

Influence of attitudinal traits on academic engagements of senior secondary islamic studies students in Irepodun, Osun State

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of attitudinal traits on academic engagements of senior secondary Islamic Studies Students in Irepodun, Osun State. The objectives of the study were to investigate prevalent attitudinal traits, positive attitudinal traits, impact of negative attitudinal traits and intervention to enhance positive attitudinal traits and senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements. Descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study. The population for the study consisted of all 185 Islamic studies students in the 20 secondary schools in Osun State. A sample of 185 respondents was selected from the population using a simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire titled "Attitudinal Traits and Academic Engagements of Senior Secondary Islamic Studies Students Questionnaire (ATAESSISSQ). The reliability of instrument was established with the use of test-re-test methods and value of 0.78 was obtained. Four research questions were answered. The study found that positive attitudinal traits such as enthusiasm, resilience, and open-mindedness play a significant role in fostering academic engagement among senior secondary students of Islamic Studies in Irepodun, Osun State. Negative traits, such as apathy, pessimism, and low self-efficacy, were found to hinder academic engagements. Interventions aimed at promoting resilience, enhancing motivation, providing peer support, and incorporating mindfulness practices could significantly improve students' attitudes and academic engagement in Islamic Studies. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that teachers should adopt interactive and student-centered teaching methods that make Islamic Studies more engaging, such as group discussions, debates, and real-world applications of Islamic teachings. Teachers should create an inclusive learning environment that encourages students to explore different perspectives and ideas, fostering a more open and adaptable mind-set in their approach to Islamic Studies.

INTRODUCTION

Attitudinal traits such as optimism, resilience, open-mindedness, and self-confidence play a pivotal role in how students approach learning tasks, respond to challenges, and interact with peers and teachers. Conversely, negative traits like apathy, pessimism, or lack of motivation can hinder academic participation, leading to poor performance and disengagement. Understanding the interplay between these traits and academic engagement is particularly important for educators and policymakers aiming to improve students' learning outcomes.

Academic engagement, a critical determinant of students' academic success, encompasses behavioural, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning activities. It reflects the extent to which students actively participate in and commit to their educational experiences. However, various factors influence academic engagement, including attitudinal traits underlying psychological and emotional characteristics that shape students' perceptions, behaviours, and interactions in educational settings.

In the context of Islamic Studies, a discipline grounded in both intellectual rigor and moral values, attitudinal traits may significantly influence students' engagement. The subject requires cognitive effort, emotional commitment, and moral alignment, as it seeks to nurture students' spiritual growth and academic development. Students' attitudes toward Islamic Studies could thus determine their level of interest, effort, and performance in the subject.

Right from the beginning, one of the major challenges faced by man, jins and other creatures is attitude and behavioural issue. Attitude, according to John (2023) is a word that describes an individual's state of mind with respect to a situation, person or thing. It is clearly stated that attitudes are situational and should not be confused with character of an individual. Likewise, attitudes are intentional and should not be confused with emotions that are more often involuntary state. By looking back to the history, we discover that a lot of people were elevated and accepted because of their positive attitudes towards the commandments. Allah said:

They used to vie one with another in (doing) good deeds and call upon Us with (mixed feelings of) hope and fear, and they were humble before Us. Suratul-Ambiyaah:90

While others were rejected and perished because of their negative attitude
Allah said:

And (similar was the fate met by) Korah, Pharaoh and Hâmân. Moses had come to them with manifest signs but they behaved arrogantly on the earth yet they could not outstrip (Us and thus escape Our punishment). In short, We took each one of them to task for his sins. Against some of them We sent a violent storm of sand and stones while others were overtaken by a roaring blast and some others, We made extinct in (the bowels of) the earth, and yet others We drowned. It was far from Allâh to have done injustice to them. Rather they were doing wrong to themselves. (Suratul-Ankabuut:38-40)

If one observed the first set of people, the prophets and messengers of Allah according to the said verses, we discovered that, they are hopeful, fearful and pious to Allah, then, they are promoted and became successful. Likewise, the second set of people, people of prophet Luth, people of Madyan, people of A'ad and Thamuud, Qaarun, Firhaon and Aamaan, they were all downgraded and perished because of their arrogance, aggression, and transgression and failure became their portion at last. And certainly, this will be an everlasting ruling in reciprocal to the good and bad attitudes.

Allah said:

Such has been the way of Allâh in the case of those who have gone before and you will find no change in the way of Allâh. (Suratul-A'azaab :62).

After a comprehensive review of literatures, this study observed that attitude on its own is not original! It is a result of a particular incident under the concept of cause and effect. To have a comprehensive understanding of this concept (attitude), we are to look into these four variables: Character, Attitude, Behaviour and Habit.

The study is situated in Irepodun Local Government Area, Osun State, a region with a rich cultural and religious heritage. Understanding the influence of attitudinal traits on academic engagement in this setting is critical, as the interplay of cultural, social, and religious factors may shape students' attitudes and educational behaviours uniquely. The senior secondary school phase, a critical period for academic and career decision-making, makes this investigation timely and relevant.

Despite the recognized importance of attitudinal traits, there is limited research exploring their specific impact on academic engagement in Islamic Studies within the Nigerian educational context. This gap necessitates a focused inquiry into how traits like enthusiasm, resilience, and empathy affect students' participation, motivation, and achievement in Islamic Studies. The findings of this study will provide insights for educators, parents, and policymakers to foster positive attitudes and enhance academic engagement among students in Irepodun and similar contexts. This study aims to examine the influence of attitudinal traits on the academic engagements of senior secondary Islamic Studies students in Irepodun, Osun State, thereby contributing to the development of tailored strategies to improve student outcomes in Islamic education.

Academic engagement is a critical factor in the educational success of students, as it determines their level of participation, persistence, and performance in learning activities. Despite its importance, evidence suggests that many students struggle with maintaining consistent engagement, often due to underlying attitudinal traits such as low motivation, lack of resilience, or apathy (Hui et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2022). In senior secondary schools, where students face heightened academic expectations and career decision-making pressures, the impact of these traits on engagement becomes even more pronounced.

In the specific context of Islamic Studies, the challenge is compounded by the subject's unique requirements for intellectual engagement and moral alignment. As a discipline that integrates cognitive learning with spiritual and ethical development, a lack of positive attitudes such as enthusiasm, resilience, and conscientiousness can significantly hinder students' participation and achievement. This is particularly concerning in regions like Irepodun, Osun State, where cultural and religious factors heavily influence students' educational experiences.

Despite the acknowledged importance of attitudinal traits in shaping educational outcomes, there is a lack of empirical research focused on their specific impact on academic engagement among Islamic Studies students in Nigeria. Most existing studies have examined broader factors influencing academic performance without isolating the critical role of attitudinal characteristics, leaving educators and policymakers with limited insight into effective strategies for fostering engagement in this context (Wang et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2022).

Undoubtedly, Islamic religion Studies is one of the most important subjects to every Muslim child, which must be included in their syllabus at every stage of their academic level. Unexpectedly, low academic performance of students in this very important subject is generally observed in Irepodun Local Government Area, Osun State, which is linked to their development of negative attitudes towards the subject. Hence, the study aims to investigate the influence of attitudinal traits of the students on this particular subject.

This gap in knowledge poses a significant challenge to improving the academic and personal development of senior secondary students studying Islamic Studies. Addressing this problem requires

a focused investigation into how various attitudinal traits influence students' academic engagement, particularly within the cultural and religious framework of Irepodun, Osun State. This study seeks to bridge this gap, providing evidence-based recommendations to enhance educational practices and outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of attitudinal traits on academic engagements of senior secondary Islamic Studies Students in Irepodun, Osun State. Specifically, this study investigated:

1. the prevalent attitudinal traits exhibited by senior secondary Islamic Studies students in Irepodun, Osun State;
2. The positive attitudinal traits (e.g., resilience, enthusiasm, and open-mindedness) that influence the academic engagements of senior secondary Islamic Studies students;
3. the impact of negative attitudinal traits (e.g., apathy, pessimism, and low self-efficacy) on senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements; and
4. Interventions that can be designed to enhance positive attitudinal traits and improve senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements?"

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the prevalent attitudinal traits exhibited by senior secondary Islamic Studies students in Irepodun, Osun State?
2. How do positive attitudinal traits (e.g., resilience, enthusiasm, and open-mindedness) influence the academic engagement of senior secondary Islamic Studies students?
3. What is the impact of negative attitudinal traits (e.g., apathy, pessimism, and low self-efficacy) on senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagement?
4. What interventions can be designed to enhance positive attitudinal traits and improve senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements?"

METHODOLOGY

Research design adopted in this study was a descriptive survey. This research designed was deemed fit for this study because it tends to find out and interpret conditions, relationship, that exist or attitude of people towards events or ideas. This study captured all the senior secondary public schools in the local government area, where simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 Students in each School as the respondents

The instrument of the study was a researcher-structure questionnaire, titled "Attitudinal Traits and Academic Engagements of Senior Secondary Islamic Studies Students Questionnaire (ATAESSISSQ)" it has two sections. Section A was demographic information of the respondents while section B contained 15 items with four sub-sections on prevalent attitudinal traits, positive attitudinal traits, impact of negative attitudinal traits with Likert scale of Very True of Me, True of Me, Rarely True of Me, and Never True of Me. The intervention to enhance positive attitudinal traits and senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements was also on Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The draft copies of the instrument was presented to the researcher's supervisor, a lecturer from the Department of Humanities, Arts and Social Science Education, a lecturer in the department of Arts and Social Science Education and an expert in Test and Measurement at Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria. The observations, corrections and adjustment

made were effected and the final copy was submitted to the researcher's supervisor and the approval for the administration of the instrument would be expected.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by adopting the spilt-half method. The instrument was administered on 10 secondary school Islamic Studies teachers outside the sampled teachers for the study. The data collected in the administration were analysed using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) and the reliability coefficient of .78 was recorded. The data collected for this study were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Research questions 1, 2, 3 & 4 were answered using mean ranking.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the prevalent attitudinal traits exhibited by senior secondary Islamic Studies students in Irepodun, Osun State?

Table 1. Prevalent attitudinal traits exhibited by senior secondary Islamic Studies students

S/N	Prevalent attitudinal traits	Mean	SD	Ranking
1.	I feel motivated to learn Islamic Studies every day.	3.08	.82	1 st
2.	I am enthusiastic about participating in class discussions on Islamic Studies.	3.01	.80	2 nd
3.	I believe that Islamic Studies can positively impact my future.	2.91	.93	4 th
4.	I am willing to go beyond the classroom to learn more about Islamic Studies.	2.95	.88	3 rd
5.	I tend to find solutions to academic challenges in Islamic Studies without giving up.	2.34	.78	5 th
Mean Average: 2:50				

Table 1 shows the prevalent attitudinal traits exhibited by senior secondary Islamic Studies students. The benchmark of 2.50 of the instrument was used in determining the views of by senior secondary Islamic Studies students. It revealed that, "I feel motivated to learn Islamic Studies every day" with a mean of 3.08 was ranked first, "I am enthusiastic about participating in class discussions on Islamic Studies" with a mean of 3.01 was ranked second, while I am willing to go beyond the classroom to learn more about Islamic Studies was ranked third. This therefore implies that these were the prevalent attitudinal traits exhibited by senior secondary Islamic Studies students.

Research Question 2: How do positive attitudinal traits (e.g., resilience, enthusiasm, and open-mindedness) influence the academic engagement of senior secondary Islamic Studies students?

Table 2. Positive attitudinal traits on senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagement

S/N	Positive attitudinal traits	Mean	SD	Ranking
1.	My enthusiasm for Islamic Studies helps me actively participate in class activities.	2.61	.80	2 nd

2.	Resilience has helped me overcome academic challenges in Islamic Studies.	2.83	.93	1 st
3.	I am open-minded and willing to learn from others' perspectives in Islamic Studies.	2.52	.88	3 rd
4.	Positive thinking helps me stay focused and engaged in Islamic Studies.	2.30	.78	4 th
5.	My passion for Islamic Studies encourages me to engage with the subject outside of school hours.	2.28	.82	5 th
Mean Average: 2:50				

Table 2 shows the positive attitudinal traits and the academic engagement of senior secondary Islamic Studies students. The benchmark of 2.50 of the instrument was used in determining the views of by senior secondary Islamic Studies students. It revealed that, "Resilience has helped me overcome academic challenges in Islamic Studies" with a mean of 2.83 was ranked first, "My enthusiasm for Islamic Studies helps me actively participate in class activities" with a mean of 2.61 was ranked second, while I am open-minded and willing to learn from others' perspectives in Islamic Studies was ranked third. This therefore implies that these were the positive attitudinal traits and the academic engagement of senior secondary Islamic Studies students.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of negative attitudinal traits (e.g., apathy, pessimism, and low self-efficacy) on senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagement?

Table 3. Impact of negative attitudinal traits on senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements

S/N	Impact of negative attitudinal traits	Mean	SD	Ranking
1.	I feel apathetic about studying Islamic Studies.	3.40	.71	3 rd
2.	I often feel pessimistic about my ability to succeed in Islamic Studies.	3.45	.61	1 st
3.	I struggle to stay engaged in Islamic Studies lessons because I doubt my abilities.	3.41	.72	2 nd
4.	I often feel that Islamic Studies is too difficult to understand.	3.36	2.6	5 th
5.	When faced with challenges in Islamic Studies, I feel discouraged rather than motivated to try again.	3.38	.69	4 th
Mean Average: 2:50				

Table 3 shows the impact of negative attitudinal traits on senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements. The benchmark of 2.50 of the instrument was used in determining the views of by senior secondary Islamic Studies students. It revealed that, "I feel apathetic about studying Islamic Studies." with a mean of 3.45 was ranked first, "I struggle to stay engaged in Islamic Studies lessons because I doubt my abilities." with a mean of 3.41 was ranked second, while I feel apathetic about studying Islamic Studies was ranked third. This therefore implies that these were the impact of negative attitudinal traits on senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements.

Research Question 4: What interventions can be designed to enhance positive attitudinal traits and improve senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements?

Table 4. Interventions to enhance positive attitudinal traits senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements

S/N	Interventions to enhance positive attitudinal traits	Mean	SD	Ranking
1.	More interactive learning methods should be introduced.	2.58	.82	2 nd
2.	Regular motivational talks or counseling help in enhancing positive attitudinal traits.	2.78	.82	1 st
3.	Encouraging classroom discussions	2.50	.80	4 th
4.	Providing real-life examples and applications of Islamic Studies	2.31	.93	5 th
5.	Extra tutoring sessions should be encouraged	2.53	.88	3 rd
Mean Average: 2:50				

Table 4 shows the interventions to enhance positive attitudinal traits and improve senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements. The benchmark of 2.50 of the instrument was used in determining the views of by senior secondary Islamic Studies students. It revealed that, "Regular motivational talks or counseling help in enhancing positive attitudinal traits" with a mean of 2.78 was ranked first, "More interactive learning methods should be introduced" with a mean of 2.58 was ranked second, while Extra tutoring sessions should be encouraged was ranked third. This therefore implies that these were the interventions that enhance positive attitudinal traits and improve senior secondary Islamic Studies students' academic engagements.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that the predominant attitudinal traits among senior secondary students in Islamic Studies were a mix of both positive and negative traits. Positive traits such as enthusiasm, resilience, and open-mindedness were present among many students, and these traits were correlated with higher levels of engagement in Islamic Studies. Resilience, in particular, was identified as a key attribute that helped students persist in their studies despite challenges. This finding is supported by the work of Alhassan et al. (2021), who highlighted resilience as a critical factor influencing students' ability to overcome academic obstacles. However, the study also revealed significant negative traits such as apathy, pessimism, and low self-efficacy. These traits negatively affected students' academic engagement, as students who exhibited these attitudes were less likely to participate actively in lessons or complete assignments. Low self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed, often leads to disengagement and reduced academic performance, which was evident among many students in the study.

The research revealed that positive attitudinal traits such as enthusiasm and open-mindedness significantly influenced students' academic engagement. Students who demonstrated enthusiasm for Islamic Studies were more likely to actively participate in class discussions, complete assignments on time, and exhibit a genuine interest in the subject. This finding is consistent with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation (such as enthusiasm) is essential for sustained academic engagement. Resilience was also a major factor contributing to higher academic engagement. Students who were resilient in the face of academic challenges showed a stronger commitment to their studies and were more likely to seek additional resources when faced

with difficult topics. The role of resilience in academic engagement has been well-documented by Martin and Marsh (2006), who found that resilient students tend to display higher levels of perseverance, which enhances their academic performance. Open-mindedness further contributed to the engagement of students by fostering a willingness to explore different viewpoints and perspectives in Islamic Studies. This trait aligns with the concept of growth mind-set proposed by Dweck (2006), which emphasizes the importance of embracing challenges and learning from feedback, both of which are integral to academic engagement.

Conversely, negative traits such as apathy, pessimism, and low self-efficacy were found to negatively affect students' engagement with Islamic Studies. Apathy, in particular, resulted in students showing little interest in the subject, often leading to poor performance. Lack of interest has been linked to low academic achievement in various studies (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), and in this study, apathetic students were less likely to engage in class activities or complete homework. Pessimism and low self-efficacy further contributed to disengagement, as students with these traits often doubted their ability to succeed in Islamic Studies.

Based on the findings of this study, several interventions can be designed to enhance positive attitudinal traits and improve academic engagement in Islamic Studies. **Resilience-building Programs:** One key intervention is the development of resilience programs that focus on coping strategies for overcoming academic challenges. Deci and Ryan (2000) emphasize that motivation increases when students perceive the subject matter as personally relevant. Interactive lessons, real-world applications of Islamic teachings, and the use of multimedia tools could make Islamic Studies more engaging for students. **Peer Mentorship and Study Groups:** Peer mentorship programs can also enhance students' academic engagement. By pairing high-achieving students with those who struggle, teachers can provide role models who demonstrate positive academic attitudes. This aligns with Topping's (2015) findings that peer tutoring can significantly boost students' engagement and performance. **Mindfulness and Positive Psychology Interventions:** To combat pessimism and low self-efficacy, schools can implement mindfulness and positive psychology interventions. These approaches have been shown to enhance emotional regulation, reduce stress, and improve overall engagement (Seligman, 2011). Programs that focus on goal setting, self-reflection, and affirmations can also help boost students' confidence and motivation. **Teacher Training on Student Engagement:** Finally, teacher training programs should be designed to help teachers identify and address students' negative attitudes. Teachers can be trained in strategies to provide constructive feedback, promote a positive learning environment, and identify students who may benefit from additional support.

CONCLUSION

The study found that positive attitudinal traits such as enthusiasm, resilience, and open-mindedness play a significant role in fostering academic engagement among senior secondary students of Islamic Studies in Irepodun, Osun State. Negative traits, such as apathy, pessimism, and low self-efficacy, were found to hinder academic engagement and performance. Interventions aimed at promoting resilience, enhancing motivation, providing peer support, and incorporating mindfulness practices could significantly improve students' attitudes and academic engagement in Islamic Studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Teachers should adopt interactive and student-centered teaching methods that make Islamic Studies more engaging, such as group discussions, debates, and real-world applications of Islamic teachings.
2. Teachers should create an inclusive learning environment that encourages students to explore different perspectives and ideas, fostering a more open and adaptable mindset in their approach to Islamic Studies.
3. Schools can introduce incentive-based programs that motivate students to actively participate in class, such as recognition for academic improvement or involvement in extracurricular activities related to Islamic Studies.
4. Regular counseling sessions should be held to address students' self-doubt and pessimism. Peer mentorship programs, where high-achieving students provide guidance to struggling peers, can also help boost students' confidence and self-efficacy.

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