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Exploring the Practice of Creative Teaching among Islamic Education Teachers in Nigeria: A Survey Study

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
	Creative teaching makes learning more enjoyable, meaningful, and engaging. It helps students learn beyond memorisation by improving their thinking skills, which allows them to think creatively, make decisions, and justify their decisions to solve problems independently. Thus, practising creative teaching became more significant since the call for shifting the teaching and learning paradigm from traditional to effective and interactive learning to meet the 21st-century educational goals, which aim to prepare competent individuals for the challenges of the information age. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate teachers' perception of creative teaching, how they implement it in their classrooms, and examine the relationship between their perception and practice of creative teaching in Islamic education. The study employed a survey design with 120 Islamic education teachers participating. The findings revealed high perception and creative teaching practices among Islamic education teachers and showed a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions and creative teaching practices. These findings support existing studies that emphasise the importance of teachers' perceptions in shaping their teaching practices. It also highlights understanding, belief, and attitude as crucial factors that can enhance the implementation of creative teaching methods in their classrooms.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education and accelerated the need for innovative teaching and learning methods. This urgency is underscored by the twenty-first-century educational goals, which demand adaptable and practical approaches to knowledge dissemination. Thus, memorisation is now less critical when compared to other teaching methods that improve students' cognitive and non-cognitive skills (Runco, 2022). Except for some Islamic education sub-subjects that necessitate memorising the texts, such as the Quran and Hadith (Abdulkareem Idris Aiyetoro, 2020). Thus, it has become more important for teaching and learning activities to be innovative to produce excellent and capable students by implementing creative teaching. Creativity is necessary for teaching and learning because teachers need to be creative in teaching to get and retain student attention and to remain motivated in the classroom, by which learning can be more invigorating, meaningful, and realistic.

Creative teaching is creating and using various instructional strategies to make learning a meaningful experience (Sale, 2015). It requires using specific techniques to increase learning effectiveness; this process helps students learn better and cultivate their creativity. The teacher must be competent and creative in his practice and creatively manage the classroom and the instructional materials. Implementing new, interesting, unique, extraordinary, and helpful teaching and learning environments instils in students the importance of knowledge acquisition (Adibah Mohamad et al., 2012).

Moreover, creative teaching aligns with the Qur'an and Sunnah (Zulkifli et al., 2022). Thus, Islamic education learning strategies for students should be developed to provide meaningful concepts to students through real experience (Noorhaidi Hasan, 2012). Creative teaching in Islamic education offers a learning environment to increase students' creativity (Al-Karasneh & Saleh, 2010). Meanwhile, Islamic education aims to inculcate moral and spiritual virtues into the learners' minds so that they can grow up and abide by the provision and teaching of their religion with the fear of Allah (Ismail Abubakar, 2018). Al-Farabi (1983), according to Muhammad Rauf et al. (2013), explained that Islamic education is the acquisition of values, knowledge, and practical skills in

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a particular period and culture. Islamic education aims to guide individuals towards perfection because the human being was created for this purpose. The existence of humanity in this world is to gain happiness, which is absolute good and the highest perfection.

Much attention has been devoted to the creative teaching of Islamic education in recent years. Adibah Mohamad (2012) investigated the distinctive perspective on creativity and innovation and its necessity in the contemporary Islamic educational system. It should be considered a crucial tool for teachers and learners in the era of knowledge and innovation based on science and technology. In his study, he recommended that Islamic education teachers use collaborative and problem-based learning strategies, which tend to induce creative teaching of Islamic education to embark on innovative teaching.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Islamic education plays an important role in nurturing moral and ethical development among students, ensuring the integration of religious values and academic knowledge. Despite this vital role, Abdulkareem Idris Aiyetoro (2020) reported a lack of integration of instructional technologies in teaching Islamic education in Nigerian schools. Therefore, he recommended providing adequate instructional technologies in Islamic schools for effective and creative teaching of Islamic education. In addition, Busari Jamiu Muhammad (2018) opined that one of the challenges facing teaching and learning in Islamic education in Nigeria is the teacher-centred learning approach, which usually focuses on the transmission of knowledge in a more traditional method. Therefore, he asserted the need for innovative methods of teaching which can make Islamic education more effective, ensuring students' development morally, spiritually, and ethically. Thus, employing creative teaching in teaching Islamic education will contribute to its impact on students, by helping them to reflect the Islamic teachings embedded in the subject. This is because creative teaching is an instructional technique that helps students transfer their knowledge to real-life problems and solve them in a creative way (Mayer, 1989).

However, integrating creativity in teaching and learning Islamic education strongly depends on teachers' creativity and competence because creative teaching stems from teachers' creative potential (Torrance, 1972). Moreover, teaching creatively requires teachers' ability to apply imaginative approaches to make learning more effective and exciting (Hilao, 2016). Thus, Mullet et al. (2016) recommended an in-depth investigation of teachers' perceptions of creative teaching as this will inform how they practice creativity in their classrooms. Therefore, this quantitative analysis aims to gauge teachers' perception of creative teaching, investigate how they practice it in their classrooms, and examine the relationship between their perception and practice of creative teaching in Islamic education.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

1. How do Islamic education teachers perceive creative teaching?
2. To what extent do Islamic education teachers practice creative teaching?

H_0: There will be no significant correlation between teachers' perception and creative teaching practice.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
4.1. Islamic Education in Nigeria

In Islam, education is made compulsory for every Muslim. This is because, through knowledge, humans can fulfil the deity of being the vicegerent of Allah on the earth and the purpose of being created. Thus, the first revelation emphasised the importance of knowledge, as stated in Qur'an 96:5: "Read in the name of your Lord, who created (Humans)." The prophet (PBUH) also asserted the necessity of knowledge acquisition for every individual when he said, "The quest for knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and Muslim woman (Amjad Hussain, 2004). These quotations are just a few of many that command individuals to seek knowledge irrespective of tribe, gender or age.

Islamic education aims to prepare and balance all aspects of human growth, intellectually, spiritually, and physically, in a way that will lead them to realise the total submission to Allah (SWT) as their Creator, individually or as a community or even humanity. Azeez and Adeshina (2013) argued that Islamic education inculcates moral values such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, self-discipline, humanity, patience, and other virtues which tend to transform human life into a meaningful one, by which they acquire the wisdom of relating with his fellow human being and achieve Allah's pleasure in the hereafter. In addition, Islamic education helps individuals understand Islamic characteristics and encourages them to have a way of life. It is the guidance of good manners and virtues. Islamic education emphasises practical and experimental aspects, developing creative and critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and connecting conceptual knowledge, procedure knowledge, and students' lives (Yousif, 2018).

In Nigeria, Islamic education has gained a different recognition than other subjects in formal schools. This is because Nigeria is a secular state that is not confined to any specific religion but accommodates all faiths. Therefore, Islamic education in Nigeria's

educational system was made an elective subject under religious subjects and named "Islamic Religious Subject" (I.R.S). On the other hand, many Islamic centres arose because of the realisation of the importance of Islamic education, many of which are being recognised and registered under the Ministry of Education. Consequently, Islamic education has become more effective in these centres and is taught in its various subsidiary fields (Abdulkareem Idris Aiyetoro, 2020). However, Kazeem and Balogun (2013) outlined the challenges facing Islamic education in Nigeria's educational system as follows:

i.   Acceptability:

Nigeria is multi-religious with various ideologies, practising secularism as the system of government. Any effort from the government to increase the awareness of Islamic education will be considered as Islamization of the country by other religious practitioners. This, in return, limits the acceptability of the subjects in Nigeria.

ii.   Resources:

Reading and instruction materials are among the challenges facing Islamic education in Nigeria, just like other subjects. However, Islamic education requires profound material to be as effective and valuable as other subjects such as mathematics, chemistry, physics, etc. Moreover, competent teachers are also a resource that must be provided to make the subject more effective and valuable.

iii.   Enlightenment:

The belief that any development attached to Islam and Islamic knowledge is an effort to Islamize the country is one of the problems restraining the effectiveness of Islamic education, in the sense that many people are antagonists of this. It might even be among Muslims who are not enlightened and thinking first-hand that it is about implementing Shariah law. Therefore, people should be educated about the aims of Islamic education, which will benefit everyone in the end.

iv.   Government Patronage:

The government has many roles to play if there is to be any development related to Islamic education. This can be done by providing support for Islamic centres that are struggling to make the subject available to Muslims quickly. Also, the government should make provisions for the graduates of those centres in the labour market.

4.2. Creative Teaching of Islamic Education

The current trend of twenty-first-century educational goals aims to shift the paradigm from the dominance of educators' role in the learning process to student-centred learning (Firman Mansir & Halim Purnomo, 2020). This development has necessitated redefining the curriculum to prepare individuals who can think creatively to solve the contemporary problems of their society. Creative teaching is creating and using various instructional strategies to make learning a meaningful experience (Sale, 2015). It develops and uses novel, original or inventive teaching methods (Hafizhah Zulkifli et al., 2022). Creative teaching involves a cognitive process, personality characteristics, environment variables, and the interaction of these components (Wechsler et al., 2018). It aims to empower students to relate knowledge or ideas that were previously unrelated (Rawlinson, 2017).

Creative teaching of Islamic education requires the teacher to develop his skills and performance, such as creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, and the ability to manage the classroom. The teacher should also be innovative in developing lesson plans, activities, and teaching strategies that can creatively enhance Islamic education teaching. Therefore, Abdulkareem Idris Aiyetoro et al. (2024) recommended using stimulant materials while teaching Islamic education to enhance students' thinking skills and creativity in the classroom.

Furthermore, creative teaching helps to increase learning effectiveness and cultivate students' creativity (Tan & Ng, 2021). Creative teaching encourages students to think independently, participate actively and express themselves freely. Hence, many countries' education strategies show why student creativity is a crucial competency (Horng et al., 2005). Creative teaching of Islamic education is vital; it helps the students acquire Islamic values and understandings. Therefore, Islamic education teachers are expected to be the front-runners of creativity because they greatly influence their students as they lead and instruct them (Al-Karasneh & Jubran, 2013). Al-Karasneh and Jubran (2013) argued that the leadership and creativity skills of the teachers lie in the context of observing a moral value system, building a positive culture, managing and leading, relating with students, relating to community, and their ability to adopt Kouzes and Posner's five dimensions while teaching, which are: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modelling the way, and encouraging the heart. He explained further that the creativity dimension comprised the following eight traits: Passion for work, Independence, Goal setting, Originality, Flexibility, Wide range of interests, Intelligence, and Motivation.

Saebo et al. (2007) listed some strategies to foster creativity in the classroom:

1. Encouraging active learning.
2. Supporting students' interests and opinions.
3. Employing different learning styles.
4. Encouraging and considering emotional responses.
5. Using inquiry-based strategy.
6. Offering ambiguities for students to think.
7. Being open-minded to welcome students' ideas to encourage participation.
8. Being known for surprising with new ideas and examples.
9. Offering different patterns and examples.
10. Recognizing multiple intelligences.
11. Employing visual representations and auditory ones.

Fisher and Williams (2012) argued that some aspects of creativity needed to be present in the learning environment for foster creative teaching to occur; these are:

1. Motivation: This is an internal encouragement manifested through a good engagement strategy. It makes students more passionate towards participating in the classroom.
2. Inspiration refers to being inspired by someone or something, which makes students more curious to ask questions and engage actively in the classroom.
3. Gestation: This means giving students enough time to think and generate creative ideas during the learning process. Giving enough time will allow creative ideas and thoughts to emerge.
4. Collaboration: Creative teaching requires a shared knowledge activity that allows students to collaborate with others and produce creative ideas.

5. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study is grounded in the creative pedagogy framework, emphasising the dynamic interplay between creative teaching, teaching for creativity, and creative learning. The interconnection between these three elements complements each other and leads to a resonating process (Lin, 2011). Creative teaching focuses on the teacher's ability to use imaginative approaches to make learning effective and more interesting to the learners (Selkrig & Keamy, 2017). It is practically manifest in existing pedagogies that are innovative and make learning meaningful for students (Craft, 2011). Teaching for creativity on the other hand involves employing different innovative teaching methods and strategies to foster creative thinking and behaviours among students (Cheung & Leung, 2013). This creative element includes experimenting, playfulness, autonomy, spontaneity, collaboration, and imaginative thinking (Craft, 2011). Creative learning is a middle ground between creative teaching and teaching for creativity (Craft, 2011). It is often collaborative through the mind and body, emotions, and all senses aiming to face challenges or solve problems (Cremin & Barnes, 2018).

The interconnection between these elements underscores the importance of classroom practices' interactional, collaborative and emergent nature (Craft, 2011). This framework is relevant to Islamic education, where critical and creative thinking skills, moral reasoning, and spiritual and ethical development are integral objectives. Thus, teachers' perceptions are important to determine their teaching practice. Therefore, understanding how teachers, in Nigerian schools, perceive creative teaching and how these perceptions shape their creative teaching practice in their classrooms can provide insights into professional development and reform of Islamic education curricula.

6. METHODOLOGY

This survey employs a quantitative research method through a questionnaire to address the research objectives. A questionnaire is a vital instrument to gather information from widely scattered sources. It is customarily used where a researcher cannot see personally all the people, he desires responses to or where there is no reason to see them personally (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). The survey was conducted in December 2022 for Islamic education teachers in Nigerian secondary schools. The survey covered six states: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti, in the southwest of Nigeria. An online questionnaire was distributed to the Islamic education teachers within the respective states, to which 120 teachers responded.

The study employed a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three sections; the first section captured the participants' demographic characteristics, such as gender, type of school, and teaching experience. The second section comprises 7 items that measure teachers' perceptions of creative teaching. This section is a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The third section consists of 17 items measuring teachers' creativity practice in Islamic education. It is also graded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

6.1. Test of Normality

Before the analysis, a normality test was conducted to check if the sample was usually distributed; Elliott and Woodward (2007) argued that Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are recommended for sample sizes less than (50). Therefore, the normality assumption can be violated because of a larger sample size. However, the Skewness and Kurtosis tests were conducted. The values for skewness were less than +/-2, while the values for Kurtosis were less than +/-3. These values are within the range of acceptable values for normality (Demir, 2022).

6.2. Reliability of the Instrument

Instrument reliability is critical because it determines how much a measurement provides stable and consistent results (Taherdoost, 2016). An instrument's high internal consistency and reliability indicate that the items of a scale hang together and measure the same construct (Huck, 2012). To this end, Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted to establish the instrument's internal consistency and to determine whether the scale items measure the underlying attribute. The Cronbach's Alpha test result was (.709) and (.937) respectively, indicating acceptable reliability of the construct in the instrument (Whitley & Ball, 2002).

In addition, a factor analytic procedure was conducted to establish instrument validity. This exercise reduced the whole scale to 24 items after removing cross-loading and low-loading items. The remaining items, with a KMO of .810 and Bartlett's test of .000, explained 50.6% of the total variance in the participants' practice of creative teaching of Islamic education. Details of the factor loading for each item and the reliability estimation are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Reliability test and factor loading of the scale items

TVE = 50.6%; KMO = .810; Bartlett's test of .000; Cronbach's Alpha = .917			
Factor	**Item**	**Item Loading**	**C. Alpha**
Teacher's creative teaching perception	Creative teaching involves designing activities that require students to think critically.	.776	.709
	Creative teaching enhances students' ability to face challenges and solve problems.	.776	
	Creative teaching helps to improve students' higher-order thinking skills and knowledge application.	.738	
	Creative teaching requires creating opportunities for collaborative learning and peer interaction among the students.	.644	
	Creative teaching involves using innovative methods to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes.	.644	
	Creative teaching requires employing various hands-on activities in the classroom.	.590	
	Creative teaching encourages students to share ideas and express themselves.	.540	
Teachers' creative teaching practice	I encourage group discussion and collaborative activities in my classroom.	.793	.937
	I give constructive feedback that encourages students to improve their creative efforts.	.769	
	I change my teaching styles based on student feedback.	.762	
	I link problems with daily activities.	.754	
	I give ideas to trigger students' creative thinking abilities.	.747	
	I introduce new solutions to a topic.	.738	
	I provide examples of solutions suitable for the teaching topic.	.716	
	I give a simple definition of the terms used in the lesson.	.702	
	I encourage students to access the internet to explore topics they have not well mastered.	.699	
	I integrate technology in teaching according to the topic.	.699	
	I use teaching aids that are appropriate to the topic of instruction.	.688	
	I change the teaching method when it turns out to be less effective.	.684	
	I explain the content in levels, from easy to complex.	.675	
	I implement 'hands-on' activities in my class.	.652	
	I include tasks that require students to think critically and solve problems.	.628	

| I encourage students to share their ideas and explore multiple solutions to solve problems. | .581 |
| I present various forms of solutions to the same problem. | .532 |

7. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

7.1. Research question 1: How do Islamic education teachers perceive creative teaching?

Descriptive analysis was conducted to answer this research question, including frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviations. The midpoint was also calculated to interpret the result by adding the highest and lowest values of the Likert scale and dividing by 2 (i.e., 5+1/2+=3). Therefore, the cutoff mean is 3. Table 2 shows Islamic education teachers' perceptions of creative teaching.

Table 2: Teachers' creative teaching perception

Item	SD	DA	NS	A	SA	Mean	St.D
Creative teaching involves designing activities that require students to think critically.	6 5%	3 2.5%	15 12.5%	84 70%	12 10%	3.78	.85
Creative teaching enhances students' ability to face challenges and solve problems.	6 5%	7 5.8%	17 14.2%	78 65%	12 10%	3.69	.91
Creative teaching helps to improve students' higher-order thinking skills and knowledge application.	10 8.3%	4 3.3%	17 14.2%	81 67.5%	8 6.7%	3.61	.97
Creative teaching requires creating opportunities for collaborative learning and peer interaction among the students.	6 5%	7 5.8%	16 13.3%	80 66.7%	11 9.2%	3.69	90
Creative teaching involves using innovative methods to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes.	9 7.5%	9 7.5%	19 15.8%	75 62.5%	8 6.7%	3.53	.99
Creative teaching requires employing various hands-on activities in the classroom.	11 9.2%	6 5%	20 16.7%	75 62.5%	8 6.7%	3.53	.1.02
Creative teaching encourages students to share ideas and express themselves.	11 9.2%	4 3.3%	17 14.2%	81 67.5%	7 5.8%	3.58	.99
Sum	59 8.4%	40 5.7%	121 17.3%	554 79.1%	66 9.4%	3.63	.52

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, NS= Not Sure, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

The above table indicates a high perception of creative teaching among Nigerian secondary schools of Islamic education, with a mean of (3.63) and a standard deviation of (0.52).

Item 1, from the table above, recorded the highest mean of (3.78). This item shows that 12 (10%) participants strongly agreed that creative teaching involves designing activities that require students to think critically. 84 (70%) participants agreed with this item, while 15 (2.5%) among the participants were not sure if creative teaching can trigger the student's ability to think critically. However, 3 (2.5%) participants disagreed that students' critical ability does not depend on creative teaching, and 6 (5%) participants strongly disagreed.

Meanwhile, Items 5 and 6 recorded the lowest mean (3.53). Item 5 indicates that only 8 (6.7%) participants strongly agreed that creative teaching requires the teacher to apply various new approaches to his instructions, 75 (62.5%) participants agreed, 19 (15.8%) participants were not sure if creative teaching requires the teacher to apply various new approaches to his instructions, 9 (7.5%) disagreed, and 9 (7.5%) strongly disagreed. On the other hand, item 6 shows that 8 (6.7%) participants strongly agreed that creative teaching requires employing various hands-on activities in the classroom., while 75 (62.5%) participants agreed to this item, 20 (16.7%) were unsure, 6 (5%) participants disagreed, and 11 (9.2%) participants strongly disagreed.

7.2. Research question 2: To what extent do Islamic education teachers practice creative teaching?

Descriptive (i.e., frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviations) analysis was also conducted on the data to answer this research question. In addition, the same process as in research question 1 was employed for establishing the midpoint and cut-off mean. Table 3 below presents the participants' responses, showing how they practice creative teaching in their classrooms.

Table 3: Teachers' creative teaching practice

Item	N	R	S	M	A	Mean	St.D
I encourage group discussion and collaborative activities in my classroom.	6 5%	5 4.2%	60 50%	11 9.2%	38 31.7%	3.58	1.12
I give constructive feedback that encourages students to improve their creative efforts.	12 10%	7 5.8%	41 34.2%	5 4.2%	55 45.8%	3.70	1.36
I change my teaching styles based on student feedback.	12 10%	10 8.3%	32 26.7%	5 4.2%	61 50.8%	3.78	1.40
I link problems with daily activities.	7 5.8%	9 7.5%	33 27.5%	6 5%	65 54.2%	3.94	1.28
I give ideas to trigger students' creative thinking abilities.	8 6.7%	10 8.3%	39 32.5%	5 4.2%	58 48.3%	3.79	1.31
I introduce new solutions to a topic.	11 9.2%	10 8.3%	29 24.2%	3 2.5%	67 55.8%	3.88	1.40
I provide examples of solutions suitable for the teaching topic.	12 10%	6 5%	34 28.3%	5 4.2%	63 52.5%	3.84	1.37
I give a simple definition of the terms used in the lesson.	10 8.3%	9 7.5%	31 25.8%	7 5.8%	63 52.5%	3.87	1.35
I encourage students to access the internet to explore topics they have not well mastered.	18 15%	6 5%	41 34.2%	1 0.8%	54 45%	3.56	1.47
I integrate technology in teaching according to the topic.	12 10%	5 4.2%	42 35%	7 5.8%	54 45%	3.72	1.34
I use teaching aids that are appropriate to the topic of instruction.	12 10%	5 4.2%	34 28.3%	8 6.7%	61 50.8%	3.84	1.36
I change the teaching method when it turns out to be less effective.	11 9.2%	7 5.8%	28 23.3%	4 3.3%	70 58.3%	3.96	1.37
I explain the content in levels, from easy to complex.	8 6.7%	8 6.7%	29 24.2%	7 5.8%	68 56.7%	3.99	1.30
I implement 'hands-on' activities in my class.	7 5.8%	10 8.3%	32 26.7%	6 5%	65 54.2%	3.93	1.29
I include tasks that require students to think critically and solve problems.	11 9.2%	8 6.7%	42 35%	6 5%	53 44.2%	3.68	1.34
I encourage students to share their ideas and explore multiple solutions to solve problems.	9 7.5%	8 6.7%	37 30.8%	6 5%	60 50%	3.83	1.31
I present various forms of solutions to the same problem.	12 10%	8 6.7%	28 23.3%	3 2.5%	69 57.5%	3.91	1.40
Sum	178 8.7%	131 6.4%	612 30%	95 4.7%	1024 50.2%	3.81	.95

N= Never, R= Rarely, S= Sometimes, M= Mostly, A= Always

The above table shows a high level of creative teaching practice among Islamic education teachers in Nigerian schools. The total mean score is (3.81), while the standard deviation is (0.95).

According to the table above, Item 13 recorded the highest mean score (3.99). This item indicates the degree to which Islamic education teachers teach creatively. It shows that 68 (56.7%) participants always explain the content in levels, from easy to complex, to help the student understand the lesson. In comparison, 7 (5.8%) participants often use these techniques during the teaching process, while 29 (24.2%) participants sometimes use them. Meanwhile, 8 (6.7%) participants rarely integrate creativity in teaching Islamic education by explaining the content in levels. Moreover, 8 (6.7%) participants never practice creative teaching using this teaching strategy.

However, item 9 recorded the lowest mean score of (3.56). This item indicates that 54 (54%) participants encourage students to access the internet to explore topics they have not well mastered. In comparison, only 1 (0.8%) participant often uses this technique during the teaching process, while 41 (34.2%) participants sometimes use it, 6 (5%) participants rarely encourage

students to access the internet to explore topics they have not well mastered, and 18 (15%) participants never practised this technique.

7.3. Research hypothesis: There will be no relationship between teachers' perspectives and creative teaching practices.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between teachers' perspectives and creative teaching practices in Islamic education. The outcome of the correlational test is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: The relationship between teachers' perspective and creative teaching practice.

	Correlations		
		Teacher's Perspective	Creative Teaching Practice
Teacher's Perspective	Pearson Correlation	1	.646**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Creative Teaching Practice	Pearson Correlation	.646**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The above table illustrates the correlation coefficient between teachers' perception and creative teaching practice in Islamic education. The output of the Pearson correlation coefficient is r = 646 and p =.000. This result indicates a moderate positive correlation between teachers' perspectives and creative teaching practices. The result also indicates that the correlation is statistically significant since $p = < 0.01$.

8. DISCUSSION

According to these findings, as demonstrated in the tables above, teachers highly perceive creative teaching and the meaning and importance of integrating creativity in teaching and learning Islamic education. These findings are supported by previous studies such as (Hassanna, 2018), whose findings revealed that 80% of the participants had a high understanding of creativity and its integration into the teaching and learning process. These findings also align with the results of studies conducted by Craft (2005) and Horng et al. (2005), which found that understanding the meaning of creativity in teaching and learning and its importance is one of the main factors that make one a creative instructor. Hilao (2016) found that teachers' perceptions of creative teaching based on the school environment, personal motivation, personal quality, teaching belief, education, and teaching experience were high.

In addition, the second research question (To what extent do Islamic education teachers practice creative teaching?) is answered by the findings shown in Table 3, which indicates that teachers in Nigerian schools primarily practice creativity while teaching Islamic education. These findings align with those of Norfarahi Zulkifli et al. (2021), who found that a high level of creative teaching practice among Islamic Education teachers achieves teaching and learning outcomes and, at the same time, develops students' creativity. The results are also supported by Vigo Arrazola and Bozalongo's (2014) findings, which indicated that teachers adopted different creative teaching strategies in their classrooms and developed inclusive thought. Moreover, EFL teachers often practice creative teaching in their classrooms despite lacking some knowledge about creative teaching skills (Saleem Masadeh, 2021). This is also asserted by Mahato and Sen (2023), who found a significant relationship between teachers' content knowledge and their attitudes

Lastly, the research hypothesis (There will be no relationship between teachers' perspective and creative teaching practice) is tested as shown in Table 4. The findings indicate a moderate positive relationship between teachers' perspectives and creative teaching practice and that this relationship is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected to accept the alternative hypothesis that "there is a relationship between teachers' perspective and creative teaching practice". These results are supported by Aini Hayati Pazin @ Fadzil et al. (2022), who found that personality traits (such as perception) significantly influence teachers' creative teaching practice in the classroom. Popoola Kareem Hamed et al. (2016) supported the current findings by stating that teachers' beliefs about creative teaching are among the factors that influence how they practice creativity in their classrooms. It is also purported by Bereczki and Karpati (2018) that teachers' perceptions and beliefs about creative teaching might be the factors that enhance or hinder creativity practice.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has concisely investigated the Islamic education teachers' perceptions, practices, and the relationships between teachers' perceptions and practising creative teaching of Islamic education in Nigerian secondary schools. The findings indicated that most teachers understand the importance of integrating creativity in teaching and learning. It is also noticeable

from the findings that the teachers mainly engage in creative activities in their classrooms. Moreover, the study shows a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of creative teaching and practice.

These findings support existing studies that emphasize the importance of teachers' perceptions in shaping their teaching practices. This validation adds to the literature on creative teaching and Islamic education. It also highlights understanding, belief, and attitude as crucial factors that can enhance the implementation of creative teaching methods in the classrooms. Therefore, the study recommends providing teachers with professional development programs which focus on enhancing teachers' perceptions and understanding of the importance of creative teaching methods. In addition, providing teachers with the necessary support and resources that will enable them to engage in creative teaching is very important, such as enough time for planning, an adequate learning environment, and instructional technologies.

While this study provides significant insights into how teachers perceive and practice creative teaching in their classrooms, several limitations should be acknowledged. Such as the sample which covers only the Southwestern part of Nigeria, the study context which is within the realm of Islamic education, and the study instrument which might not capture all the aspects of creative teaching. Therefore, the study recommends conducting further research in more broader research focus, targeting a larger sample to explore deeper understanding and perspectives of teachers. In addition, further research is needed to explore different educational contexts to examine how teachers are practising creative teaching. Furthermore, further studies should consider using a broader range of research instruments to provide a more comprehensive understanding of creative teaching.

Lastly, this study recommends further research on the impact of creative teaching on Islamic education, exploring more effective strategies in the context, and gathering feedback from teachers and students to design professional development programs, creative teaching interventions, and curriculum adjustments.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

For this study, data has been gathered with each respondent's prior consent to provide feedback. No names or other personally identifiable information is gathered, so no identities are disclosed in this paper. Based on the information gathered and the defined study objectives, an objective analysis has been made.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Articles

All authors contributed to the preparation of this paper

Statement of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

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