fields such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy, discovered and developed during the classical period, continue to influence science and education in the Islamic world and globally.

## **F. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLASSICAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND MODERN ISLAMIC EDUCATION.**

The differences between classical and modern Islamic education encompass various aspects, including teaching methods, curriculum, educational goals, and the educational environment. Here are some key differences between the two:

a. Teaching Methods:

- Classical Islamic Education: Teaching methods in classical Islamic education are more traditional and based on a formal teacher-student approach. Learning tends to focus on memorization and repetition of religious texts such as the Quran and Hadith. Discussion and critical thinking may not be the main focus.
- Modern Islamic Education: Teaching methods in modern Islamic education are more diverse and inclusive. They encompass technology, interactive approaches, and the application of problem-solving methods. Modern education also promotes critical and analytical thinking, as well as the development of relevant practical skills.

b. Curriculum:

- Classical Islamic Education: The curriculum of classical Islamic education heavily emphasizes religious subjects such as tafsir (interpretation of the Quran), hadith (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), fiqh (Islamic law), aqidah (belief), and Islamic history. Secular sciences may be less emphasized.
- Modern Islamic Education: The curriculum of modern Islamic education tends to encompass a broader range of secular disciplines such as mathematics, science, languages, arts, and social sciences. While religious education remains an important part, modern education aims to strike a balance between religious and secular knowledge.

c. Educational Goals:

- Classical Islamic Education: The primary goal of classical Islamic education is to shape individuals who are devout, possess a strong

knowledge of Islam, and are capable of practicing it in their daily lives.

This education also aims to understand the laws of Islam.

- Modern Islamic Education: The goals of modern Islamic education include shaping individuals who not only have faith but also possess a broad understanding of the world, relevant skills to contribute to society, critical thinking abilities, and independence. Modern education also aims to prepare students to face global challenges.

d. Educational Environment:

- Classical Islamic Education: Traditionally, classical Islamic education is often taught in madrasahs or other classical Islamic education institutions, with a focus on religious teachings. This educational environment is often more conservative and religion-centered.
- Modern Islamic Education: Modern Islamic education can be found in various institutions, including public and private schools and universities. They usually offer a more inclusive and diverse environment, focusing on the integration of knowledge and technology.

It is important to remember that modern Islamic education does not always replace classical Islamic education but often seeks to integrate elements from both approaches to provide comprehensive education. These differences can also vary between countries and different educational institutions within the Islamic world.

## G. CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn from the evolution of classical Islamic education is that it has played a profoundly significant role in the intellectual, social, and cultural development of the Islamic world over centuries. Several key points can be summarized as follows:

1. **Continuity with Islamic Roots:** Classical Islamic education is rooted in early Islamic teachings and maintains a focus on the understanding of religion, the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic law.
2. **Development of Knowledge and Philosophy:** Eminent figures such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, and Al-Farabi played a key role in integrating classical Greek thinking with Islamic tradition, aiding in the development of sciences, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy.
3. **Importance of Madrasah:** Madrasahs, as advanced educational institutions, became centers of Islamic learning and knowledge in the Islamic world, and many modern universities trace their origins to the madrasah tradition.
4. **Inclusive Education:** Initially, classical Islamic education may have been open to only a few scholars and elites, but over time, access to Islamic education became more inclusive, encompassing various layers of society.
5. **Global Influence:** Classical Islamic education also had a global impact, with the works of scholars like Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd influencing the development of science and thinking in Europe and across the world.
6. **Cultural and Knowledge Exchange:** The period of classical Islamic education created an environment conducive to the exchange of culture and knowledge among different cultures, especially during the Islamic Golden Age.
7. **Modern Relevance:** Although classical Islamic education has changed over time, this tradition still influences education in the Islamic world today, with efforts to integrate religious teachings with modern science.
8. **Classical Islamic education is an integral part of the intellectual and cultural heritage of the Islamic world. Despite significant evolution, this**

tradition continues to hold value and relevance in the development of modern Islamic education and thought.

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