The Teaching Trends and Methods in Public Elementary School and Private Madrasah

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the teaching trends and instructional methods employed by Islamic teachers in public elementary schools and private madrasahs in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. Utilizing a comparative-quantitative research design, the study gathered data from 45 Islamic teachers, 27 from public schools, and 18 from madrasahs through a structured survey. The research aimed to assess the frequency and nature of teaching practices and to determine whether significant differences exist between the two educational settings. Results indicated that while public school teachers consistently applied teaching trends and methods with high frequency (overall 'Always' level), madrasah teachers also frequently applied diverse teaching methods (overall 'Often' level). However, statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between the two groups. These findings suggest a shared commitment to student-centered and effective instructional practices. The study underscores the importance of ongoing professional development to further enhance teaching quality in both public and private Islamic educational institutions.

Keyword – Private Madrasah, Islamic Teachers, Teaching Trends and Methods
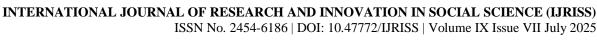
INTRODUCTION

Educational access, equity, and quality differ significantly between public elementary schools and private madrasahs, creating systemic challenges that shape learners' academic and cultural experiences. Halai and Durrani (2021) note that public schools often grapple with uneven resource distribution, while private madrasahs benefit from more stable funding and strong community support, factors that may reinforce educational inequalities. Atuhurra (2020) and Din (2023) add that differences in curriculum and pedagogy deepen these disparities: public schools follow national curricula and increasingly adopt interactive teaching methods, whereas madrasahs emphasize religious instruction and rely on traditional, teacher-centered approaches. These distinctions extend beyond pedagogy to affect students' cultural outlooks. As Rahman et al. (2024) observe, public schools tend to cultivate diversity and inclusivity, while madrasahs reinforce religious identity and communal values.

In the Philippine context, Sali and Marasigan (2020) highlight persistent barriers in the implementation of the ALIVE program, including inadequate infrastructure, absenteeism, and insufficient compensation for Islamic teachers (asatidz). These challenges underscore the need for comprehensive reform, increased investment, and culturally responsive strategies to uplift Islamic education. However, as Keerio (2019) observes, there is a lack of in-depth analysis on the actual impact of teaching methodologies in public and private Islamic institutions, signaling a research gap in understanding how different pedagogical practices shape student outcomes and educational equity.

Objectives of the Study

To determine the demographic profile of the Islamic teachers, specifically in terms of age, gender, type of institution, years of teaching experience, and educational background

To assess the extent of teaching trends and methods practiced by Islamic teachers in public elementary schools and private madrasahs.

To compare the teaching trends and methods between Islamic teachers in public elementary schools and those in private madrasahs, and to determine whether significant differences exist.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the extent of teaching methods practiced by Islamic teachers in public elementary schools and private madrasahs.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study investigates the teaching trends and methods employed by Islamic teachers in public elementary schools and private madrasahs in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. Specifically, it examines the extent to which these teachers utilize contemporary student-centered approaches, critical thinking promotion, and effective classroom management techniques. Through a comparative analysis, the research aims to understand the shared and differing pedagogical landscapes in these two distinct educational environments, rather than presuming specific disparities. While the participants are Islamic teachers, the study focuses on their general teaching methodologies applicable across various subjects, providing insights into their commitment to effective instruction within their respective contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The contemporary educational landscape increasingly underscores the necessity of a variety of teaching strategies tailored to the varied learning needs of students, as emphasized by Sukarno and Riyadini (2024). Modern pedagogy prioritizes active and experiential learning approaches to foster deeper student engagement and skill development. For instance, Condliffe et al. (2017) highlight project-based learning (PBL) as a means of promoting engagement and problem-solving abilities, while Freeman et al. (2014) found that active learning enhances performance and lowers failure in STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. Innovative classroom models, such as flipped classrooms, also improve performance when combined with active strategies (O'Flaherty and Phillips, 2015). Furthermore, effective technology integration demands continual teacher preparation (Mohammad, 2025), and blended learning is increasingly recommended for tis adaptability and customization (Catthoor, 2023). Beyond specific methods, the broader environment benefits from approaches like multicultural education, which fosters inclusion and global citizenship through intercultural cooperation and culturally sensitive practices.

Effective curriculum development and implementation are central to successful educational outcomes, yet they often face significant challenges. Kuznecova, (2024) stresses the importance of closely aligning goals, instruction, and assessment for curriculum effectiveness. However, persistent systemic challenges hinder the widespread adoption of these best practices, including insufficient teacher training and resistance to change, continue to exist (Khosa & Makuvire, 2021). Despite these hurdles, incorporating socio-scientific concerns promotes critical thinking (Nicolaou et al., 2015, while gifted programs must address fragmentation and a lack of rigor to be effective (VanTassel-Baska, 2015). Reflecting a learner-centered curricula shift, Swargiary (2024) advocates for curricula that genuinely take into account students' interests and needs.

A growing body of research strongly supports innovative, student-centered teaching models, demonstrating their positive impact on student engagement and achievement. For instance, Sunzuma (2021) showcased how ethnomathematics significantly enhances student engagement and achievement in Zimbabwe. In contrast, other studies reveal persistent reliance on traditional, less effective methods; Aslam et al. (2022) critique Ethiopian classrooms for relying on rote methods that hinder dialogic instruction. To bridge this gap between traditional and innovative practices, substantial institutional support and professional development are crucial for effective implementing student-led and reflective pedagogies (Soomro et al., 2024; Khurshid, 2024). Collectively, these studies highlight the immense potential of culturally responsive, adaptive education when reinforced by structural reform.

Assessment practices, a critical component of teaching, also contribute significantly to learning outcomes and require careful consideration. Panadero (2017) asserts that self-evaluation enhances student motivation and

results. Huhta (2008) emphasizes the crucial distinction between formative, summative, and diagnostic instruments, each serving different pedagogical purposes. Students' motivation and self-belief in their abilities also profoundly influence how they view and respond to assessment (Teltemann et al., 2016). However, the implementation of high-stakes testing can unintentionally skew learning priorities (Nicholas and Harris, 2016), impacting both curriculum changes nad teaching methods, as observed by Teltemann and Klieme (2016) in their study of TIMSS and PISA.

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by a theoretical framework primarily drawing upon Constructivism and Social Learning Theory, with an acknowledgement of principles from Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy) to interpret the teaching trends and methods employed by Islamic teachers in public elementary schools and private madrasahs. These theories provide a lens through which to understand how learning is facilitated and how teaching practices are acquired and implemented by educators.

Constructivism posits that learners actively construct their understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Rather than passively receiving information, individuals build their knowledge through interaction with their environment and by connecting new information to their existing cognitive structures (Piaget, 1954; Vygotsky, 1978).

This framework is crucial for analyzing the "teaching trends" and "teaching methods" in both settings, particularly those geared towards active engagement, higher-order thinking, and student autonomy, which the data shows are frequently practiced by both public and madrasah teachers. The commitment to such practices, despite varying institutional contexts, can be interpreted as a shared alignment with constructivist principles.

Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Albert Bandura (1977), emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. SLT suggests that learning occurs within a social context and is influenced by factors such as attention, motivation, and memory. This theory helps explain the emphasis on classroom management through structured routines and positive reinforcement, as well as the use of role-playing and modeling behaviors, all of which are evident in your findings for both public and madrasah teachers. It highlights how teachers, through their modeling and creation of an observational learning environment, facilitate social and behavioral learning among their students.

Malcolm Knowles's (1980) theory of Andragogy provides a relevant lens for understanding professional development needs and the teachers' learning behaviors. Andragogy posits that adult learners are: Self-directed, Goal-oriented, Experience-based, and Problem-centered.

Though not directly measuring student learning, understanding these principles helps interpret why teachers might gravitate towards certain methods, seek professional development, or integrate real-world examples and personal experiences into their teaching strategies they might have found effective in their own learning or professional growth.

Constructivism and Social Learning Theory explain the pedagogical underpinnings of the student-centered, critical thinking, and behavior-oriented practices identified. The application of these theories allows for a deeper understanding of the observed "always" and "often" remarks in the data, demonstrating that even amidst institutional differences, many teachers are employing practices aligned with established principles of effective learning. The finding of no significant difference between the two groups, when viewed through these theories, suggests a broader commitment among these educators to foster active, engaging, and well-managed learning environments, regardless of the specific institutional structure.

METHODS

This descriptive-quantitative study investigated the teaching practices and trends of Islamic educators in private madrasahs and public elementary schools in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. A total of 27 Islamic teachers from public elementary schools and 18 from private madrasahs participated in the study through a structured survey

questionnaire that covered demographic profiles, teaching trends, and teaching methods to gather data. The instrument underwent expert validation. Upon securing institutional approval, the data were analyzed using an independent sample t-test to determine significant differences between the two teacher groups, mean interpretation for teaching trends and methods, and basic percentage analysis for demographic profile. The teaching trends and methods were analyzed using a 5-point Likert scale, with mean scores interpreted as follows: 4.20–5.00 = Always, 3.40–4.19 = Often, 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes, 1.80–2.59 = Rarely, and 1.00–1.79 = Never.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Problem 1. What is the demographic profile of Islamic teachers in terms of age, gender, types of institution, years of teaching experience, and educational background?

The majority of participants (53.33%) were between the ages of 20 and 30, followed by those between the ages of 31 and 40 (33.33%). A female majority participated, as indicated by gender distribution, which showed 60% female and 40% male. Forty-five Islamic teachers participated in the study; forty percent were from private madrasahs and sixty percent were from public elementary schools. While some respondents had one to four years of teaching experience, the majority (46.67%) had three years. Regarding educational background, 33.33% were undergraduates and 66.67% were college graduates.

Problem 2. What is the extent of the teaching trends and methods practiced by Islamic teachers in public elementary schools and private madrasahs?

Table 1. Public Elementary Islamic Teachers' Teaching Trends

	Teaching Trends	**Mean**	**Remarks**
1	I encourage students to connect new information to their existing knowledge.	4.55	always
2	I use open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking.	4.11	often
3	I use real-world examples to enhance relevance.	4.44	always
4	I assess understanding through projects and presentations	4	often
5	I create assignments that require critical analysis	4.11	often
6	I encourage students to apply learned concepts in new contexts.	4	often
7	I use questioning techniques that promote higher-order thinking.	4.22	always
8	I assess students' ability to synthesize multiple sources of information.	4.33	always
9	I facilitate self-directed learning with resources and guidance.	4.11	often
10	I design activities that are problem-centered rather than content-focused.	4.44	always
11	I use positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviors.	4.66	always
12	I implement structured routines for classroom management.	4.55	always
13	I use role-playing to teach social skills.	4.22	always
14	I create a classroom environment that supports observational learning.	4.55	always
	Total	**4.30**	**always**

Legend: 4.20–5.00 = Always, 3.40–4.19 = Often, 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes, 1.80–2.59 = Rarely, and 1.00–1.79 = Never.

The table's data demonstrates how Islamic teachers in public elementary schools consistently and robustly implement contemporary teaching methods, with an impressive overall mean score of 4.30 that is categorically classified as "always."
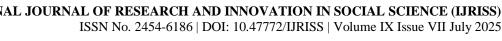
Their dedication to creating a well-structured, encouraging, and behaviorally reinforcing classroom is one of their main strengths. The highest-rated items indicate practices that are "always" used, such as the deliberate creation of classroom environments that support observational learning (4.55), the consistent implementation of structured routines for classroom management (4.55), and the widespread use of positive reinforcement (4.66). This is in line with more general educational research, contemporary learning approaches significantly improve students' achievement, particularly in smaller group settings. (Kış et al., 2016).

Teachers exhibit a strong pedagogical commitment to critical thinking and real-world application in addition to classroom management. They "always" encourage students to use real-world examples to enhance relevance (4.44), create problem-centered activities instead of just content-centered ones (4.44), and use questioning strategies that encourage higher-order thinking (4.22). Additionally, they "always" evaluate students ' capacity to integrate information from various sources (4.33) and employ role-playing to impart important social skills (4.22). while not "always," strategies like encouraging students to apply concepts they have learned in new concepts they have learned in new contexts (4.00), assessing understanding through projects and presentations (4.00), encouraging students to use open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking (4.11) and providing resources and guidance to facilitate self-directed learning (4.11) are still observed "often," indicating a well-rounded and student-centric approach. This aligns with learner-centered curricula advocated by Swargiary (2024) and the contemporary educational landscape's necessity for varied teaching strategies (Sukarno & Riyadini, 2024)

In summary, the study's Islamic teachers consistently implement a wide range of student-centered and evidence-based teaching practices, demonstrating a strong commitment to teaching and a clear alignment with modern educational standards that place importance on the development of higher-order cognitive skills as well as productive classroom dynamics, this is in line with Social Learning Theory that highlight effective classroom management and behavioral modeling.

Table 2. Public Elementary Islamic Teachers' Teaching Method

	Method practiced	Mean	Remarks
1	I design learning activities that require active engagement.	4.22	Always
2	I facilitate group work for collaborative learning.	4.00	often
3	I adapt teaching strategies based on students' needs.	4.55	always
4	I design activities that involve evaluation and judgment.	4.22	always
5	I provide opportunities for students to create original work.	4.33	always
6	I encourage adult learners to take responsibility for their learning.	4.11	often
7	I incorporate their life experiences into discussions.	3.77	often
8	I provide learning opportunities relevant to personal and professional goals.	4.22	always
9	I assess learners' needs and tailor instruction accordingly	4.22	always
10	I provide immediate feedback to reinforce learning.	4.55	always
11	I set clear expectations for behavior and performance.	4.00	often

12	I model behaviors and skills for students.	4.33	always
13	I organize peer-to-peer learning activities.	4.11	often
14	I provide opportunities for students to observe and imitate positive behaviors.	4.33	always
	Total	4.21	always

Legend: 4.20–5.00 = Always, 3.40–4.19 = Often, 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes, 1.80–2.59 = Rarely, and 1.00–1.79 = Never.

Table 2 presents the teaching methods most frequently practiced by Islamic teachers in public elementary schools. The fall in the "always" category, with an overall mean score of 4.21, indicates a consistent use of learner-centered and active instructional strategies. This is consistent with the generalized view presented by Atuhurra (2020) and Din (2023) that public schools merely "increasingly adopt interactive teaching methods." Using immediate feedback to reinforce learning (M = 4.55) and tailoring teaching strategies to students' needs (M = 4.55) are the two approaches that received the highest ratings. These imply that educators are attentive and committed to enhancing learning objectives. Constructivist pedagogy, which promotes creativity and observational learning, is characterized by frequent modeling of behaviors and skills (M = 4.33) and opportunities for students to produce original work (M = 4.33).

Creating activities that demand participation, assessment, and judgment (M = 4.22), along with assessing learners' needs and tailoring instruction accordingly (M = 4.22), are two more regularly used strategies, and these principles were also highlighted by Kuznecova (2024). Despite receiving slightly lower scores, some strategies, like allowing students to share their life experiences (M = 3.77) and encouraging group projects (M = 4.00), remain consistent and support the individualized and collaborative nature of teaching.

In summary, the data show that Islamic teachers are strongly committed to using inclusive, flexible, and reflective pedagogical approaches that foster students' intellectual and personal development. These findings support the teachers' adherence to contemporary educational standards and their awareness of the developmental needs of their students. The findings of this study align with Constructivist principles, emphasizing active engagement, creating original work, and adapting strategies based on need. Modeling behaviors and opportunities to observe and imitate are direct applications of Social Learning Theory.

Table 3. Private Madrasahs Teachers' Teaching Trends

	Teaching Trends	**Mean**	**Remarks**
1	I encourage students to connect new information to their existing knowledge.	4.5	always
2	I use open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking.	4.33	always
3	I use real-world examples to enhance relevance.	4.33	always
4	I assess understanding through projects and presentations	4.16	often
5	I create assignments that require critical analysis	3.66	often
6	I encourage students to apply learned concepts in new contexts.	3.83	often
7	I use questioning techniques that promote higher-order thinking.	4.16	often
8	I assess students' ability to synthesize multiple sources of information.	4.16	often
9	I facilitate self-directed learning with resources and guidance.	3.66	often
10	I design activities that are problem-centered rather than content-focused.	3.66	often

11	I set clear expectations for behavior and performance.	4	often
12	I model behaviors and skills for students.	3.5	often
13	I organize peer-to-peer learning activities.	4	often
14	I provide opportunities for students to observe and imitate positive behaviors.	3.83	often
	Total	3.98	often

Legend: 4.20–5.00 = Always, 3.40–4.19 = Often, 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes, 1.80–2.59 = Rarely, and 1.00–1.79 = Never.

Table 3 presents the teaching trends practiced by Islamic teachers in private madrasahs. The overall mean score of 3.98, interpreted as "often," suggests that while student-centered strategies are regularly employed, there remains room to strengthen their consistency across various methods. Private madrasah teachers are, in fact, "often" employing student-centered strategies, including a strong focus on relevance, inquiry, and learner engagement. While some research, such as Atuhurra (2020) and Din (2023), indicates that madrasahs may traditionally rely on teacher-centered approaches, the findings of this study reveal that private madrasah teachers frequently employ student-centered strategies, including a focus on relevance, inquiry, and learner engagement. The three practices that received the highest ratings were using open-ended questions (M = 4.33), incorporating real-world examples (M = 4.33), and promoting connections to prior knowledge (M = 4.50), which show a strong focus on relevance, inquiry, and learner engagement.

Teachers also frequently employ questioning strategies (M = 4.16) and set expectations for behavior (M = 4.00) to support critical thinking and structure. Similarly, performance-based assessments, such as projects and presentations (M = 4.16) and the synthesis of multiple sources (M = 4.16), are also used often. These practices align with the modern assessment practices discussed by Huhta (2008) and underscore the importance Nicolaou et al. place on fostering students' critical thinking capacity. However, areas related to reflective practices and fostering learner autonomy appear to be less emphasized, as indicated by lower scores for modeling behaviors (M = 3.50) and facilitating self-directed learning (M = 3.66). To enhance instructional impact, these areas benefit from targeted mentorship and professional development.

Teachers' efforts to strike a balance between traditional values and changing pedagogical demands are noteworthy. Many Madrasah educators are using methods associated with Constructivist and Social learning theories, despite continuously implementing Islamic principles. While this study did not directly measure technology integration, the findings suggest that areas needing strengthening, such as the design of critical analysis assignments (M = 3.66) and fostering self-directed learning (M = 3.66), may reflect a broader challenge in aligning educational practices with contemporary needs, a struggle highlighted by Restalia and Khasanah (2025).

In summary, private madrasah instructors demonstrate an admirable fusion of contemporary teaching methods and traditional values. Strengthened support in areas such as critical task design and experiential modeling can help their instructional practices become even more effective, giving their students a richer, more independent learning environment.

Table 4. Private Madrasahs Teachers' Method Practiced

	Method Practiced	Mean	Remarks
1	I encourage students to connect new information to their existing knowledge.	4.5	always
2	I use open-ended questions to stimulate critical thinking.	4.16	often
3	I use real-world examples to enhance relevance.	4.00	often

4	I assess understanding through projects and presentations.	4.00	often
5	I create assignments that require critical analysis.	4.00	often
6	I encourage students to apply learned concepts in new contexts.	4.00	often
7	I incorporate their life experiences into discussions.	4.00	often
8	I provide learning opportunities relevant to personal and professional goals.	3.66	often
9	I assess learners' needs and tailor instruction accordingly	4.00	often
10	I design activities that are problem-centered rather than content-focused.	3.83	often
11	I set clear expectations for behavior and performance.	4.00	often
12	I model behaviors and skills for students.	4.00	often
13	I organize peer-to-peer learning activities.	4.33	always
14	I provide opportunities for students to observe and imitate positive behaviors	3.83	often
	Total	4.02	often

Legend: 4.20–5.00 = Always, 3.40–4.19 = Often, 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes, 1.80–2.59 = Rarely, and 1.00–1.79 = Never.

Table 4 illustrates the teaching methods practiced by Islamic teachers in private madrasah settings. The Islamic teachers frequently use a range of teaching techniques in their classrooms, as indicated by their overall mean score of 4.02, which places them in the "often" category.

Notably, peer-to-peer learning activities (M = 4.33) and encouraging students to make connections between new and existing knowledge (M = 4.5) were rated as "always" practiced, demonstrating their consistent use and conformity to Constructivist learning principles and Social Learning Theory. These practices contribute to student engagement and problem-solving, resulting in benefits of approaches like project-based learning (PBL) as noted by Condliffe et al. (2017), and the positive effect of active learning performance, as found by Freeman et al. (2014).

Using open-ended questions to encourage critical thinking (M = 4.16), using real-world examples to increase relevance (M = 4.00), evaluating understanding through projects and presentations (M = 4.00), creating assignments that require critical analysis (M = 4.00), and encouraging students to apply learned concepts in new contexts (M = 4.00) are all examples of other highly rated practices that are all classified as "often." Kuznecova (2024) implies that a key aspect of effective curriculum development is incorporating real-world examples given to students, which make school or madrasah curricula relevant and applicable.

Although some practices, like giving students opportunities to observe and emulate positive behaviors (M = 3.83), creating activities that are problem-centered rather than content-focused (M = 3.83), and offering learning opportunities related to personal and professional goals (M = 3.66), received slightly lower ratings, they still fall in the "often" category, indicating frequent application.

Particularly for practices that are currently rated as "often" rather than "always," these findings point to a strong foundation in student-centered education with room to improve methods by more consistently integrating them with goal-based and real-world contexts.

Problem 3. Is there a significant difference in the teaching trends and methods between public elementary schools and private madrasahs?

Table 5. Comparison of Teaching Trends Between Public and Private Islamic Teachers Using t-Test

Variable	t	df	p-value	Remarks
public	1.4883	13.976	0.1589	Not significant
private	0.68981	9.5577	0.5067	Not significant

Table 5 presents the results of t-tests conducted to compare teaching trends and methods in public elementary schools and private madrasahs. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups' analyses.

In particular, the p-value was 0.1589 and the t-value was 1.4883 with 13.976 degrees of freedom for the public group. Likewise, the private group produced a p-value of 0.5067 and a t-value of 0.68981 with 9.5577 degrees of freedom. These results show that there is insufficient evidence to suggest a significant difference in teaching trends and methods for either the public or private Islamic teachers based on this data, as both p-values are higher than the traditional significance level of 0.05.

These findings, indicating no statistically significant differences in teaching trends and methods between public and private Islamic teachers, offer an interesting perspective. While some literature (e.g. Khairullah, 2024) often highlights distinct approaches in madrasahs (emphasizing specialized Islamic subjects for religious character development) versus public elementary schools (focusing on thematic integration of moral values), our results suggest that the pedagogical practices employed by teachers in both settings are remarkably similar. This convergence in teaching methods, despite potential differences in curriculum emphasis, warrants further exploration into factors like teacher training, shared educational goals, or evolving teaching standards that might lead to such consistency across these diverse environments.

CONCLUSIONS

The results indicate that despite a minor focus difference, both teacher groups are actively implementing contemporary, student-centered teaching techniques, with public school teachers demonstrating a slightly higher frequency in applying teaching trends and methods overall. Notwithstanding these variations, statistical analysis showed that there was no discernible difference between the two groups' general teaching methodologies. This suggests that Islamic educators in both public and private schools share a dedication to good instruction that is in line with contemporary pedagogical norms that encourage critical thinking, active learning, and student involvement.

The study emphasizes that significant efforts are being made to provide high-quality education in both public and private Islamic educational settings. To further improve particular teaching methods and guarantee effective, balanced instruction in all institutions, ongoing professional development is crucial.

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