

Comparative Analysis of the Academic Performance of Secondary Schools' Students in Religious Studies using Traditional and Digital Tools Approaches in Kogi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study explored a comparative analysis of the academic performance of secondary schools' students in religious studies using traditional and digital tools approaches in Kogi state, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design to compare the two approaches. The research assesses the effectiveness of these approaches in enhancing student engagement, understanding, and overall academic achievement. By evaluating data from the two schools—Kabba Comprehensive School, which employs traditional methods, and St. Augustine College Kabba, which utilizes digital tools—the study reveals that students exposed to digital resources significantly outperform their peers taught through conventional methods, with a notable difference in mean scores (65.4 vs. 78.3, $p < 0.0001$). The findings indicate that the integration of digital tools fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment, enhancing students' comprehension of complex religious concepts. However, challenges such as inadequate ICT infrastructure and insufficient teacher training hinder the full realization of digital methods' potential. The study emphasizes the need for educational policymakers to develop strategies that balance traditional and digital learning approaches, improve infrastructural support, and promote professional development for educators to enhance academic outcomes in Religious Studies. Future research should explore the long-term effects of these teaching methods on critical thinking and moral development among students, providing insights for refining educational practices in religious studies.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: August, 2024

Received in revised form: October, 2024

Accepted: November, 2024

Published online: December, 2024

KEYWORDS

Digital Tools, Traditional Teaching,
Academic Performance, Religious
Studies, Secondary Education

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, education has changed a lot because of digital tools, making teachers and researchers look closely at how these affect student performance in different subjects. This essay looks at how students perform in Religious Studies in some secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria, comparing digital tools and traditional teaching methods. As technology becomes common in schools, it is important to see how these tools shape student interest, understanding, and success. Religious Studies includes not just lesson content but also ethics and culture, so looking at how it is taught can give us important information about wider educational patterns. By assessing both teaching methods, this study wants to find out

which one produces better results, adding to the discussion on good teaching practices in a fast-changing education world.

Religious Studies is a key part of the Nigerian school curriculum, especially in secondary schools, showing the country's diverse cultural background. It was first added to encourage moral values and good behavior, but it has changed to look at many different religions, like Christianity, Islam, and local beliefs. This curriculum looks to build understanding and respect among students of various religions, which is important in a diverse society like Nigeria. However, the ways of teaching these studies have switched between older and newer methods, causing different levels of success in schools. As digital tools

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become more important in education, their ability to improve interest and understanding in Religious Studies offers an interesting alternative to traditional teaching methods. Recognizing this context is important for assessing how well these teaching methods work in schools in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Academic performance in Religious Studies is important because it helps students understand culture and ethics in their lives. As teaching methods change, it is important to tell apart traditional methods from digital tools. Research shows that using technology in learning settings makes students more engaged and satisfied, showing a move toward more interactive and hands-on learning models. However, problems still exist in how curriculums are taught. This is shown by the variety of teaching methods that teachers use, which can sometimes lead to a gap between educational goals and actual student experiences (Sofadekan et al., 2012). This gap highlights the need for a unified educational plan that balances teaching methods while also considering cultural significance and current issues. Looking into these factors can provide insights on how to improve academic performance in Religious Studies, helping students better understand their religious and cultural backgrounds (Rouf et al., 2020).

When looking at how Religious Studies is taught in Kogi State, the mix of digital tools and traditional teaching methods shows a key contrast that influences how well students do. Digital tools, like online materials and educational software, create an interactive and interesting learning space that suits different learning styles, which can lead to better retention among students. In contrast, traditional methods, which include in-person teaching and printed books, provide structured ways to emphasize discipline and basic knowledge gaining. Even with the benefits of digital tools, studies show many teachers still like traditional methods because they are seen as more reliable, especially in areas where digital skills might not be well-developed. The issue is finding a way to combine both methods to improve educational results, as highlighted in several studies that suggest combining traditional and digital teaching strategies. This mix could change the learning experience, making it more complete and better matched to

what today's students need (Ugwu et al., 2024; Antoniadis et al., 2013; Obaje et al., 2018).

Using digital tools in schools can help students do better, especially in subjects like Religious Studies. In Kogi State, Nigeria, some secondary schools show that these tools are helpful because they support different ways of learning. For example, blended learning, which mixes usual teaching and digital methods, helps engage students and helps them understand tough topics. Also, research shows that using online platforms can create opportunities for students to work together and discuss things, which improves their understanding. However, social media, while it's useful for learning, also has its downsides that need to be handled thoughtfully (Onalo et al., 2020). Therefore, the contributions of digital tools to improving academic success are complex and need to be looked at closely.

The use of digital tools in studying religion has greatly changed how teachers teach in secondary schools, especially in Kogi State, Nigeria. These tools include many platforms like mobile apps for studying scriptures, online groups for discussions, and multimedia presentations that help students understand religious texts better. Studies show that these digital resources increase student engagement, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of religious ideas than traditional methods (Adebisi et al., 2012). Also, using mixed learning techniques lets teachers blend in-person classes with online tasks, meeting the needs of different learners and boosting overall academic success in religious studies (Onalo et al., 2020). However, issues like poor ICT infrastructure and lack of teacher training still exist. Therefore, effectively using these digital tools is important for enhancing their positive effects on students' learning outcomes in religious studies.

In the realm of improving student involvement in Religious Studies, using digital tools has shown to be quite effective. These tools create active learning settings, allowing students to engage more actively with content compared to regular lecture methods. Students who use these technologies, especially in schools with diverse economic backgrounds, show greater interest in and comprehension of difficult topics like religious texts and ethics. For example, educational platforms provide

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interactive simulations and discussions that promote group work and critical thinking, aspects that are usually missing in traditional teaching styles. This move towards digital engagement supports conclusions from recent studies that note better academic outcomes when new teaching methods are used. As indicated in studies looking at educational changes in Kogi State, using blended learning methods can help solve problems linked to old teaching practices, ultimately aiding student achievement in religious studies (Onalo et al., 2020; Makoji-Stephan et al., 2021, Obukadeta et al., 2019).

Old ways of teaching Religious Studies have mostly used methods that focus on memorizing facts and teaching in a straightforward manner, often putting more importance on delivering content than getting students involved. These traditional methods, such as lectures and heavy use of textbooks, can limit critical thinking and personal engagement with the subject, as they do not fit well with different learning styles. The effectiveness of these methods can be seen in instances like the use of Rath's, Harmin, and Simons' strategies, which have shown to improve student interest and performance in similar subjects, even though they are not widely used in Religious Studies (Obukadeta et al., 2019). On the other hand, new teaching methods suggest using blended learning, which mixes online tools with traditional teaching to encourage active participation and a better understanding of the material (Igwebueze et al., 2024). This move towards using technology is becoming more important, especially in areas like Kogi State, where various social and cultural factors affect education outcomes. In the end, it is important to evaluate how these teaching methods impact student performance in Religious Studies to help shape future educational approaches.

Old teaching methods have been important in education, especially in secondary schools in Nigeria. These methods focus on direct teaching, mainly through lectures, where teachers are the main source of information. These approaches show different levels of success, especially in subjects like Social Studies and Religious Studies. New research shows that teaching strategies can greatly improve student involvement and performance,

showing that using structured methods, like Rath's, Harmin, and Simon's valuing process, can boost student interest and results (Onalo et al., 2020). However, problems like poor teacher training and lack of technology often make it hard to use these methods properly, thus affecting how the curriculum is delivered (Adebisi et al., 2012). In the end, traditional methods create a basis for learning, but their success relies on how skilled teachers are and how much support they get from the institution.

The problems teachers face when using old methods in teaching are many and closely linked to deep issues in Nigeria's education system. A key issue is the gap between the set curriculum and what students actually experience, making it hard for them to engage and find relevance, as seen in the issues within the Social Studies curriculum. Moreover, traditional teaching often leans on memorizing facts instead of encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving, making it hard for teachers to meet the different needs of today's learners. The socio-economic obstacles that limit access to resources make things worse, causing many teachers to struggle with weak ICT skills and lack of training, as shown in several studies (Makoji-Stephan et al., 2021; Akata et al., 2008). Additionally, the low funding and poor infrastructure make these problems worse, preventing the successful use of teaching methods that could enhance learning experiences.

The use of old teaching methods has affected student learning results in Nigerian secondary schools, especially in Religious Studies. These teaching styles often focus on memorizing facts and lectures, which can reduce student interest and critical thinking abilities. Studies show that these methods can lead to a gap between what the curriculum intends and how students use the knowledge in real life, as seen in findings that show a difference between what is considered relevant and what is in the curriculum. Furthermore, the lack of proper facilities and resources makes these issues worse, causing problems in how education is delivered in primary schools (Jones M et al., 2024). Without new strategies and the use of digital tools, the chance for better educational experiences is limited, highlighting a need for changes that adopt new teaching methods to improve learning results (Sofadekan

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et al., 2012). Thus, addressing these problems is vital for creating a learning environment that better supports students.

To look at how digital tools and traditional methods affect academic performance in religious studies, a detailed analysis of performance data is needed. This analysis should include aspects like student involvement, retention rates, and overall achievement. Research on healthcare access and service quality shows that context matters for successful outcomes, and this idea applies to education too (Obaje et al., 2018). Also, the different ways poverty appears in Nigeria highlight the diversity in students' backgrounds and the resources they can access, which affects their academic success (Abubakar et al., 2021). Moreover, past efforts to enhance retention and resource use have faced problems because of systemic issues, indicating that a customized approach to educational strategies might lead to different results. In conclusion, examining these metrics will provide important insights into how digital and traditional teaching methods work in secondary schools in Kogi State.

A look at case studies from secondary schools in Kogi State shows important points about using digital tools in education, especially in Religious Studies. Schools that use blended learning show how digital tools can improve student performance by offering different resources and interactive learning methods. For example, research shows that using digital

platforms effectively can increase student engagement and understanding of difficult religious ideas. However, problems like poor ICT infrastructure and lack of training for teachers, as noted in earlier studies, stop the full use of these tools (Demanet et al., 2015). Furthermore, even though English and Nigerian Pidgin English are common in teaching materials, not using local languages in digital content is a problem that affects inclusivity. Tackling these challenges is important for making digital learning more effective in Kogi State's schools.

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was deployed to compare the performance of students of Christian Religious studies in Kabba, Kabba/Bunu Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. A sample of 200 students was made using stratified random sampling to capture diverse experiences with online tools and traditional teaching methods. The study adopted descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to analyze performance levels and differences based on teaching methods.

RESULTS

For this comparative study, the researcher collected scores from 100 students in each school after a common assessment in Christian Religious Knowledge. Based on the detailed calculation, the following result is hereby presented in tables below:

Table 1: Mean Performance of students in Christian Religious Knowledge

School	Mean Score	S D	Sample Size (n)	t-value	p-value
Kabba Comprehensive School	65.4	10.2	100	-9.75	<0.0001
St. Augustine College Kabba	78.3	8.5	100		

The findings indicate that students taught using modern digital tools outperformed those taught through traditional means, with a statistically significant difference in academic performance.

This table provides statistical details about two schools-Kabba Comprehensive School and St. Augustine College Kabba-in terms of their mean scores, variability in scores

(standard deviation), and sample sizes. It also includes inferential statistics, such as t-values and p-values, which are essential for comparing the performance between the two schools. The Mean Scores for Kabba Comprehensive School is 65.4 while St. Augustine College Kabba= 78.3. St. Augustine College Kabba has a significantly higher mean score than Kabba Comprehensive School, indicating better



average performance by its students. The Standard Deviation for Kabba Comprehensive School is 10.2 while St. Augustine College Kabba is 8.5. Summarily, St. Augustine College Kabba's lower standard deviation shows less variability in scores among students, suggesting more consistent academic performance compared to Kabba Comprehensive School. The Sample Sizes of both schools have equal sample sizes (100 students each).

This ensures the comparison is balanced and reduces the possibility of bias caused by unequal group sizes. The $t = -9.75$. The negative sign indicates that the mean score of Kabba Comprehensive School is lower than that of St. Augustine College Kabba. The magnitude of the t -value reflects a large difference between the two means. $P < 0.0001$ very small p -value indicates that the difference in mean scores is statistically significant. It suggests that the observed difference in performance is unlikely to have occurred by chance (assuming proper data collection and statistical assumptions).

DISCUSSIONS

The comparison of school performance in Religious Studies in Kogi State, Nigeria shows clear benefits and issues linked to digital tools and traditional teaching methods in schools. Blended learning, as shown in studies, supports a complete method of education by mixing technology with standard learning practices, giving students diverse and improved learning experiences (Makoji-Stephan et al., 2021). However, ongoing problems like lack of funding and poor infrastructure, especially in rural regions, lead to doubts about how well these digital tools help improve academic performance (Akata et al., 2008). Additionally, cultural issues and leadership problems in schools can greatly affect student involvement and success. Understanding the details of language use and how policies are carried out in schools makes this educational situation more complicated, calling for specific strategies to effectively manage both digital and traditional learning environments. In the end, grasping these dynamics is vital for creating effective educational systems that meet the needs of various students.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, looking at academic performance in Religious Studies in certain secondary schools in Kogi State shows important points about how digital tools work compared to old methods. Using digital methods seems to make students more involved and helps them understand better, which matches earlier findings about needing to mix traditional teaching with new learning methods (Makoji-Stephan et al., 2021). Still, issues like not enough infrastructure and teachers not getting proper training are obstacles to fully using blended learning's advantages here. Moreover, the role of teaching materials and how teachers feel about the curriculum implementation is very important, as they greatly affect educational results (MOJI et al., 2019). In the end, a balanced plan that takes the best from both digital and traditional methods, while fixing the problems with how to implement them effectively, is necessary for improving academic performance in Religious Studies.

The analysis shows some main points about how students perform in Religious Studies at certain secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. The use of digital tools in education can really help learning, which is seen by more student involvement and better knowledge retention compared to older methods. This agrees with findings from (Makoji-Stephan et al., 2021), which highlight how blended learning can create better educational experiences. However, the analysis also points out big problems that make it hard to use digital methods, such as poor infrastructure and teachers not being skilled with technology, which reflects ongoing problems with weak educational leadership in the area discussed in (Akata et al., 2008). In the end, the study highlights the need for a strategic plan to tackle these issues, making sure both digital and traditional methods are used well to boost academic performance in Religious Studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Policy-makers should also look at the cultural aspects of education, ensuring gender fairness and inclusivity in developing curricula, which are important for creating a good learning environment.

2. Forming partnerships with stakeholders, including tech companies, can greatly improve the sustainability of new educational methods.
3. Improving these points will be key in changing Religious Studies education for the better.

Future Research Directions in Religious Studies Education

As education changes, future studies in religious studies education need to focus on combining digital tools while checking how well they work compared to traditional teaching methods. It is important to look into factors like student involvement, understanding, and how well they remember information to see how these tools can improve learning in religious studies. Also, studies that compare different educational environments will help us understand how digital resources can fit into various cultures, especially in places like Kogi State, Nigeria, where technology access can be different. Future research should also look at how teachers use digital tools, as their methods can greatly affect student success. Furthermore, investigating how these teaching methods impact students' critical thinking and moral development over time could provide valuable insights that enhance religious studies programs. In the end, this research will help teachers improve their methods to meet the diverse needs of students better.

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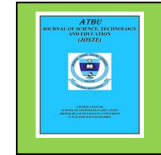
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