

CREATIVE TEACHING: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper discusses the creative teaching from the Islamic perspective outlining instances from the teaching of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the content analysis method. A thematic exegesis approach was used to identify the saying of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through a careful selection of some examples during his lifetime. These includes methodology of human being, methodology of the universe, analogy, methodology of unseen (Ghayb), congregational sermons, storytelling, demonstration, and problem. However, the conventional perspective was considered on domain relevant skills, creativity relevant processes, task motivation and the social environment. This analysis concluded that Muslims should emulate Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from his personal life.

Keywords: Creative, Teaching, Islamic, Approach, Storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

The primary sources of creative teaching and communication are the Quran and Sunnah. Thus, this research is guided by the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to show the significance of creative teaching and communication. The Quran has shown different verses that indicated the importance of creative teaching and communication.

The Quran has emphasizes that Man is given the ability to think in a rational manner because Allah (SWT) has given human beings the capacity to invent and think creatively. Therefore, it is the responsibility of human being to work hard and think of how to improve the way they conceptualize their teaching method. An example is the importance of methodology as emphasized by Muslim scholar Al-Mawdoudi. He mentioned that “the Islamic sciences have lost their unique characteristic due to improper usage of faculties of hearing, seeing and thinking and it was because Muslims have left the historical role in leading the world” (Al-Karasneh & Saleh, 2010).

Another example was the Muslims scholars who are concerned with building up proper methodologies to guide, clarify and understand every aspect of Islamic Shariah. The methodology teaching is seen to be essential for creative teaching and

communication. The four school of thoughts of Imam Abu Hanifah Al-Nu'man, Imam Malik bin Anas Imam of Darul Hijrah of Al-Madinah, Imam Muhammad bin Idris Al-Shafi'i and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal invented methods to take properly care of their schools.

They worked to find a suitable methodology to guide different principles of the schools. Creative teaching is encouraged and should be taught in Islam with the right methodology to improve Muslim students to excel in their different endeavors in life. This stance is anchored by the fact that the Quran is replete with verses that shows the essence of creative teaching with deep thinking about the universe, and it has stated some important levels which identify how a teacher could teach creatively.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CREATIVE TEACHING

It is essential to understand that the commencement of creative teaching and communication started since the revelation of the Holy Quran by angel Gabriel (ASW) to the sealed Prophet Muhammad (SAW) (Al-Karaneh & Jubran, 2013). Bearing that in mind, the first academician in Islam is the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who was taught what he knew not by Al-Mighty Allah (SWT) (Hashim, 2014). This is contained in the Quran in Surah Al-'Alaq Allah (SWT) Says:

"Read: In the Name of your Lord, who created. Created man from a clinging clot. Read: And your Lord is the Most Generous. He Who taught by the pen. Taught man what he never knew" (Al-Quran. Al-'Alaq: 1-5).

Also the second revelation in surat alqalam it is about the ink and pen and what is written.

Thus, by his creative teaching ability he was able to transfer it to his followers by the methodology of teaching. This was practically demonstrated by sending Muaz bin Jabal to the people of Yemen. Muaz (RA) was taught by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) the methodology that he needed for the people to understand their situation and informing them how to go about their lives (Hashim, 2014; Sulaiman et al., 2014). Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was able to build an Islamic state in Al-Madinah, and Muslim society at large. Also, he was able to transform the social and political landscape of the Arabian Peninsula (Zarif et al., 2013). Therefore, the concept of creative teaching and communication was not a new concept in Islam.

Accordingly, Hashim (2014) mentions that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used different teaching methodologies for various group of people in different contexts. Therefore, creative teaching refers to the process of realizing, applying or elaborating the principles and ideals mentioned in the Quran and sunnah at any time or place, when the act is needed, in order to meet the challenges that arise in the spheres of life (Yousif, 1999).

CONVENTIONAL AND ISLAMIC CREATIVE TEACHING

Creative teaching was linked with at least six components. These components are namely, (i) the pedagogical skills, such as lesson planning, classroom management, communication and evaluation, (ii) the domain specific expertise, creative techniques and knowledge of development processes, (iii) the competence in selecting appropriate assessments modes, (iv) teachers and student motivation, (v) the learning climate and (vi) the environment meaning the educational policies and the institution culture (Giri, 1998).

Consequently, creative teaching is the method to promoting autonomous thinking and original abilities in students, encouraging, constructing, and understanding that are new and valuable to them (Amabile, 2012).

On the other hand, creative teaching is the process of realizing, applying or elaborating the divine principles and ideals at any given time or place to meet the challenges that rose in all spheres of life (Yousif, 1999). The concept started by our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during his lifetime in Al-Madinah. It is understood that during his thirteen years in Mecca, the unbelievers were intimidating and wanted to prosecute him, and life was completely tedious for him.

THINKING METHODOLOGY OF HUMAN BEING

Allah (SWT) in His infinite mercy upon human beings has given a book which has no hesitation to mankind. Allah Says, "This is the Book (the Quran) where of there is no doubt, guidance to those who are *Al-Muttaqun*" (Al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 2).

Allah Says, "As also in yours own selves. Will you not then see" (Al-Quran. Al-Dhariyat: 21). Allah Says: "We will show them Our Signs in the universe and their own selves until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. It is not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things" (Al-Quran. Fussilat: 53).

Allah Says: "Do they not think deeply in their own selves about how Allah created them from nothing. Allah has created not the heavens and the earth and all that is between them except with truth and for appointed term" (Al-Quran. Al-Rum: 8).

The above verses show the thinking methodology of creation that has been give a divine guidance from Allah (SWT).

METHODOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSE

Several verses in the Quran encourage creative teaching by encouraging thinking of the universe.

Allah Says: "Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected truth" (Al-Quran. Al-An'am: 11). Allah Says: "On the earth are signs for those of assured faith" (Al-Quran. Al-Dhariyat: 20). Allah Says: "Say: Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth; but neither Signs nor warners profit those who believe not" (Al-Quran. Yunus: 101). Allah Says: "He who created the seven heavens one above another, no want of proportion wilt thou see in the creation of the Most Gracious. So, turn thy vision again, seest thou any flaw?" (Al-Quran. Al-Mulk: 3).

METHODOLOGY OF THE UNSEEN (GHAYB)

The methodology emphasized on thinking out of the box which indicates that human beings are limited. However, they are given the chance to utilize their cognitive ability.

Allah Says: "O mankind! Fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a thing terrible! The Day ye shall see it, every mother giving suck shall forget her suckling-babe, and every pregnant female shall drop her load (unformed), thou shalt see mankind as in a drunken riot, yet not drunk, but dreadful will be the chastisement of Allah" (Al-Quran. Al-Hajj: 1-2).

Allah Says: "Their Lord doth give them glad tidings of a Mercy from Himself, of His good pleasure. And of gardens for them, wherein are delights that endure. They will dwell therein forever. Verily with Allah is a reward, the greatest (of all)" (Al-Quran. Al-Tawbah:22).

Thus, creative teaching in Islamic perspective is of tremendous importance because the primary source is heavenly guidance from Allah (SWT). On the other hand, communication is the process by which individuals stimulate meaning in the minds of other individuals by means of verbal or nonverbal messages (Richmond et al., 2005; Spaho, 2013). Communication is the transfer of information from the sender to receiver implying that the receiver understands the message sent (Richmond et al., 2005).

This means that communication in institutions ought to be balanced between the top management, academic staff and the administrative staff as well. However, it is essential to note that the commencement of creative teaching and organisational communication started since the revelation of the Holy Quran by angel Gabriel (ASW) to the sealed Prophet Muhammad (SAW) (Al-Karasneh & Jubran, 2013) as mentioned earlier.

According Hashim (2014) mentioned that creative teaching and the communication style of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was unique. He used different teaching methodologies for various group of people and for different situations. Therefore, based on the Quran, Sunnah and other literature (Abdulghani, 1993; Al-Karasneh & Jubran, 2013; Ashraf, 1985; Hashim, 2009; Naeem, 2011; Rufai, 2010) this research has identified five important methods of creative teaching and organizational communication.

ANALOGY

Narrated Ibn Abass (RA): "A man came to the Prophet and said "O Allah's Messenger! My mother died and she ought to have fasted one month (for her Missed Ramadhan). Shall I fast on her behalf?" The Prophet replied in affirmative and said, "Allah's debts have more rights to be paid" (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Book 31, 1994). This shows the importance of integrating analogy with a productive question to enhance the use of imagination and creative thinking by adopting this method.

CONGREGATIONAL SERMONS

Narrated Jarir (RA): *The Prophet (SAW) said to me during the farewell sermon: Let the people keep quiet and listen. Then he said (addressing the people) "Do not (become infidels) revert to disbelief after me by striking the necks (cutting the throats) of one another killing each other"* (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 1, Book 3, 1994). This shows the of systematic oratory/communication skills in teaching presentation.

STORY TELLING

The Quran is full of stories of different nations in the past. These stories are full of wisdom and inspirations that calls for reflections, heeding advice and warning. It contains morals lesson that fills the heart with fear and love of Allah for those who read the Quran and reflected upon it. The Quran narrates stories of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and pious individuals who were not prophets but wise like Dwellers of the Cave, Dhul Qarnain and Maryam. The Night Journey from the sacred mosque to the Heavens (Al-Quran. Al-Isra': 1); using a story telling method by the Prohet Muhammad was creative teaching way that can be adopted . This method can be implemented in all lessons in the class or out the class and it can attract student's emotional attention.

DEMONSTRATION

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): "*The Prophet (SAW) said (Religious) knowledge will be taken away (by the dearth of religious scholars) ignorance (in religion and affliction will appear; and Harj will increase" It was asked "what is Harj O Allah Apostle (SAW)" He replied by beckoning with his hand indicating "killing"* (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 1, Book 3, 1994). Here, the Prophet (SAW) uses demonstration to explain a phenomenon.

PROBLEM SOLVING

There was a dispute among Quraish tribes over who should install a black stone on the Kaaba. The Prophet requested for a stone to be put on a cloth. A representative of each tribe got the honor of holding one side of the cloth to the Kaaba then the Prophet lifted it and placed it onto the agreed spot (Ibn Kathir, 2006). This shows a teacher could involve students in the learning process through peer interface. This can improve the cognitive thinking skills problem solving, logical reasoning and decision making.

As a teacher who teaches in educational arena, a fundamental creative teaching and communication from the Islamic perspective has been suggested by Al-karasneha & Saleh (2010). (i) Sincerity (ii) Conformity with the *Shari'ah* (iii) Beneficial products (iv) Usage of lawful means, (v) The ethical and moral system (vi) Ijtihad (vii) Rejection of imitation.

Therefore, creative teaching and communication have their own origins from the primary source of knowledge in Islam which is the Quran and Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is understood that the Quran and Sunnah give overall detail of pedagogical reasoning. The Quran and Sunnah are the main source that clearly stress on how creative teaching and communication could be achieved through deep understanding of its verses and the authentic hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

DOMAIN RELEVANT SKILLS ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Domain relevant skills include knowledge, expertise, technical skills, intelligence, and

product and talent in specific domain where the problem solver is working. It provides the necessary attribution that individuals must possess (Amabile, 2012).

On the other hand, domain relevant skills are related to the knowledge and skills that are gained by an individual from acquisition. This knowledge is grounded and has its basis in the prophetic hadith as mentioned by Imam al-Ghazālī in his book *Ihyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*: Seeking knowledge is an ordinance obligatory on every Muslim. Therefore, the source of knowledge in Islam is divided into two, which are the revealed knowledge and the acquired knowledge. Domain relevant skills are categorised under the acquired knowledge (research providing) which need to be Islamised according to Al-'Attas, Al-Faruqiyy, Abu Sulayman and Kamal Hassan (Ali, 2013).

CREATIVITY RELEVANT PROCESSES ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Creativity relevant processes include the cognitive styles and personality characteristics that are conducive for independence, risk taking and taking new perspectives on problems and skills in generating ideas (Amabile, 2012).

The Islamic view on creativity, the relevant process is viewed as aiming, applying and implementing the Islamic principles to all aspects of life. In this respect, researchers who engage in creative relevant processes should ensure that their work and inventions are at all time compatible with the principles and teachings of Islam. Therefore, creative Muslims should consider the Islamic law and follow the Divine guidance in transforming their creative processes and ideas into a product or service.

As such, creative Muslims are distinguished from the non-Muslims in this ethical, spiritual guidance from the Quran. Referring to Surah Al-'Alaq (1-5) Allah has taught man what he knew not. The Quran was revealed by Allah and it contains verses that are regarded as both creative and miraculous in its eloquence, meaning and composition in every ramification. In fact, Muslims believe that the verses contained therein are inimitable and they are signs of the divine creative process that is relevant to all human beings irrespective of time and place.

TASK MOTIVATION ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Task motivation refers to intrinsic, it is the motivation to undertake a task or solve a problem and it involves personal challenges and it is central component of componential theory creativity (Amabile, 1996, 1988, and 2012). It is understood that task motivation in the Western perspective is based on the materialist endeavors of human beings. This is because the traditional or Western task motivation is not conveying the whole picture of human task motivation.

The Islamic perspective on task motivation on the other hand is based on both materialistic and spiritual aspect of task motivation. Task motivation started with the creation of Adam and it evolves him as a vicegerent in this earth. Allah Says: *"When your Lord said to the angels, "I am placing a successor on earth." They said, "Will You place in it someone who will work corruption in it, and shed blood, while we declare Your praises and sanctify You?" He said, "I know what you do not know".* (Al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 30).

The creation of man was for mankind to become Allah's representatives on Earth so that they will be accountable of what has been given in this world. Therefore, many verses have mentioned task motivation in the holy Quran and Sunnah.

Allah Says: *"As to those who believe and work righteousness, verily We shall not suffer to perish the reward of any who do a (single) righteous deed"* (Al-Quran. Al-Nahl: 30).

Allah Says: *"He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit: He that doeth evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: no wrong shall be done unto (any of) them"* (Al-Quran. Al-An'am: 160). From the Sunnah the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Who I ever revived a dead land that it belongs to him"* (Sunan Al-Tirmizi. Cited in Muhammad, 2007). This is a stimulus to land reclamation and cultivation. Therefore, task motivation in Islamic view is concerned with the reward in this world and hereafter regarding accountability of

the vicegerent (Khalifah).

THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

The social environment is the outside component, meaning the working environment. It includes all extrinsic motivators that have shown to undermine intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 2012).

The Islamic world view perceives social environment as visualized by Islamic society is based on Islamic moral values in line with socioeconomic and political behaviors which are consistent with the environment. Therefore, the social environment is maintained by an Islamic state and Islamic way of life. The Islamic society covers all aspect of human life, which produces personalities by continuous catering for their spiritual and material needs. This is because man as a *khalifah* in this world seeks the ultimate pleasure of Allah (SWT) in his interaction with other people in the Islamic society.

CONCLUSION

The Islamic perspective about creative teaching should be given a proper attention, adhering to all aspect of life. This should not be confined with teaching and learning but away of adopting life through the inspirations of those stories told by the Quran. The ultimate source in Islam is the Quran and Sunnah guiding the Muslim ummah in upholding their good relationship with their maker and upholding good relationship with others.

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