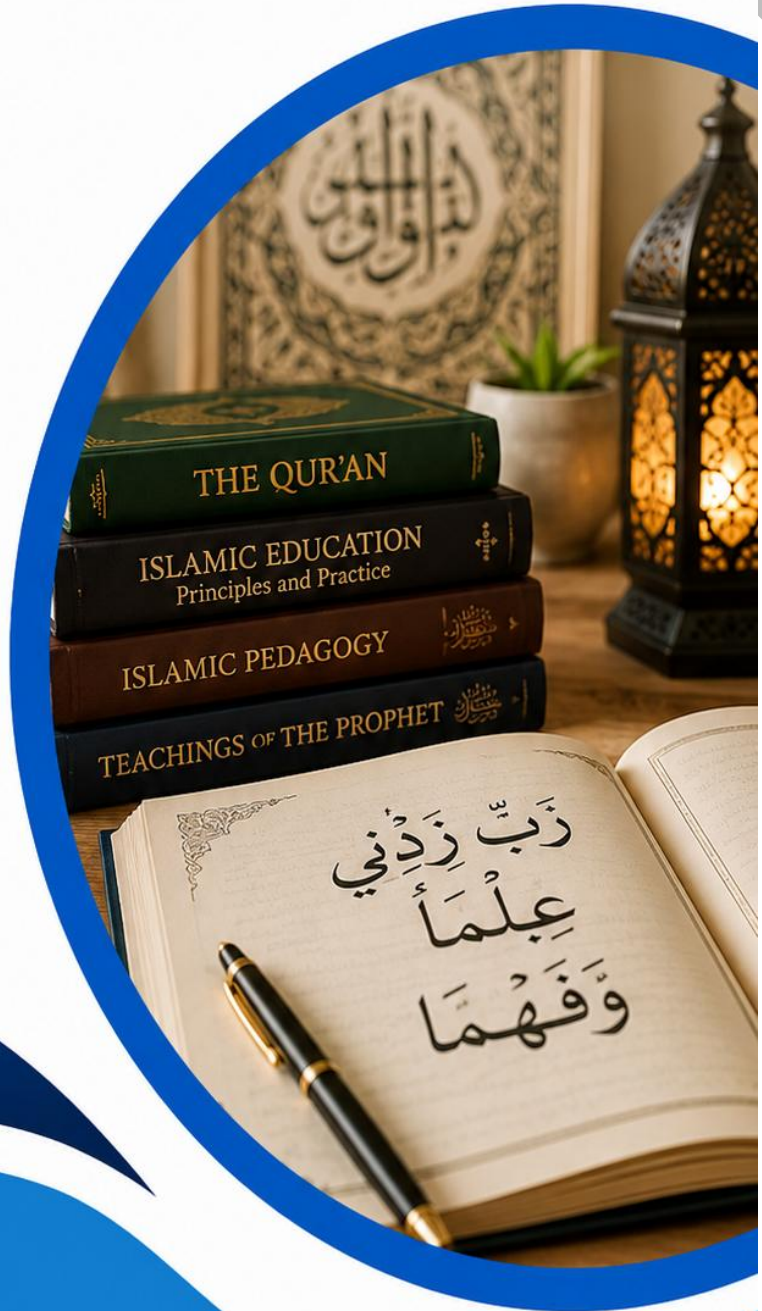




La-Net

# ISS 108

## ISLAMIC EDUCATION



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Course code: ISS 108

Course title: Islamic Education

Course credit load: 2 Units (C; LH 30)

**List of Series:**

- **Series 1: Concept of Knowledge and Education in the Qur'ān**
- Series 2: Origin and Development of Islamic Education
- Series 3: Contributions of Early Muslims and Traditional Scholars
- Series 4: Institutions and Theories in Islamic Education
- Series 5: Contemporary Challenges and Solutions in Islamic Education

**Series 1: Concept of Knowledge and Education in the Qur'ān**

*Parts and Sub-Parts*

**1.1 Concept of Knowledge in the Qur'ān**

- 1.1.1 Meaning and Scope of Knowledge in the Qur'ānic Framework
- 1.1.2 Revelation, Human Reason and the Pursuit of Knowledge
- 1.1.3 The Value of Knowledge in the Life of a Muslim

**1.2 Sources and Types of Knowledge**

- 1.2.1 Revelation as a Source of Knowledge
- 1.2.2 Observation, Reflection and Human Experience
- 1.2.3 Beneficial Knowledge and Responsible Use

**1.3 The Purpose of Education in Islam**

- 1.3.1 Education for Faith, Character and Worship
- 1.3.2 Education for Personal and Social Development
- 1.3.3 Knowledge, Action and Accountability



## 1.4 Principles of Learning from the Qur'ānic Perspective

- 1.4.1 Seeking Knowledge with Sincerity and Discipline
- 1.4.2 Teachers, Learners and Respect for Knowledge
- 1.4.3 Applying Knowledge in Everyday Life

### Introduction

Knowledge occupies a central place in the Qur'ānic view of human life. The Qur'ān repeatedly directs people to read, reflect, observe, remember, and seek guidance. Education in this framework is therefore more than the collection of facts. It involves developing sound belief, disciplined thinking, good character, responsible action, and awareness of accountability before Allah. In this Series, you will examine how the Qur'ān presents knowledge and how that understanding shapes the purpose and practice of education.

The aim of this Series is to help you explain the Qur'ānic concept of knowledge and education and apply its major principles to learning and responsible conduct. You will also examine the relationship between revelation, reason, observation, character, and action in an Islamic approach to education.

We shall begin by examining the meaning and scope of knowledge in the Qur'ānic framework and the relationship between revelation and human reasoning. Next, we will consider the major sources and types of knowledge, including revelation, observation, reflection, and human experience. We will then examine the purposes of education in Islam, with attention to faith, character, worship, personal development, and social responsibility. Finally, we will consider practical principles of learning, the responsibilities of teachers and learners, and the importance of applying knowledge in everyday life.

### Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:



- SLO 1.1 define knowledge within the Qur'ānic framework and explain its significance in human life,
- SLO 1.2 analyse the relationship between revelation, reason, observation, and the pursuit of knowledge,
- SLO 1.3 explain the purposes of education in Islam in relation to faith, character, worship, and social responsibility,
- SLO 1.4 apply Qur'ānic principles of learning and responsible use of knowledge to everyday situations.



## 1.1 Concept of Knowledge in the Qur'ān

### 1.1.1 Meaning and Scope of Knowledge in the Qur'ānic Framework

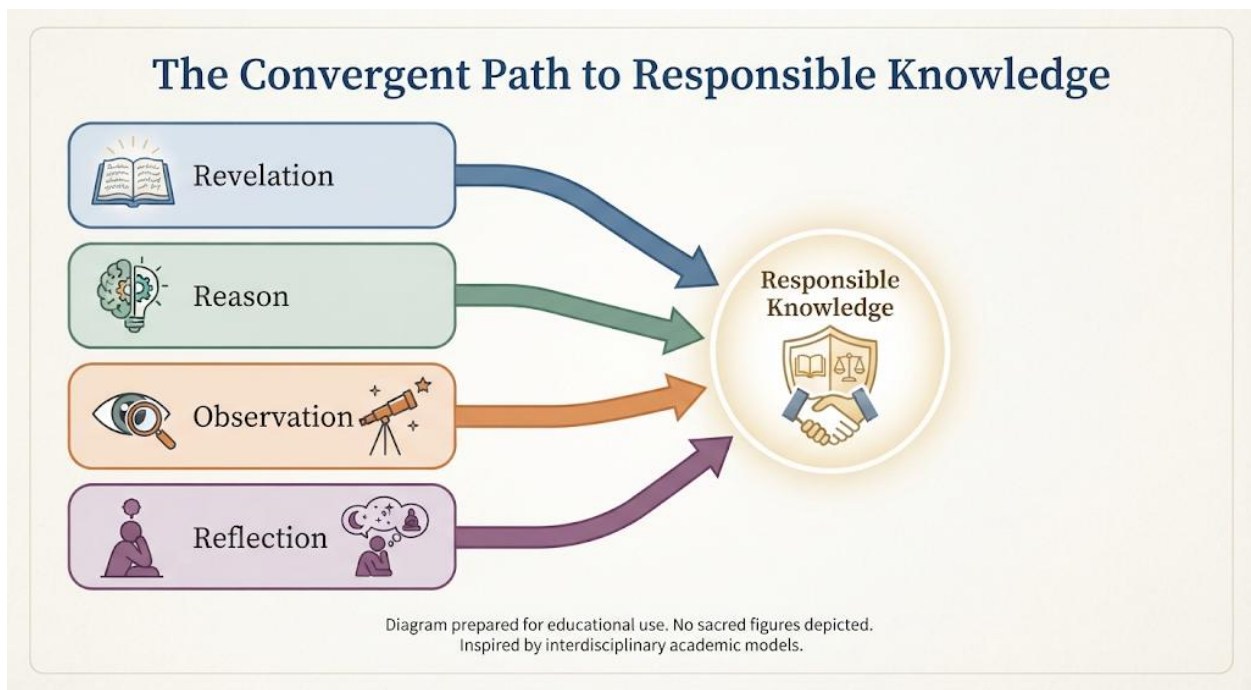
In the Qur'ānic framework, knowledge is not limited to information stored in the mind. It includes awareness of Allah, understanding of revelation, recognition of the signs of creation, and sound judgement that guides conduct. The Qur'ān connects reading, learning, reflection, and remembering with responsible human living. This means that when you study, the goal is not simply to accumulate facts but to develop knowledge that improves your belief, character, decisions, and actions.

Fill in the blank: In the Qur'ānic framework, knowledge is expected to guide a person's \_\_\_\_\_ as well as understanding.

### 1.1.2 Revelation, Human Reason and the Pursuit of Knowledge

The Qur'ān presents revelation as a fundamental source of guidance while also repeatedly calling human beings to think, observe, reflect, and reason. The first revealed verses in Sūrah al-'Alaq (96:1–5) connect reading and learning with the Creator. Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:114) also records the prayer for increase in knowledge. Together, these references show that seeking knowledge involves openness to divine guidance and responsible use of the intellectual abilities Allah has given human beings.





Simple flow diagram showing Revelation, Reason, Observation and Reflection converging into Responsible Knowledge.

Figure 1.1: Revelation and Human Faculties in the Pursuit of Knowledge

Fill in the blank: Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:114) records a prayer asking Allah to increase the speaker in \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 1.1.3 The Value of Knowledge in the Life of a Muslim

The Qur'ānic view gives knowledge a high value because knowledge can guide people towards truth and responsible action. Sūrah al-Mujādilah (58:11) links elevation in rank with faith and knowledge, while Sūrah al-Zumar (39:9) contrasts those who know with those who do not know. These references encourage you to treat learning as a serious responsibility. Knowledge becomes especially valuable when it produces humility, sound judgement, useful service, and obedience to what is right.

Fill in the blank: Qur'ānic teaching presents knowledge as valuable when it leads to responsible \_\_\_\_\_ and conduct.

Fill in the blank: Tawḥīd protects the believer from \_\_\_\_\_ and ensures worship is directed only to Allah.



1. What does knowledge include within the Qur'ānic framework?
2. How does the Qur'ān connect knowledge with responsible living?
3. What does Sūrah al-‘Alaq (96:1–5) associate with learning?
4. What prayer for knowledge is recorded in Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:114)?
5. Why is knowledge highly valued in the life of a Muslim?

## 1.2 Sources and Types of Knowledge

### 1.2.1 Revelation as a Source of Knowledge

Revelation provides guidance about matters that human observation alone cannot fully establish, especially questions concerning Allah, worship, moral responsibility, accountability, and the purpose of human existence. The Qur'ān therefore occupies a central place in Islamic education. When you study Islamic subjects, you should distinguish between knowledge grounded in revelation and conclusions reached through ordinary human investigation, while recognising that both can contribute to learning when used appropriately.

Fill in the blank: In Islamic education, the Qur'ān is a central source of \_\_\_\_\_ and guidance.

### 1.2.2 Observation, Reflection and Human Experience

The Qur'ān frequently invites human beings to observe the natural world, reflect on its signs, and learn from experience. Such reflection does not replace revelation; rather, it encourages careful thinking about the world in which people live. In education, this principle supports inquiry, questioning, observation, comparison, and reasoned judgement. For example, a student studying agriculture can observe local soil and rainfall patterns, compare results, and use evidence to improve farming practices while maintaining an awareness of ethical responsibility.

Fill in the blank: Shirk nullifies \_\_\_\_\_ deeds and prevents forgiveness if not repented from.





Plate 1.2: Observation and Reflection in Learning

Image showing a Qur'ān opened to verses warning against Shirk.

Fill in the blank: The Qur'ānic encouragement to observe and reflect supports careful \_\_\_\_\_ and reasoned judgement.

### 1.2.3 Beneficial Knowledge and Responsible Use

Knowledge carries responsibility. A learner may possess accurate information but still misuse it through dishonesty, manipulation, harmful speech, or irresponsible decisions. Islamic education therefore values beneficial knowledge, meaning knowledge that contributes to sound belief, good character, useful work, and the wellbeing of people. As you acquire knowledge, you should ask not only “What do I know?” but also “How should I use what I know?” This turns learning into responsible practice.

Fill in the blank: Islamic education connects beneficial knowledge with responsible \_\_\_\_\_ of what is learned.

#### *Pilot questions 1.2*

1. What role does revelation play in Islamic education?



2. Why does observation not replace revelation in an Islamic approach to knowledge?
3. Mention two learning activities supported by observation and reflection.
4. What makes knowledge beneficial in an Islamic educational framework?
5. Why should a learner consider how knowledge will be used?

## 1.3 The Purpose of Education in Islam

### 1.3.1 Education for Faith, Character and Worship

Education in Islam has a moral and spiritual dimension. Learning should help a person recognise truth, strengthen faith, develop good character, and perform acts of worship correctly. This does not mean that every subject is reduced to ritual instruction. Rather, education should cultivate qualities such as honesty, discipline, humility, responsibility, and respect for others. A student who combines academic learning with good conduct demonstrates the wider purpose of education.

Fill in the blank: Islamic education gives attention to knowledge, faith, worship, and good \_\_\_\_\_.

### 1.3.2 Education for Personal and Social Development

Education also prepares people to contribute positively to society. Knowledge can develop communication, problem-solving, professional competence, cooperation, and responsible citizenship. In a Nigerian setting, for example, an educated Muslim can use professional knowledge in teaching, healthcare, business, agriculture, technology, or public service while maintaining ethical standards. The Qur'ānic perspective therefore supports learning that benefits both the individual and the wider community.

Fill in the blank: Education can contribute to society by developing professional competence and responsible \_\_\_\_\_.



### 1.3.3 Knowledge, Action and Accountability

The Qur'ānic approach does not treat knowledge and action as unrelated. A person is expected to act responsibly on the basis of what they know. This creates a strong connection between learning and accountability. For you as a student, this means that academic honesty, responsible use of information, respect for intellectual work, and ethical application of skills are part of your educational responsibility. Knowledge should therefore be reflected in conduct, not merely stored as examination material.

Fill in the blank: The Qur'ānic approach connects knowledge with responsible \_\_\_\_\_ and accountability.

#### *Pilot questions 1.3*

1. What spiritual purpose can education serve?
2. Mention three character qualities that education should cultivate.
3. How can education contribute to Nigerian society?
4. Why should knowledge be connected with action?
5. Mention two ways a student can demonstrate responsible use of knowledge.

## 1.4 Principles of Learning from the Qur'ānic Perspective

### 1.4.1 Seeking Knowledge with Sincerity and Discipline

Effective learning requires a serious attitude. A learner should approach knowledge with sincerity, patience, discipline, and willingness to revise mistakes. Sincerity helps you recognise that learning carries responsibility, while discipline helps you organise time and sustain effort. In practical terms, you can demonstrate these qualities by attending learning activities, reading carefully, keeping useful notes, asking questions, checking evidence, and completing academic tasks honestly.

Fill in the blank: Effective learning requires sincerity, patience, and \_\_\_\_\_.



### 1.4.2 Teachers, Learners and Respect for Knowledge

Islamic learning places importance on the relationship between teachers, learners, and knowledge itself. A teacher has the responsibility to explain carefully, guide learners, and model good conduct. A learner should listen attentively, ask respectful questions, acknowledge sources, and remain open to correction. Respect does not mean accepting every statement without thought; it means approaching learning with courtesy while examining evidence and seeking sound understanding.

Fill in the blank: A responsible learner should acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_ when using another person's ideas or words.

### 1.4.3 Applying Knowledge in Everyday Life

The value of education becomes visible when knowledge is applied responsibly. You can apply Qur'ānic principles of learning by using accurate information, avoiding plagiarism, treating others fairly, solving problems constructively, and using professional skills for beneficial purposes. For instance, a student who learns digital skills can use them to create educational resources rather than deliberately spreading false information. In this way, education becomes a means of responsible personal development and service to society.

Fill in the blank: Knowledge demonstrates its practical value when it is applied \_\_\_\_\_ and responsibly.

#### *Pilot questions 1.4*

1. Mention three qualities that support effective learning.
2. What responsibilities does a teacher have in the learning process?
3. How should a learner respond to correction?
4. Why should students acknowledge sources?
5. Give one example of applying knowledge responsibly in everyday life.



## Series Summary

This Series has examined the Qur'ānic concept of knowledge and its implications for education. We began by considering the meaning and scope of knowledge, including the connection between learning, guidance, reflection, and responsible conduct. We then examined revelation, reason, observation, and experience as dimensions of the pursuit of knowledge, while distinguishing the unique guidance provided by revelation. Next, we explored the purposes of education in relation to faith, character, worship, personal development, and social responsibility. Finally, we considered practical principles of learning, including sincerity, discipline, respect for teachers and knowledge, academic integrity, and responsible application.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define knowledge within the Qur'ānic framework and explain its significance (SLO 1.1), analyse the relationship between revelation, reason, observation, and the pursuit of knowledge (SLO 1.2), explain the purposes of education in Islam (SLO 1.3), and apply Qur'ānic principles of learning and responsible use of knowledge (SLO 1.4).

## Glossary of Terms

- **Accountability:** The responsibility to answer for one's beliefs, decisions, conduct, and use of knowledge.
- **Beneficial knowledge:** Knowledge that contributes to sound belief, good character, useful action, and the wellbeing of people.
- **Education:** A purposeful process of developing knowledge, character, skills, and responsible conduct.
- **Knowledge:** Understanding or awareness acquired through revelation, learning, reflection, observation, and responsible human inquiry.
- **Qur'ānic framework:** The principles and guidance derived from the Qur'ān that shape how knowledge, learning, and conduct are understood.
- **Revelation:** Divine guidance communicated by Allah to His prophets, with the Qur'ān serving as the central revealed source for Islamic guidance.
- **Reflection:** Deliberate thinking about information, experience, and the signs of creation in order to reach sound understanding.



- Reason: The human capacity to think, compare, judge, and draw conclusions responsibly.
- Sincerity: An honest intention to seek and use knowledge for a sound and responsible purpose.



## Concept Check Questions 1

### Objective Questions

1. How does the Qur'ānic framework extend the meaning of knowledge beyond the simple accumulation of information? (Linked to SLO 1.1)
2. Which source provides central revealed guidance for Islamic education? (Linked to SLO 1.2)
3. Why does the Qur'ānic approach encourage observation and reflection? (Linked to SLO 1.2)
4. Which of the following best describes a major purpose of education in Islam? (Linked to SLO 1.3)
5. Which practice best demonstrates responsible application of knowledge? (Linked to SLO 1.4)

### Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain the relationship between revelation and human reasoning in the pursuit of knowledge. (Linked to SLO 1.2)
7. Explain two ways education can contribute to personal and social development. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
8. Describe three qualities that support effective learning from a Qur'ānic perspective. (Linked to SLO 1.4)
9. Explain why beneficial knowledge should be connected with responsible action. (Linked to SLO 1.3)

### Long-Answer Questions

10. Analyse the purposes of education in Islam, showing how faith, character, worship, personal development, and social responsibility can be connected. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
11. Evaluate how a student can apply Qur'ānic principles of knowledge and learning to academic life in a contemporary Nigerian university. (Linked to SLO 1.4)



## Answers to Concept Check Questions 1

### Objective Questions

1. In the Qur'ānic framework, knowledge is more than stored information. It includes awareness of Allah, understanding of revelation, recognition of the signs of creation, sound judgement, and knowledge that guides responsible conduct.
2. The Qur'ān is the central revealed source of guidance for Islamic education.
3. Observation and reflection encourage people to examine creation, learn from experience, develop evidence-based judgement, and recognise signs that invite thoughtful consideration, while remaining guided by revelation.
4. A major purpose is to develop the learner's faith, character, worship, useful skills, and responsibility towards society.
5. Applying accurate knowledge honestly and constructively, such as using professional or digital skills to solve problems without deception or harm.

### Short-Answer Questions

6. Revelation provides divine guidance, especially on matters such as belief, worship, morality, purpose, and accountability. Human reasoning helps learners examine evidence, reflect, compare, and apply knowledge responsibly. Reason therefore operates within an ethical and guided pursuit of knowledge rather than replacing revelation.
7. Education can develop professional competence, communication, problem-solving, cooperation, responsible citizenship, and the ethical use of skills. These capacities can help learners contribute positively to Nigerian society.
8. Effective learning requires sincerity, discipline, patience, careful reading, willingness to ask questions, openness to correction, and academic honesty.
9. Knowledge becomes beneficial when it produces sound belief, good character, useful work, and responsible conduct. Connecting knowledge with action prevents learning from becoming mere information and makes education practically meaningful.

### Long-Answer Questions



10. Basic response: Education in Islam has spiritual, moral, personal, and social purposes. It should strengthen faith, improve character, support correct worship, develop useful abilities, and prepare learners to contribute responsibly to society. Value-added response: These purposes are interconnected because faith provides moral direction, character shapes conduct, worship reinforces responsibility, personal development builds competence, and social responsibility directs knowledge towards beneficial service. An effective Islamic educational approach therefore develops the learner as a whole person rather than treating academic achievement as the only goal.
11. Basic response: A student can apply Qur'ānic principles by seeking knowledge sincerely, studying with discipline, checking information carefully, acknowledging sources, avoiding plagiarism, asking respectful questions, and using acquired skills constructively. Value-added response: In a contemporary Nigerian university, the student can apply these principles when researching online, using digital tools, working in groups, completing assignments, and preparing for professional practice. For example, the student can verify information before sharing it, cite sources, avoid academic dishonesty, and use digital and professional skills to produce useful solutions for the university and wider community.

## Answers to Pilot Questions 1

### Part 1.1

1. Knowledge includes awareness of Allah, understanding of revelation, recognition of signs of creation, and sound judgement that guides conduct.
2. It connects learning with responsible belief, character, decisions, and action.
3. It associates reading and learning with the Creator.
4. The prayer is to increase in knowledge.
5. It can guide people towards truth, responsible action, good character, and useful service.

### Part 1.2

1. Revelation provides central guidance on belief, worship, morality, purpose, and accountability.



2. Observation and reflection support inquiry and understanding but do not replace the divine guidance provided by revelation.
3. Observation and reflection; questioning and comparison; evidence gathering; or practical investigation.
4. Knowledge is beneficial when it contributes to sound belief, good character, useful work, and the wellbeing of people.
5. Because knowledge carries responsibility and should be used honestly, ethically, and constructively.

### Part 1.3

1. Education can strengthen faith, develop character, and support correct worship.
2. Examples include honesty, discipline, humility, responsibility, and respect for others.
3. It can develop professional competence, problem-solving, cooperation, responsible citizenship, and useful service.
4. Because the Qur'ānic approach connects learning with responsibility and accountability.
5. Examples include acknowledging sources, avoiding plagiarism, checking information, and using skills constructively.

### Part 1.4

1. Sincerity, patience, discipline, careful study, willingness to ask questions, openness to correction, and academic honesty.
2. A teacher should explain carefully, guide learners, model good conduct, and support sound understanding.
3. A learner should respond respectfully, examine the correction carefully, and use it to improve understanding or practice.
4. To acknowledge intellectual contributions, maintain academic integrity, and allow others to trace the sources of ideas or words.
5. For example, using digital skills to create an educational resource or using professional knowledge to solve a community problem honestly.



## References and Attributions 1

- Qur’ānic References:
  - Sūrah al-‘Alaq (96:1–5): The opening verses connect reading and learning with the name of the Creator and are relevant to the Series discussion of knowledge.
- Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:114): The verse contains the prayer, “My Lord, increase me in knowledge,” used in the discussion of seeking knowledge.
  - Sūrah al-Mujādilah (58:11): The verse connects faith and knowledge with elevation in rank and is relevant to the value of knowledge.
    - Sūrah al-Zumar (39:9): The verse contrasts those who know with those who do not know and supports the discussion of the value of knowledge.
    - Sūrah al-Nisā’ (4:82): The verse invites reflection on the Qur’ān and supports discussion of thoughtful engagement with revelation.
    - Illustrations:
      - Figure 1.1: Revelation and Human Faculties in the Pursuit of Knowledge
        - AI-generated suggestion: “Create a clean educational flow diagram showing Revelation, Reason, Observation, and Reflection converging into Responsible Knowledge, using simple academic icons and clear labels, without depicting sacred figures.”
        - Attribution: Prompt designed specifically for an educational AI illustration tool.
        - Suggested OER search string: “Islamic education revelation reason observation reflection knowledge OER diagram”.
- Plate 1.2: Observation and Reflection in Learning
  - AI-generated suggestion: “Educational photograph of university students in a Nigerian learning environment observing and recording evidence during a practical study activity, with notebooks and simple field equipment, natural classroom or campus setting, no sacred figures.”
  - Attribution: Prompt designed specifically for an educational AI illustration tool.
  - Suggested OER search string: “students observation reflection practical learning Nigeria OER image”.
- Secondary Sources:



- Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979). *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization.
- Halstead, J. M. (2004). *An Islamic concept of education*. *Comparative Education*, 40(4), 517–529.

Rosenthal, F. (2007). *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*. Brill.



## Series 2: Origin and Development of Islamic Education

### Parts and Sub-Parts

#### 2.1 Foundations and Early Development of Islamic Education

- 2.1.1 Education in the Prophetic Mission
- 2.1.2 The Prophet's Mosque and the Suffah as Learning Spaces
- 2.1.3 Early Methods of Teaching and Learning

#### 2.2 Development during the Early Caliphates

- 2.2.1 Education during the Rashidun Caliphate
- 2.2.2 Expansion of Learning during the Umayyad Period
- 2.2.3 The Growth of Qur'ānic and Hadith Learning

#### 2.3 Intellectual Expansion in the Abbasid Era

- 2.3.1 Translation and the Expansion of Knowledge
- 2.3.2 Libraries, Scholars, and Centres of Learning
- 2.3.3 From Informal Study Circles to Organised Institutions

#### 2.4 Transmission and Development of Islamic Education in West Africa

- 2.4.1 Routes and Agents of Islamic Learning in West Africa
- 2.4.2 Qur'ānic Schools and Islamic Learning Traditions
- 2.4.3 The Development of Islamic Education in the Nigerian Context

### Introduction

Islamic education developed alongside the spread and consolidation of Islam, beginning with the Prophet Muhammad's teaching mission and expanding through mosques, study circles, Qur'ānic schools, scholarly networks, libraries, and later institutions of learning. Its history shows how Muslims transmitted revealed knowledge while also developing methods for studying language,



law, theology, history, medicine, mathematics, and other fields. As you study this Series, you will see that Islamic education was not a single institution or method, but a changing educational tradition shaped by religious, social, and intellectual needs.

The aim of this Series is to trace the origin and development of Islamic education from the Prophetic period through major phases of Muslim intellectual history and its transmission into West Africa. You will examine how early Muslims created learning spaces, how scholarly activity expanded, and how Islamic educational traditions developed in West Africa and Nigeria.

We shall begin by examining education within the Prophetic mission, including the role of the mosque, the Suffah, and early teaching practices. Next, we will consider educational development during the Rashidun and Umayyad periods, focusing on the expansion of Qur'ānic and Hadith learning. We will then examine the Abbasid period and the growth of translation, libraries, scholars, and organised learning. Finally, we will trace the transmission of Islamic education into West Africa, including Qur'ānic schools and the development of Islamic education in Nigeria.

### Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- SLO 2.1 describe the foundations and early methods of Islamic education during the Prophetic period,
- SLO 2.2 explain the development of Islamic education during the Rashidun and Umayyad periods,
- SLO 2.3 analyse the factors that expanded Islamic learning during the Abbasid era,
- SLO 2.4 trace the transmission and development of Islamic education in West Africa and Nigeria.



## 2.1 Foundations and Early Development of Islamic Education

### 2.1.1 Education in the Prophetic Mission

The origin of Islamic education is closely connected with the mission of Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'ān presents teaching, purification, and the communication of revelation as important elements of the prophetic mission. The first revealed verses, in Sūrah al-'Alaq (96:1-5), connect reading and learning with the name of Allah and with the divine teaching of the human being. This establishes a foundation in which seeking knowledge is connected with worship, moral formation, and responsible action. During the Prophetic period, learners were taught the Qur'ān, principles of faith, worship, ethical conduct, and practical ways of living as Muslims. Education therefore combined intellectual instruction with character formation.

Fill in the blank: The first revealed verses in Sūrah al-'Alaq (96:1-5) connect reading and learning with the name of \_\_\_\_\_.

### 2.1.2 The Prophet's Mosque and the Suffah as Learning Spaces

The mosque in Madinah served not only as a place of worship but also as an important centre for teaching, consultation, community affairs, and transmission of knowledge. The Suffah, associated with the Prophet's Mosque, provided a setting in which some companions devoted themselves to learning and religious life. The Prophet taught companions directly, and learners also transmitted what they had received to others. This model shows how Islamic education could operate through a shared community space where instruction, practice, memorisation, discussion, and mentorship supported one another.

Key point: In the Prophetic period, the mosque functioned as both a religious and educational space, demonstrating the close relationship between learning and community life.



## THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE (AL-MASJID AN-NABAWI): A CENTER OF LEARNING AND COMMUNITY (c. 622-632 CE)

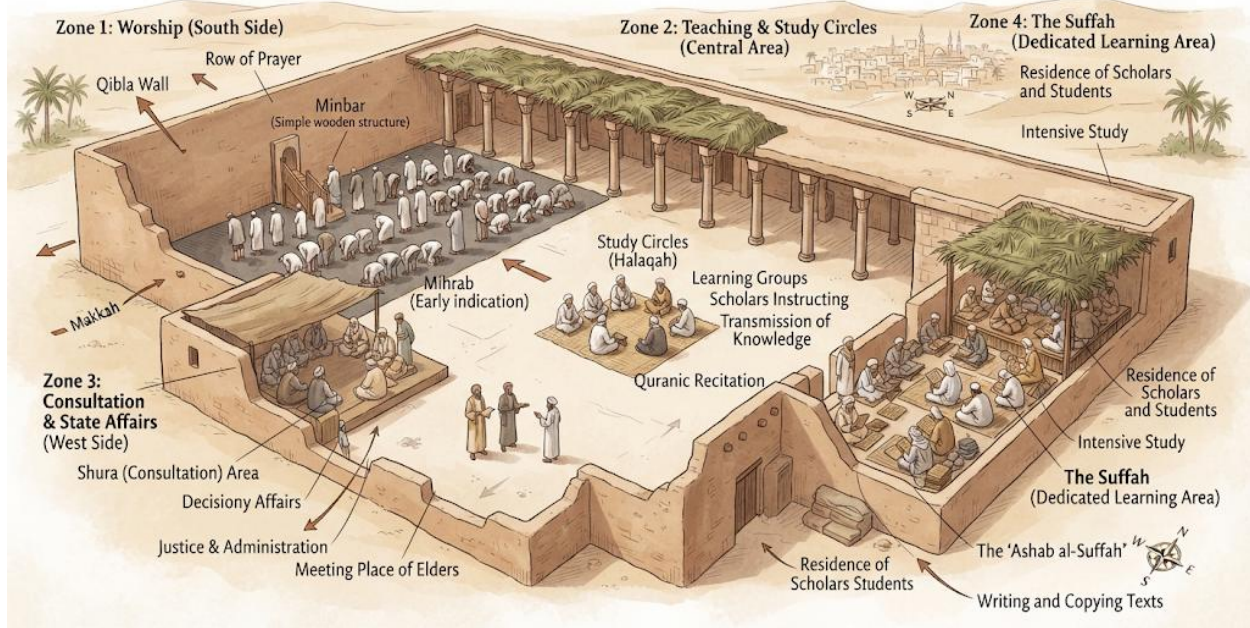


Illustration showing the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah as a centre of worship, teaching, consultation, and community learning, with the Suffah represented as a learning area.

Figure 2.1: The Mosque and the Suffah as Early Islamic Learning Spaces

Fill in the blank: The mosque in Madinah served as an important centre for worship, teaching, consultation, and \_\_\_\_\_ affairs.

### 2.1.3 Early Methods of Teaching and Learning

Early Islamic teaching relied on methods suited to oral transmission and communal learning. Recitation and memorisation were important for preserving the Qur'ān, while explanation, repetition, questioning, demonstration, and practice helped learners apply what they studied. Students learned directly from teachers and could transmit knowledge to others after receiving it. This teacher-learner relationship encouraged careful transmission and personal accountability. In practical matters, instruction was often connected to observation and participation, so learning was reinforced by practice rather than separated from everyday life.



Fill in the blank: Recitation and \_\_\_\_\_ were important methods for preserving and transmitting the Qur'ān in early Islamic education.

#### Pilot questions 2.1

1. What aspects of education were emphasised during the Prophetic mission?
2. Why was the mosque important to Islamic education in Madinah?
3. What was the educational significance of the Suffah?
4. Mention two methods used in early Islamic teaching.
5. How did practical participation support learning in the early Muslim community?

## 2.2 Development during the Early Caliphates

### 2.2.1 Education during the Rashidun Caliphate

After the death of Prophet Muhammad, the Rashidun caliphs continued to support the transmission of the Qur'ān, Prophetic teachings, and Islamic practice. As Muslim communities expanded, companions and other teachers travelled to new settlements and taught local populations. Mosques became important places for learning, while teachers and reciters helped preserve and transmit the Qur'ān and Hadith. The compilation of the Qur'ānic text during the caliphate of Abū Bakr and its standardisation during the caliphate of 'Uthmān were major developments in preserving the revealed text for a growing Muslim community.

Fill in the blank: The standardisation of Qur'ānic copies during the caliphate of \_\_\_\_\_ helped maintain a consistent written text as Muslim communities expanded.

### 2.2.2 Expansion of Learning during the Umayyad Period

Under the Umayyads, the geographical expansion of Muslim rule increased the number of communities requiring teachers and centres of learning. Arabic became increasingly important for administration and scholarship, while Qur'ānic recitation, Hadith, Arabic language, and Islamic legal learning continued to develop. Teachers, reciters, and scholars worked in mosques and local study settings. The expansion of cities also created wider networks through which students could travel to learn from recognised scholars.



Fill in the blank: The expansion of Muslim communities during the Umayyad period increased the need for teachers and \_\_\_\_\_ of learning.

### 2.2.3 The Growth of Qur'ānic and Hadith Learning

The early caliphates strengthened traditions of memorisation, transmission, and verification. Qur'ānic learning focused on accurate recitation and memorisation, while Hadith learning developed through transmission from teachers and attention to the reliability of reports. Students travelled to scholars, attended lessons, recorded knowledge where appropriate, and passed it on to others. These practices helped create a culture in which the authority of a teacher, the reliability of transmission, and the preservation of texts were important parts of learning.

Key point: The early caliphates did not replace the Prophetic educational model. They expanded its reach as Muslim communities grew and new centres of learning emerged.

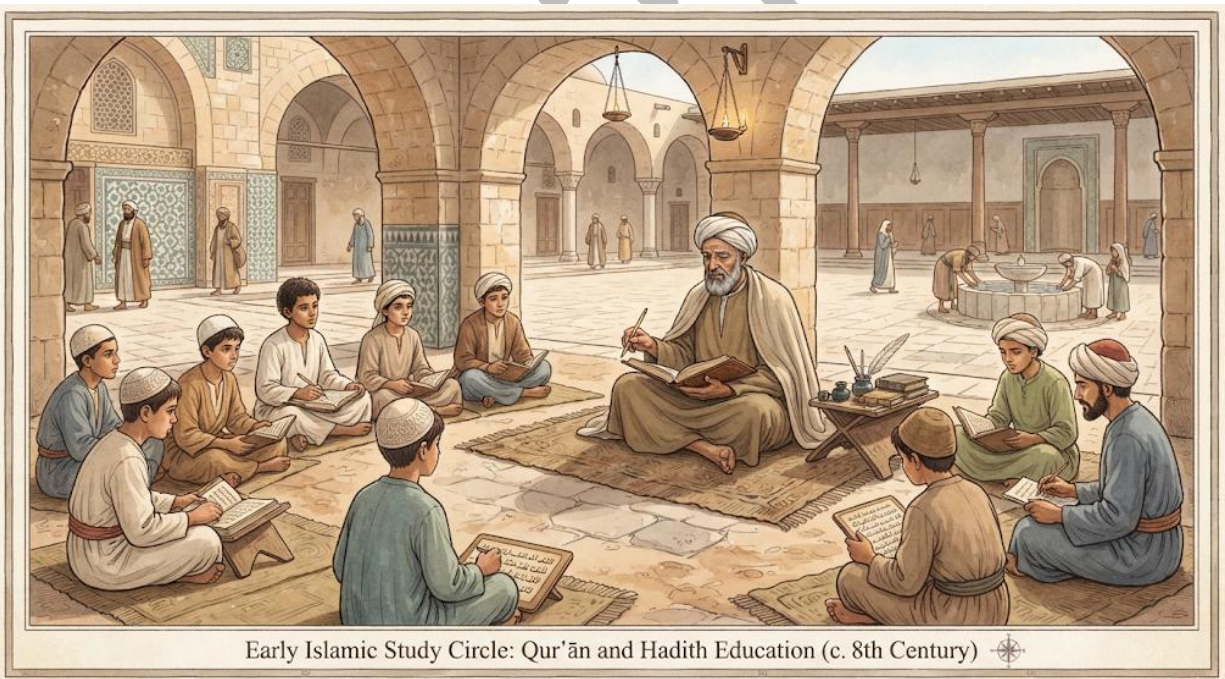


Plate 2.2: Early Muslim Study Circle for Qur'ān and Hadith Learning

Fill in the blank: Hadith learning placed importance on the reliability of \_\_\_\_\_ from teachers to students.



1. How did the Rashidun caliphs support the transmission of Islamic knowledge?
2. Why was the standardisation of the Qur'ānic text significant?
3. Mention two areas of learning that developed during the Umayyad period.
4. How did the expansion of Muslim communities affect education?
5. Why was reliable transmission important in Hadith learning?

## 2.3 Intellectual Expansion in the Abbasid Era

### 2.3.1 Translation and the Expansion of Knowledge

The Abbasid period witnessed a major expansion of intellectual activity. Scholars and patrons supported the translation of important works from languages such as Greek, Syriac, Persian, and Sanskrit into Arabic. Translation did not simply introduce foreign ideas; Muslim scholars examined, commented on, adapted, criticised, and extended many of the works they encountered. This contributed to the development of scholarship in fields such as philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, geography, and natural sciences alongside religious disciplines.

Fill in the blank: During the Abbasid period, important works from several languages were translated into \_\_\_\_\_, widening access to knowledge.

### 2.3.2 Libraries, Scholars, and Centres of Learning

The growth of scholarship was supported by libraries, book collections, scholarly households, mosques, and specialised centres of learning. Baghdad became a major intellectual centre, while other cities also developed strong scholarly traditions. Scholars travelled, debated ideas, wrote books, taught students, and formed networks that connected different regions. Libraries and book culture made it easier for students and scholars to consult earlier works and contribute new ideas.

Fill in the blank: Libraries and book collections helped scholars consult earlier works and contribute \_\_\_\_\_ ideas.



### 2.3.3 From Informal Study Circles to Organised Institutions

Islamic education gradually developed from predominantly informal circles of instruction into more organised forms of teaching. The mosque remained important, but other arrangements emerged around specialised teachers, endowments, libraries, and institutions. The development of organised educational institutions did not eliminate earlier methods; rather, it added new structures for supporting teachers, students, accommodation, books, and regular instruction. This gradual institutionalisation helped Islamic learning become more systematic while retaining the importance of the teacher-student relationship.

Fill in the blank: The development of organised institutions added structures that supported teachers, students, books, and regular \_\_\_\_\_.

Pilot questions 2.3

1. Why was translation important to intellectual development during the Abbasid period?
2. Mention two fields of knowledge that expanded alongside religious scholarship.
3. How did libraries contribute to Islamic learning?
4. What role did scholars play in the expansion of knowledge?
5. How did organised institutions build upon earlier study circles?

## 2.4 Transmission and Development of Islamic Education in West Africa

### 2.4.1 Routes and Agents of Islamic Learning in West Africa

Islamic education reached West Africa through long-distance trade, migration, scholarship, preaching, and the movement of teachers and students. Muslim merchants and scholars connected communities across the Sahara and the western Sudan, while rulers and local communities sometimes supported scholars and places of learning. Over time, towns such as Timbuktu, Jenne, and other centres became associated with Islamic scholarship. The spread of Islam and Islamic education was therefore linked to social networks as well as to formal political structures.

Fill in the blank: Trade, migration, scholarship, preaching, and the movement of teachers and students were important \_\_\_\_\_ through which Islamic learning reached West Africa.



### 2.4.2 Qur'ānic Schools and Islamic Learning Traditions

Qur'ānic schools became important instruments for introducing children and new learners to reading, recitation, memorisation, basic religious knowledge, and moral instruction. In many communities, learning was organised around a teacher who guided students through progressive stages. As Islamic scholarship became established, learners could advance from basic Qur'ānic instruction to Arabic language, Hadith, jurisprudence, theology, and other areas of study. These traditions helped preserve Islamic learning across generations and adapted to the social conditions of different West African communities.

Fill in the blank: Qur'ānic schools commonly introduced learners to reading, recitation, memorisation, and basic \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge.

### 2.4.3 The Development of Islamic Education in the Nigerian Context

In the Nigerian context, Islamic education developed through Qur'ānic schools, mosque-based teaching, itinerant scholars, Islamiyyah schools, and other forms of organised instruction. In northern areas, the historical development of Islamic scholarship was closely associated with established Muslim communities and scholarly networks. In other parts of Nigeria, Islamic education also developed through migration, trade, local Muslim communities, and contemporary educational initiatives. The historical pattern shows continuity as well as adaptation: traditional Qur'ānic learning has remained important while newer institutions have combined Islamic studies with broader school subjects.

Fill in the blank: Contemporary Islamic education in Nigeria includes Qur'ānic schools, mosque-based teaching, Islamiyyah schools, and other forms of organised \_\_\_\_\_.

Pilot questions 2.4

1. 1. Mention three routes or agents through which Islamic education reached West Africa.
2. 2. Name two West African centres associated with Islamic scholarship.
3. 3. What are the main functions of Qur'ānic schools?
4. 4. How can learners progress beyond basic Qur'ānic instruction?
5. 5. Mention two forms of Islamic education found in contemporary Nigeria.





## Series Summary

This Series has traced the origin and development of Islamic education across major historical stages. We began with the Prophetic mission, where education combined revelation, moral formation, worship, and practical guidance, and where the mosque and Suffah supported communal learning. We then examined the Rashidun and Umayyad periods, when the expansion of Muslim communities strengthened the transmission of Qur'ānic and Hadith learning. The Abbasid era brought wider intellectual activity through translation, libraries, scholars, and increasingly organised institutions. Finally, we followed the transmission of Islamic education into West Africa and considered the development of Qur'ānic schools and Islamic education in Nigeria.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to describe the foundations of Islamic education during the Prophetic period (SLO 2.1), explain its development during the Rashidun and Umayyad periods (SLO 2.2), analyse the intellectual expansion of Islamic learning during the Abbasid era (SLO 2.3), and trace the transmission and development of Islamic education in West Africa and Nigeria (SLO 2.4).

## Glossary of Terms

- Abbasid period: The period of Muslim political and intellectual history associated with the Abbasid caliphate, during which scholarship and book culture expanded substantially.
- Hadith: Reports describing the sayings, actions, approvals, or characteristics attributed to Prophet Muhammad and transmitted through chains of narrators.
- Islamic education: The process of transmitting Islamic knowledge, values, skills, and practices for intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social development.
- Islamiyyah school: A contemporary form of Islamic school that provides organised Islamic instruction and may combine it with general academic subjects.
- Kuttāb: A traditional elementary learning setting in which children commonly received instruction in Qur'ānic reading, recitation, and basic religious knowledge.
- Qur'ānic school: A learning setting centred on teaching the Qur'ān, particularly reading, recitation, memorisation, and basic religious instruction.
- Rashidun Caliphate: The period of leadership associated with Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī after the death of Prophet Muhammad.



- Suffah: A sheltered area associated with the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah where some companions devoted themselves to learning and religious life.
- Umayyad period: The period associated with the Umayyad caliphate, during which Muslim territories expanded and educational and scholarly networks developed across a wider region.



## Concept Check Questions 2

### Objective Questions

1. Which institution served as an important centre for worship, teaching, consultation, and community affairs during the Prophetic period? (Linked to SLO 2.1)
2. Which caliph is associated with the standardisation of Qur'ānic copies? (Linked to SLO 2.2)
3. Which activity helped expand access to Greek, Syriac, Persian, and Sanskrit works during the Abbasid period? (Linked to SLO 2.3)
4. Which type of school traditionally focused on Qur'ānic reading, recitation, and memorisation? (Linked to SLO 2.4)
5. Name one West African centre associated with Islamic scholarship. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

### Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain two features of education during the Prophetic period. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
7. Describe how the expansion of Muslim communities affected Islamic education during the early caliphates. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
8. Explain two ways libraries and scholars contributed to Abbasid intellectual development. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
9. Describe how Islamic education was transmitted into West Africa. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

### Long-Answer Questions

10. Analyse the development of Islamic education from the Prophetic period through the Abbasid era, showing how earlier methods and institutions contributed to later intellectual expansion. (Linked to SLO 2.1, SLO 2.2 and SLO 2.3)



11. Evaluate the historical development of Islamic education in West Africa and Nigeria, identifying the major channels of transmission and explaining how traditional and contemporary forms relate to one another. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

## Answers to Concept Check Questions 2

### Objective Questions

1. The mosque, particularly the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah.
2. 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān.
3. Translation of works into Arabic.
4. The Qur'ānic school.
5. Timbuktu or Jenne.

### Short-Answer Questions

1. 6. Education during the Prophetic period combined Qur'ānic teaching with faith, worship, moral conduct, and practical guidance. The mosque also provided a shared setting for instruction and community learning.
2. 7. As Muslim communities expanded, teachers and reciters travelled to new settlements, mosques became local learning centres, and the need to preserve and transmit Qur'ānic and Hadith knowledge increased.
3. 8. Libraries preserved and made earlier works accessible, while scholars interpreted, debated, taught, wrote, and extended knowledge across different fields. Together they strengthened scholarly networks and intellectual continuity.
4. 9. Islamic education spread through trade, migration, preaching, scholarship, and the movement of teachers and students across West African networks. Qur'ānic schools and scholarly centres then helped sustain learning within local communities.
5. Long-Answer Questions
6. 10. Basic response: Islamic education began with the Prophetic mission, using revelation, oral instruction, memorisation, practice, and communal learning. During the early caliphates



these traditions expanded as Muslim communities grew. In the Abbasid era, translation, libraries, scholarly networks, and organised institutions widened the range and reach of learning. Value-added response: The development was cumulative rather than a complete replacement of earlier methods. Mosques and teacher-student relationships remained important while new intellectual resources and institutional arrangements allowed Islamic scholarship to develop across religious and scientific fields.

7. 11. Basic response: Islamic education reached West Africa through trade, migration, scholarship, preaching, and the movement of teachers and students. Qur'ānic schools became important centres of basic Islamic learning, while established scholarly centres supported advanced study. In Nigeria, traditional Qur'ānic and mosque-based instruction has continued alongside Islamiyyah schools and other contemporary institutions. Value-added response: The Nigerian experience illustrates continuity and adaptation, because traditional methods of Qur'ānic learning remain significant while newer institutions may combine Islamic studies with broader academic subjects.

## Answers to Pilot Questions 2

### Part 2.1

1. Qur'ān, faith, worship, ethics, and practical conduct.
2. The Prophet's Mosque was a major centre for teaching and community learning.
3. It provided a setting where some companions devoted themselves to learning and religious life.
4. Recitation and memorisation, together with explanation, questioning, demonstration, and practice.
5. Learning was reinforced by observing and participating in practical community life.

### Part 2.2

1. They supported Qur'ānic and Prophetic teaching as Muslim communities expanded.
2. It helped preserve a consistent written Qur'ānic text across expanding communities.
3. Qur'ānic recitation, Hadith, Arabic language, and Islamic legal learning.
4. Expansion increased the need for teachers, learning centres, and wider scholarly networks.



5. It helped preserve reliable reports by giving attention to transmission from teachers.

### Part 2.3

1. Translation widened access to works from other intellectual traditions and stimulated further Muslim scholarship.
2. Medicine and mathematics, among others.
3. They preserved earlier works and made them available for study and further scholarship.
4. Scholars taught, wrote, debated, travelled, interpreted earlier works, and developed new knowledge.
5. They added organised support for teachers, students, books, accommodation, and regular instruction.

### Part 2.4

1. Trade, migration, preaching, scholarship, and movement of teachers and students.
2. Timbuktu and Jenne.
3. They provide basic Qur'ānic reading, recitation, memorisation, and religious and moral instruction.
4. They can progress to Arabic language, Hadith, jurisprudence, theology, and other areas of study.
5. Qur'ānic schools and Islamiyyah schools, among others.



## References and Attributions 2

- Qur’ānic Verses:
  - Sūrah al-‘Alaq (96:1-5). These verses provide a foundational Qur’ānic reference to reading, learning, and divine teaching in the discussion of the origin of Islamic education.
- Sūrah al-Mujādilah (58:11). This verse is relevant to the discussion of the elevated status of knowledge and those granted knowledge.
  - Sūrah Tā Hā (20:114). The prayer for increase in knowledge supports the emphasis on continuous learning.
    - Illustrations:
    - Figure 2.1: The Mosque and the Suffah as Early Islamic Learning Spaces. AI-generated suggestion: “Create an educational historical diagram of the Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah showing its roles in worship, teaching, consultation, and community learning, with a clearly labelled learning area representing the Suffah. Avoid depicting the Prophet or identifiable companions.” Attribution: Prompt designed for AI illustration tools such as Microsoft Designer or DALL·E. Suggested OER search string: “Prophet’s Mosque Suffah early Islamic education learning space OER diagram”.
    - Plate 2.2: Early Muslim Study Circle for Qur’ān and Hadith Learning. AI-generated suggestion: “Create an educational historical illustration of an early Muslim study circle in a mosque courtyard, showing a teacher seated with students learning Qur’ānic recitation and Hadith. Use historically respectful architecture and clothing, with no depiction of prophets or sacred figures.” Attribution: Prompt designed for AI illustration tools such as Microsoft Designer or DALL·E. Suggested OER search string: “early Islamic study circle Quran Hadith education OER illustration”.
  - Secondary Sources:
    - Berkey, J. P. (1992). *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education*. Princeton University Press.
    - Makdisi, G. (1981). *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*. Edinburgh University Press.



- Trimingham, J. S. (1962). *A History of Islam in West Africa*. Oxford University Press.
- Pedersen, J. (1991). *The Arabic Book*. Princeton University Press.
  - Nakosteen, M. (1964). *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education, A.D. 800-1350*. University of Colorado Press.
  - Rosenthal, F. (1970). *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*. Brill.
  - General Attribution:
- The historical account synthesises Qur'ānic references and established scholarship on the development of Islamic learning and its transmission into West Africa. Illustration prompts were created specifically for this Series.
  - All definitions of Tawḥīd, Shirk, and Īmān are based on classical Islamic scholarship and Qur'ānic references.
  - AI prompts were created specifically for this Series to generate educational illustrations.



## Series 3: Contributions of Early Muslims and Traditional Scholars

### *Parts and Sub-Parts*

#### 3.1 Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars

- 3.1.1 Preservation and Transmission of Islamic Knowledge
- 3.1.2 Development of Scientific and Intellectual Inquiry
- 3.1.3 Scholarship, Teaching, and the Culture of Learning

#### 3.2 Contributions of Classical Muslim Educational Thinkers

- 3.2.1 Al-Zarnūjī and the Ethics of Seeking Knowledge
- 3.2.2 Al-Ghazālī and the Moral Purpose of Learning
- 3.2.3 Ibn Khaldūn and Learning through Experience and Society

#### 3.3 Contributions of Scholars to Islamic Educational Practice

- 3.3.1 Teachers, Mentorship, and Scholarly Networks
- 3.3.2 Writing, Commentary, and the Preservation of Knowledge
- 3.3.3 Character Formation and the Integration of Knowledge and Practice

#### 3.4 Contributions of Traditional Scholars in West Africa and Nigeria

- 3.4.1 Scholarly Networks and the Spread of Islamic Learning
- 3.4.2 Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Nana Asma'u
- 3.4.3 Continuing Influence on Islamic Education in Nigeria



## Introduction

The development of Islamic education was shaped not only by institutions and historical events but also by the scholars who preserved knowledge, taught learners, wrote books, developed intellectual methods, and connected learning with moral and social life. Early Muslims contributed to the preservation and transmission of Qur'ānic and Prophetic knowledge while Muslim scholars also advanced inquiry in fields such as language, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, history, and law. As you study this Series, you will see that the history of Islamic education is also a history of people who made learning a sustained intellectual and moral activity.

The aim of this Series is to examine the contributions of early Muslims and traditional scholars to Islamic education and to evaluate how their ideas, methods, writings, and educational practices influenced Muslim learning. You will also consider the contribution of West African and Nigerian scholars to the continuity of Islamic education.

We shall begin by examining how early Muslims preserved and transmitted knowledge and how scholarly inquiry developed within Muslim intellectual life. Next, we will study selected educational thinkers, including al-Zarnūjī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Khaldūn, with attention to their views on learning, teaching, ethics, and experience. We will then examine practical contributions made through teaching, mentorship, writing, commentary, and character formation. Finally, we will consider the work of traditional scholars in West Africa and Nigeria, including Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Nana Asma'u, and their continuing relevance to Islamic education.

## Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- SLO 3.1 describe the contributions of early Muslims to the preservation, transmission, and expansion of knowledge,
- SLO 3.2 compare selected ideas of al-Zarnūjī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Khaldūn on learning and education,
- SLO 3.3 analyse the contribution of traditional scholarly practices to teaching, knowledge preservation, and character formation,



- SLO 3.4 evaluate the contributions of traditional scholars in West Africa and Nigeria to the continuity of Islamic education.



## 3.1 Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars

### 3.1.1 Preservation and Transmission of Islamic Knowledge

Early Muslims made the preservation and transmission of Islamic knowledge a major educational responsibility. The Qur'ān was memorised, recited, written, and taught, while reports of the Prophet's sayings and practices were transmitted through teachers and learners. The development of careful methods of transmission helped learners distinguish reliable reports and maintain continuity between generations. This culture of learning meant that knowledge was not treated simply as information to collect; it was something to preserve accurately and pass on responsibly.

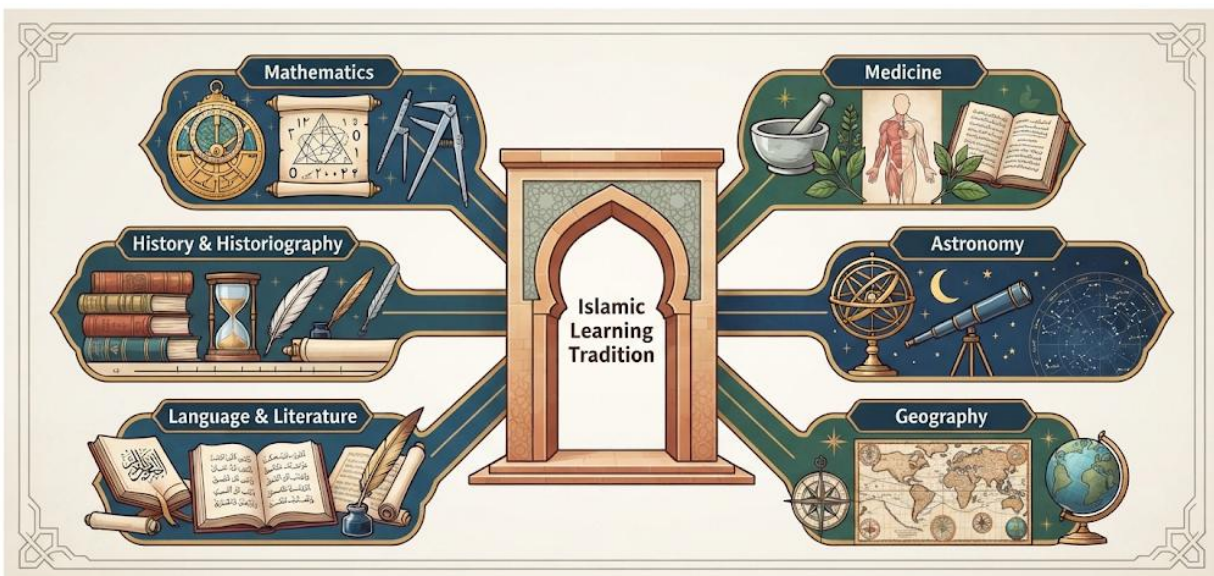
Fill in the blank: Early Muslims preserved Islamic knowledge through memorisation, writing, teaching, and careful \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3.1.2 Development of Scientific and Intellectual Inquiry

Muslim scholars also contributed to the growth of intellectual inquiry beyond the direct study of religious texts. Scholars worked in areas such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, geography, language, and philosophy, often building on earlier knowledge while testing, explaining, organising, and extending it. For Islamic education, this broad intellectual activity demonstrated that disciplined inquiry could serve human welfare and deepen understanding of the created world. In a Nigerian university, you can see a similar principle when religious learning is combined with disciplined study of science, education, technology, or the humanities.

**Key point: The intellectual contribution of early Muslims extended beyond religious instruction and encouraged organised inquiry, writing, observation, reasoning, and the development of knowledge in different fields.**





**Figure 3.1: Fields of Knowledge Advanced by Muslim Scholars.** AI-generated suggestion: 'Create a clean educational infographic showing a central Islamic learning tradition connected to mathematics, medicine, astronomy, geography, language, and history. Use books, instruments, and abstract symbols rather than depicting sacred figures.' Attribution: Prompt designed for AI illustration tools such as Microsoft Designer or DALL·E.

Illustration showing selected fields of Muslim scholarship, such as mathematics, medicine, astronomy, geography, language, and history, connected to a central learning tradition.

Figure 3.1: Fields of Knowledge Advanced by Muslim Scholars

Fill in the blank: Muslim scholars contributed to fields such as mathematics, medicine, astronomy, geography, and \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3.1.3 Scholarship, Teaching, and the Culture of Learning

The contribution of early Muslim scholars was strengthened by a culture in which teaching and learning were connected to scholarly discipline. Teachers explained texts, answered questions, corrected learners, and encouraged students to continue studying. Students travelled to recognised scholars, listened to lessons, copied or recorded important works, and transmitted knowledge to others. This culture created scholarly communities in which learning depended on both personal effort and relationships between teachers and learners.

Fill in the blank: Early Muslim scholarship developed through teaching, learning, questioning, writing, and scholarly \_\_\_\_\_.



1. Mention two ways early Muslims preserved Islamic knowledge.
2. Why was careful transmission important in Islamic learning?
3. Mention three fields in which Muslim scholars advanced intellectual inquiry.
4. How did teachers contribute to the culture of learning?
5. How did travel contribute to scholarly learning among Muslims?

## 3.2 Contributions of Classical Muslim Educational Thinkers

### 3.2.1 Al-Zarnūjī and the Ethics of Seeking Knowledge

Al-Zarnūjī is associated with the classical work *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, which discusses guidance for students seeking knowledge. His approach places emphasis on sincere intention, respect for teachers, disciplined study, perseverance, and proper conduct. For the learner, this means that academic success is not separated from attitude and character. When you approach your studies with purpose, respect, patience, and consistent effort, you strengthen the habits that support meaningful learning.

Fill in the blank: Al-Zarnūjī emphasised sincere intention, respect for teachers, perseverance, and proper \_\_\_\_\_ in seeking knowledge.

### 3.2.2 Al-Ghazālī and the Moral Purpose of Learning

Al-Ghazālī treated education as closely connected with moral and spiritual development. In his writings on knowledge and the conduct of learners, he distinguished beneficial knowledge from knowledge pursued for harmful or merely worldly purposes and stressed the importance of applying knowledge through right action. His educational thought therefore links intellectual development with purification of character and responsible conduct. For you as a student, the lesson is that learning becomes more valuable when it improves judgment, behaviour, and service to others.



Fill in the blank: Al-Ghazālī connected beneficial knowledge with moral development and right \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3.2.3 Ibn Khaldūn and Learning through Experience and Society

Ibn Khaldūn discussed education in relation to human development, society, and the gradual acquisition of knowledge. He criticised teaching approaches that overwhelm learners and emphasised progression, repetition, practice, and movement from simpler matters to more advanced ones. His observations highlight the importance of considering a learner's level and experience when teaching. This principle remains useful today because a lecturer who introduces complex ideas without building the required foundation may make learning unnecessarily difficult.

**Key point: Classical Muslim educational thinkers addressed not only what should be learned but also how learners should be taught, how teachers should behave, and how knowledge should influence character and society.**



|                                     | <br><b>al-Zarnūjī</b><br>(d. c. 1203)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <br><b>al-Ghazālī</b><br>(d. 1111)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <br><b>Ibn Khaldūn</b><br>(d. 1406)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learner Ethics                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect for teacher and knowledge </li> <li>Intention (<i>niyyah</i>) for seeking knowledge</li> <li>Punctuality and diligence</li> <li>Avoiding worldly distractions </li> </ul>                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sincerity of intention (<i>ikhlas</i>) </li> <li>Humility and piety </li> <li>Purification of the soul</li> <li>Seeking knowledge for closeness to God </li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discipline and good character </li> <li>Social responsibility in learning </li> <li>Ethical conduct in scholarship </li> <li>Respect for the scholarly hierarchy </li> </ul>                             |
| Moral Purpose of Knowledge          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge for action and practice </li> <li>Preparing for the Hereafter </li> <li>Distinguishing lawful (<i>halal</i>) from unlawful (<i>haram</i>)</li> <li>Benefit to the self and community </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking truth and certainty (<i>yaqin</i>) </li> <li>Spiritual enlightenment and wisdom (<i>hikmah</i>) </li> <li>Knowledge as a means to worship God</li> <li>Transforming character </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding societal dynamics ('<i>ilm al-'umran</i>) </li> <li>Developing critical thinking </li> <li>Preserving cultural heritage </li> <li>Contributing to civilization's progress </li> </ul> |
| Gradual Learning through Experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sequential study of subjects</li> <li>Repetition and review </li> <li>Learning from knowledgeable scholars</li> <li>Practical application of learned knowledge </li> </ul>                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hierarchy of knowledge (worldly vs. religious)</li> <li>Stages of spiritual development </li> <li>Reflection (<i>tafakkur</i>) and contemplation</li> <li>Moving from imitation (<i>taqlid</i>) to realization </li> </ul>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation and empirical study </li> <li>Historical context and comparison </li> <li>Stages of learning from concrete to abstract</li> <li>Practical experience (<i>mubashara</i>) alongside theory </li> </ul>                                                                      |

**Plate 3.2:** A respectful educational comparison chart illustrating key ideas of three classical Muslim thinkers on ethics, purpose, and methodology, utilizing abstract scholarly symbols instead of portraits.

Illustration comparing



three classical educational emphases: al-Zarnūjī on learner ethics, al-Ghazālī on moral purpose, and Ibn Khaldūn on gradual learning and experience.

### Plate 3.2: Selected Educational Ideas of Classical Muslim Thinkers

Fill in the blank: Ibn Khaldūn emphasised progression, repetition, practice, and movement from simpler matters to more \_\_\_\_\_ ones.

#### *Pilot questions 3.2*

1. What did al-Zarnūjī emphasise in the conduct of students?
2. How did al-Ghazālī connect knowledge with moral development?
3. Mention two teaching principles associated with Ibn Khaldūn.
4. Why is gradual learning important for students?
5. What common concern can be identified in the educational ideas of the three scholars?

## 3.3 Contributions of Scholars to Islamic Educational Practice

### 3.3.1 Teachers, Mentorship, and Scholarly Networks

Traditional Islamic education depended heavily on relationships between teachers and learners. A teacher did more than deliver information; the teacher explained texts, corrected mistakes, modelled conduct, and guided learners through increasingly difficult studies. Students also learned through scholarly networks by travelling, attending lessons, and studying with more than one teacher. Such mentorship created continuity because learners who became competent could teach others and extend the chain of learning.

Fill in the blank: Traditional Islamic education relied strongly on teacher guidance, mentorship, and scholarly \_\_\_\_\_.



### 3.3.2 Writing, Commentary, and the Preservation of Knowledge

Scholars contributed to education by writing original works, preparing commentaries, abridging longer texts, organising knowledge, and preserving earlier scholarship. Commentary was especially useful because it helped learners approach difficult texts through explanation and clarification.

Written materials could then be copied, taught, discussed, and transmitted across different communities. In this way, writing supported continuity while allowing later scholars to respond to new questions and educational needs.

Fill in the blank: Commentaries helped learners approach difficult texts through explanation and \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3.3.3 Character Formation and the Integration of Knowledge and Practice

Traditional Islamic scholarship commonly treated character formation as an important part of education. Knowledge was expected to influence conduct, worship, relationships, professional responsibility, and service to the community. This integration of knowledge and practice is relevant to modern education because a graduate is expected not only to recall information but also to use knowledge responsibly. For example, a student studying Islamic education in Nigeria should be able to connect classroom learning with respectful teaching, ethical leadership, community service, and responsible communication.

Fill in the blank: Traditional Islamic education sought to connect knowledge with character, conduct, and practical \_\_\_\_\_.

#### *Pilot questions 3.3*

1. What roles did teachers perform beyond delivering information?
2. How did scholarly networks support the continuity of Islamic learning?
3. Mention two forms of scholarly writing that supported education.
4. Why were commentaries important to learners?



5. How can knowledge and character be connected in contemporary education?

### 3.4 Contributions of Traditional Scholars in West Africa and Nigeria

#### 3.4.1 Scholarly Networks and the Spread of Islamic Learning

Traditional scholars played an important role in sustaining Islamic education in West Africa through teaching, preaching, writing, study circles, Qur'ānic schools, and networks linking communities. Scholars and students moved between centres of learning, while books and oral teaching helped transmit knowledge. These networks allowed Islamic learning to continue even when formal educational institutions were limited. They also helped local communities develop teachers who could pass knowledge to new generations.

Fill in the blank: Teaching, preaching, writing, study circles, Qur'ānic schools, and scholarly networks helped sustain Islamic \_\_\_\_\_ in West Africa.

#### 3.4.2 Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Nana Asma'u

In the history of Islamic scholarship in the region that includes present-day northern Nigeria, Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Nana Asma'u are important figures associated with teaching, writing, reform, and the expansion of learning. Uthman dan Fodio produced works used for religious instruction and encouraged scholarship. Abdullahi dan Fodio contributed writings and teaching within the scholarly tradition. Nana Asma'u became especially associated with women's education and the use of teaching networks to extend learning. Their contributions show that traditional Islamic education could involve scholarship, community leadership, writing, and deliberate efforts to widen access to learning.

**Key point: The contributions of West African scholars show that Islamic education was sustained not only through inherited texts but also through active teaching, writing, reform, and the creation of networks that reached different groups in society.**



Fill in the blank: Nana Asma'u is particularly associated with expanding access to Islamic learning among \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3.4.3 Continuing Influence on Islamic Education in Nigeria

The legacy of traditional scholars remains visible in contemporary Nigerian Islamic education. Qur'ānic schools, Islamiyyah schools, mosque-based instruction, private Islamic learning centres, and university programmes continue to draw on traditions of teacher guidance, memorisation, textual study, moral instruction, and community service. At the same time, contemporary educators can adapt these traditions by combining sound Islamic scholarship with appropriate teaching methods, literacy, digital resources, critical thinking, and wider educational opportunities. The goal is not simply to preserve old practices unchanged but to retain their educational strengths while responding responsibly to present needs.

*Fill in the blank: Contemporary Nigerian Islamic education can preserve traditional strengths while responding responsibly to present \_\_\_\_\_.*

#### Pilot questions 3.4

1. Mention three ways traditional scholars sustained Islamic education in West Africa.
2. What contribution is Uthman dan Fodio associated with in Islamic scholarship?
3. What educational contribution is Nana Asma'u particularly known for?
4. Mention two forms of Islamic education found in contemporary Nigeria that reflect traditional scholarly practices.
5. How can traditional educational strengths be adapted to contemporary Nigerian needs?



## Series Summary

### Series Summary

This Series has examined how early Muslims and traditional scholars contributed to the preservation, expansion, and practice of Islamic education. We began by considering the preservation and transmission of Qur'ānic and Prophetic knowledge and the wider intellectual inquiry developed by Muslim scholars. We then examined selected educational thinkers: al-Zarnūjī, who emphasised the ethics of seeking knowledge; al-Ghazālī, who connected knowledge with moral development; and Ibn Khaldūn, who discussed gradual learning, experience, and the social context of education. Next, we considered practical scholarly contributions through teaching, mentorship, writing, commentary, and character formation. Finally, we explored traditional scholarship in West Africa and Nigeria, including the contributions associated with Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Nana Asma'u.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to describe the contributions of early Muslims to the preservation and expansion of knowledge (SLO 3.1), compare selected educational ideas of classical Muslim thinkers (SLO 3.2), analyse traditional scholarly practices in teaching and knowledge preservation (SLO 3.3), and evaluate the contributions of traditional scholars in West Africa and Nigeria to Islamic education (SLO 3.4).

### Glossary of Terms

- Al-Zarnūjī: A classical Muslim educational writer associated with Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, a work on the conduct and methods of the learner.
- Character formation: The development of moral habits, attitudes, and conduct alongside intellectual learning.
- Commentary: An explanatory work that clarifies, interprets, or expands on an earlier text.
- Islamic scholarship: The disciplined study, preservation, interpretation, teaching, and development of knowledge within Muslim intellectual traditions.
- Mentorship: Guidance provided by an experienced teacher or scholar to support the development of a learner.



- Nana Asma'u: A West African Muslim scholar and educator associated with teaching, writing, and the expansion of women's Islamic education.
- Scholarly network: A connected community of teachers, students, writers, and centres through which knowledge is taught and transmitted.
- Traditional scholar: A scholar trained within established Islamic learning traditions and involved in teaching, writing, interpretation, or community education.



## Objective Questions

1. Which practice helped early Muslims preserve and transmit Islamic knowledge? (Linked to SLO 3.1)
2. Which scholar is associated with *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* and the ethics of seeking knowledge? (Linked to SLO 3.2)
3. Which educational thinker emphasised gradual learning and attention to the learner's level and experience? (Linked to SLO 3.2)
4. Which scholarly practice helps explain difficult earlier texts for learners? (Linked to SLO 3.3)
5. Which scholar is particularly associated with expanding women's Islamic education in the Sokoto scholarly tradition? (Linked to SLO 3.4)

## Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain two ways early Muslim scholars contributed to the preservation and transmission of knowledge. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
7. Compare the educational emphases of al-Zarnūjī and al-Ghazālī. (Linked to SLO 3.2)
8. Analyse the importance of mentorship, scholarly networks, and written commentaries in traditional Islamic education. (Linked to SLO 3.3)
9. Evaluate two contributions of traditional scholars to the development of Islamic education in West Africa and Nigeria. (Linked to SLO 3.4)

## Long-Answer Questions

10. Analyse how the contributions of early Muslim scholars and classical educational thinkers shaped the preservation, transmission, and practice of Islamic education. In your answer, relate scholarly activity to teaching, character formation, and the expansion of knowledge. (Linked to SLO 3.1, SLO 3.2, SLO 3.3)
11. Evaluate the contributions of traditional scholars in West Africa and Nigeria to Islamic education, paying particular attention to scholarship, teaching networks, women's education, and the continuing relevance of their educational legacy. (Linked to SLO 3.4)



## Answers to Concept Check Questions 3

### Objective Questions

1. Memorisation, writing, teaching, and careful transmission of knowledge.
2. Al-Zarnūjī.
3. Ibn Khaldūn.
4. Commentary.
5. Nana Asma' u.

### Short-Answer Questions

6. Early Muslim scholars preserved Qur'ānic and Prophetic knowledge through memorisation, writing, teaching, and careful transmission. They also developed scholarly practices that allowed knowledge to be taught and passed to later generations.
7. Al-Zarnūjī emphasised sincere intention, discipline, respect for teachers, perseverance, and proper conduct, while al-Ghazālī connected beneficial knowledge with moral and spiritual development and its application in right action.
8. Mentorship provided direct guidance and correction; scholarly networks connected teachers and learners across communities; and commentaries clarified difficult texts. Together, these practices supported continuity and deeper understanding.
9. Traditional scholars in West Africa and Nigeria sustained Islamic education through teaching, writing, study circles, Qur'ānic schools, and scholarly networks. Figures such as Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Nana Asma' u also helped expand scholarship and educational access, including women's learning.

### Long-Answer Questions

10. *Basic response:* Early Muslim scholars preserved Qur'ānic and Prophetic knowledge through memorisation, writing, teaching, and careful transmission. Muslim intellectuals also advanced inquiry in several fields, while educational thinkers such as al-Zarnūjī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Khaldūn reflected on learner conduct, moral purpose, gradual learning, and experience. These contributions strengthened teaching, character formation, and the wider development of knowledge. *Value-added response:* A strong answer should show how



preservation made knowledge available to later generations, how scholarly inquiry expanded the scope of learning, and how educational thought addressed both the intellectual and moral dimensions of education.

11. *Basic response:* Traditional scholars in West Africa and Nigeria sustained Islamic education through teaching, writing, study circles, Qur'ānic schools, and networks of scholars and learners. Uthman dan Fodio and Abdullahi dan Fodio contributed through scholarship and teaching, while Nana Asma'u became especially associated with women's education and teaching networks. *Value-added response:* A strong answer should evaluate how these contributions strengthened access, continuity, and local ownership of Islamic learning, while considering how their legacy can be adapted to contemporary educational needs.

## Answers to Pilot Questions 3

### Part 3.1

1. Memorisation, writing, teaching, and careful transmission.
2. Careful transmission helped preserve reliable knowledge across generations.
3. Mathematics, medicine, astronomy, geography, language, and history.
4. Teachers explained texts, corrected learners, answered questions, modelled conduct, and guided students.
5. Travel allowed students to study with recognised scholars and helped connect different learning communities.

### Part 3.2

1. Sincere intention, respect for teachers, perseverance, disciplined study, and proper conduct.
2. He connected beneficial knowledge with moral and spiritual development and right action.
3. Gradual progression, repetition, practice, and attention to the learner's level and experience.
4. It allows learners to build foundations before moving to more complex ideas and reduces unnecessary difficulty.
5. All three linked effective learning with disciplined learner conduct, responsible teaching, and the proper use of knowledge.



### Part 3.3

1. They explained texts, corrected mistakes, answered questions, modelled conduct, and guided learners.
2. They connected teachers and students across communities and helped transmit knowledge to new generations.
3. Original works, commentaries, and abridgements.
4. They clarified difficult texts and made earlier scholarship more accessible to learners.
5. Knowledge was expected to influence conduct, responsibility, worship, relationships, and service to the community.

### Part 3.4

1. Teaching, preaching, writing, study circles, Qur'ānic schools, and scholarly networks.
2. He is associated with scholarship, teaching, writing, and reform in the Sokoto scholarly tradition.
3. She is particularly associated with women's education and teaching networks.
4. Qur'ānic schools, Islamiyyah schools, mosque-based instruction, and private Islamic learning centres.
5. They can retain strengths such as teacher guidance, memorisation, moral instruction, and textual study while using appropriate teaching methods, literacy, digital resources, and wider educational opportunities.



## References and Attributions 3

- Qur'ānic Verses:
  - Sūrah al-‘Alaq (96:1-5). These verses provide a foundational reference to reading, learning, and divine teaching in the discussion of the value of knowledge.
- Sūrah al-Mujādilah (58:11). This verse supports the discussion of the elevated status of knowledge and those granted knowledge.
  - Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:114). The prayer for increase in knowledge supports the emphasis on continuous learning.
    - Illustrations:
    - Figure 3.1: Fields of Knowledge Advanced by Muslim Scholars. AI-generated suggestion: “Create a clean educational infographic showing a central Islamic learning tradition connected to mathematics, medicine, astronomy, geography, language, and history. Use books, instruments, and abstract symbols rather than depicting sacred figures.” Attribution: Prompt designed for AI illustration tools such as Microsoft Designer or DALL·E. Suggested OER search string: “Muslim scholars fields mathematics medicine astronomy geography Islamic education OER infographic”.
    - Plate 3.2: Selected Educational Ideas of Classical Muslim Thinkers. AI-generated suggestion: “Create a respectful educational comparison chart for al-Zarnūjī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Khaldūn. Show learner ethics, moral purpose of knowledge, and gradual learning through experience as the three central themes. Use books and abstract scholarly symbols, not portraits of the scholars.” Attribution: Prompt designed for AI illustration tools such as Microsoft Designer or DALL·E. Suggested OER search string: “al Zarnuji al Ghazali Ibn Khaldun educational ideas comparison OER chart”.
  - Secondary Sources:
    - Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979). *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization.
    - Al-Ghazālī. (1962). *The Book of Knowledge, Book 1 of the Ihya’ Ulum al-Din*. Translated by Nabih Amin Faris. Islamic Book Trust.



- Ibn Khaldūn. (1967). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*.  
Translated by Franz Rosenthal. Princeton University Press.
- Al-Zarnūjī. (1947). *Instruction of the Student: The Method of Learning*. Translated by G. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel. King's Crown Press.
  - Hunwick, J. O. (2003). *Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume 1: The Writings of Western Sudanic Africa*. Brill.
  - Last, M. (1967). *The Sokoto Caliphate*. Longman.
  - General Attribution:
- The historical and educational discussion synthesises Qur'ānic references and established scholarship on Muslim scholars, educational thought, and traditional Islamic learning in West Africa and Nigeria.
  - All definitions and descriptions of scholarly contributions are presented for educational purposes and should be read alongside the cited primary and secondary sources.
  - AI prompts were created specifically for this Series to generate educational illustrations.



## Parts and Sub-Parts

### 4.1 The Masjid and Foundations of Institutional Islamic Education

- 4.1.1 The Masjid as a Centre of Learning
- 4.1.2 Study Circles, Teachers and Learners
- 4.1.3 Educational Functions of the Masjid

### 4.2 Madrasah and the Nizāmiyyah Tradition

- 4.2.1 Meaning and Development of the Madrasah
- 4.2.2 The Nizāmiyyah Institutions
- 4.2.3 Curriculum, Scholarship and Institutional Support

### 4.3 Major Centres of Islamic Learning and Educational Thought

- 4.3.1 Cordova as a Centre of Learning
- 4.3.2 al-Azhar and the Continuity of Islamic Scholarship
- 4.3.3 al-Ghazālī's Educational Theory

### 4.4 Islamic Educational Institutions in West Africa and Nigeria

- 4.4.1 Qur'ānic Schools in West Africa
- 4.4.2 Islamiyyah and 'Ilmī Schools
- 4.4.3 Institutional Continuity and Adaptation in Nigeria

## Introduction

Islamic education has never depended on a single classroom, teaching method or educational institution. From the earliest Muslim communities, learning took place through the masjid, study circles, teachers, homes and other community settings. As Muslim societies expanded and educational needs became more complex, more organised institutions developed to support sustained teaching, scholarly study and the transmission of knowledge.

The institution through which education is organised influences how knowledge is taught, who has access to it, how teachers and learners interact, and how learning is preserved from one generation to another. For this



reason, studying Islamic education requires attention not only to what Muslims taught but also to the institutions through which that teaching was sustained.

This Series examines important institutions and educational ideas that shaped Islamic education. You will study the masjid as an early centre of learning, the development of the madrasah and the Nizāmiyyah tradition, major centres such as Cordova and al-Azhar, and selected educational ideas associated with al-Ghazālī. You will then examine Qur’ānic schools, Islamiyyah schools and ‘Ilmī learning traditions in West Africa and Nigeria.

The aim of this Series is to help you analyse how Islamic educational institutions developed, identify their major educational functions, and evaluate how their principles can inform Islamic education in contemporary Nigeria.

We shall begin with the masjid and study circles because they demonstrate how worship, teaching, mentorship and community life were brought together in early Muslim educational settings. Next, we will examine the madrasah and the Nizāmiyyah tradition, paying attention to organised teaching, curriculum, teachers, students and institutional support. We will then consider Cordova and al-Azhar as important centres of Islamic scholarship and examine al-Ghazālī’s educational theory. Finally, we will study Islamic educational institutions in West Africa and Nigeria, focusing on Qur’ānic schools, Islamiyyah schools, ‘Ilmī learning and institutional adaptation.

## Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 4.1:** analyse the educational functions of the masjid and study circles in Islamic educational history;
- **SLO 4.2:** explain the development and institutional characteristics of the madrasah and Nizāmiyyah tradition;
- **SLO 4.3:** evaluate the educational significance of Cordova, al-Azhar and selected principles in al-Ghazālī’s educational thought;
- **SLO 4.4:** assess the continuity, adaptation and contemporary relevance of Islamic educational institutions in West Africa and Nigeria.



## 4.1 The Masjid and Foundations of Institutional Islamic Education

### 4.1.1 The Masjid as a Centre of Learning

The masjid occupies a central position in Muslim community life. Although its primary purpose is worship, it has historically also provided a setting for teaching, learning, guidance and community interaction. In many Muslim communities, people could attend lessons in the masjid after prayers or at other scheduled times. Children, young people and adults could therefore participate in learning within the same community environment.

The educational importance of the masjid lies partly in its accessibility. Learning did not necessarily require a separate specialised building. A community could use an existing religious space to teach Qur'ānic recitation, Arabic, religious knowledge and moral conduct. This arrangement also kept education connected with everyday religious and social life.

The masjid could therefore serve different educational levels. A beginner might learn how to read and recite the Qur'ān, while a more advanced learner could participate in discussions of jurisprudence, Hadith, Arabic or other areas of Islamic scholarship. The particular subjects and level of instruction varied according to the community and the teachers available.

**Fill in the blank:** The masjid historically served as a place of worship and a centre of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** learning.

### 4.1.2 Study Circles, Teachers and Learners

One important educational arrangement associated with the masjid was the study circle. A teacher would sit with learners to read, explain, discuss or memorise a text or subject. Students could ask questions, repeat material, take notes and receive correction from the teacher.

The study circle encouraged direct contact between teacher and learner. The teacher was not merely a source of information but could also demonstrate appropriate conduct. Learners therefore encountered knowledge together with scholarly discipline, respect and practical guidance.

The arrangement also allowed learning to proceed according to the abilities of participants. A learner who had mastered foundational material could move to more advanced study, while beginners could receive basic instruction.



This teacher-learner relationship was particularly important in traditions where knowledge was transmitted through sustained interaction rather than through written material alone. The learner benefited from explanation, correction and observation of the teacher's method.

**Fill in the blank:** A study circle is an educational arrangement in which a teacher guides learners through a text, topic or \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** discussion.

### 4.1.3 Educational Functions of the Masjid

The educational functions of the masjid included Qur'ānic instruction, religious teaching, moral guidance, scholarly discussion and community education. It could support both structured lessons and less formal learning activities.

The masjid also provided an environment in which education could respond to community needs. For example, a mosque might organise Qur'ānic recitation for children, Arabic lessons for beginners, public lectures for adults or study sessions for university students.

In contemporary Nigeria, the educational role of the masjid can still be observed in mosque-based Qur'ānic schools, Arabic classes, Islamic lectures and youth learning programmes. The effectiveness of such activities depends on factors such as qualified teachers, suitable learning materials, regular instruction and attention to learners' needs.

The educational significance of the masjid therefore extends beyond its physical structure. Its importance lies in its ability to connect knowledge, worship, mentorship and community life.

**Fill in the blank:** The masjid can support Qur'ānic instruction, Arabic learning, moral guidance and community \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** education.

### Pilot Questions 4.1

1. What educational functions can the masjid perform besides worship?
2. What is a study circle?
3. How does the teacher-learner relationship contribute to Islamic education?
4. Why was the masjid suitable for community learning?
5. Mention two examples of mosque-based Islamic education that can be found in Nigeria.



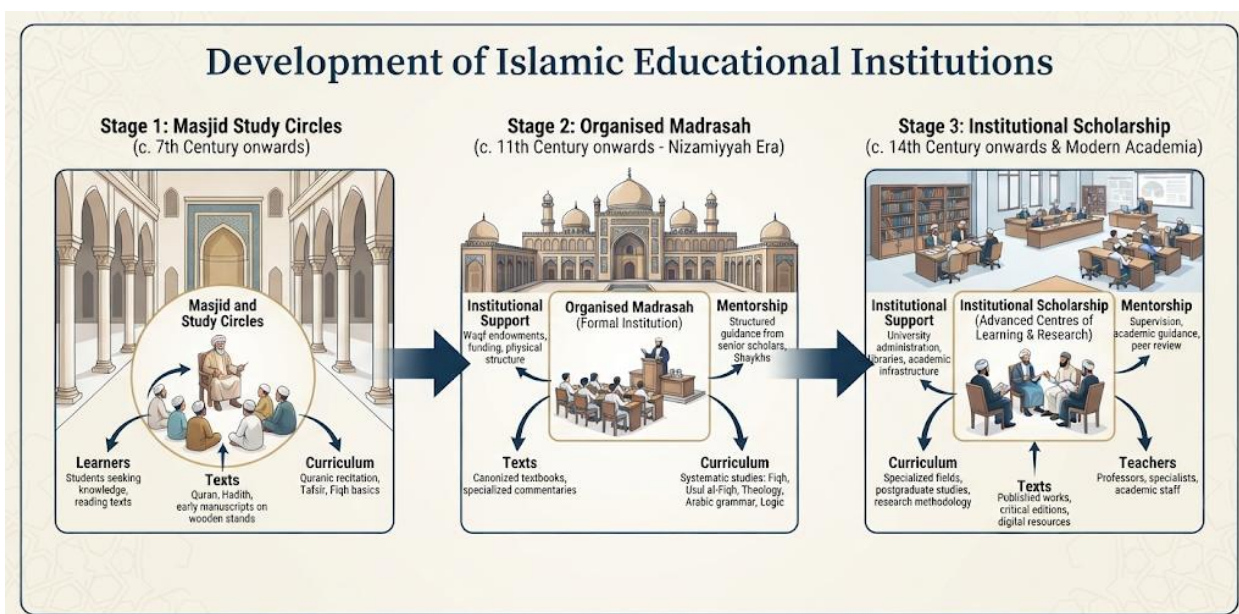


Figure 4.1: From Masjid-Based Learning to Organised Islamic Institutions

## 4.2 Madrasah and the Nizāmiyyah Tradition

### 4.2.1 Meaning and Development of the Madrasah

The term **madrasah** generally refers to a place or institution of learning. As Islamic educational traditions developed, madrasahs became increasingly organised settings for sustained study. They could provide instruction in Qur'ānic studies, Hadith, jurisprudence, Arabic, theology and other disciplines.

The development of the madrasah responded to the growing need for regular teaching, specialist scholars, texts, student support and continuity. Whereas a single lesson or informal study circle depended heavily on the immediate presence of a teacher, an established madrasah could organise several educational elements together.

The madrasah should not be understood as having developed in exactly the same form everywhere. Muslim societies adapted educational institutions according to their political, economic, intellectual and social circumstances.

A major educational advantage of institutional organisation was continuity. Teachers could train students over longer periods, texts could be preserved, resources could be maintained, and established programmes could continue beyond the lifetime of an individual teacher.



**Fill in the blank:** A madrasah is broadly understood as a place or institution of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** learning.

### 4.2.2 The Nizāmiyyah Institutions

The Nizāmiyyah institutions associated with Nizām al-Mulk represent an important stage in the institutional development of Islamic education. The most famous of these institutions was established in Baghdad and became associated with organised teaching and scholarly activity.

The importance of the Nizāmiyyah tradition was not simply the construction of educational buildings. Its significance lay in the coordination of teachers, students, instruction, scholarly activity and material support.

Institutional support could include provisions for teachers and students, educational facilities and resources for learning. This helped create conditions in which scholarly activity could continue on a more stable basis.

The Nizāmiyyah tradition therefore illustrates a movement towards greater institutional organisation. It demonstrates how educational activity could be supported by structures that brought together people, knowledge, resources and administration.

**Fill in the blank:** The Nizāmiyyah tradition demonstrated the importance of organised teachers, students, scholarship and institutional \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** support.

### 4.2.3 Curriculum, Scholarship and Institutional Support

Organised Islamic education required more than classrooms and teachers. It also required a body of knowledge to be taught, suitable texts, methods of instruction and resources for sustaining educational activities.

The curriculum of a madrasah could include religious disciplines such as Qur'ānic studies, Hadith, jurisprudence and theology, alongside Arabic language and other areas of learning depending on the institution and period.

Scholarly activity was also connected with writing, reading, commentary, discussion and transmission. Students did not merely receive information. Through sustained study, they could develop the ability to read important texts, understand scholarly arguments and participate in intellectual traditions.

Institutional support was therefore important because it created continuity. Teachers could devote time to instruction, students could remain engaged in study, and books and other resources could be maintained.



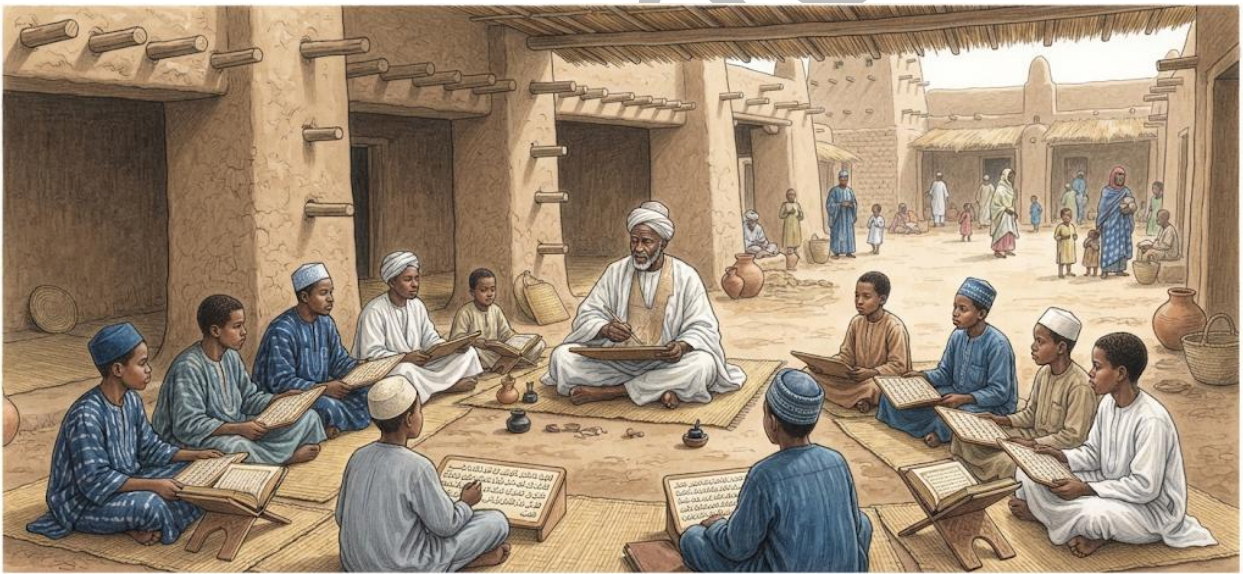
For you as a learner, the wider lesson is that successful education depends on an interaction between curriculum, teachers, learners, learning resources and institutional organisation.

**Fill in the blank:** A sustainable educational institution requires teachers, learners, curriculum, resources and institutional \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** support.

## Pilot Questions 4.2

1. What is a madrasah?
2. Why did madrasahs become more organised than informal study circles?
3. What is the Nizāmiyyah tradition associated with?
4. Mention two forms of institutional support that can strengthen education.
5. Why is curriculum important to organised Islamic education?



**Plate 4.2: Islamic Educational Learning Environment in West Africa**

*A traditional 'Dara' or community Qur'ānic school in a Sahelian setting (c. 19<sup>th</sup> century), showing a Malam instructing students using wooden writing boards ('allo') and manuscripts.*



## 4.3 Major Centres of Islamic Learning and Educational Thought

### 4.3.1 Cordova as a Centre of Learning

Cordova in Muslim Spain became an important centre of intellectual and educational activity. Its scholarly environment included religious studies, Arabic language, philosophy, medicine, science and other fields of learning.

Libraries, scholars, books and educational gatherings contributed to the circulation of knowledge. The intellectual life associated with Cordova demonstrates that Muslim educational history included major urban centres in which different fields of learning could develop.

The significance of Cordova should not be reduced to a claim that all knowledge in the city was organised according to one educational system. Rather, its importance lies in the broader intellectual environment in which scholars, books and institutions supported learning.

The example also reminds us that educational development can be influenced by the wider intellectual and cultural environment of a society. When scholars, learners and knowledge resources interact over time, an urban centre can develop into a major intellectual hub.

**Fill in the blank:** Cordova became an important centre of scholarship, education and \_\_\_\_\_ culture.

**Answer:** book.

### 4.3.2 al-Azhar and the Continuity of Islamic Scholarship

al-Azhar in Cairo became one of the best-known centres of Islamic learning. Its history illustrates how an educational institution can preserve scholarly traditions over a long period while responding to changing circumstances.

Teachers, students, texts, lessons and institutional practices contributed to the continuity of learning. Over time, educational programmes and administrative arrangements changed, but the institution continued to play an important role in Islamic scholarship.

The experience of al-Azhar demonstrates that continuity does not necessarily mean refusing change. An educational institution can preserve important intellectual traditions while modifying its methods and organisation in response to new educational circumstances.



For Islamic education, this provides an important institutional lesson. Preservation and adaptation do not always have to be opposites. An institution can maintain its educational identity while improving its methods, resources and organisation.

**Fill in the blank:** al-Azhar illustrates the long-term continuity of organised Islamic \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** scholarship.

### 4.3.3 al-Ghazālī's Educational Theory

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī approached education as part of the development of the whole person. Knowledge should not remain detached from conduct. Learning should contribute to moral development, disciplined behaviour and preparation for a purposeful life.

His educational thought gives attention to intention, appropriate teaching, gradual learning and the relationship between knowledge and action. This means that education should not be judged only by the quantity of information a learner can reproduce.

Consider a student who obtains excellent examination results but uses knowledge dishonestly. From the perspective being examined here, academic success alone does not demonstrate the full purpose of education. Knowledge should also contribute to character and responsible conduct.

This perspective connects with the principle established in Series 1 that knowledge should have beneficial effects. Education therefore involves intellectual development together with moral and practical formation.

**Fill in the blank:** al-Ghazālī connected knowledge with moral development, disciplined conduct and responsible \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** action.

### Pilot Questions 4.3

1. Why was Cordova important in Islamic educational history?
2. What does al-Azhar demonstrate about continuity in Islamic scholarship?
3. Mention two elements that contribute to institutional continuity.
4. What is one major principle associated with al-Ghazālī's educational thought?
5. Why should knowledge be connected with moral development?



## 4.4 Islamic Educational Institutions in West Africa and Nigeria

### 4.4.1 Qur'ānic Schools in West Africa

Qur'ānic schools became important institutions for basic Islamic education in many West African communities. They commonly introduced learners to Qur'ānic reading, recitation, memorisation and basic religious knowledge.

The teacher-learner relationship remained important. Learning often proceeded according to the learner's level of preparation, and students could gradually develop the skills required for more advanced Islamic study.

Qur'ānic schools also contributed to the continuity of Islamic learning across generations. Through regular instruction, communities could transmit religious knowledge, recitation practices and moral teachings to younger learners.

The form and organisation of Qur'ānic schools varied across West Africa. Local languages, cultural practices, available resources and community needs influenced how education was organised.

**Fill in the blank:** Qur'ānic schools commonly introduced learners to reading, recitation, memorisation and basic religious \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** knowledge.

### 4.4.2 Islamiyyah and 'Ilmī Schools

Islamiyyah schools developed as organised forms of Islamic education that could combine Islamic studies with broader academic subjects. Their development reflects attempts to respond to changing educational needs while maintaining an Islamic educational orientation.

Depending on the institution, learners may study Islamic subjects alongside English language, mathematics, science, social studies, technology and other areas. Such arrangements can provide learners with broader educational preparation while retaining Islamic instruction.

The term **'Ilmī** is associated with knowledge and learning. In West African educational contexts, 'Ilmī learning settings and related scholarly traditions have supported more advanced study in Arabic and Islamic disciplines.



These institutions demonstrate that Islamic education can exist in different organisational forms. Some emphasise foundational Qur'ānic learning, while others provide broader academic programmes or advanced scholarly instruction.

**Fill in the blank:** Islamiyyah schools may combine Islamic studies with broader academic \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** subjects.

### 4.4.3 Institutional Continuity and Adaptation in Nigeria

Islamic educational institutions in Nigeria demonstrate both continuity and adaptation. Traditional Qur'ānic schools continue to provide foundational Islamic learning, while Islamiyyah schools and other organised institutions offer structured programmes.

Some institutions have responded to contemporary educational needs by combining Islamic studies with subjects in the wider school curriculum. Others have incorporated technology, new teaching materials, improved assessment practices or vocational preparation.

However, institutional adaptation also creates challenges. Educational institutions need qualified teachers, relevant curricula, adequate learning materials, suitable facilities and appropriate support for learners. They must also consider how Islamic knowledge can remain connected with the wider educational and social needs of students.

The challenge is therefore not simply to preserve traditional institutions unchanged or to replace them entirely with modern structures. A more useful approach is to identify what existing institutions do effectively and improve areas that require development.

For example, an Islamiyyah school can preserve systematic Qur'ānic and Islamic instruction while strengthening teacher preparation, digital literacy, assessment, learner support and integration with relevant academic subjects.

**Fill in the blank:** Effective Islamic educational institutions require qualified teachers, suitable curricula, learning resources, facilities and learner \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** support.

### Pilot Questions 4.4

1. What are the major educational functions of Qur'ānic schools?
2. What are Islamiyyah schools?
3. What is the educational significance of 'Ilmī learning?



4. Mention two ways Islamic educational institutions have adapted in Nigeria.
5. Identify three resources required for effective Islamic educational institutions.



## Series Summary

This Series has examined the institutions and educational theories that have contributed to the development of Islamic education.

We began with the **masjid**, examining its role as a centre of worship, teaching, study circles, mentorship and community learning. We then considered the **madrasah and Nizāmiyyah tradition**, focusing on the organisation of teachers, students, curriculum, scholarship and institutional support.

Next, we examined **Cordova and al-Azhar** as important centres of Islamic learning. We also considered **al-Ghazālī's educational thought**, particularly his emphasis on intention, moral development, disciplined learning and the connection between knowledge and action.

Finally, we examined **Qur'ānic schools, Islamiyyah schools and 'Ilmī learning traditions in West Africa and Nigeria**. We saw that Islamic educational institutions have demonstrated both continuity and adaptation as educational and social needs have changed.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to analyse the educational functions of the masjid and study circles (**SLO 4.1**), explain the development and institutional characteristics of the madrasah and Nizāmiyyah tradition (**SLO 4.2**), evaluate the educational significance of Cordova, al-Azhar and selected principles in al-Ghazālī's thought (**SLO 4.3**), and assess the continuity, adaptation and contemporary relevance of Islamic educational institutions in West Africa and Nigeria (**SLO 4.4**).

## Glossary of Terms

**al-Azhar:** A long-established centre of Islamic scholarship and learning in Cairo.

**Curriculum:** The organised body of subjects, learning activities, content and educational experiences planned for a programme.

**Educational institution:** An organised setting established to facilitate teaching, learning and the transmission of knowledge.

**Endowment:** Property or resources dedicated to a continuing charitable, religious, educational or social purpose.

**Islamiyyah school:** An organised Islamic school that provides Islamic instruction and may combine it with general academic subjects.



**Madrasah:** A place or institution of learning, particularly one associated with organised study of Islamic and related disciplines.

**Masjid:** A mosque and, in Islamic educational history, an important setting for worship, teaching, study and community learning.

**Nizāmiyyah:** A group of organised educational institutions associated with Nizām al-Mulk and the development of institutional Islamic learning.

**Scholarship:** Systematic study, research, teaching, writing and transmission of knowledge.

**Study circle:** An educational arrangement in which a teacher guides learners through reading, explanation, discussion, recitation or study.

**‘Ilmī:** Relating to knowledge or learning and used in some West African contexts in connection with advanced Islamic and Arabic learning.



# Concept Check Questions 4

## Objective Questions

1. Which institution historically combined worship with teaching and community learning?  
(Linked to SLO 4.1)
2. Which institution developed as a more organised setting for sustained Islamic learning?  
(Linked to SLO 4.2)
3. What does the Nizāmiyyah tradition illustrate about Islamic education?  
(Linked to SLO 4.2)
4. Which two centres discussed in this Series illustrate major traditions of Islamic scholarship?  
(Linked to SLO 4.3)
5. Which educational approach connects knowledge with moral development and action?  
(Linked to SLO 4.3)

## Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain two educational functions of the masjid.  
(Linked to SLO 4.1)
7. Explain how the madrasah contributed to the organisation and continuity of Islamic education.  
(Linked to SLO 4.2)
8. Compare the educational significance of Cordova and al-Azhar.  
(Linked to SLO 4.3)
9. Describe two ways Islamic educational institutions have adapted in Nigeria.  
(Linked to SLO 4.4)

## Long-Answer Questions

10. Analyse the development of Islamic educational institutions from community-based learning around the masjid to more organised forms of education.  
(Linked to SLO 4.1 and SLO 4.2)



11. Evaluate the relevance of al-Ghazālī's educational ideas to contemporary Islamic education in Nigeria.

(Linked to SLO 4.3 and SLO 4.4)

## Answers to Concept Check Questions 4

### Objective Questions

1. **The masjid.** It combined worship with teaching, study, mentorship and community learning.
2. **The madrasah.** It provided a more organised setting for sustained instruction and scholarly study.
3. The Nizāmiyyah tradition illustrates the organisation of teachers, students, scholarly activities and institutional resources around sustained education.
4. **Cordova and al-Azhar.**
5. **al-Ghazālī's educational approach,** which connects knowledge with intention, character, disciplined conduct and action.

### Short-Answer Questions

#### 6. Explain two educational functions of the masjid.

**Answer:** The masjid could provide Qur'ānic instruction and religious teaching. It could also serve as a setting for study circles, moral guidance, public lectures, mentorship and community education. Its educational value came partly from connecting learning with worship and community life.

#### 7. Explain how the madrasah contributed to the organisation and continuity of Islamic education.

**Answer:** The madrasah provided more organised and sustained instruction through teachers, students, curriculum, texts and institutional resources. This organisation allowed learning to continue beyond individual lessons and helped maintain scholarly traditions over time.

#### 8. Compare the educational significance of Cordova and al-Azhar.

**Answer:** Cordova illustrates the development of a broad intellectual environment in Muslim Spain involving religious and other fields of learning, libraries and scholarly activity. al-Azhar illustrates the long-term



continuity of organised Islamic scholarship through teachers, students, texts and institutional traditions. Both demonstrate the importance of sustained intellectual environments.

## 9. Describe two ways Islamic educational institutions have adapted in Nigeria.

**Answer:** Some Islamic schools have combined Islamic studies with broader academic subjects, while others have introduced structured programmes, improved learning resources, digital tools or vocational preparation. These adaptations allow institutions to respond to changing educational needs while retaining Islamic learning objectives.

## Long-Answer Questions

### 10. Analyse the development of Islamic educational institutions from community-based learning around the masjid to more organised forms of education.

#### Basic Response:

Early Islamic education was closely connected with community life. The masjid provided a convenient setting for Qur'ānic instruction, religious teaching, study circles and mentorship. As Muslim communities expanded and educational needs became more complex, more organised institutions such as madrasahs developed.

The madrasah brought together teachers, students, texts, curriculum and institutional support. This provided greater continuity and allowed learners to undertake sustained study.

#### Value-Added Response:

The development should not be understood as a complete replacement of the masjid by the madrasah. Both forms could coexist. The masjid remained important for community education, while the madrasah provided greater organisational capacity for sustained and specialised learning.

The Nizāmiyyah tradition illustrates the increasing importance of institutional support. Education could be strengthened when teachers, students, curriculum and resources were deliberately coordinated.

The broader lesson is that educational institutions develop in response to changing needs. Their effectiveness depends not merely on buildings but on the quality of teachers, curriculum, resources, organisation and relationships within the learning environment.



## 11. Evaluate the relevance of al-Ghazālī's educational ideas to contemporary Islamic education in Nigeria.

### Basic Response:

al-Ghazālī's educational thought connects knowledge with moral development, intention, disciplined learning and responsible action. This remains relevant because Islamic education should develop more than examination knowledge.

In Nigeria, Islamic educational institutions can apply these principles by combining academic learning with character formation, responsible conduct and useful skills.

### Value-Added Response:

The relevance of al-Ghazālī's ideas becomes clearer when contemporary educational institutions face the challenge of producing learners who possess both knowledge and ethical responsibility. A learner may perform well academically but still misuse knowledge. An educational system informed by al-Ghazālī's approach would therefore consider character and responsible application as important educational outcomes.

Contemporary Islamic schools can preserve these principles while improving teacher preparation, curriculum design, assessment, learner support and technology use. This does not require abandoning traditional Islamic educational aims. Instead, institutions can use modern educational resources to strengthen the ethical and intellectual purposes of Islamic education.

## Answers to Pilot Questions 4

### Part 4.1

1. The masjid can support Qur'ānic instruction, religious teaching, study circles, moral guidance, scholarly discussion and community education.
2. A study circle is a learning arrangement in which a teacher guides learners through a text, topic, recitation or discussion.
3. It provides direct teaching, correction, mentorship and opportunities for learners to observe scholarly conduct.
4. The masjid was accessible to community members and connected learning with worship and everyday community life.



5. Examples include Qur'ānic recitation classes, Arabic lessons, Islamic lectures and mosque-based study sessions.

## Part 4.2

1. A madrasah is a place or institution of learning, particularly one associated with organised study of Islamic and related disciplines.
2. Madrasahs responded to the need for regular instruction, specialist teachers, texts, organised curriculum, student support and educational continuity.
3. It is associated with organised institutions of learning linked to Nizām al-Mulk and the development of more structured Islamic education.
4. Examples include financial support, teachers' support, student provisions, educational facilities, libraries and learning materials.
5. Curriculum identifies the knowledge and learning experiences that students are expected to study and helps organise instruction systematically.

## Part 4.3

1. Cordova was an important centre of scholarship, education, book culture and intellectual activity in Muslim Spain.
2. al-Azhar demonstrates how an educational institution can preserve scholarly traditions over a long period while adapting its organisation and educational arrangements.
3. Teachers, students, texts, lessons, institutional resources and established educational practices can contribute to continuity.
4. One major principle is the connection between knowledge and moral development. al-Ghazālī also emphasised intention, disciplined learning and responsible action.
5. Knowledge should contribute to the development of the whole person and should influence conduct rather than remain merely theoretical information.

## Part 4.4

1. Qur'ānic schools provide instruction in Qur'ānic reading, recitation, memorisation and basic religious and moral knowledge.



2. Islamiyyah schools are organised Islamic schools that provide Islamic instruction and may combine it with broader academic subjects.
3. ‘Ilmī learning traditions can support more advanced study in Arabic and Islamic disciplines.
4. Examples include combining Islamic studies with broader academic subjects, introducing structured programmes, using digital resources and improving assessment or vocational preparation.
5. Qualified teachers, appropriate curricula, learning materials, suitable facilities and learner support are among the resources required.



# References and Attributions

## Qur'ānic References

- **Sūrah al-Mujādilah (58:11):** Relevant to the status of knowledge and those granted knowledge.
- **Sūrah Ṭā Hā (20:114):** Relevant to the continuing pursuit of knowledge.
- **Sūrah al-‘Alaq (96:1-5):** Relevant to reading, learning and the pursuit of knowledge.
- **Sūrah al-Zumar (39:9):** Relevant to the distinction between those who possess knowledge and those who do not.

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## Illustrations and Attributions

### Figure 4.1: From Masjid-Based Learning to Organised Islamic Institutions

#### Short Description:

A conceptual educational diagram showing the progression from community-based learning around the masjid and study circles towards more organised educational institutions such as the madrasah. The diagram should emphasise continuity rather than suggesting that one institution simply replaced another.



**AI Prompt:**

“Create a clean university-level educational flow diagram titled ‘Development of Islamic Educational Institutions’. Begin with ‘Masjid and Study Circles’ and show connected stages leading to ‘Organised Madrasah’ and ‘Institutional Scholarship’. Along the flow, label teachers, learners, texts, curriculum, mentorship and institutional support. Show arrows indicating development and continuity rather than replacement. Use a professional Islamic Studies textbook style, subtle geometric Islamic design, clear academic typography, no portraits of sacred figures and no modern political imagery.”

**Suggested OER Search String:**

“development of Islamic educational institutions masjid madrasah study circles OER diagram”

**Attribution:**

AI prompt designed specifically for an educational illustration. Any externally sourced image should be used only under an appropriate licence or with permission, with the source recorded.

## Plate 4.2: Islamic Educational Learning Environment in West Africa

**Short Description:**

A historically informed educational illustration showing a West African Islamic learning environment with a teacher guiding students through Qur’ānic or Arabic study, representing the continuity and local adaptation of Islamic education.

**AI Prompt:**

“Create a historically informed educational illustration of a traditional West African Islamic learning environment. Show a teacher guiding learners in Qur’ānic and Arabic study, with appropriate books or writing materials and a simple community learning setting. Represent a diverse group of West African learners respectfully. Avoid depicting sacred figures, avoid modern electronic devices, and avoid exaggerated stereotypes. Use a realistic academic textbook illustration style suitable for a university course on Islamic Education.”

**Suggested OER Search String:**

“West African Qur’ānic school Islamic education learners teacher OER image”

**Attribution:**

AI prompt designed specifically for an educational illustration. Any externally sourced image should be used only under an appropriate licence or with permission, with the source recorded.



## Parts and Sub-Parts

### 5.1 Contemporary Context of Islamic Education

- 5.1.1 Modernisation, Globalisation and Changing Learning Needs
- 5.1.2 Digital Technology and Social Media
- 5.1.3 Balancing Islamic Identity with Contemporary Educational Demands

### 5.2 Curriculum, Teachers and Learning Resources

- 5.2.1 Curriculum Relevance and Integration of Knowledge
- 5.2.2 Teacher Preparation and Professional Development
- 5.2.3 Learning Materials, Language and Educational Resources

### 5.3 Access, Quality and Institutional Sustainability

- 5.3.1 Funding, Infrastructure and Access
- 5.3.2 Quality Assurance and Recognition
- 5.3.3 Family, Community and Institutional Partnerships

### 5.4 Strategies for Strengthening Islamic Education

- 5.4.1 Responsible Use of Digital Learning
- 5.4.2 Curriculum Renewal and Teacher Development
- 5.4.3 Partnerships, Innovation and Continuous Improvement

## Introduction

Islamic education has developed through Qur'ānic schools, mosques, study circles, madrasahs, Islamiyyah schools, 'Ilmī schools and other organised forms of learning. Series 4 examined institutions and selected educational theories. In this final Series, you will move from historical institutions to the contemporary conditions that affect their relevance, quality, accessibility and sustainability.

The aim of this Series is to examine major contemporary challenges confronting Islamic education and to evaluate practical approaches for strengthening its quality, relevance and sustainability, with particular attention to situations that learners and institutions may encounter in Nigeria.



We shall begin by examining modernisation, globalisation, digital technology and changing learning needs. Next, we will consider curriculum relevance, teacher preparation and learning resources. We will then examine funding, infrastructure, access, quality assurance, recognition and partnerships. Finally, we will consider practical strategies for responsible digital learning, curriculum renewal, teacher development, innovation and continuous improvement.

## Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- SLO 5.1 analyse major contemporary challenges affecting Islamic education;
- SLO 5.2 evaluate curriculum, teacher and resource issues affecting the quality of Islamic education;
- SLO 5.3 assess institutional and community factors that influence access and sustainability;
- SLO 5.4 propose practical strategies for improving Islamic education in contemporary settings.

## 5.1 Contemporary Context of Islamic Education

### 5.1.1 Modernisation, Globalisation and Changing Learning Needs

Modernisation has changed how people work, communicate and access education. Islamic education therefore operates in an environment where learners may encounter several educational traditions at the same time. Globalisation increases contact with ideas, media, institutions and educational practices from different societies. These developments can widen learning opportunities, but they can also require Islamic educational institutions to reconsider how knowledge is presented and connected to contemporary learner needs. For example, a student in Nigeria may attend a Qur'ānic or Islamiyyah school, study at a university and use international online learning platforms. Islamic education can help the learner connect these experiences in a coherent way.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: modernisation

### 5.1.2 Digital Technology and Social Media

Digital technology has expanded access to Qur'ānic recitation, lectures, electronic books, recorded lessons, virtual classrooms and discussion forums. Social media can help institutions communicate with students and communities. However, availability does not guarantee accuracy. Online religious material may be incomplete, poorly contextualised or presented without adequate scholarly authority. Responsible digital learning therefore requires learners to check source, context and reliability before accepting or sharing



information. A Nigerian Islamic education programme may use recorded lessons while directing students to qualified teachers, recognised texts and reliable scholarly resources.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: reliable

### 5.1.3 Balancing Islamic Identity with Contemporary Educational Demands

Contemporary Islamic education must preserve its Islamic foundations while preparing learners to participate effectively in modern society. This includes sound engagement with the Qur'ān, Sunnah and Islamic intellectual traditions alongside literacy, communication, critical thinking, research skills and appropriate digital competence. Balance does not mean accepting every contemporary trend without evaluation. It means identifying useful knowledge and methods, assessing them in relation to educational aims and Islamic ethical principles, and adapting them responsibly.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: foundations

### Pilot Questions 5.1

1. Which development has significantly changed how learners access Islamic education? A. Digital technology B. Reduced communication C. Removal of libraries D. Elimination of study groups
2. Globalisation mainly increases learners' exposure to: A. Different ideas and educational practices B. Only local texts C. Fewer sources D. No new information
3. A responsible use of digital technology in Islamic education is: A. Sharing every online claim B. Using supervised digital lessons C. Avoiding all electronic resources D. Replacing teachers completely
4. Contemporary Islamic education should balance Islamic foundations with: A. Relevant contemporary skills B. Abandonment of Islamic knowledge C. Elimination of assessment D. Isolation from society
5. Which is an example of a changing learning need? A. Digital literacy B. Refusal to communicate C. Avoidance of all technology D. Elimination of reading

## 5.2 Curriculum, Teachers and Learning Resources

### 5.2.1 Curriculum Relevance and Integration of Knowledge

A relevant curriculum should reflect the purposes of Islamic education while addressing the realities learners face. It should provide sound Islamic knowledge and develop abilities that help students communicate, investigate, solve problems, use evidence and participate responsibly in society. Integration of knowledge does not require Islamic education to lose its distinctive character. It can help learners examine how Islamic ethical and intellectual principles relate to contemporary knowledge and professional life.



Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: relevance

### 5.2.2 Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Teachers strongly influence the quality of Islamic education. Effective teaching requires sound subject knowledge, appropriate instructional methods, fair assessment and the ability to guide learners with patience and respect. Professional development helps teachers update knowledge and improve lesson planning, assessment, classroom management and responsible use of technology. In Nigerian settings, workshops, peer learning, mentoring and lesson observation can help teachers in Qur'ānic schools, Islamiyyah schools and other institutions strengthen instructional practice.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: professional development

### 5.2.3 Learning Materials, Language and Educational Resources

Effective learning requires suitable textbooks, Qur'ānic materials, writing resources, libraries and, where appropriate, digital resources. Materials should be selected for accuracy, relevance, clarity and suitability for learners. Language is also important because learners may encounter Arabic source materials alongside English or local languages. Carefully prepared translations and explanations can improve access while encouraging learners to appreciate important Arabic terminology used in Islamic scholarship.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: resources



## Pilot Questions 5.2

6. A relevant curriculum should: A. Address educational aims and learner needs B. Ignore learners' realities C. Exclude all contemporary skills D. Avoid assessment
7. Teacher professional development helps teachers improve: A. Teaching and assessment practices B. Only attendance registers C. Building maintenance only D. School fees only
8. Which is an important Islamic education resource? A. Suitable learning materials B. Unverified rumours C. Unlabelled sources D. Unchecked social media posts
9. Language can affect Islamic learning because students may: A. Encounter Arabic, English and local languages B. Use only one language in every context C. Never need translations D. Avoid technical terms
10. Integration of knowledge encourages learners to: A. Connect Islamic principles with contemporary knowledge B. Reject all other fields C. Separate every subject completely D. Avoid professional applications

## 5.3 Access, Quality and Institutional Sustainability

### 5.3.1 Funding, Infrastructure and Access

Some Islamic educational institutions face constraints involving finance, classrooms, libraries, learning materials, teacher remuneration and access to digital facilities. These limitations can affect enrolment, attendance and learning quality. Access may also depend on location, household circumstances, programme organisation and learners' ability to obtain required resources. Practical responses may include community-supported funding, careful use of existing facilities, shared resources, transparent financial planning and partnerships that expand learning opportunities without lowering standards.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: funding

### 5.3.2 Quality Assurance and Recognition

Quality assurance involves systematic efforts to maintain and improve the standard of teaching, learning, assessment and institutional management. Institutions benefit when programmes have clear objectives, competent teachers, suitable learning materials, appropriate assessment and regular evaluation. Recognition can strengthen public confidence and support educational progression where an institution meets relevant requirements. Recognition should not replace quality. Institutions should use clear standards, evidence and periodic review to identify strengths and areas requiring improvement.



Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: quality assurance

### 5.3.3 Family, Community and Institutional Partnerships

Islamic education does not operate in isolation. Families influence attendance, study habits and learners' attitudes, while communities can provide financial, material and advisory support. Institutions can strengthen programmes by working with parents, mosques, scholars, alumni and other educational organisations. For example, a Nigerian Islamiyyah school may involve parents in attendance monitoring, invite qualified scholars for seminars, seek community support for learning materials and work with a local mosque to provide suitable learning space. Effective partnerships should have clear responsibilities and support institutional accountability.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: partnerships

### Pilot Questions 5.3

11. Which factor can restrict access to Islamic education? A. Limited funding B. Effective planning C. Adequate facilities D. Strong community support
12. Quality assurance is mainly concerned with: A. Maintaining and improving educational standards B. Increasing enrolment alone C. Replacing teachers D. Removing assessment
13. Institutional recognition can help to: A. Strengthen public confidence and progression B. Remove educational standards C. Eliminate quality checks D. Prevent partnerships
14. Families can support Islamic education by: A. Supporting attendance and study habits B. Discouraging learning C. Withholding learning materials D. Avoiding communication with teachers
15. Community partnerships can provide: A. Resources and expertise B. Less accountability C. Fewer learning opportunities D. Unverified information

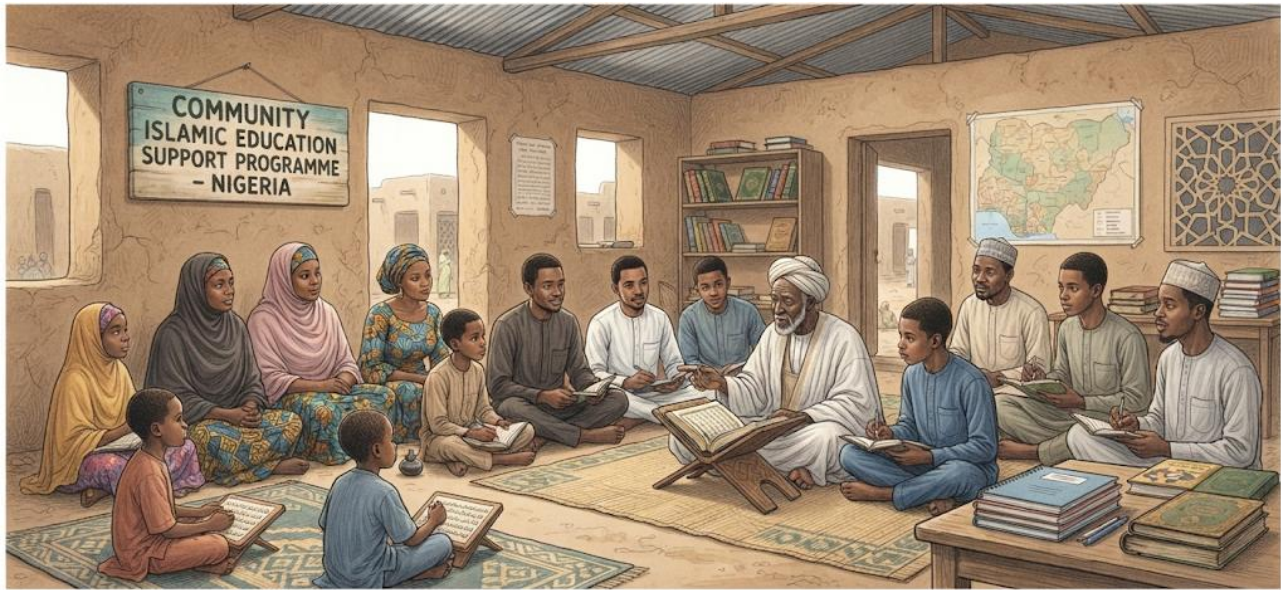
## 5.4 Strategies for Strengthening Islamic Education

### 5.4.1 Responsible Use of Digital Learning

Digital learning can strengthen Islamic education when it is deliberately connected to learning objectives. Institutions can provide recorded lessons, digital reading materials, supervised discussion spaces, online revision activities and structured access to selected electronic resources. Learners should be taught to check the authority, context and reliability of online religious information before accepting or sharing it. Teachers can guide students towards appropriate sources and model responsible digital conduct. Digital tools should support sound teaching and learning rather than replace qualified scholarly guidance.



Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: learning



**Plate 4.2: Islamic Educational Learning Environment in West Africa**

*A traditional 'Dara' or community Qur'ānic school in a Sahelian setting (c. 19<sup>th</sup> century), showing a Malam instructing students using wooden writing boards ('allo') and manuscripts.*

## 5.4.2 Curriculum Renewal and Teacher Development

Curriculum renewal should begin with clear educational aims and evidence about learners' needs. Institutions can review topics, learning activities and assessment methods to determine what should be retained, updated or expanded. Teacher development should accompany curriculum changes so that teachers understand new content, methods and assessment expectations. Workshops, peer observation, mentoring and periodic review of student performance can help teachers translate curriculum decisions into effective classroom practice.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: renewal

## 5.4.3 Partnerships, Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Sustainable improvement requires cooperation among teachers, learners, families, scholars, community organisations and educational authorities where appropriate. Institutions can pilot new teaching methods, collect feedback and examine evidence of learning before expanding a new practice. Innovation should be purposeful rather than change for its own sake. Continuous improvement can be viewed as a cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation and refinement. This allows Islamic education to respond to changing circumstances while maintaining clear educational and ethical foundations.

Fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: continuous improvement



## Pilot Questions 5.4

16. Which is a responsible digital-learning practice? A. Using supervised online learning resources B. Sharing every religious post C. Ignoring source authority D. Replacing scholarly guidance
17. Curriculum renewal should be guided by: A. Clear educational aims and learner needs B. Random changes C. Popularity alone D. Removal of Islamic content
18. Teacher development can improve: A. Instruction and assessment B. Only school decoration C. Only enrolment D. Only fee collection
19. Which can support Islamic education through partnership? A. Families and community organisations B. Unverified online accounts C. Unrelated commercial advertisements D. Anonymous sources
20. Continuous improvement involves: A. Planning, implementation, evaluation and refinement B. One-time inspection only C. Avoiding feedback D. Keeping every practice unchanged

## Series Summary

Part 5.1 examined modernisation, globalisation, digital technology and changing learning needs, together with the need to preserve Islamic foundations while developing relevant contemporary skills.

Part 5.2 examined curriculum relevance, integration of knowledge, teacher preparation and professional development, as well as learning materials, language and educational resources.

Part 5.3 considered funding, infrastructure, access, quality assurance, recognition and family, community and institutional partnerships.

Part 5.4 examined responsible digital learning, curriculum renewal, teacher development, partnerships, innovation and continuous improvement. By completing the Series, you should now be able to analyse contemporary challenges, evaluate factors affecting quality and sustainability, and propose practical approaches for strengthening Islamic education.

## Glossary of Terms

**Access:** The opportunity and ability of learners to participate in an educational programme and obtain necessary learning resources.

**Curriculum renewal:** The systematic review and improvement of curriculum content, learning activities and assessment so that education remains relevant.

**Digital learning:** The use of digital technologies and electronic resources to support teaching and learning.



Globalisation: Increasing interaction and exchange of ideas, information, institutions and practices across societies.

Islamiyyah school: An organised school that provides instruction in Islamic knowledge and related subjects.

Partnership: A cooperative relationship in which people or organisations work together towards shared educational objectives.

Professional development: Planned activities through which teachers improve subject knowledge, instructional skills and professional practice.

Quality assurance: Systematic processes used to maintain and improve the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and institutional practice.

Recognition: Formal or public acceptance that an educational programme or institution meets specified standards or requirements.

‘Ilmī school: An Islamic educational institution associated with systematic study and instruction in Islamic knowledge.

## Concept Check Questions 5

### Objective Questions

21. Which contemporary development has expanded access to online Islamic learning? A. Digital technology B. Elimination of communication C. Removal of learning resources D. Abolition of study circles. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
22. Which factor is directly related to the quality of Islamic education? A. Teacher preparation and professional development B. Building decoration alone C. Fee collection alone D. Publicity alone. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
23. Which can support institutional sustainability? A. Family and community partnerships B. Unverified online claims C. Avoidance of evaluation D. Removal of learning resources. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
24. Which approach best represents continuous improvement? A. Planning, implementation, evaluation and refinement B. One-time inspection C. Avoiding feedback D. Keeping every practice unchanged. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
25. Why should learners evaluate online religious information? A. Because online information varies in authority, accuracy and context B. Because all online information is false C. Because digital learning is prohibited D. Because teachers are unnecessary. (Linked to SLO 5.1)



## Short-Answer Questions

26. Analyse two ways modernisation and globalisation affect Islamic education. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
27. Evaluate the importance of teacher professional development in improving Islamic education. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
28. Assess how family and community partnerships can improve access and sustainability. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
29. Explain how curriculum renewal can preserve Islamic educational aims while responding to contemporary needs. (Linked to SLO 5.4)

## Long-Answer Questions

30. Evaluate the major challenges facing Islamic education in contemporary Nigeria and propose practical solutions for at least three of them. (Linked to SLO 5.1 and SLO 5.4)
31. Develop a practical improvement plan for an Islamic educational institution that combines teacher development, digital learning, curriculum review and community partnership. (Linked to SLO 5.2, SLO 5.3 and SLO 5.4)

## Answers to Concept Check Questions 5

### Objective Questions

32. 1. A. Digital technology.
33. 2. A. Teacher preparation and professional development.
34. 3. A. Family and community partnerships.
35. 4. A. Planning, implementation, evaluation and refinement.
36. 5. A. Online religious information varies in authority, accuracy and context, so learners should evaluate sources before accepting or sharing claims.

### Short-Answer Questions

37. 6. Modernisation changes learning environments, communication and access to educational resources. Globalisation increases exposure to ideas, media and educational practices from different societies. Islamic education can respond by retaining its educational aims while helping learners connect Islamic learning with contemporary needs.



38. 7. Professional development can strengthen teachers' subject knowledge, instructional methods, assessment practices, classroom management and responsible use of technology, supporting more effective teaching and learning.
39. 8. Families can support attendance, study habits and positive attitudes to learning. Communities can provide resources, learning spaces, expertise, advice and links with scholars or other institutions, reducing barriers to access and supporting continuity.
40. 9. Curriculum renewal can retain core Islamic knowledge and values while updating examples, skills, learning activities and assessment. The process should begin with educational aims and learner needs so that change improves relevance without removing the distinctive purpose of Islamic education.

## Long-Answer Questions

41. 10. Basic response: Major challenges include changing learner needs, unequal access to resources, digital misinformation, teacher development needs, curriculum relevance, infrastructure limitations and difficulties of recognition. Solutions include teacher training, responsible digital learning, curriculum review, resource sharing, community partnerships and quality assurance. Value-added response: These measures should operate as an interconnected improvement programme. Curriculum review should identify needs, teacher development should support implementation, digital tools should be selected according to learning objectives, and partnerships should help address access and resource constraints.
42. 11. Basic response: An improvement plan should begin with a needs assessment, measurable objectives, teacher-development activities, appropriate digital resources, curriculum review and partnerships with families, mosques, scholars and relevant educational bodies. Value-added response: The plan should assign responsibilities, establish a realistic timeline, identify resources and specify evaluation indicators. Learner and teacher feedback should be reviewed periodically so the institution can refine the programme based on evidence.

## Answers to Pilot Questions 5

### Part 5.1

43. 1. A
44. 2. A
45. 3. B
46. 4. A
47. 5. A



## Part 5.2

48. 1. A

49. 2. A

50. 3. A

51. 4. A

52. 5. A

## Part 5.3

53. 1. A

54. 2. A

55. 3. A

56. 4. A

57. 5. A

## Part 5.4

58. 1. A

59. 2. A

60. 3. A

61. 4. A

62. 5. A

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## Illustration Attributions

Figure 5.1: Responsible Digital Learning in Islamic Education. Description: A Nigerian learner uses a laptop for a supervised Islamic education lesson with digital Islamic learning resources and teacher guidance. AI prompt: Create a clean educational illustration showing a Nigerian university-age learner using a laptop for a supervised Islamic education lesson, with digital Islamic study materials and a teacher guidance element, no sacred figures. OER search string: Islamic education digital learning supervised online classroom Nigeria OER. Attribution: Original educational illustration prompt prepared for an educational AI illustration tool.

Plate 5.2: Community Partnership Supporting Islamic Education. Description: Parents, teachers, qualified scholars and students collaborate to support an Islamic education programme in a Nigerian community. AI prompt: Create a realistic educational scene showing parents, teachers, qualified community scholars and students collaborating around an Islamic education programme in Nigeria, with books and a modest learning space, no sacred figures. OER search string: community partnership Islamic education Nigeria parents teachers scholars OER. Attribution: Original educational illustration prompt prepared for an educational AI illustration tool.

- No em dash character is used.

