Research Methodology for Muslim Researchers

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What is Research?

- The researcher asks a question
- The researcher collects data
- The researcher indicates how the data answered the question
- Muslims are encouraged to verify the truth of information Al-Nur (24): 4-13
Importance of Research

- **Reason 1: Research Adds Knowledge About Educational Issues**
  - Addresses gaps in knowledge
  - Expands knowledge
  - Adds voices of individuals to knowledge

- **Reason 2: Research Helps Improve Practice**
  - Educators gain new ideas
  - Educators gain new insight into methods
  - Educators gain new insight into students
Importance of Research

- **Reason 3: Research Informs Policy Debates**
  - Research helps people weigh different perspectives on issues
  - Research helps people make informed decisions regarding policy

- **Reason 4: Research Builds Student Research Skills**
  - Organizational skills
  - Analytical skills
  - Writing skills
  - Presentation skills
Importance of Research - Islamic

- To raise the feeling of awe at the power, wisdom and might of Allah leading to an increase in the faith of the researcher, his humility and gratitude to Allah. To recognize his Creator.  FIKR ==> ZIKR
- To give meaning to the signs read whether in the Qur’an or in the universe of creation leading to meaning in life. This meaning produces useful knowledge for the benefit of mankind.
- To give more certainty to knowledge (not conjecture/shakāk): ‘ayn al-yaqīn ==> ilm al-yaqīn ==> haq al-yaqīn
Relationship between Philosophy, Theory and Educational Practices

Philosophy

Theory

Activities & Practices
Educational research and theory

Purpose of research: to understand more on
- The nature of the learner or man
- The methods of obtaining knowledge i.e. learning theories
- The methods of instruction i.e. teaching methodologies
- Problems related to educational practice i.e. C & I, values, behaviours and skills
- Educational concepts and clarify confusion
- The greatness and wisdom of the Creator and reinforce faith in him
Educational Theory vs Scientific theory

Educational Theory
- Prescriptive & practical
- Elements of man: (ruh, jasad, aql & nafs, qalb)
- Method of verification: depends on the theory - empirical, the holy scripture, human heritage, philosophical arguments, logic and language.

Scientific Theory
- Descriptive, explanation, predictive.
- Elements of living things (its biology) and non-living
- Method of verification: empirical only
Philosophical debates underlying educational research - epistemology

- Proponents of empiricism ➔ quantitative methods
- Proponents of interpretivism, normativism/critical inquiry ➔ qualitative methods
- Synthesis ➔ empirism, interpretivism, normativism/critical inquiry
- The Islamic Paradigm ➔ principles from the Qur’an plus all instruments of epistemology.
Research Design and Methodology from Islamic Perspective

- Depends on the research QUESTIONS.
- The research QUESTIONS depend on one’s worldview – the difference between Muslim and non-Muslim researchers; and areas of interest. Thus, the methodology differs in the way it is READ.
Problems With Research Today

- Contradictory or vague findings
- Questionable data
- Unclear statement about the intent of the study
- Lack of full disclosure of the data collection procedure
- Inarticulate rendering of the research problem
- Failure of research today: not relevant for practice, low quality in comparison to applied sciences, lack of access to the research findings, weakness of the education system itself to act and make decision based on results of research
Ethical Considerations in Research

- Respect the rights of the participants
- Honor the requests and restrictions of the research site
- Report the research fully and honestly
Problem of researcher in Islamic education

- Apply western epistemology. Not wrong.
- However only restricted to quantitative method although Western research methods have developed far more. Even the quantitative method employed is limited to survey research. Not experiment
- Neglect our own primary sources and methodology i.e. the Qur’an, Sunnah and our heritage (for eg. Al-Biruni and Ibn Khaldun – first ethnographers).
Questions on educational practice – methodology?

- How to produce topic on biology that bears the Islamic spirit?
- How to teach a language with Islamic elements? What are Muslim students’ responses?
- What is the most effective method of teaching to read Arabic? Jawi? Malay?
- What is the difference between the Iqra and traditional Muqaddam method?
- How do we benefit from ICT in teaching Qur’an memorization?

Method – empirical quantitative. Design and test by experiment.
Normative questions – method?

- Should we revive the teaching of philosophy in our curriculum?
- Should we teach memorization as much as possible without understanding?
- Should we teach tasawwuf in Islamic education?
- Should we teach Ibn Khaldun’s Muqaddimah or al-Ghazali ‘s Ihya ulumuddin in Form Six”
- What do we mean by an effective Islamic Studies Programme?

Method – philosophical or critical analysis are important for normative questions that cannot be answered by empirical means only.
Interpretive Questions

- How do students live in pondok and SMKA?
- Why do students like to loiter around in shopping complex in the city?
- What are the differences and similarities between Indonesian and Malaysian way of learning the Qur’an? Jawi? Bahasa Melayu?
- What are the differences and similarities in thoughts of members of Islamic movements in Malaysia?

Method: ethnography, interview, observation
Questions based on texts of al-Qur’an, Sunnah and Islamic Heritage

- What is the concept of ‘ilm and ulama?
- What is the concept of sexuality education?
- What is the concept of ‘abd and ‘ibadah?
- What are the effects of polygamy on children’s self esteem?
- How does salah affect teenagers?
- What is the implication of al-Qur’an S Luqman: 12-19 on Muslim education?
- What are the implication of al-Qur’an S Mu’mínun: 1-11 on Muslim education?
Conclusion

• Increase research using ethnography and history in view of Ibn Khaldun, al-Biruni, Ibn Battuta etc.
• Conduct research that will enhance educational practice by discovering new methods of learning al-Qur’an, Arabic, aqidah etc. 
• Think of research questions that are relevant and important for the development of the Muslim ummah.
• Persevere and be serious in doing research. Be committed. Not just for the sake of academic promotion.
The Research Spiral

Identify the Research Problem

Specify a Research Purpose

Review the Literature

Collect Data

Analyze and Interpret Data

Evaluate Data and Write Report
Research Spiral: Identify the Research Problem

- Specify a problem
- Justify a problem
- Suggest a need to study it for audiences
Research Spiral: Reviewing the Literature

- Locate the Resources
  - Books
  - Journals
  - Electronic Resources

- Select Resources
  - Determine the relevant resources for the topic
  - Organize the resources by developing a “Literature Map”

- Summarize the resources in a Literature Review
Research Spiral: Specify a Purpose for the Research

- Identify the purpose statement
- Narrow the purpose statement to research
  - Quantitative: Research Questions and or hypothesis
  - Qualitative: Central Phenomenon and sub-questions
Research Spiral: Collecting Data

- Determine the data collection method
- Select the individuals to study
- Design data collection instruments and outline procedures
- Obtain permissions
- Gather information
Research Spiral: Analyzing and Interpreting Data

- Breaking down the data
- Representing the data
- Explaining the data
Research Spiral: Reporting and Evaluating Research

- Determine the audience for the report
- Structure the report
- Write the report sensitively and accurately
Ethical Considerations in Research

- Respect the rights of the participants
- Honor the requests and restrictions of the research site
- Report the research fully and honestly
Skills Needed for Research

- Curiosity to solve puzzles
- Lengthen your attention span
- Using the library and computer resources
- Writing and editing