

**EFFECT OF BOARD GAME ON ACHIEVEMENT IN ISLAMIC STUDIES  
EDUCATION CONCEPT AMONG PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN OSUN,  
STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the effect of board game-based instruction on pupils' achievement in Islamic Studies among public primary school pupils in Osun State, Nigeria. A pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design was adopted. Using purposive sampling, 60 pupils were selected from six public primary schools across Osun State and assigned to experimental and control groups. Data were collected using the Islamic Studies Education Achievement Test (ISEAT), a researcher-developed instrument with a reliability coefficient of 0.85, validated by experts in Educational Technology and Islamic Studies. One research question and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Findings revealed that pupils exposed to board game-based instruction achieved significantly higher scores in Islamic Studies than their counterparts in the control group. It is therefore recommended that teachers of Islamic Studies at the primary school level integrate board games into their instructional practice as a cost-effective and engaging strategy for improving learning outcomes.

Keywords: Board Game, students' achievement, Islamic studies

**INTROUCTION**

Islamic Religious Studies (IRS) occupies a foundational position in the curriculum of Nigerian primary schools, serving not only as a vehicle for the transmission of religious knowledge but also

as a framework for moral formation and character development among young learners (Judrah, Arjum, Haeruddin, and Mustabsyirah, 2024; Akbar and Azani, 2024). The subject is intended to equip pupils with a sound understanding of Islamic principles and to prepare them to apply those principles in their daily conduct and social interactions (Sari, Hayani, and Nurlaili, 2023; Izzah, 2018). For these objectives to be realised, effective instructional delivery is essential, enabling pupils to internalise religious teachings meaningfully rather than superficially (Qolbiyah, Mansur, and Bakar, 2022; Utomo, 2025).

Notwithstanding the importance of the subject, empirical evidence suggests that Islamic Studies instruction in Nigerian primary schools is beset by persistent pedagogical challenges. A recurring concern is the low level of pupil motivation and engagement in IRS classrooms, manifesting in poor class participation, inattentiveness, and reluctance to complete academic tasks (Astuti et al., 2025). In severe cases, pupils resort to unethical academic behaviour, including examination malpractice, as a consequence of poor comprehension stemming from disengagement. These behavioural indicators point to a deeper instructional problem: the dominant teaching methods employed in IRS principally lecture, dictation, and rote memorisation fail to stimulate meaningful learning or sustain pupil interest (Ulfa and Nasryah, 2020). Teachers frequently deliver content without the support of instructional aids, relying almost exclusively on verbal exposition, an approach that research has consistently linked to diminished learner motivation (Andriani and Rasto, 2019; Magdalena, Fauziah, Sari, and Berliana, 2020).

The relationship between instructional method, learning media, and pupil motivation has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Andriani (2017) demonstrated that the use of appropriate learning media significantly assists pupils in understanding and interpreting content, facilitating more effective information processing than unaided verbal instruction. Similarly, Pertiwi, Suarjana, and Arini (2019) found a positive relationship between the use of learning media and pupil motivation, concluding that well-designed instructional materials increase learners' willingness to participate actively in classroom activities. These findings collectively affirm that the integration of creative and interactive learning media into subject instruction is not merely supplementary but is pivotal to improving both engagement and learning outcomes. In the specific context of IRS, Mayangsari (2022) reported a measurable increase in pupil learning motivation following the introduction of a

board game innovation, the inclusion of Smart Star Board Game into the teaching of Islamic Religious Education, indicating that game-based media holds particular promise for this subject area.

Game-based learning (GBL) has emerged as a well-documented pedagogical approach that integrates structured game mechanics with curriculum content to foster active learner engagement and deepen understanding (Jin, Nakayama, and Tu, 2020). In primary education, GBL aligns naturally with children's cognitive and developmental characteristics by providing interactive, problem-solving environments that support experiential learning (Alipova et al., 2024). The motivational architecture of games incorporating challenge, immediate feedback, and goal-directed activity, sustains attention and promotes retention in ways that conventional didactic methods frequently cannot (Alipova et al., 2024). Empirical studies have demonstrated that pupils taught through game-based approaches outperform peers in conventional settings on measures of both achievement and motivation (Alipova et al., 2024; Jin et al., 2020). Board games, as a subset of GBL, are particularly well-suited to resource-constrained school environments because they require no digital infrastructure, are adaptable to local content, and can be designed to reflect culturally and religiously relevant narratives (Mayangsari, 2022).

Despite the growing body of literature on GBL in general primary education, the development and empirical evaluation of board game-based learning media specifically for Islamic Religious Studies in the Nigerian primary school context remains significantly underexplored. Existing studies have addressed GBL in subjects such as Mathematics, Social Studies, and Basic Science, but few have systematically investigated its application to IRS or examined its effect on pupil achievement and motivation within the Nigerian curriculum framework. This study addresses that gap by developing and evaluating a board game learning medium for Islamic Religious Studies among Primary 5 pupils in Osun State, Nigeria. The novelty of the study lies in the contextualisation of board game media within the Nigerian IRS curriculum and its empirical evaluation in a quasi-experimental setting, an approach that moves beyond descriptive or design-focused studies to generate evidence directly applicable to classroom practice and curriculum development.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the curricular centrality of Islamic Studies in Nigerian primary schools, the subject continues to record poor learner outcomes. Evidence from state-level Basic Education Certificate Examination analyses consistently document shallow pupil understanding of foundational topics such as *ṣalāt* and *zakāt*. These trends are reinforced by empirical findings indicating that Islamic Studies instruction at the primary level is dominated by rote memorisation and chalk-and-talk delivery approaches that prioritise surface recall over meaningful learning and fail to engage learners at their developmental stage (Abdullahi, 2019; Bello and Yusuf, 2021; Yusuf, 2020). The resultant knowledge deficit has been associated with declining moral consciousness and weakened adherence to Islamic ethical values among school-age children in Muslim-majority communities in South-West Nigeria (Adeleke, 2020; Saliu and Musa, 2022).

A review of the literature reveals that game-based learning strategies have demonstrated significant positive effects on learner engagement, retention, and conceptual understanding across primary school subjects in the Nigerian context (Ibrahim and Afolabi, 2021; Okafor, 2022). Board games, in particular, create structured interactive environments that promote active recall, peer collaboration, and repeated low-stakes content exposure principles consistent with constructivist learning theory. They are also low-cost and infrastructure independent, making them viable for under-resourced school settings. However, the application of board game-based instruction specifically to Islamic Studies at the primary school level remains largely unexplored. This gap in research and practice motivates the present study, which investigates the effect of board game-based instruction on primary school pupils' understanding and performance in Islamic Studies in Osun State, Nigeria.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the mean difference in achievement scores of pupils taught Islamic studies using board games and those exposed to traditional method in Osun State?

## HYPOTHESES

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant mean difference between the mean difference in achievement scores of pupils taught Islamic studies concept using board games and those exposed to traditional method in Osun State

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant mean difference between the mean difference in achievement scores of male and female pupils taught Islamic studies concept using board games in Osun State

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and Gender on achievement scores of pupils taught Islamic studies concept using board games in Osun State

The study used a pretest, posttest, control group quasi experimental research design. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 80 students from six selected school in Osun State .

### **Research instruments**

The following were the instruments used for the study

#### **(a) Islamic Studies Education Achievement Test (ISEAT)**

This instrument was developed and validated with reliability coefficient of 0.85. The level of comprehension of the students was tested on the following topics: Solat, types of solat, Qabli and Baddi. The test contains 20 multiple choice objective test items. It has two sections (a) containing demographic information such as name of school, students name, class, gender, age (b) contains the constructed test items, the options for the questions ranges from A to D. Two marks were awarded for each correct option and zero for wrong option and the total score was 40 marks. The questions covered the six levels of cognitive domain, that is, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

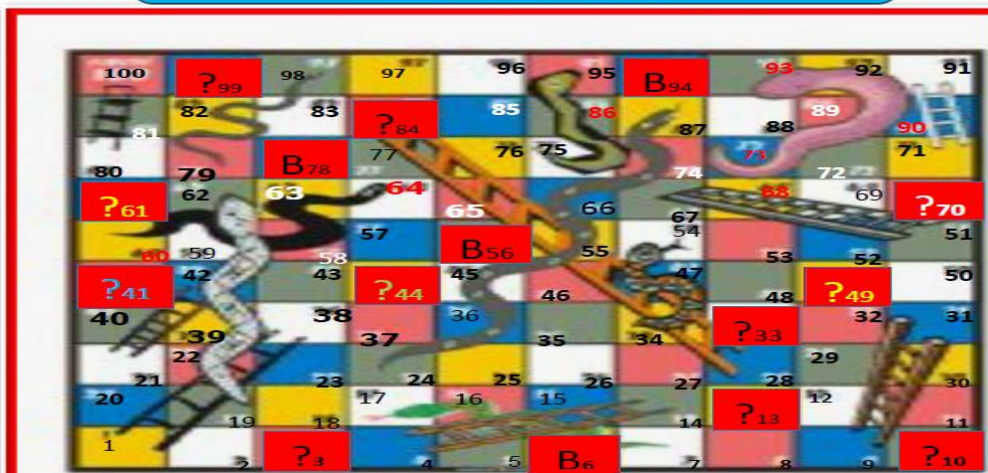
#### **Snakes and Ladders Board Game**

This is the board game designed and validated by the teachers in primary schools and instructional media technologist Served as an instructional material used to teach the experimental group. The board has 100 square boxes numbered from 1 to 100. The player starts by rolling a dice in order to know the box where to commence the game, the players move along until they encounter a ladder or snake. If a player lands at the tip of the snake's

head, the group will be asked Security Education concept related question by the question master, if they get the question right they stay on the square if not they slide down to the square at the snake tail. If a player lands on a square that is at the base of a ladder, the group will be asked a Security Education concept related question by the question master, if right answer is given they move to square at the top of the ladder and continue from there.

### SNAKES AND LADDERS BOARD GAME

DESIGNED BY OLAIYA MARUF



#### Question Bank

The Question Bank that contain items (related content) on the following topics; Solat, types of solat, Qabli and Baddi are playing tools for the snake and ladder board. Options for the questions range from A to D. Students ascend by picking correct option while a wrong option leads to their descent.

#### Card: 1

1. If a worshipper forgets to recite *Tashahhud* in the first sitting, what should he do?
  - A. Stop the *Ṣalāt* and restart
  - B. Continue and perform *Sujūd as-Sahw* before or after *Taslīm*
  - C. Ignore the mistake since it is minor
  - D. Perform extra *Rak'ah* immediately

**Card: 2**

A student leading Ṣalāt in school mistakenly adds a third *Tashahhud*. What should he practically do?

- (a) Restart the prayer from the beginning
- (b) Perform two Sujūd as-Sahw prostrations before Taslīm
- (c) End the prayer without correction
- (d) Wait until the next prayer to correct it

- (a) The board game and the materials for playing the game were validated by experts, Security education professional teachers and educational media technologist for content and packaging. Based on their corrections and comments, necessary corrections were done by the researcher which made the game suitable for the study. Islamic Studies Education Achievement Test (ISEAT)

was trial tested on 20 students apart from those used for the main study.

### **Research Design, Population, and Sample**

This study adopted a pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design to examine the effect of board game-based instruction on pupils' achievement in Islamic Studies. This design was considered appropriate because intact classroom groups were used, thereby avoiding the disruption of school schedules and preventing artificial restructuring of existing class arrangements.

The target population comprised all Primary 5 pupils in public primary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. Six public primary schools were purposively selected from the Ede educational district based on the following criteria: availability of Islamic Studies as a timetabled subject, similarity in school type (public), comparable class sizes, and willingness of school authorities to participate in the study. From each of the six selected schools, pupils were drawn through purposive sampling, yielding an initial pool of eligible participants. The final sample of 60 pupils was then obtained

after excluding pupils who were absent during the pretest or who did not meet the inclusion criteria. The six schools were subsequently paired and randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group, with three schools constituting the experimental group and three forming the control group. This school-level assignment, rather than individual-level randomisation, was adopted to minimise the risk of contamination between treatment conditions.

The 60 participating pupils comprised 30 males and 30 females, reflecting an equal gender distribution. The experimental group consisted of 30 pupils (15 males and 15 females), while the control group equally comprised 30 pupils (15 males and 15 females). This balanced composition ensured that gender was controlled as a potential confounding variable in the analysis.

### **Instrumentation**

Data were collected using the Islamic Studies Education Achievement Test (ISEAT), a researcher-developed instrument consisting of multiple-choice and short-answer items covering the designated Islamic Studies concepts for Primary 5. The instrument was validated by two experts in Educational Technology and two Islamic Studies teachers with cognate experience at the primary school level. Their feedback was used to refine item clarity, content coverage, and language appropriateness. The ISEAT was pilot-tested on a comparable group of pupils outside the study sample, and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), indicating high internal consistency and suitability for use.

### **Treatment Procedure and Researcher/Teacher Roles**

The study was conducted over six weeks. Prior to the commencement of the treatment, all participating teachers in both the experimental and control groups attended a one-day orientation session organised by the researcher. Teachers assigned to the experimental group received detailed training on the design, rules, and instructional application of the board games developed for the study. The board games were specifically designed to align with the Islamic Studies concepts outlined in the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) primary school curriculum, covering topics such as the pillars of Islam, *ṣalāt*, and *zakāt*. Teachers in the control group were instructed to continue delivering their lessons using the conventional chalk-

and-talk method, without exposure to the board game materials, to maintain the integrity of the control condition.

During the treatment phase, the researcher visited each school weekly to monitor instructional fidelity, provide logistical support, and ensure that experimental group teachers implemented the board game activities as designed. The researcher did not directly teach any of the groups, in order to eliminate researcher bias and ensure that observed effects were attributable to the instructional strategy rather than to the researcher's personal influence. At the end of each lesson in the experimental group, structured debriefing sessions were conducted by the classroom teacher to consolidate learning, clarify misconceptions, and connect game activities to the relevant Islamic Studies concepts. The control group received equivalent instructional time covering the same content through conventional methods.

At the conclusion of the six-week treatment period, the ISEAT was administered as a posttest to both groups under standardised conditions. The pretest, administered before the commencement of treatment, served as a covariate in the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to statistically control for any pre-existing differences in achievement between the two groups.

### **Presentation of Results**

Research Question 1: What is the mean difference between the students exposed to the experimental group (Snake and Ladder Board game) and control group (Traditional Method)?

#### **Table 1 Summary of the mean difference between the experimental and control groups in students' posttest achievement score**

Table : 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PRE TEST SCORE	60	21.27	3.473
POST TEST SCORE	60	26.40	4.163
MEANS DIFF	5.13		

The mean score of students (26.40) exposed to the intervention is higher than the mean score of those exposed to the Conventional method of teaching (21.27). The implication of this is that the treatment or intervention is effective and capable of improving academic performance of students in Islamic Education Concept

HO<sub>1</sub> There is no significant mean difference between the mean difference in achievement scores of pupils taught Islamic education Concept using board games and those exposed to traditional method in Osun State

**Table 2 Summary of Analysis of covariance of posttest, achievement by treatment, (Snakes and Ladders board game and Conventional method of teaching)**

Table 2

Source	Type III sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Partial $\eta^2$
Corrected Model	803.582	4	200.896	50.495	.000	.786
Intercept	138.702	1	138.702	34.863	.000	.388
PRETEST	446.915	1	446.915	112.332	.000	.671
GROUP	310.494	1	310.494	78.043	.000	.587
GENDER	14.079	1	14.079	3.539	.065	.060
GROUP*GENDER	1.107	1	1.107	.278	.600	.005
Error	218.818	55	3.979			

The table 2 shows that after adjusting for pretest scores, treatment had significant main effect on students' achievement in Islamic Studies in some selected topics ( $F_{(1, 218.818)} = 78.043$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that the treatment contributed better to the performance of Primary five pupils in some selected topics in Islamic Studies concept.

**HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant mean difference between the mean difference in achievement scores of male and female pupils taught Islamic Studies Education concept using board games in Osun State**

The table 2 shows that after adjusting for pretest scores, gender had no significant main effect on students' achievement in some selected topics in Social studies ( $F_{(1, 218.818)} = 3.539$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

**HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant interaction effect of gender and treatment on student achievement in some selected topics in Social Studies**

Table 2 shows that after adjusting for pretest scores, the interaction between treatment and gender had no significant effect on students' achievement in some selected topics in Islamic studies Education ( $F_{(1, 218.818)} = .278$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). There is no positive effect on the interaction of gender and treatment on the learning performance of students in Islamic Studies education concept

### **Discussion of findings**

The findings of this study revealed that pupils in the experimental group, who were taught selected Islamic Studies concepts using the Snakes and Ladders board game, achieved significantly higher posttest scores than their counterparts in the control group, who were exposed to the conventional method of instruction. This outcome confirms that board game-based instruction is a more effective pedagogical strategy for improving pupil achievement in Islamic Studies than traditional chalk-and-talk delivery. The result is theoretically consistent with constructivist learning principles, which hold that active, experience-based engagement with content produces deeper understanding and more durable retention than passive reception of information.

This finding aligns with the work of Olaiya (2017; 2025), who observed that game-based instruction enhances not only academic achievement but also pupils' motivation and social learning capacities when compared with conventional teaching methods. Similarly, Mayangsari (2022)

reported improved learner motivation in Islamic Religious Education following the introduction of a board game innovation, lending direct support to the present finding within the specific context of religious studies instruction. The convergence of these results suggests that the interactive and goal-directed structure of board games addresses the motivational deficits that have long been identified as a core obstacle to effective IRS learning in primary schools (Hadiyanto and Perawironegoro 2025).

Beyond the Islamic Studies context, the finding is further corroborated by broader game-based learning research at the primary school level. Hung et al. (2014) demonstrated that game-based learning effectively promoted achievement, self-efficacy, and motivation among elementary school pupils in a quasi-experimental study, while Imoko and Isa (2015) similarly found that a game-based learning approach produced significant gains in pupil achievement at the primary level. These studies, though conducted in different subject areas, reinforce the pedagogical validity of game-based strategies as cross-curricular tools for improving learning outcomes. Tobias et al. (2014) further established through quasi-experimental control-group designs that pupils utilising game-based learning consistently outperformed those taught through conventional methods, a pattern clearly replicated in the Islamic Studies context of the present study.

The finding that there was no significant difference in achievement between male and female pupils is equally noteworthy. This result suggests that the Snakes and Ladders board game is gender-inclusive in its instructional effect, a conclusion supported by the game's accessible design, which requires no specialised prior skills and presents content in a visually engaging format that appealed equally to both sexes. This gender neutrality is an important practical attribute, as it confirms that board game-based instruction can be adopted equitably across mixed-gender primary school classrooms without disadvantaging either group. Researchers have contended that game-based learning fosters intrinsic motivation and improvements across multiple competencies, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication (Hsieh et al., 2016), and the gender-neutral outcomes of this study suggest that these benefits extend to both male and female learners in the Islamic Studies classroom.

Taken together, these findings have significant implications for Islamic Studies pedagogy at the primary school level in Nigeria. The persistent reliance on rote memorisation and lecture-based delivery has been widely identified as a contributing factor to low achievement and disengagement in IRS (Andriani and Rasto, 2019; Qolbiyah, Mansur, and Bakar, 2022). The present study provides empirical evidence that board game-based instruction offers a viable, cost-effective, and culturally adaptable alternative that can meaningfully improve both achievement and engagement among primary school pupils in the Nigerian context.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that game-based instructional strategies significantly enhanced pupils' academic achievement in Islamic Studies at the primary school level. The use of board games stimulated learners' interest and active participation in the teaching and learning process, thereby fostering child-centred learning. By providing alternative and engaging pathways to content delivery, board games enabled pupils to assimilate and consolidate Islamic Studies concepts more effectively. The interactive nature of the instructional approach also facilitated continuous formative assessment, allowing teachers to monitor and respond to learners' understanding in real time. These outcomes affirm that game-based learning constitutes a viable and impactful pedagogical strategy for improving the mastery of Islamic Studies content among primary school pupils in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **Curriculum Integration:** Educational stakeholders and curriculum planners should incorporate game-based learning strategies, particularly board games, into the Islamic Studies curriculum at the primary school level to enhance pupils' academic achievement.
2. **Teacher Professional Development:** In-service training and capacity-building workshops should be organised for Islamic Studies teachers to equip them with the competencies required to design and implement game-based instructional approaches effectively.

3. **Policy Formulation:** The Federal and State Ministries of Education should develop policies that support and institutionalise the use of innovative, interactive teaching methods in Islamic Studies instruction across Nigerian primary schools.
4. **Development of Contextualised Learning Materials:** Curriculum developers and instructional designers should collaborate to produce age-appropriate and culturally relevant board games aligned with the Nigerian Islamic Studies syllabus for primary education.
5. **Further Research:** Subsequent studies should examine the effectiveness of game-based learning in Islamic Studies across diverse demographic groups, school types, and geographical contexts to strengthen the empirical base for its broader application.

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