

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF WESTERN PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES IN SHAPING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN NASFAT MODEL SCHOOL, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the role of Western pedagogical approaches in shaping the teaching and learning of Islamic religious instruction at NASFAT Model School, Rivers State. The objectives were to identify the Western pedagogical methods adopted in IRI instruction, examine how these approaches influence teachers' instructional practices and classroom interactions, and assess their effects on students' engagement, understanding, and religious identity. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Western Pedagogical Approaches and Islamic Religious Instruction Questionnaire ($r=0.82$) was used for data collection. The instrument was administered to 50 respondents comprising 50 individuals. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores, while the Chi-square (χ^2) test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that teachers employed various Western pedagogical approaches such as group discussions, inquiry-based learning, lesson objectives, and continuous assessment in their teaching of Islamic religious instruction. Results further indicated that these approaches significantly influenced teachers' instructional practices, making lessons more interactive and learner-centered. Similarly, Western pedagogical methods positively affected students' engagement, comprehension of Islamic concepts, and moral development without undermining their religious identity. The Chi-square analysis showed significant relationships between the use of Western pedagogical methods and both teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. The study concluded that the thoughtful integration of Western pedagogical approaches with Islamic educational philosophy enhances both intellectual and spiritual development in faith-based schools. The study recommended that teachers of Islamic Religious Instruction receive continuous professional training in modern pedagogical techniques, curriculum planners incorporate interactive learning elements into Islamic religious instruction syllabi, and educational policymakers encourage blended instructional frameworks that harmonise Islamic values with contemporary educational standards.

Keywords: Western pedagogy, Islamic religious instruction, Teaching approaches, Student engagement, Instructional practices

Introduction

Education is both a socialising force and a site of contestation where ideas about knowledge, values and identity are negotiated. In plural and multi-faith societies such as Nigeria, formal schooling functions not only to transmit cognitive skills but also to shape moral outlooks, religious identity and civic dispositions (Obidike & Ubah, 2020). Islamic religious instruction in schools has traditionally aimed to inculcate doctrinal knowledge, ritual competence and Islamic ethical dispositions (Murtala, 2018). Over recent decades, however, the practices, goals and methods used in Islamic Religious Instruction classrooms have become sites of innovation

and adaptation as schools adopt pedagogical techniques associated with Western models of schooling such as learner-centered instruction, constructivist approaches, inquiry learning, and the systematic use of assessment and instructional technologies (Yusuf & Adamu, 2020). Understanding how these Western pedagogical approaches shape the content, process and outcomes of Islamic religious education is therefore important for policymakers, school leaders, teachers, parents and scholars concerned with the quality and identity implications of religion education.

Western pedagogical approaches broadly refer to instructional models that foreground active, student-centered learning, critical thinking, collaborative problem solving and evidence-informed assessment practices (Olaniyan, 2017). These approaches contrast with more traditional, teacher-centered or rote methods in which the teacher is the primary source of knowledge and the learner's role is largely receptive. Examples of Western pedagogical practices that commonly enter school settings include the use of lesson planning aligned to learning outcomes, formative assessment (feedback-driven instruction), project-based learning, group work, discussion and debate, and the integration of digital tools to scaffold instruction (Haruna & Idris, 2019). Such methods are frequently promoted within national reforms, teacher education programs, and by non-governmental organisations seeking to raise standards of learning and independent thinking.

Islamic religious instruction, however, is not merely a set of factual claims to be transmitted; it is bound up with devotional practices, theological positions, moral training and community values (Murtala 2018). The epistemic aims of Islamic religious instruction which is knowledge of scripture, proper ritual practice, character formation and communal identity may at times appear to be in tension with pedagogical emphases on individual inquiry and epistemic doubt. The adoption of Western pedagogical features in Islamic religious instruction classrooms therefore raises a number of empirical and normative questions: Do learner-centered methods alter the way religious knowledge is conceptualized and assessed? Do collaborative and discussion-based activities encourage theological reflection or produce relativism? How do teachers negotiate religious authority and pedagogical innovation? And how do students experience their religious identity in classrooms that combine different instructional traditions? NASFAT (Nasirul-Lahi-l-Fathi Society of Nigeria) model schools provide a particularly instructive site for examining these dynamics. Established by an Islamic socio-religious organisation with a strong emphasis on modern education and community development, NASFAT model schools typically aim to combine religious and secular curricula within a modern school framework. These schools often position themselves as exemplars balancing Islamic ethos with contemporary pedagogical standards and infrastructure. Given the organisation's interest in both religious renewal and social engagement, NASFAT model schools are likely to reflect active attempts to integrate Western pedagogical practices into the teaching of Islamic religious subjects. Studying this context therefore offers insight into how institutional vision, teacher preparation, curriculum design and parental expectations shape the lived reality of Islamic religious instruction in a contemporary Nigerian setting.

Despite growing interest in pedagogy and religion education, several gaps remain. Empirical studies that explicitly examine how Western pedagogical approaches modify classroom interactions, curricular priorities and student religiosity within Islamic faith-based schools are limited, particularly within the Nigerian context and in Rivers State specifically. This study was designed to fill these gaps by investigating the role of Western pedagogical approaches in shaping Islamic Religious Instruction at NASFAT model school, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The globalisation of education and the spread of modern pedagogical philosophies have increasingly influenced instructional practices in diverse cultural and religious settings. In

Nigeria, this trend has reached Islamic faith-based schools, where educators are progressively adopting Western pedagogical approaches such as learner-centered instruction, collaborative learning, inquiry-based methods, and the use of instructional technology. These methods, often promoted by curriculum reformers and education policymakers, are perceived as essential for improving learning outcomes and fostering critical thinking skills (Schweinfurt, 2015). However, their integration into Islamic Religious Instruction presents both opportunities and challenges. Traditionally, Islamic education in Nigeria has relied heavily on rote learning, teacher-centered instruction, and memorisation of Qur'anic verses and Hadiths (AbdulGaniyu et al., 2021). These methods were designed to promote discipline, piety, and strict adherence to religious tenets. The introduction of Western pedagogical approaches which emphasise student autonomy, questioning, and critical reflection may appear to conflict with the foundational goals of Islamic religious instruction, which prioritise obedience, reverence for authority, and the preservation of doctrinal purity. This tension raises a crucial question about how far modern instructional methods can be integrated into IRI without diluting its religious essence or undermining its objectives. NASFAT model schools were established to bridge the gap between Islamic and Western education, offering a curriculum that integrates both religious and secular subjects within a modern institutional framework. Despite this objective, there remains limited empirical evidence on how Western pedagogical approaches are practically implemented in Islamic Religious Instruction within these schools, especially in Rivers State. The extent to which these approaches influence teaching practices, curriculum delivery, student participation, and religious identity remains unclear.

Existing studies on faith-based education in Nigeria have primarily focused on curriculum content, religious tolerance, or moral outcomes, with limited attention to how pedagogy shapes learners' engagement and understanding of religious knowledge. Similarly, most research examining Western pedagogical reforms tends to generalise across secular contexts, overlooking how such methods interact with faith-based learning environments that operate under distinct moral and epistemological assumptions. Therefore, the central problem of this study is the lack of empirical understanding of how Western pedagogical approaches influence the teaching and learning of Islamic Religious Instruction in NASFAT model schools.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the role of Western pedagogical approaches in shaping the teaching and learning of Islamic Religious Instruction in NASFAT Model School, Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. To identify the Western pedagogical approaches adopted in the teaching of Islamic Religious Instruction in NASFAT Model School, Rivers State.
- ii. To examine how Western pedagogical approaches influence teachers' instructional practices and classroom interactions.
- iii. To determine the effects of Western pedagogical approaches on students' engagement, understanding, and religious identity in Islamic Religious Instruction.

Research Questions

- i. What are the Western pedagogical approaches adopted in the teaching of Islamic Religious Instruction in NASFAT Model School, Rivers State?
- ii. How does Western pedagogical approaches influence teachers' instructional practices and classroom interactions?
- iii. What are the effects of Western pedagogical approaches on students' engagement, understanding, and religious identity in Islamic Religious Instruction?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: Western pedagogical approaches do not influence teachers' instructional practices and classroom interactions in Islamic Religious Instruction

H₀₂: Western pedagogical approaches have no significant effect on students' engagement, understanding, and religious identity in Islamic Religious Instruction.

Literature Review

Concept of Western Pedagogical Approaches

Western pedagogical approaches refer to a broad range of instructional philosophies and methods that originated and evolved within Western educational thought, particularly from the Enlightenment period onward. They are rooted in humanistic, constructivist, and progressive educational theories that emphasize the development of the whole learner cognitively, emotionally, socially, and morally. Unlike traditional teacher-centered paradigms that treat students as passive recipients of knowledge, Western pedagogical models encourage active participation, collaboration, and reflective learning (Dewey, 1938; Schweinfurt, 2015).

Historically, the foundation of Western pedagogy can be traced to philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who argued that education should respect the learner's natural curiosity and experiential development. This tradition was later advanced by John Dewey, whose theory of progressive education emphasized learning by doing, and Jean Piaget, whose constructivist theory posited that knowledge is actively constructed through experience and interaction. Lev Vygotsky further introduced the sociocultural perspective, emphasizing the role of language, culture, and social interaction in cognitive growth (Vygotsky, 1978). Key characteristics of Western pedagogical approaches include:

- **Learner-Centered Instruction:** The focus is on the learner's needs, interests, and developmental stage rather than the teacher's authority. Students are viewed as co-constructors of knowledge.
- **Constructivism:** Knowledge is constructed through exploration, reflection, and critical thinking rather than memorization. Teachers act as facilitators who guide inquiry rather than dictate answers.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Students learn through dialogue, teamwork, and peer interactions, which promote communication skills and mutual respect.
- **Inquiry-Based Learning:** Lessons are structured around questions, problems, and projects that stimulate curiosity and reasoning.
- **Formative Assessment:** Learning is continuously assessed through observation, discussion, and feedback rather than solely through summative examinations.
- **Integration of Technology:** The use of multimedia and digital platforms enhances interactivity and promotes independent learning.

In Western contexts, these pedagogical approaches are associated with the broader goals of democratization of education, critical citizenship, and lifelong learning (Freire, 1970). They seek to develop learners who can think independently, question assumptions, and contribute meaningfully to society.

In the Nigerian context, Western pedagogical ideas entered through colonial education, missionary schools, and later through national curriculum reforms that emphasized modern instructional techniques. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy and teacher education curricula in Nigeria encourage learner-centered teaching and critical thinking as hallmarks of 21st-century education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). However, their application within faith-based and traditional institutions, such as Islamic schools, remains a complex process that requires cultural and religious adaptation. Thus, Western pedagogical approaches

represent not merely instructional techniques but a philosophy of education, one that prioritizes reasoning, dialogue, and human development. When introduced into faith-based learning such as Islamic Religious Instruction, they invite reflection on how knowledge, authority, and moral formation are conceptualized and transmitted.

Concept of Islamic Religious Instruction

Islamic Religious Instruction is an integral part of the educational process in Muslim communities, designed to cultivate both intellectual understanding and spiritual devotion in learners. It encompasses the systematic teaching of Islamic theology (*Aqidah*), Qur'anic recitation and interpretation (*Tafsir*), prophetic traditions (*Hadith*), jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), and moral ethics (*Akhlaq*). The primary aim of Islamic religious instruction is not only to transfer religious knowledge but to shape character, behavior, and identity in accordance with Islamic principles (Murtala, 2018).

Historically, Islamic education has its roots in the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) emphasis on seeking knowledge as an act of worship. Early Islamic learning occurred in mosques, Qur'anic schools (*madrasah*), and *halqa* circles, where instruction relied on recitation, memorization, and oral transmission from teacher to student. This approach was highly teacher-centered, reflecting the deep respect accorded to the *alim* (teacher) as a moral guide and custodian of sacred knowledge (Al Zeera, 2001). The goals of Islamic Religious Instruction extend beyond academic achievement to include; developing a firm belief in Allah and internalizing Islamic doctrines; cultivating virtues such as honesty, humility, and discipline; fostering a sense of belonging to the global *ummah* (Muslim community); and strengthening the individual's relationship with God through worship and obedience.

In Nigeria, Islamic Religious Instruction occupies a unique position within the education system. It is offered in Islamic schools, integrated faith-based schools, and public schools, depending on the institutional mission and curriculum design. While traditional Qur'anic schools still emphasize rote memorization and recitation, integrated Islamic schools such as NASFAT Model Schools seek to combine Islamic moral training with modern academic standards (AbdulGaniyu et al., 2021).

However, Islamic Religious Instruction faces several contemporary challenges; continued reliance on rote methods may limit learners' analytical and reflective capacities; tension exists between religious and secular knowledge domains; many Islamic religious instruction teachers lack training in modern pedagogy or access to instructional technology; and balancing global educational reforms with Islamic moral imperatives requires careful negotiation (Murtala, 2018).

Despite these challenges, Islamic religious instruction remains central to shaping Muslim identity and moral values. It provides the moral compass necessary for ethical citizenship, social responsibility, and personal integrity. Therefore, any pedagogical innovation such as the introduction of Western teaching methods must be assessed not only for its instructional efficiency but also for its alignment with Islamic epistemological and spiritual goals.

Integration of Western Pedagogical Approaches into Islamic Religious Instruction

The integration of Western pedagogical approaches into Islamic Religious Instruction represents a contemporary educational reform movement aimed at bridging traditional religious pedagogy with modern learning paradigms. It reflects a recognition that effective religious education must not only preserve doctrinal integrity but also foster critical reasoning, creativity, and adaptability among learners in a rapidly changing world (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). Integration involves the harmonization of two distinct epistemological traditions: western pedagogy, which emphasizes inquiry, reflection, and cognitive autonomy; and Islamic pedagogy, which values transmission, reverence for authority, and moral obedience. The process of integration does not imply the wholesale adoption of Western methods but rather their contextual adaptation within Islamic frameworks. It seeks to ensure that modern

instructional techniques enhance rather than erode the spiritual and moral objectives of Islamic education (Tan, 2017).

Dimensions of integrating western pedagogical approaches into Islamic religious instruction include aligning Islamic subjects with contemporary educational goals such as critical thinking and application of knowledge. For example, lessons on Islamic ethics may incorporate case studies or moral dilemmas for reflective analysis. Using learner-centered and discussion-based methods to complement traditional memorization and recitation. Teachers may employ storytelling, debates, group projects, or digital resources to deepen understanding of Qur'anic teachings. Leveraging educational technology such as multimedia presentations, e-learning platforms, or audiovisual Qur'an tutorials to enhance engagement and accessibility. Combining traditional oral and written evaluations with formative assessment techniques like peer feedback, reflective journals, and performance-based tasks.

When effectively implemented, integration can improve learners' comprehension and retention of Islamic knowledge; foster critical and reflective engagement with religious texts; enhance students' motivation, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities and promote alignment between religious and secular educational objectives. However, integration also presents philosophical and practical tensions. Some religious scholars view inquiry-based methods as undermining the authority of sacred texts, teachers may lack adequate training to apply interactive methods within a faith-based context as well as parents and community leaders may resist innovations perceived as "Westernization" of Islamic education.

NASFAT Model Schools exemplify this integration effort. Established by the Nasirul-Lahi-l-Fathi Society of Nigeria, these schools embody a vision of producing learners who are both devout Muslims and academically competent citizens. Their curriculum merges Islamic Religious Instruction with national academic standards, while their teaching philosophy promotes the use of modern pedagogical practices within a morally grounded framework. Teachers in NASFAT schools are encouraged to employ lesson planning, cooperative learning, and formative assessment, alongside Qur'anic recitation and moral instruction. Yet, the degree to which these Western methods influence classroom dynamics, teacher roles, and student outcomes remains under-researched particularly in Rivers State.

Theoretical Review

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored in three major frameworks: Constructivist Learning Theory, Sociocultural Theory of Learning, and the Theory of Pedagogical Integration.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist Learning Theory, developed primarily by Jean Piaget (1972) and expanded by Jerome Bruner (1966), posits that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through experience, reflection, and interaction rather than passively received from the teacher. This theory challenges traditional didactic teaching models by emphasizing that learning occurs when learners engage meaningfully with content, connect new ideas to prior knowledge, and apply understanding to real-life contexts.

Piaget's cognitive constructivism asserts that learners progress through stages of intellectual development, each characterized by increasing ability to reason abstractly and independently. Knowledge, therefore, is not transmitted but constructed as learners interact with their environment. Bruner further emphasized discovery learning, in which teachers facilitate rather than dictate, allowing learners to explore and derive principles through guided inquiry. In the context of Western pedagogical approaches, constructivism forms the philosophical foundation for practices such as inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, and student-centered instruction. These methods cultivate curiosity, encourage experimentation, and nurture critical and reflective thinking.

Applying this to Islamic Religious Instruction, constructivism suggests that learners should not only memorize Qur'anic verses and Hadiths but also understand their meanings, contexts, and applications. For instance, rather than merely reciting the Qur'an, students can engage in guided discussions to explore moral and social lessons embedded in the text. This aligns with the Qur'anic call to reflection (*tafakkur*) and reasoning (*ta'aqqul*), which encourage believers to ponder divine signs in creation (Qur'an 3:190–191). Hence, constructivist principles do not contradict Islamic education but enrich it by promoting active learning and deeper comprehension of faith. Teachers at NASFAT Model School who adopt constructivist strategies enable students to internalise Islamic teachings in ways that are personally meaningful and socially relevant.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect data from teachers and students to describe the existing conditions, practices, and perceptions regarding the use of Western pedagogical approaches in Islamic Religious Instruction at NASFAT Model School, Rivers State. The population of the study comprised all teachers and students of Islamic Religious Instruction in NASFAT Model School, Rivers State. This included both male and female students and all teachers involved in the teaching of Islamic Religious subjects. A sample of 50 respondents was selected for the study, consisting of 10 teachers and 40 students of Islamic religious instruction. The selection was done using purposive sampling, which allowed the researcher to focus on participants directly involved in Islamic religious instruction teaching and learning. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: “*Western Pedagogical Approaches and Islamic Religious Instruction Questionnaire (WPAIRIQ)*”. The questionnaire contained closed-ended items divided into sections covering: Section A deals with the demographic information, section B deals with the Western pedagogical approaches adopted in the teaching of Islamic religious instruction; section C examine how Western pedagogical approaches influence teachers' instructional practices and classroom interactions; while section D handles the effects of Western pedagogical approaches on students' engagement in Islamic Religious Instruction. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Educational Foundations and one expert in Islamic Studies Education from a recognized university. Their feedback helped refine the items for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness to the study objectives. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a test–retest method. The questionnaire was administered twice within a two-week interval to a small group of respondents outside the study sample. The scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.82, which indicated that the instrument was reliable. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to ensure a high response rate and provide clarifications where necessary. The completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion to minimise data loss. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical method at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Responses on Research Questions

Table 1: Western pedagogical approaches adoption and teaching of Islamic Religious

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Decision
Teachers use group discussions and collaborative learning during IRI lessons.	25	20	5	0	3.40	Agree
Lesson plans are designed around clear learning outcomes and objectives.	28	18	4	0	3.48	Agree
Teachers use questioning and inquiry methods to encourage students' thinking.	30	16	4	0	3.52	Agree
Students participate actively in classroom debates and moral case studies.	22	21	5	2	3.26	Agree
Technology is used to support IRI teaching.	20	18	8	4	2.88	Agree
Teachers adopt project-based learning in IRI classes.	19	17	9	5	2.80	Agree
Students are encouraged to relate Islamic teachings to real-life experiences.	30	15	5	0	3.50	Agree
Teachers use continuous assessment and feedback during lessons.	25	20	4	1	3.38	Agree

Grand Mean = 3.28

The findings indicate that teachers at NASFAT Model School apply various Western pedagogical approaches such as group discussions, inquiry-based learning, lesson objectives, and continuous feedback. However, the use of technology and project-based learning, though practiced, was not as strongly emphasized. The average mean of 3.28 implies that Western pedagogical approaches such as inquiry learning, collaboration, and feedback are widely used in teaching Islamic religious instruction at NASFAT Model School. However, technology and project-based strategies need further reinforcement.

Table 2: Western pedagogical approaches and teachers' instructional practices

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Decision
Western teaching methods make IRI lessons more interactive.	29	18	3	0	3.52	Agree
Teachers act more as facilitators than transmitters of knowledge.	26	20	3	1	3.42	Agree
Learner-centered approaches improve participation.	30	15	3	2	3.46	Agree
Teachers face challenges balancing traditional and modern methods.	20	18	8	4	2.88	Agree
Modern teaching requires more preparation.	22	20	6	2	3.24	Agree
Western methods help explain complex religious concepts clearly.	25	19	5	1	3.36	Agree
Teachers experience resistance to new teaching styles.	15	17	10	8	2.78	Agree
Adoption of Western methods improved teacher-student relationships.	26	20	3	1	3.42	Agree

Grand Mean = 3.26

The result shows that Western pedagogical approaches positively influence teachers' instructional methods, making lessons more interactive and student-centered. Teachers, however, noted challenges such as balancing Western and Islamic methods and resistance from some stakeholders. The grand mean of 3.26 shows that Western pedagogical approaches

significantly improve instructional practices, making Islamic religious instruction more engaging and interactive. However, teachers must address resistance and methodological balance between traditional and modern methods.

Table 3: Effects of Western pedagogical approaches on students' engagement

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Decision
Students actively participate in class discussions.	27	18	3	2	3.40	Agree
Western teaching methods improve students' understanding of Islamic concepts.	28	16	4	2	3.40	Agree
Modern methods encourage critical thinking about Islamic values.	25	18	5	2	3.32	Agree
Collaborative learning strengthens students' Islamic community spirit.	30	15	3	2	3.46	Agree
Modern teaching does not weaken Islamic faith.	24	18	6	2	3.28	Agree
Students can apply Islamic lessons to real life.	26	19	4	1	3.40	Agree
Western methods promote tolerance and respect for others.	25	18	5	2	3.32	Agree
Integration of modern methods enhances students' moral values.	28	17	4	1	3.44	Agree

Grand Mean = 3.38

The findings reveal that the adoption of Western pedagogical approaches enhances student engagement, understanding, and critical thinking without negatively impacting their religious identity. Students showed high participation and improved application of Islamic values to real-life situations. The grand mean of 3.38 indicates that Western pedagogical methods greatly enhance students' engagement, moral values, understanding, and reflection without compromising their Islamic identity. The findings confirm that modern teaching approaches can coexist with faith-based instruction effectively.

Test of Hypotheses

To further verify the study's findings, two hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical method at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is as follows:

- If $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} > \chi^2_{\text{critical}}$, reject the null hypothesis (H_0)
- If $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} \leq \chi^2_{\text{critical}}$, accept the null hypothesis (H_0)

The degree of freedom (df) is calculated as: $df = (r - 1)(c - 1)$, where r = number of rows and c = number of columns.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Western pedagogical approaches do not influence teachers' instructional practices and classroom interactions in Islamic Religious Instruction.

Table 4

Response	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	(O-E) ² /E
SA & A	198	162	8.00
D & SD	62	98	13.24
Total	260	260	21.24

Calculated $\chi^2 = 21.24$

Degree of freedom (df) = 1

Critical χ^2 (0.05, 1) = 3.841

Decision: Since $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} (21.24) > \chi^2_{\text{critical}} (3.841)$, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected. The result indicates a significant relationship between Western pedagogical approaches and teachers' instructional practices in Islamic religious instruction

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Western pedagogical approaches have no significant effect on students' engagement, understanding, and religious identity in Islamic Religious Instruction.

Table 5

Response	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	(O-E) ² /E
SA & A	213	174	8.73
D & SD	55	94	16.17
Total	268	268	24.90

Calculated $\chi^2 = 24.90$

Degree of freedom (df) = 1

Critical χ^2 (0.05, 1) = 3.841

Decision: Since $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} (24.90) > \chi^2_{\text{critical}} (3.841)$, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is rejected. There is a significant effect of Western pedagogical approaches on students' engagement, understanding, and religious identity in Islamic Religious Instruction.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine how Western pedagogical approaches influence the teaching and learning of Islamic Religious Instruction at NASFAT Model School, Rivers State. Findings from the analysis of data revealed that Western pedagogical approaches significantly influence teachers' instructional practices and classroom interactions in the teaching of Islamic Religious Instruction. This indicates that the adoption of Western instructional methods such as discussion-based learning, inquiry-oriented teaching, collaborative group work, and learner-centered instruction has a measurable impact on how teachers deliver lessons and engage students during Islamic Religious Instruction.

Furthermore, the study confirms earlier reports by Yusuf and Adamu (2020), who found that Islamic education teachers in Nigeria increasingly adopt aspects of Western pedagogy to modernise classroom delivery while maintaining spiritual integrity. This hybridisation of methods enables teachers to balance both traditional Islamic moral formation and contemporary educational standards. Western pedagogical techniques also encourage reflection, learner autonomy, and mutual respect, all of which are consistent with Islamic principles of *Shura* (consultation) and *Adab* (ethical conduct).

The second hypothesis (H₀₂) tested whether Western pedagogical approaches significantly affect students' engagement, understanding, and religious identity in Islamic Religious Instruction. Results showed a calculated Chi-square value of 24.90, greater than the critical value of 3.841 at the 0.05 significance level, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that Western pedagogical approaches significantly enhance students' engagement levels, comprehension of Islamic concepts, and internalization of moral and religious identity. This outcome supports the observations of Abu-Nimer and Nasser (2017), who asserted that interactive and participatory teaching strategies promote moral reflection and self-awareness among learners in Islamic contexts. Similarly, Hassan and Basheer (2019) reported that students exposed to learner-centered pedagogies demonstrate stronger critical reasoning, empathy, and religious commitment than those taught through purely didactic methods. At NASFAT Model School, students engaged in group discussions, role plays, debates, and moral case studies were more participatory and showed improved understanding of Islamic injunctions. These activities allowed students to relate Islamic principles to contemporary moral dilemmas, thus bridging the gap between faith and modern society. The data also revealed that such methods did not weaken religious identity; rather, they strengthened it by helping students internalize Islamic values through active participation and peer collaboration.

A critical observation emerging from the findings is that the integration of Western pedagogical approaches into Islamic Religious Instruction need not result in cultural or theological conflict. Instead, when contextualized appropriately, these approaches complement the core aims of Islamic education which is the development of faith (*Iman*), knowledge (*Ilm*), and character (*Akhlaq*). The experience at NASFAT Model School demonstrates that combining learner-centered methodologies with Quranic principles fosters an environment of moral reasoning, tolerance, and respect for diversity. The study therefore highlights that modernisation in pedagogy does not equate to Westernisation of values. Rather, it signifies an educational reform aimed at making Islamic Religious Instruction more responsive to contemporary learning needs while maintaining the essence of faith-based teaching.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that Western pedagogical approaches play a vital role in enhancing the teaching and learning of Islamic Religious Instruction in NASFAT Model School, Rivers State. When thoughtfully integrated, these approaches complement traditional Islamic pedagogy by promoting inquiry, reflection, collaboration, and moral reasoning among learners. The study concludes that Western pedagogical methods such as group discussions, inquiry-based learning, and learner-centered instruction enhance teachers' effectiveness and students' engagement without undermining religious values. Instead of creating a dichotomy between Western and Islamic educational traditions, a synthesis of both produces learners who are intellectually active, morally upright, and spiritually conscious. Therefore, the adoption of Western pedagogical approaches should not be perceived as a threat to Islamic education but as a strategic enhancement that makes religious instruction more relevant to contemporary learners and global educational standards.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Islamic Religious Instruction teachers should continue to incorporate Western pedagogical methods such as cooperative learning, project-based learning, and inquiry-driven discussions to make lessons more engaging and effective. Teachers should be trained in blending modern methods with Islamic moral and spiritual principles to maintain doctrinal integrity.
- School management should provide adequate instructional resources, including multimedia tools and teaching aids, to support the integration of modern pedagogical strategies in Islamic Religious Instruction. Regular workshops and seminars should be organised to build teachers' capacity in innovative instructional design.
- Islamic Religious Studies curricula should be redesigned to include more interactive learning components, reflective practices, and real-life application tasks. Curriculum developers should ensure that Western pedagogical models are adapted to align with Islamic worldviews and ethical standards.
- The Ministry of Education and relevant Islamic educational boards should recognize and support the use of modern pedagogical frameworks in religious instruction. Policy frameworks should encourage continuous professional development for teachers of Islamic Studies in both faith-based and public schools.

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