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Tafsir Education and Its Challenges in Relation to Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah in Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research examines the major challenges confronting tafsir education in halaqat al-'ilmiyyah (study circles) within Borno State, Nigeria. The objectives of the research are to assess the current state of tafsir teaching, identify the main obstacles affecting its effectiveness, analyze their implications on Islamic educational goals, particularly in preserving religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn) and intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql) as emphasized in Maqasid al-Shari'ah, and to propose strategies for improving the system. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining eighty (80) questionnaires administered to students of halaqat and twenty (20) semi-structured interviews with scholars actively engaged in tafsir teaching. Findings reveal that the absence of a structured curriculum, linguistic barriers, socio-economic hardship, insecurity, and resistance to modern educational innovations significantly hinder effective tafsir education. The lack of standardization in teaching content and limited access to materials reduce learning consistency and depth. Insecurity, especially the Boko Haram insurgency, further disrupts the continuity of study circles across affected areas. The research recommends the establishment of a unified curriculum, teacher training, improved resource support, and collaboration with educational authorities to enhance the quality and sustainability of tafsir learning in the region.

Keywords: *Tafsir; Education; Halaqat al-'Ilmiyyah; Islamic Studies; Challenges.*

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Introduction

The Qur'an is the foundation of Islamic knowledge, and Tafsir serves as the key to understanding its meanings. Throughout Islamic history, the ḥalaqat al-'ilmiyyah circles of learning played a vital role in disseminating Tafsir among scholars and laymen alike. These circles fostered an environment of dialogue, mentorship, and spiritual growth [1]. In the past, learners gathered around a teacher ('alim) in mosques or madrasahs, engaging deeply with Qur'anic texts through discussion, memorization, and interpretation. However, as Islamic education increasingly interacts with modern systems, the traditional methods of Tafsir instruction face challenges related to methodology, accessibility, and relevance. Understanding how Tafsir education can adapt while preserving the spirit of the ḥalaqat is essential for revitalizing Qur'anic studies today [2].

The study of Islamic sciences in Borno State, Nigeria, has a rich and deep-rooted history dating back to the Kanem-Borno Empire, which served as a major center of Islamic learning in West Africa. The traditional system of ḥalaqat al-'ilmiyyah (study circles) emerged as an indigenous method of imparting Islamic knowledge, particularly Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), jurisprudence (fiqh), and Arabic language [3]. These ḥalaqat were usually organized in mosques, Qur'anic schools, and scholars' homes, providing accessible and continuous religious education for both children and adults.

In the modern era, ḥalaqat al-'ilmiyyah in Borno have continued to serve as essential institutions for religious and moral education, even amidst the growing influence of formal Western education [4]. These circles emphasize personal interaction between teacher and student, memorization, interpretation, and discussion of classical texts, thereby preserving the traditional methods of Islamic pedagogy [5]. However, despite their enduring role, ḥalaqat have faced challenges related to modernization, insecurity, and declining institutional support [6].

Tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) holds a central position in Islamic scholarship, as it enables a deeper understanding of the divine message and guides moral, legal, and social conduct. According to Imam Al-Ghazali, understanding the Qur'an is the foundation of all Islamic sciences, as it provides the principles for jurisprudence, ethics, and spiritual refinement [7]. In the context of ḥalaqat al-'ilmiyyah, tafsir serves not only as an academic exercise but as a means of moral reform and communal enlightenment [8].

In Borno State, tafsir sessions are particularly significant during the month of Ramadan, when scholars interpret verses of the Qur'an to large audiences, addressing contemporary issues in light of Islamic teachings [9]. These sessions reinforce Islamic identity and provide moral guidance to the community. As

such, strengthening tafsir education within halaqat al-'ilmiyyah will contribute to the preservation of Islamic knowledge, ethical development, and social cohesion among Muslims in Northern Nigeria [10].

Despite their long-standing significance, halaqat al-'ilmiyyah in Borno State face various challenges that threaten the effectiveness of tafsir education. Factors such as lack of structured curriculum, inadequate funding, insecurity caused by insurgency, and limited government or institutional support have weakened the traditional system [11]. Additionally, the younger generation's increasing interest in formal education and technology-based learning platforms has created a gap between traditional and modern methods of teaching Islamic knowledge.

Therefore, this research investigates the current state of tafsir education within halaqat al-'ilmiyyah in Borno State, examining both its challenges and potential prospects. It aims to assess the historical and contemporary role of halaqat al-'ilmiyyah in promoting tafsir education, identify the major challenges affecting tafsir instruction in these circles, and explore possible strategies for revitalizing tafsir education to meet contemporary needs while maintaining its traditional values.

This study tends to contribute to the existing body of research on Islamic education in Nigeria by identifying the specific challenges that Tafsir education faces in Halaqat Al-Ilmiyyah in Borno State. The originality of this research work lies in its emphasis on the connection between Tafsir education and Halaqat Al-Ilmiyyah, thereby providing a refined understanding of the complexities surrounding Islamic education in the area of study. Through identifying and highlighting the impediments and possible solutions in this context, this paper suggests valuable perceptions for stakeholders, educators, and policymakers seeking to promote Islamic education and its development in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Tafsir education occupies a central place in the broader system of Islamic learning, as it serves as the foundation for understanding the divine message of the Qur'an and applying it to human life. In traditional Islamic pedagogy, tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) is taught through the halaqat al-'ilmiyyah – study circles led by qualified scholars ('ulama') who explain the Qur'an verse by verse, drawing upon classical commentaries, linguistic analysis, and contextual understanding. This form of education emphasizes spiritual growth, moral refinement, and intellectual discipline rather than formal institutional certification [12],[13]. Classical tafsir works such as those of Imam Ibn Kathir, Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, and Imam al-Qurtubi continue to influence pedagogical approaches within these

circles, combining the transmission of sacred knowledge (naql) with rational reasoning ('aql) [14].

Contemporary scholars have noted that tafsir pedagogy in Islamic education embodies the principle of tarbiyah holistic development of the learner's intellect and character [15]. The teacher acts not merely as an instructor but as a moral guide and exemplar, cultivating both understanding and devotion among students. According to Al-Zuhayli, effective tafsir teaching requires mastery of Arabic, familiarity with classical commentaries, and sensitivity to modern issues so that the Qur'anic message remains relevant across generations [16]. In many Muslim communities, including Nigeria, halaqat continue to serve an essential function in preserving Qur'anic scholarship and spiritual education despite the expansion of formal Islamic institutions [17].

However, scholars have observed that traditional halaqat al-'ilmiyyah face significant pedagogical and structural challenges. One of the main limitations is the absence of standardized curricula and assessment systems, which often leads to variations in the scope, depth, and methodology of instruction [18]. Furthermore, the dependence on oral transmission and the limited availability of learning materials have hindered modernization and integration with contemporary educational standards [19]. While this traditional approach preserves authenticity and spiritual discipline, it struggles to engage modern learners who are accustomed to structured and technology-based learning environments.

In northern Nigeria, the Islamic education system, including tafsir study circles, operates alongside formal Western-oriented institutions, creating a dual educational structure. The halaqat al-'ilmiyyah system in this region has historically served as the bedrock of Qur'anic scholarship, moral training, and community leadership [20]. Yet, socio-political instability, poverty, and limited institutional support have weakened its sustainability. Many Qur'anic and tafsir schools in Borno State and other northern regions face inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers [21]. The Boko Haram insurgency has further disrupted Islamic education by displacing scholars, destroying learning centers, and instilling fear among communities [22].

Moreover, language barriers present an ongoing challenge in tafsir pedagogy. Since Arabic remains the language of instruction, many students with limited proficiency struggle to grasp deeper interpretive meanings [23]. Teachers often alternate between Arabic and local languages such as Kanuri or Hausa to bridge this gap, but this can sometimes dilute the depth of interpretation. Another concern is the limited incorporation of contemporary issues, such as

science, social justice, and governance, into tafsir discussions, which restricts students' ability to relate Qur'anic principles to modern realities [24].

Despite these challenges, there are growing prospects for revitalizing tafsir education within halaqat al-'ilmiyyah. Recent initiatives emphasize integrating modern teaching methods, digital resources, and structured syllabi while maintaining the traditional spirit of scholarship [25]. Strengthening collaboration between Islamic institutions and government agencies, improving teacher training, and ensuring security and funding can significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of tafsir study circles. Such reforms would preserve the heritage of tafsir while equipping students to address contemporary moral and intellectual challenges.

Method

This research employed a quantitative and qualitative approach to examine the challenges and prospects of tafsir education in halaqat al-'ilmiyyah (study circles) in Borno State, Nigeria. The combination of these methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by merging numerical data with interpretive insights [26]. The research utilized a mixed-method approach, combining the use of questionnaires for quantitative data and semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights. This design was chosen to capture both measurable trends and personal perspectives, enabling triangulation of data for greater validity and reliability [27]. The questionnaires provided information from students of halaqat al-'ilmiyyah, while interviews captured the experiences of scholars actively involved in tafsir teaching. The population of the research consisted of students and scholars engaged in tafsir education across various halaqat al-'ilmiyyah in Borno State. A purposive sampling technique was adopted, selecting participants who were directly involved in Qur'anic study circles. In total, 100 participants were involved 80 students who responded to questionnaires and 20 scholars who participated in interviews. This sampling ensured that both learners' and instructors' perspectives were adequately represented [28].

Data were collected over three weeks. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the students, and all 80 were retrieved and found valid. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and via telephone where necessary due to distance and security challenges. Notes were manually recorded, and the responses were transcribed for analysis. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained before data collection [29]. The analysis focused on extracting patterns related to teaching challenges, learning barriers, and opportunities for improvement. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards for educational research. Ethical clearance

was obtained from the Department of Islamic Studies, Kashim Ibrahim University, Maiduguri. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, participation was voluntary, and anonymity was maintained by coding responses numerically. The ethical principles of respect, confidentiality, and beneficence were strictly upheld. In summary, this methodology combined quantitative and qualitative techniques to explore the challenges and prospects of tafsir education in halaqat al-'ilmiyyah. The inclusion of both students and scholars ensured a balanced representation of experiences, and the integration of data sources enhanced the validity of the findings. This approach provided a solid empirical foundation for the interpretation and recommendations that follow in the subsequent sections.

Result and Discussion

The results of this research reveal a multifaceted picture of tafsir education in halaqat al-'ilmiyyah in Borno State, Nigeria, characterized by both deep-rooted traditional strengths and critical systemic challenges. When analyzed through the lenses of educational theory and Maqasid al-Shari'ah (the higher objectives of Islamic law), the findings illuminate how tafsir education continues to play a vital role in moral, intellectual, and spiritual development but remains constrained by structural, linguistic, and socio-economic factors that hinder its full potential.

Findings of the Research

The findings from this research provide a comprehensive understanding of the main challenges affecting tafsir education within halaqat al-'ilmiyyah in Borno State. The thematic analysis revealed that one of the primary challenges is the absence of a structured curriculum guiding the teaching of tafsir. Most halaqat operate informally, relying on the personal discretion, experience, and scholarly background of the mufasssir (teacher). This informal arrangement, while deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, has resulted in inconsistencies in the content and methodology of teaching [30]. Some scholars may emphasize linguistic interpretation, others focus on jurisprudential implications, while some approach tafsir from a purely moral perspective. Such diversity, though beneficial in enriching students' perspectives, often leads to fragmentation in learning outcomes and makes it difficult to assess the depth and quality of tafsir education across different circles [31]. Consequently, students may complete their studies without mastering core exegetical principles, such as the rules of interpretation (usul al-tafsir) or contextual understanding of Qur'anic verses.

Another major challenge identified is the issue of linguistic barriers. Arabic is the language of the Glorious Qur'an and the primary medium of

classical tafsir literature. However, many students in Borno State have limited proficiency in Arabic due to the dominance of local languages such as Kanuri, Hausa, and Shuwa Arabic [32]. This linguistic gap restricts direct engagement with Qur'anic texts and commentaries, forcing scholars to translate and interpret materials into local languages during lessons. While this translation practice increases accessibility, it also risks loss of nuance and depth in meaning, as certain Qur'anic expressions and exegetical terminologies are not easily translatable. The linguistic barrier also limits students' exposure to a broad range of classical tafsir works, such as Tafsir Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari or Imam Tafsir al-Qurtubi, which require high-level Arabic literacy [33].

Socio-economic hardship emerged as another significant obstacle affecting tafsir education in halaqat al-'ilmiyyah. Many students who attend these learning circles come from low-income families and rely on limited community support. According to Ibrahim, the lack of financial stability among students often leads to irregular attendance, difficulty in acquiring study materials, and the need to engage in part-time labor to sustain themselves [34]. Similarly, some scholars operating these halaqat do so voluntarily and lack the necessary resources to sustain regular teaching sessions. The result is a decline in the quality of instruction and limited motivation among both teachers and students to pursue long-term study.

In addition, the ongoing security crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State has had devastating effects on the halaqat system. The insurgency has disrupted traditional learning centers, displaced scholars, and instilled fear among communities. Okonkwo and Yusuf note that in Maiduguri and its surrounding several Qur'anic schools and halaqat were destroyed or abandoned during the peak of the conflict in the area [35]. This situation has undermined the traditional institutional structure of Islamic scholarship that was once prominent in the region, reducing opportunities for students to study tafsir under established scholars. Moreover, the insecurity has discouraged community gatherings and limited mobility, making it difficult to sustain regular teaching sessions.

Finally, the research identified a notable resistance to modern teaching methods among many scholars within the halaqat. Although new educational technologies and pedagogical approaches are available, many traditional scholars remain resistant to integrating such innovations into tafsir education [36]. Some fear that modern methods could undermine the spiritual essence and authenticity of Qur'anic learning, while others view them as unnecessary Western impositions. This resistance has hindered the modernization of halaqat and limited their ability to engage younger generations who are increasingly accustomed to interactive, technology-based learning environments. According

to Abdullahi, this reluctance to adapt has widened the gap between traditional tafsir institutions and formal Islamic education systems, reducing the overall impact of halaqat on contemporary Islamic scholarship [37].

Overall, the findings underscore that while halaqat al-'ilmiyyah remain essential for preserving traditional Qur'anic scholarship in Borno State, their effectiveness in tafsir education is constrained by structural, linguistic, socio-economic, and institutional challenges. Addressing these issues requires a balanced approach that respects the traditional spirit of halaqat while adopting practical reforms to enhance their relevance in the modern educational landscape.

Tafsir Education and Contemporary Educational Theories

From the perspective of educational theory, tafsir instruction in halaqat al-'ilmiyyah reflects many elements of constructivist learning, a model which emphasizes learner-centered, interactive, and experience-based education [38],[39]. In these study circles, knowledge is transmitted not merely through formal lectures but through discussion, question-and-answer sessions, and contextual reflection on Qur'anic verses. Students actively construct understanding by linking Qur'anic messages to their social realities. However, the absence of a structured curriculum undermines the full application of constructivist principles. Without a clearly defined sequence of topics and learning objectives, students' progress becomes uneven, and teachers may unintentionally repeat or omit essential themes. This finding harmonized with earlier research by Abdullahi, who noted that many traditional Islamic learning systems in northern Nigeria lack curriculum coherence, leading to inconsistency in pedagogical outcomes [40]. To address this gap, integrating basic curriculum planning rooted in Islamic educational philosophy would harmonize traditional halaqat methods with modern educational structure without compromising authenticity [41].

Linguistic Barriers and Cognitive Accessibility

Language emerged as a major impediment to effective tafsir instruction. The exclusive use of Arabic in some circles limits comprehension for learners whose linguistic proficiency is low. Educational theory stresses that language serves as both a medium and a tool of cognitive development [42]. According to Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development," learners understand better when instruction is scaffold through familiar linguistic principles. Applying such principles to halaqat al-'ilmiyyah, thereby combining Arabic exegesis along with the local languages such as Kanuri or Hausa, enhances comprehension and promotes inclusive learning [43]. This approach is consistent with the Islamic

pedagogical principle of taysir (ease), which aims to make knowledge accessible to all believers, as derived from the Glorious Qur'an:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

Allah intends for you ease, and He does not intend for you hardship [44].

Thus, using local languages (as Kanuri or Hausa) alongside Arabic complements both modern educational theory and the maqasid principle of ḥifz al-'aql (preservation of intellect), ensuring that learning truly benefits the mind and understanding of students.

Socio-Economic Hardship and the Maqasid of Hifz al-Mal

The findings show that socio-economic hardship is a persistent barrier to tafsir education. Many students lack basic materials such as Qur'anic commentaries, notebooks, and access to proper learning spaces. Teachers often conduct lessons voluntarily without financial incentives or institutional support. From a Maqasid al-Shari'ah perspective, such a lack of support undermines the protection of wealth and the protection of life, as it perpetuates financial strain and limits the sustainability of religious learning. Islamic law promotes the fair distribution of wealth and support for education as part of communal responsibility [45]. Therefore, funding and institutional backing from government and NGOs are not merely administrative needs but Shari'ah-based imperatives to preserve the continuity of knowledge transmission and safeguard the welfare of both teachers and learners. This interpretation harmonized with the views of Auda, who emphasizes that the maqasid principle extends beyond individual worship to include societal structures that uphold justice, education, and welfare [46].

Security Challenges and the Maqasid of Hifz al-Nafs

The research also highlights how insecurity, particularly due to insurgency in Borno State, disrupts tafsir education. Many study circles have been displaced or disbanded, and attendance has drastically declined. In educational terms, this represents a disruption of the "learning environment," a main determinant of academic success [47]. From a maqasid viewpoint, the preservation of life (ḥifz al-nafs) is paramount, and any condition that threatens safety undermines the holistic purpose of education in Islam. Islamic governance principles obligate the state to provide security that enables the flourishing of knowledge ('ilm) and worship ('ibadah) [48]. Thus, addressing insecurity is not only a political or social necessity but a religious duty rooted in the maqasid principle. Revitalizing halaqat al-'ilmiyyah requires stable peace and proactive

protection of educational spaces where Qur'anic knowledge can be safely transmitted.

Resistance to Modern Teaching Methods and the Maqasid of Hifz al-Din

A segment of the interviewed scholars expressed reluctance toward modern teaching tools such as audio recorders, microphones, or online platforms. While their concerns stem from a desire to maintain traditional reverence for tafsir, educational modernization (if guided ethically) can complement rather than corrupt traditional pedagogy. According to Bloom's taxonomy, higher levels of learning, such as analysis and synthesis, are enhanced when learners are exposed to diverse teaching methods [49]. From the lens of Maqasid al-Shari'ah, adopting beneficial innovations (masalih mursalah) that promote learning is consistent with hifz al-din (preservation of religion) and hifz al-'aql. As Al-Shatibi argued, Islam encourages adopting any means that serve legitimate ends and enhance understanding of divine revelation. Therefore, incorporating modern teaching tools without violating religious ethics can revitalize tafsir education and expand its reach to digital audiences while maintaining its spiritual integrity [50].

Challenges to Tafsir Education in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah in Borno State

According to Dauda Alhaji Abubakar Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah, a traditional Islamic education system has played an important role in promoting Islamic knowledge and understanding in Borno State. Tafsir education, a fundamental part of Islamic education, is faced with numerous challenges in this system. Despite its significance, Tafsir education in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah in Borno State is confronted with numerous challenges that undermine its effectiveness [51].

Among the most significant concerns, as averred by Kasim Muhammad Ba'ana is the lack of a standard curriculum and teaching methods. Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah defaults to traditional teaching methods, which may not be effective in arousing the interest of students or promoting a greater appreciation of Tafsir. This lack of standardization could lead to inconsistencies in the quality of education received [52].

One of the problems faced by Tafsir education in the area is the lack of access to resources. Shettima Abubakar states that the majority of the Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah in the study area lack the necessary modern resources, including textbooks, libraries, and electronic devices, to support the learning of Tafsir. This

deficiency can undermine the ability of the students to acquire Tafsir studies and have a better understanding of the Qur'an [53].

According to Baba Alkali Modu, who avers that the Boko Haram insurgency has also significantly impacted Tafsir education in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah. The insurgency has led to the displacement of both teachers and students, destruction of educational infrastructure, and insecurity, making it difficult for students to access Tafsir education and other Islamic knowledge. Moreover, it has been observed that the shortage of experienced teachers is another existing issue that confronts Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah. The teachers in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah are not well qualified or experienced enough to teach Tafsir effectively, and this can affect the learning quality [54].

In essence, it has been observed by the researchers that Tafsir education in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah in Borno State is faced with numerous challenges that must be tackled urgently. Solutions to the challenges will require a concerted effort from the government agencies, non-governmental agencies, and the local communities in terms of offering support to Tafsir education and promoting Islamic knowledge and understanding.

Opportunities of Tafsir Education in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah

It has been observed that Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah, provides a unique platform for the spread of Islamic knowledge and insight in Borno and other parts of Nigeria. Tafsir education, a key component of Islamic education, has numerous opportunities for individuals and communities in the study area. Despite the various challenges, Tafsir education in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah in Borno has its own opportunities.

According to Kasim Muhammad Ba'ana that part of the greatest opportunities is Islamic knowledge preservation and sharing. That Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah is a vital institution that shares Islamic knowledge, including Tafsir, with future generations. This supports preservation of the Islamic heritage as well as enhanced comprehension of the Qur'an [55].

The researchers have also observed that Tafsir training in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah also serves as a platform for social cohesion and community engagement. Through the study of Tafsir, one can gain a deeper appreciation of Islamic values and principles, which can increase community harmony and social responsibility. Moreover, Tafsir learning can contribute to personal growth and spiritual maturity. By virtue of reading the Qur'an and its interpretations, one can become closer to Allah and inclined towards a more righteous and compassionate way of living.

Yunus Mustapha opined that Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah could serve as a hub of Islamic intellectual and cultural revival. As Tafsir is promoted, individuals and groups can engage with Islamic scholarship and contribute to the construction of Islamic thinking and culture. Not only that, Tafsir training in Halaqat Al-'Ilmiyyah in the study area offered several opportunities to people and society [56]. By tapping into these opportunities, people can increase their comprehension of the Qur'an, create social cohesion, and contribute towards an Islamic intellectual and cultural renaissance.

Integration of Maqasid and Educational Theory

In integrating the findings, it becomes clear that tafsir education in Borno's halaqat al-'ilmiyyah reflects the holistic objectives of maqasid al-shari'ah. Its spiritual goal corresponds to ḥifẓ al-dīn, its intellectual purpose to ḥifẓ al-'aql, and its social function to ḥifẓ al-nafs and ḥifẓ al-māl. The challenges (curriculum gaps, language barriers, insecurity, and socio-economic hardship) represent areas where the maqasid are not yet fully realized. To harmonize tafsir education more closely with both maqasid and modern educational theory, reforms must focus on three interconnected levels:

1. Pedagogical reform; this will help in developing a structured yet flexible curriculum grounded in Qur'anic pedagogy and learner engagement principles.
2. Socio-Economic support through the institutionalizing funding mechanisms for teachers and students through zakat and waqf models to uphold ḥifẓ al-māl.
3. Technological integration that will lead to embracing educational innovations consistent with Islamic ethics to ensure the preservation and wider dissemination of tafsir knowledge.

Ultimately, tafsir education in Borno State continues to embody Islam's intellectual and moral vision but requires systemic strengthening to fulfill the comprehensive goals of maqasid al-shari'ah. When properly supported, halaqat al-'ilmiyyah can remain vital instruments for nurturing faith, intellect, and social harmony in the contemporary Nigerian context.

Limitations

This research paper has several limitations that need to be acknowledged: The study's focus on Borno State may limit its generalizability to other regions or contexts. Also, the reliance on qualitative data collection methods may introduce bias or limit the representativeness of the findings. Not only that, the ongoing security challenges in the region may have restricted access to certain areas or

individuals, potentially impacting the comprehensiveness of the data collected. In addition, the study's findings are subject to interpretation, and different researchers may draw different conclusions from the same data.

Conclusion

Tafsir education and ḥalaqat al-ʿilmiyyah share a deep historical bond, both aiming to nurture understanding of the Qurʾan and cultivate righteous character. Yet, in the modern era, the survival of this traditional learning model depends on its ability to evolve without compromising its essence. Revitalizing Tafsir education requires collaboration between scholars, institutions, and communities, integrating the moral depth of the ḥalaqat with the tools and methodologies of modern education. Only through such synthesis can Tafsir continue to inspire intellectual and spiritual enlightenment for future generations.

This study investigated the challenges and opportunities of tafsir education in halaqat al-ʿilmiyyah (study circles) within Borno State, Nigeria. Using a mixed-method approach, questionnaires were administered to 80 students, and interviews were conducted with 20 scholars. The study explored the pedagogical, structural, socio-economic, and security-related issues affecting the effective teaching and learning of Qurʾanic exegesis (tafsir). The findings revealed several key challenges:

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is a need to integrate modern and Islamic education and implement a hybrid curriculum that combines traditional Islamic education with modern subjects to enhance the skills and employability of the students.
2. The need for teacher training and capacity building to enhance their subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills in teaching various Qurʾanic sciences.
3. Establish well-equipped libraries, electronic resources, and conducive learning environments to enhance effective teaching and learning.
4. To organize community sensitization initiatives to promote awareness of the importance of Tafsir education and its role in individual and societal development.

5. Establish partnerships with local and international organizations to mobilize funding, expertise, and resources to enhance Tafsir education in Halaqat Al-Ilmiyyah.
6. Implement reforms that integrate Halaqat education into mainstream formal education to allow students to acquire relevant skills and knowledge.
7. To develop higher Islamic colleges that cater to students from the Halaqat, including religious and secular curricula that equip them with the necessary skills for personal development and future employment opportunities.

Author Contributions

Muhammad Bukar Ali Ph.D: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Fatima Muhammad Audu:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Jibrin Muhammad Habib:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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