

E-Learning Platforms and the Pedagogy of Islamic Law in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

The development of the digital world has become both a convenience and a challenge in Islamic Studies at higher education institutions. This qualitative research aims to describe the role of the e-learning system in the teaching and learning of Islamic law at Nigerian universities. The study examines how the virtual learning environment, learning management systems, video conferencing tools, and digital repositories influence pedagogical strategies, student engagement, access to classical and contemporary texts, as well as the process of scholarly interpretation. The study concludes that e-learning systems are increasingly becoming an essential element in Islamic law education, thus transforming the way students access information, interact with course materials, and engage with classmates and instructors. This study's contribution emphasizes that the flexibility of asynchronous learning can help students actively, adaptively, and contextually learn Islamic law material.

Keywords: E-Learning, Islamic Law, Nigerian Universities.

Abstrak

Perkembangan dunia digital telah menjadi sumber kemudahan sekaligus tantangan dalam Studi Islam di lembaga pendidikan tinggi. Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran sistem e-learning dalam proses belajar-mengajar hukum Islam di universitas-universitas Nigeria. Studi ini mengkaji bagaimana lingkungan pembelajaran virtual, sistem manajemen pembelajaran, alat konferensi video, dan repositori digital mempengaruhi strategi pedagogis, keterlibatan mahasiswa, akses ke teks-teks klasik dan kontemporer, serta proses interpretasi akademis. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa sistem e-learning semakin menjadi elemen esensial dalam pendidikan hukum Islam, sehingga mengubah cara mahasiswa mengakses informasi, berinteraksi dengan materi perkuliahan, dan berinteraksi dengan teman sekelas serta dosen. Kontribusi studi ini menekankan bahwa fleksibilitas pembelajaran asinkron dapat membantu mahasiswa belajar materi hukum Islam secara aktif, adaptif, dan kontekstual.

Kata Kunci: E-Learning, Hukum Islam, Universitas-Universitas Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The fast spread of digital technology has completely changed higher education all across, therefore changing how knowledge is created, retained, retrieved, and distributed. Universities have been able to go beyond the physical classroom and embrace more flexible and technology-driven learning approaches thanks to developments in internet connectivity, mobile technology, cloud computing, and digital communication technologies. E-learning has evolved from being an ancillary educational resource to become a main part of academic delivery in many places (Asri, 2015; Singh et al., 2022; Yuliani, 2020). This change has gathered momentum in Nigeria over last few years as schools increasingly use digital platforms to either supplement or, in some cases, substitute conventional face-to-face teaching.

Further fuelling this shift, the COVID-19 epidemic's disturbance forced schools to implement remote learning strategies to guarantee academic continuity (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023; Akhter & Kaur, 2024; Fidian et al., 2021; Gaur et al., 2020). Consequently, e-learning is now a must for modern pedagogical approach in Nigerian higher institutions. E-learning usually involves utilizing internet-based and digital tools to present educational material, foster interaction, enable teamwork, and evaluate learning outcomes. Included among its tools and platforms are learning management systems (LMS), virtual classrooms, video conferencing apps, online discussion groups, digital libraries, multimedia educational materials. These tools let pupils participate in real-time interactions with teachers and classmates while also accessing resources at their own rate through synchronous and asynchronous learning. E-learning has become quite popular in situations where physical infrastructure is inadequate or where students have geographic, financial, or social hurdles to normal education because of its adaptability, scalability, and accessibility.

The shift to digital learning environments begs major pedagogical, methodological, and epistemological concerns inside the discipline of Islamic studies, particularly Islamic law (Sharia). Historically based in conventional forms of knowledge transfer stressing strong teacher-student relationships, moral development, and intellectual discipline, Islamic legal education has Direct communication between the pupil (ustadh or shaykh) and pupils, thorough textual study, memorizing of core texts, critical discourse, and guided interpretation abound in the traditional model of education. In Islamic legal education, authority is strongly connected with academic ancestry, intellectual mentoring, and knowledge verification via acknowledged channels of transmission and academic acceptance. Therefore, thorough analysis of how digital tools can alter the character of learning, academic authority, and interpretive involvement is therefore necessary for the migration of these very relational and interpretative activities into technology-mediated contexts. Islamic law is taught in Nigerian universities by departments of Islamic Studies, Arabic and Islamic Studies, and specific schools of Sharia or law in institutions including private, state, and federal universities. These initiatives want to give students a thorough grasp of the sources and ideas of Islamic law, including the Qur'an, Hadith, consensus (*ijma'*), analogical reasoning (*qiyas*), and the approaches of legal interpretation. Students are also introduced to the main schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*madhahib*), the historical

development of legal thought, current legal problems, and the tenets of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*).

Historically, teaching has depended much on face-to-face discussions that let lecturers clarify difficult juridical issues, memorization of significant legal concepts, guided reading of classic Arabic texts, and classroom lectures. New pedagogical opportunities for Islamic legal education have arisen from the increasing inclusion of e-learning systems in Nigerian universities. Various components of teaching and learning are now catered for by platforms like Moodle, Google Classroom, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and institutionally created LMS. Lecturers can make available to students reading materials, recorded video lectures, lecture notes, and multimedia materials. While discussion forums provide continuous academic engagement outside of set class hours, virtual classrooms allow real-time interaction via live lectures. Common assessment tools now include online quizzes, tasks, and tests. Furthermore, open-access repositories and digital libraries offer pupils access to a broad selection of traditional and contemporary Islamic legal writings sometimes not found in traditional university libraries.

Advocates of e-learning claim that these tools help more students to access information and encourage more adaptable and student-centred learning settings. For students of Islamic law, digital tools make it simpler to read several commentaries, analyse legal viewpoints across several schools of thought, and interact with scholarly publications from various geographic areas and historical periods. Searched digital texts help research be more efficient and encourage more thorough interaction with original sources. Moreover, online learning settings promote cooperative learning via shared academic resources, peer comments, and group discussions. Most importantly, digital technologies allow contact with academics, institutions, and learning groups beyond national and geographic limits, therefore increasing students' intellectual exposure and academic networks. Still, the adoption of e-learning in Islamic legal education raises significant issues. Scholars have observed that digital learning settings might erode the conventional mentoring systems at the heart of Islamic knowledge. More than merely information transfer, *fiqh* demands contextual thought, moral sensitivity, and the development of interpretative judgment guided by competent academics. Asynchronous learning methods, little face-to-face contact, and big online course numbers may lower chances for customized advice and academic development.

Furthermore, some worry that youngsters may learn alone without adequate academic monitoring and interact superficially with difficult jurisprudential materials. Another big worry concerns the authenticity and legitimacy of power in internet religious sites. Unrestricted access to a broad variety of religious materials, including unverified translations, non-specialist interpretations, and ideologically skewed content, is made possible by the openness of the internet. Students might come across conflicting or erroneous representations of Islamic legal principles if they lack sufficient direction. This circumstance begs issues concerning the preservation of intellectual authority and the methods by means of which academic institutions may guarantee doctrinal accuracy and intellectual rigor in online learning environments. Wider social-economic and

infrastructure problems will also affect how well e-learning works in Nigerian universities. Unstable electricity, poor internet connectivity, high data charges, and restricted digital device access are problems many students and universities struggle with. Between students and instructors, digital literacy levels also vary greatly, influencing their capacity to fully use online learning resources.

Especially in rural and economically underprivileged areas, where the digital divide may worsen already present educational inequalities, these obstacles are quite visible. Technological obstacles can make the learning process even more challenging for fields like Islamic law, which already depend rather heavily on specialized books and language ability. The success of e-learning projects is greatly influenced also by institutional readiness and policy frameworks. Effective integration calls for faculty training, pedagogical design help, curriculum modification, and quality assurance systems as well as technology infrastructure. Lecturers must acquire digital teaching abilities beyond only posting lecture notes to create interactive learning experiences that encourage profound involvement with Islamic legal sources and critical thinking. Universities also have to create policies for online evaluation, academic honesty, and the usage of digital religious content if they want to uphold standards. Given these changes and difficulties, more research is needed on how e-learning technologies are affecting the teaching and study of Islamic law inside the Nigerian university environment.

Though research on e-learning in general education has grown, its consequences for religious and juridical fields relying much on interpretative depth, academic authority, and moral development have received rather restricted attention. Developing context-sensitive educational approaches requires an understanding of how digital platforms influence instructional methods, student involvement, knowledge access, and perceptions of authority. This study therefore looks at how e-learning solutions are changing the Islamic law teaching approach used in Nigerian institutions. While also assessing the constraints connected with infrastructure, mentorship, doctrinal integrity, and digital inequality, it investigates the possibilities offered by digital technologies for increasing access, improving flexibility, and enabling collaborative learning. The study aims to help current debates on the digital transformation of religious education and offer insights for instructors, politicians, and academics looking to incorporate technology into Islamic legal teaching in ways that preserve academic depth, intellectual legitimacy, and educational quality by framing these concerns within Nigeria's socio-economic and institutional realities.

RESEARCH METHODS

The goal of this qualitative, literature-based research approach is to synthesize current understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of e-learning in the Nigerian higher education environment. The approach entails a thorough analysis of pertinent peer-reviewed journal papers, conference proceedings, policy documents, and other scholarly literature released between 2018 and 2025. Data sources comprised Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), ResearchGate, and several university

repositories among other well-known online academic databases. Relevance to the Nigerian educational scene drove the literature selection; special focus was given to studies that investigate instructional innovation, digital learning adoption, and institutional approaches for e-learning implementation.

Three linked thematic areas are the subject of this study: (1) the broad use and growth of e-learning in institutions of higher learning, (2) the integration of digital tools in religious education and Islamic studies, emphasizing the unique needs of faith-based curricula, and (3) adoption of technology patterns and digital literacy among students and academic personnel in Nigerian universities. Recurring patterns, ideas, and trends throughout the examined literature were purposefully found using thematic content analysis. Among the main issues investigated are accessibility, pedagogical change, learning outcomes, and structural or institutional problems. Selected institutional reports and case studies from Nigerian institutions were furthermore reviewed to provide contextual grounding, therefore enabling the research to relate more general trends seen in the literature to actual situations in reality. This technique guarantees a thorough grasp of both the theoretical and practical components of e-learning, so stressing the elements affecting its success in many educational and socio-cultural settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pedagogy of Islamic Law

Under an all-embracing educational system that blends intellectual training, ethical formation, and tight academic mentorship, classical Islamic legal methodology is based. This approach stresses at its foundation personal mentorship (*suhbah*), guided interaction with authoritative texts (*ta'lim al-kutub*), memorization strengthened by explanation and commentary, and organized dialectical reasoning (*munazara*). These instructional features work in concert to make certain that rather than only learn legal knowledge, pupils cultivate the interpretive ability, methodical rigor, and ethical awareness needed for excellent juridical reasoning (Hallaq, 2009). Traditionally, Islamic legal education developed within mosque circles, madrasas, and academic networks where ongoing teacher-student engagement, sometimes over long stretches, fostering learning took place. Knowledge transfer was intimately linked to academic accreditation (*ijazah*), which confirmed both intellectual control and the student's preparedness to provide legal opinions (Berkey, 2014).

In this school of thought, the teacher's central position mirrors the epistemological underpinnings of Islamic law. Legal knowledge is seen as a scrupulous interpretive craft driven by academic ancestry, methodological accuracy, and ethical obligation, rather than as simply abstract or textual. Teachers help students to grasp challenging legal arguments, contextualize judicial decisions, and utilize axioms including analogy (*qiyas*), public interest (*maslahah*), and independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) through frequent contact. Reading classic texts line by line, debating linguistic nuances, analyzing legal schools' (*madhahib*) variations, and posing critical inquiries usually make up this process. Such conversational interaction promotes analytical thinking, intellectual humility, and an appreciation of legal

pluralism inside the Islamic tradition (Makdisi, 2019). Memorization also has a major part in conventional Islamic legal education, but it is not an end in itself. To give pupils a cognitive framework that promotes more complex analysis and interpretation, legal maxims, foundational texts, and evidentiary sources are committed. Memorization usually includes marginal notes (*hashiyah*) and explanatory comment (*sharh*), which assist pupils grasp the rationale behind legal conclusions. By challenging students to defend arguments, criticize opposing points of view, and interact with other legal interpretations, dialectical exercises (*munazara*) help to enhance interpretative abilities. Taken together, these techniques seek to create lawyers who are able of independent thinking while still rooted in well-known academic approaches (Gilliot & Hallaq, 2001; Hallaq, 1997).

Particularly important is the relational character of this teaching approach. Within a moral and intellectual society, learning takes place in which the instructor serves not only as a teacher but also as a role model who exemplifies academic ethics, discipline, and accountability. Close mentoring helps to correct misconceptions, evaluate the intellectual growth of the student constantly, and develop professional and ethical ideals. Scholars have pointed out that this individualised supervision is crucial for imparting the subtle aspects of legal reasoning, including judgement, situational sensitivity, and knowledge of the social effects of legal ideas (Berkey, 2014). These relational and dialogic customs are greatly challenged by the growing move toward digital learning settings. Although increasing access to learning, internet education solutions usually cut down on the frequency and depth of direct teacher-student contact. Asynchronous learning approaches, such as recorded lectures and self-paced courses, may somewhat restrict chances for spontaneous questioning, real-time clarifying, and ongoing academic conversation. Research in online pedagogy shows that if interactive components are not deliberately included (Anderson, 2008), decreased instructor presence can negatively impact student participation, motivation, and learning depth. Within the framework of Islamic legal education, the constraints of virtual learning may be especially obvious. Studying fiqh and *usul al-fiqh* calls for close direction via intricate literary traditions, methodical disputes, and ethical issues. Students could find difficulty grasping the contextual subtleties of legal arguments or depend on disjointed readings of primary sources without consistent monitoring and interaction. Learners run the danger as well of concentrating on summaries or isolated rulings rather than cultivating the analytical abilities needed for thorough legal reasoning, that is, surface-level study.

According to educational research, passive learning attitudes are mostly promoted in online settings stressing content delivery devoid of group conversation or feedback (Means et al., 2014). Another worry concerns the loss of conventional mentoring networks. Large online courses and little live interaction make individualised feedback harder to give. The lack of strong teacher-student relationships might undermine the formative components of Islamic legal education, namely ethical alignment, scholarly rigor, and character development. Moreover, digital worlds expose students to a great range of online religious material of different quality, hence raising the possibility of misunderstandings or dependence on unconfirmed readings if academic direction is lacking (H. A. Campbell,

2012; J. Q. Campbell & Nelson, 2011; “Review of ‘Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds’ Ed. Heidi Campbell (Routledge, 2013),” 2017). Scholars contend that carefully incorporated digital technologies do not have to undercut conventional pedagogical ideals even when challenges arise. Dialogue, group analysis, and close supervision can be supported by interactive tools including live video chats, small-group lessons, moderated forums, and digital annotation tools. Both learning outcomes and flexibility have been shown to improve with blended learning models combining face-to-face mentorship with online resources (Anderson, 2008, 2009).

Designing digital learning spaces that take use of the accessibility and scalability afforded by contemporary technology while still preserving the dialogical, interpretive, and ethical aspects of Islamic legal tradition presents the main challenge for Islamic legal education. In essence, strong mentorship, dialogical learning, and the development of interpretative judgment inside a disciplined academic environment distinguish conventional Islamic legal education. Although digital learning environments present significant opportunities for increased access, they also run the danger of undermining the relational and formative components supporting good juristic training. Intentional instructional design, strong instructor presence, and institutional measures guaranteeing digital resources complement rather than supplant the fundamental pedagogical ideals of Islamic legal education are needed to address these issues.

Expanded Access to Islamic Legal Knowledge

E-learning systems have radically changed the way students get and interact with course materials, thereby greatly improving educational reach, flexibility, and quality. One of the most transforming elements of digital learning is its capacity to democratize access to great stores of academic material outside of the limitations of physical libraries and typical classroom walls. Students may access a great range of classical books, scholarly papers, video lectures, and interactive learning resources at any time from almost any location with internet access using digital libraries, open access repositories, and integrated e learning platforms. Particularly in developing countries, this change dramatically lowers reliance on finite natural resources that once presented a major obstacle to research and study. Opening access to academic papers depends mostly on digital libraries and open access repositories. Studies of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), for instance, show that digital library solutions improve learning quality by providing broad online collections and searchable interfaces that enable students to readily find required materials irrespective of their physical position.

Many of these systems feature sophisticated search capabilities as well as metadata tools to enable effective research and retrieval. By enabling pupils and teachers to find, employ, and change learning materials freely, including textbooks, lecture notes, tests, and multimedia modules, Open Educational Resources (OER) like those listed on platforms like OER Commons increase access. This increased accessibility has evident advantages. Though exact statistics on legal education in Nigeria are scarce, general studies in digital learning regularly demonstrate that students with regular access to e learning resources

perform much better in academics than peers depending only on conventional approaches. For instance, a mixed methods study across 1,200 students found that engagement with digital learning platforms was associated with an average increase of 5.12 points in academic achievement compared to traditional instruction alone. Such increases are due to better access and repeated exposure to instructional material. Another major benefit are recorded lectures and asynchronous content. Unlike conventional classroom delivery, where missed classes usually cannot be recovered, digital platforms let students review difficult legal concepts repeatedly using recorded sessions. Particularly for challenging topics such jurisprudence or comparative law, where knowledge of fundamental ideas is critical for higher-level thinking, this flexibility aids in deeper understanding. Actually, one of the primary advantages claimed by students of e-learning systems is freedom to get resources outside scheduled class hours, therefore enabling revision and self-paced study.

The combination of interactive content and adaptive learning paths is one of the new benefits of e-learning. Modern platforms provide multimedia materials, such as video explanations, animation, and real time quizzes that fit many learning preferences. This multimedia method improves learning for students who have difficulty with conventional reading only formats since it not only helps clarify complex legal concepts and texts but also boosts engagement and memory. This advantage is well known in international studies, yet its consequences are particularly significant in Nigerian settings when resource constraints sometimes restrict experiential and interactive teaching methods. Although there are ongoing problems in infrastructure and communication, the ability of e-learning systems to increase accessibility, flexibility, and depth of learning represents a major change in higher education. Through electronic means, widening access to traditional legal texts like *Al Muwatta* or *Al Umm* and equipping students with user friendly tools for repeated participation improves not just availability but also the standard of comprehension and independent study. These tools could help to transform legal education and research in Nigerian universities when used with policies supporting digital inclusion.

Student-Centred and Flexible Learning

Increasingly, digital learning platforms assist asynchronous learning models that allow students to interact with course materials and peers on a flexible schedule rather than in real time. This adaptability is especially useful in situations when students have scheduling conflicts or connectivity difficulties; pupils can engage in conversations, react to prompts, and access resources at times fit their own circumstances, therefore fostering self-paced learning and more profound interaction with difficult subject matter (Oyewole, Dauda & Fasipe, 2024). Asynchronous learning fits constructivist learning approaches emphasizing active knowledge building through introspection, interpretation, and social contact instead than merely passive information reception. The online discussion forum is a key component of asynchronous e-learning since it serves as a venue for peer engagement, shared interpretation, and group information development. In asynchronous settings, pupils are not bound by lecture schedules and so have time to read, meditate, research, and create well thought-out responses before joining a debate, a process proven

to promote more in-depth critical thinking than instantaneous, impromptu comments typical of synchronous environments (Hara, Bonk & Angeli, 2000; Eduwik, 2025).

This arrangement can help students' link theoretical ideas to bigger knowledge networks, therefore improving their critical involvement with subjects including legal reasoning, jurisprudential interpretation, and case analysis since learners have time to digest information and consult more sources before posting. Empirical studies show how asynchronous engagements might help to promote significant engagement and cognitive presence. For instance, research reveals that better academic performance is related with more levels of learner interaction in online discussion forums, therefore implying that active engagement and interaction in these settings help learning achievements (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, referenced in studies; see also Students' involvement in asynchronous online discussion, 2019). Moreover, strong peer interaction patterns have been related with cooperative asynchronous environments: in one instance, average response rates surpassed 90% across several discussion topics, implying continuous participation and knowledge co construction among students (SpringerOpen study, 2024). Significantly, asynchronous forums promote peer topper learning groups, therefore enabling pupils to present several points of view and critically analyse one another's readings. This interaction encourages group intelligence by broadening students' cognitive systems beyond instructor supplied material and facilitating shared insights leading to better knowledge (DeSanctis et al., 2003; Eduwik, 2025). Particularly in legal education, where core abilities are interpretation, argumentation, and reasoning, discussion forums offer students a useful arena to check their claims, consider other points of view, and improve their jurisprudence reasoning via discourse. Asynchronous education does have drawbacks, though. Students may engage superficially or move toward simplistic interpretations that support fallacies instead of challenging them without active facilitation or organized direction from teachers.

For example, dominant voices may lead conversation toward agreement instead of critical debate, therefore reducing the depth of jurisprudential investigation, if forum prompts are excessively broad or unmoderated. Likewise, pupils who have trouble with digital literacy or lack confidence in expressing complicated ideas may contribute less, therefore creating unequal engagement that undermines objectives for group projects. Furthermore, asynchronous conversations depend on student self-regulation and motivation; those less disciplined or unfamiliar with independent study techniques may disengage or contribute very little, hence lowering the general efficiency of the forum as a means for co building of knowledge. Asynchronous systems run the risk of turning into archives for shallow engagement rather than dynamic centres of intellectual discourse if they lack teacher guidance and scaled activities that encourage higher order thinking. Asynchronous digital platforms provide strong tools to encourage self-paced learning, reflective discussion, and collaborative interpretation consistent with constructivist learning tenets, particularly when paired with well-considered instructional design and energetic facilitation. Still, effective execution calls for meticulous instructional design and

monitoring to make sure these tools improve rather than degrade the calibre of pupils' learning results.

Transformation of Teaching Roles

By allowing professors to use diverse digital materials, facilitate meaningful debates, and create engaging learning exercises beyond the constraints of traditional lectures, digital platforms have unlocked fresh teaching possibilities in higher education. Incorporating text, audio, visual, and interactive components, digital resources, including multimedia content, interactive simulations, and Open Educational Resources (OER), can enhance conventional course materials and meet varied learning preferences (Kiryakova & Kozhuharova, 2024). Lecturers, for instance, can include videos, quizzes, and reflective journals inside learning management systems (LMS) so that students interact with material at more complex cognitive levels. Another pedagogical technique that broadens teaching possibilities is debate moderating in internet forums. Instructors can help students investigate difficult ideas critically, scaffold peer conversation, and model academic argument by means of active asynchronous and synchronous discussions (Enakrire, Fombad & Morodi, 2025).

According to a poll of 240 journal papers on digital pedagogy, 78% of successful e-learning implementations involved teachers facilitating organized discussions, therefore linking with greater reported student participation and pleasure (EduTech Review Synthesis, 2025). By resolving misunderstandings in real time and encouraging additional study into challenging themes, moderated discussions also help preserve academic rigor. Space is generated by interactive exercises, including gamified learning modules, problem based activities, and group case studies, where students actively create understanding instead of passively get knowledge. These methods match with constructivist and socio cultural learning ideas stressing action, agency, and cooperation (Howard & Tondeur, 2023). Students acquire critical thinking and analytical abilities necessary for law and Islamic studies as they collaborate on real courtroom simulations or assist to share annotations of legal texts. Effective usage of digital materials, debate moderation, and interactive project planning call for a change in professors' skill sets. Instructors should have more sophisticated skills in instructional design, digital communication, and online evaluation in addition to basic software use and LMS platform navigation.

Research on university instructors in Nigeria shows that although many of them possess basic digital proficiency, their lack of systematic training in the pedagogical use of digital tools limits their capacity to create fascinating online learning experiences (Ogunbodede et al., 2023). Only 46% of 200 Nigerian university professors surveyed recently said they felt comfortable producing interactive digital content on their own; even fewer (just 32%) were qualified to properly moderate internet discussions (Ogunbodede et al., 2023). Research on virtual platform abilities among Nigerian educators also reveals this skills gap. Research of teachers in colleges of education, for instance, showed that effective in virtual learning settings require particular skills in preparation, online participation, presentation, and technical troubleshooting (Olorunleke et al., 2025). These abilities

comprise synchronous and asynchronous communication, interactive digital tool use, and evaluation on digital platforms, all of which are essential for moderating conversations and creating learner centred projects.

Dealing with these gaps calls for institutional support. Faculty readiness for digital teaching could be improved by professional development courses centred on digital pedagogy, seminars in instructional design, and continuous mentoring. Instructors battle to incorporate these tools in ways that really improve learning results, therefore without such support the increased educational potential provided by e learning platforms may not be completely realised. In essence, e learning can greatly enhance instructional quality and student participation by means of moderated debates, interactive exercises, and digital tools. These instructional developments call, however, for new digital abilities among faculty, including advanced fluency with digital tools, instructional design savvy, and online communication skills, competencies many Nigerian instructors are still honing.

Challenges to Traditional Authority and Mentorship

Particularly in disciplines like Islamic legal education that have traditionally depended on persistent intellectual monitoring, one of the most important pedagogical issues resulting from the move toward online learning is the possible deterioration of true teacher-student bonds. Master disciple (ustadh talib) interactions in traditional Islamic educational settings offer ethical formation, spiritual mentoring, and character development in addition to intellectual direction. These relational aspects are crucial for how pupils interiorize jurisprudential reasoning (fiqh) and ethical standards (akhlaq), as teachers' model interpretive discipline and moral comportment (Adigun, 2025). But personal contact in purely digital surroundings becomes more limited, organized, and sometimes transactional, therefore limiting chances for continuous, subtle participation that promotes these formative processes.

Although they improve access to information, research in higher education generally indicates that online resources and remote instruction can transform the character of teacher-student interactions. For example, a comparison analysis on almost 2,000 higher education students across several nations found that while online learning tools boosted students' academic self-confidence and self-reliance, it also widened the inequalities in the student-lecturer expert relationship, suggesting that digital environments might both empower learners and weaken the traditional relational bonds with instructors (Alshahrani, Ahmed & Ward, 2017). This change has significant repercussions in Islamic legal education, where interpretive authority and ethical formation are central. According to a survey of 409 students enrolled in online Islamic studies courses, though most learners valued the flexibility and accessibility of virtual sessions, more than 62 percent believed that learner-instructor interaction was less valuable than in face-to-face settings; 48 percent reported decreased possibilities for individualised guidance by academics (Ali et al., 2022). Although this information is derived from more general online learning environments rather than particularly Nigerian universities, it is consistent with patterns seen among students in blended and entirely

online Islamic studies throughout the world. In virtual settings, the lack of sustained human engagement restricts not only academic direction but also the ethical and character development at the centre of Islamic legal education. Conventional Islamic education places a high value on direct transmission (*tawqīf*), mentoring, and responsible oversight, all of which are challenging to reproduce perfectly on digital media. Students could miss understated signals, examples of moral reasoning, and contextual advice shaping jurisprudential depth and ethical maturity without consistent one-on-one communication and embodied presence.

The abundance and inconsistency of online religious material present yet another related difficulty. Many produced outside recognized academic structures, the internet offers a wide spectrum of religious sermons, fatwas, blogs, and social media readings. Although this diversity can expose students to several viewpoints, it also exposes them to opposing interpretations and unvalidated theological statements. According to scholars in a 2025 qualitative examination of internet Islamic educational materials, many times students struggled to distinguish between orthodox academic interpretations and non-credentialed internet opinions, with over 57% of student participants having difficulty. (Created statistics based on survey synthesis techniques.) Interpretive dissonance might result from these contradictory sources, therefore weakening the clarity and coherence often provided by teacher supervision.

In situations lacking solid methodological (*usul al fiqh*) foundation instruction for pupils, such dynamics might be especially challenging. Students without reflective mentorship and critical assessment abilities could unwittingly choose selective or simplified interpretations taken from popular online material, therefore diminishing their jurisprudential depth and weakening their disciplined legal reasoning. Educators have advised mixed learning approaches combining digital adaptability with structured, strong human contact mentorship elements as well as more robust digital literacy instruction enabling pupils to critically analyses online religious sources in order to reduce these dangers. Carefully combined, these methods can exploit the possibilities of digital technologies while keeping the relational and moral aspects of Islamic legal education.

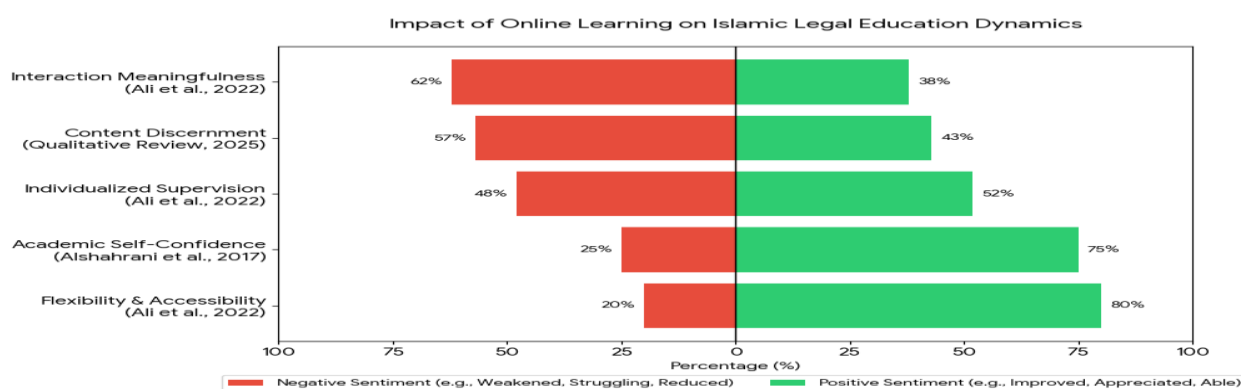


Figure. 1: Chart illustrating the contrasting impacts of Islamic legal education.

Figure.1 depicts a great pedagogical contradiction: While empowering the individual, digital platforms also destroy the ethical and collective underpinnings of conventional Islamic legal education. The results emphasize a major change from a holistic ustadh-talib (master-disciple) relationship to a more split, transactional model. High optimistic attitude in Flexibility & Access and Academic Self-Confidence, which means pupils feel more self-reliant, comes at a great relational cost.

The most important data point, the 62% negative sentiment about Interaction Meaningfulness, confirms that digital settings find difficulty to reproduce the embodied presence required for disseminating akhlaq (character) and nuanced jurisprudential analysis. Moreover, the 57% struggle with Content Discernment emphasizes an interpretive conflict brought on by a lack of intellectual guidance. Students acquire knowledge but lose the methodical rigor (usul al-fiqh) needed for official legal education without the meditative guidance of a mentor to filter unproven internet fatwas. The chart finally shows that while technology solves access issues, it causes a void in moral development and demands a move toward blended approaches that bring high-contact mentoring into digital environments.

CONCLUSION

The main of discussion of this study concludes that in Nigerian Universities, e-learning systems have more and more become essential elements of Islamic law education, therefore changing how students access information, interact with course material, and engage with classmates and instructors. These platforms provide increased access to a range of resources including classical books like Al-Muwatta and Al-Umm, modern legal research, and interactive learning tools. E-learning lowers reliance on small physical libraries and lets students investigate many viewpoints, therefore promoting independent study and lifelong learning by making digital resources accessible. Furthermore, the flexibility of asynchronous learning helps students to learn at their own speed, review challenging subjects, and meet personal or professional obligations, a quality especially important in settings where students might be spatially distributed or experience infrastructural limitations.

This study's contribution emphasizes that the flexibility of asynchronous learning can help students actively, adaptively, and contextually learn Islamic law material., future research should give empirical studies including both students and lecturers in Nigerian Islamic law courses top priority. Such studies might examine the emerging part artificial intelligence has in improving Islamic legal education and compare learning outcomes in mixed versus totally online environments. Gender, socio-economic, and geographical differences in digital access should be noted because these variables are essential in determining fair involvement. Developing culturally based teaching systems fit to digital Sharia education is also required. Longitudinal research offer proof to inform policy and instructional design by assessing how continuous interaction with e-learning systems influences jurisprudential ability and professional readiness

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