Challenges Facing Somali Islamic Education Teachers in Implementing 21st Century Teaching Approaches

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Abstract

This article reports on the results of a census survey that explored what Somali secondary school teachers perceived to be the challenges hampering their use of 21st-century teaching approaches in the Islamic Education subject. The survey also examined if the perceived challenges differed significantly by school type (i.e., public versus private) and teaching experience (i.e., extensive, moderate, and minimal). The implementation challenges were categorized into five types: school-related, teacher-related, student-related, subject-related, and approach-related. 200 Islamic Education teachers employed at 53 secondary schools in Hargeisa, the capital city of Somaliland, responded to a 35-item questionnaire adapted from Aldossari (2018). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVAs. The results indicated that the most prevalent challenges were school-related obstacles (e.g., unsuitable classrooms and the lack of educational equipment), with the highest mean rating (M = 3.70). At the same time, teachers' lack of experience and knowledge of 21st-century instructional approaches were the two most widely reported teacher-related obstacles. Private- and public-school teachers differed significantly in their perceptions of teacher-related, subject-related, and approach-related challenges. The ANOVA results suggested that teachers with the greatest amount of teaching experience (i.e., 11 years or more) tend to perceive significantly greater challenges in utilizing 21st-century instructional approaches in the classroom than did their less experienced colleagues. The findings of this study contribute to a clearer understanding of the magnitude of the challenges confronting Islamic Education teachers in Somali secondary schools. It is hoped that the findings can be used to raise the awareness of school leaders and stakeholders in Somaliland and beyond about the challenges facing Islamic Education.

Keywords: *21st-century teaching approaches, student-centred active learning, school-related challenges, teacher-related challenges, student-related challenges, subject-related challenges, approach-related challenge*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a critical component of society's development and progress into the contemporary and challenging the 21st century. The more enlightened the members of a community are, the more capable they will be in terms of contributing to the community's well-being. Education is the fuel that powers the progress of any community. Even more importantly, it fosters the development of the human capital that drives and shapes a nation's technological advancements and economic prosperity. Hence, information and more importantly, knowledge is essential to man's progress and survival in the modern world. Education should not be viewed as just a vehicle for social advancement—it should also be seen as a force for progress in the information age, powered by the wheels of knowledge and research that should gradually lead to growth (Damodharan & Rengarajan, 2007).

Due to the aims that it is expected to achieve, education, therefore, must play a truly effective role in meeting society's needs. It should be designed to develop every student's capacity for creativity, innovation, and critical thought. However, education is not a one-person enterprise. The teacher alone, by himself or herself, cannot single-handedly address the individual differences and developmental needs of all students (Vijayalakshmi, 2019), especially in this era where society's view of teaching has drastically changed in terms of the role that the student or learner must play in the educational process. Traditionally, the only source of information in the classroom has always been the teacher. However, in today's world, the teacher, the student, and the curriculum are regarded as a single entity whose intertwined roles and responsibilities are crucial to the success of the educational process. As a result, any weakness or shortcoming arising from any of the components will have a detrimental effect on the quality of the educational outcomes. One such weakness—which happens to be a major one—is teachers' lack of pedagogical literacy and their inability to be versatile in teaching, the effects of which can be devastating on students' learning outcomes and school performance (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015). Therefore, to be highly effective in the 21st-century classroom, teachers must be eclectic, i.e., they must have the ability to use a variety of teaching methods and approaches that can meet the diverse needs of students and the demands of the modern digital world (Nabhan, 2015).

The need to be pedagogically versatile and competent in today's day and age is especially critical for Islamic Education teachers. The present-day age presents numerous moral and ethical dilemmas for Muslim students and society. Therefore, teachers of Islamic Education must be dynamic enough to handle the practical and moral concerns of the modern world by being instructionally effective, especially in designing and delivering 21st-century instruction. Hence, the way they teach the subject in school matters a great deal. Since Islamic Education is the subject that lays much of the foundation for a moral society, it should therefore be taught as innovatively as possible, where the knowledge and wisdom gained from it can prepare students to meet the changing demands of the modern world in keeping with the Qur'an and *sunnah*. Indeed, the teachings of Islam should be observed in order for modern society to prosper, and it is the duty of Islamic Education teachers to teach students how to practice and maintain such observance. Muslims cannot expect to prosper just by reminiscing and clinging to the glory of Islam's past achievements. Islamic Education teachers,

especially, must be capable of generating new ideas that are practical and pragmatic and subsequently teach students to do the same, failing which Islam may not be seen as a relevant subject to be studied in the contemporary world. However, the present state of the *ummah* suggests that Islamic Education has fallen short of the ability to properly address these concerns, resulting in Muslims and Islam being stigmatized as backward and stagnant (Ashaari et al., 2012).

Currently, in Somaliland, traditional teaching is quickly being transformed by computers and the Internet. Due to advanced technological affordances and rapid globalization, the education world is undergoing a facelift and a changing landscape as it embraces new ideas and new paradigms of teaching and learning, such as heutagogy, cybergogy and peeragogy (Henebery, 2021). But despite these positive technological developments, the country's Qur'anic schools (i.e., the *Dugsis*) have failed to live up to society's expectations as they appear unable to leverage the power of technology and implement new ideas optimally for the benefit of the Islamic Education subject. This has caused society to frown upon the Qur'anic schools and the Islamic Education subject as being retrogressive and irrelevant.

For years, the pedagogy of Islamic Education utilized in Somaliland's Qur'anic schools (i.e., the *Dugsis*) has been dominated by the didactic methods of memorization, repetition, and imitation and impaired by teachers' lack of creativity (Somaliland Ministry of Education ESSP 2017-2021). In addition, resulting from years of stagnation, the teaching methods employed in Islamic education institutions in Somaliland have not seen much improvement. Most Islamic education teachers today are themselves the products of the *Dugsi* school system and have minimal exposure to alternative styles of teaching. Consequently, they tend to perpetuate the instructional styles and strategies they were taught and have little awareness of the need to encourage students to think and reflect and ask questions about what they are learning in class. All these factors have contributed to the further stagnation and dormancy of Islamic Education in Somaliland and, unfortunately, to the inability of the subject to produce students who can think critically and deal with contemporary world challenges.

Genuine criticisms against Islamic Education's didactic teaching methodology have been voiced by Rosnani (2012), who argued that teaching the religious sciences should not be overly reliant on conventional methods such as memorizing ancient books, although it is indisputable that specific basic knowledge that must be mastered and memorized by students is traditionally drawn from such texts. Rather, she argued, students need to see and go through the cognitive processes involved in learning, experiences made possible only by such methods as scientific inquiry, cooperative learning, and problem-solving. However, despite the strong criticisms levied against the conventional teacher-based approaches that permeate the teaching of Islamic Education, it is very crucial to listen to teachers' voices and probe into the obstacles they may encounter when attempting to undertake learner-centred teaching. It is crucial that we examine and address these obstacles and difficulties before holding teachers fully responsible for poor teaching and for the decline of Islamic values and morality and thinking among students.

Statement of the Problem

Myriad studies have investigated the challenges of implementing 21st-century teaching approaches in the classroom (e.g., Chiphiko & Shawa, 2014; Emenyeonu, 2012; Jabbour, 2013) and discovered significant findings on their effectiveness in promoting student thinking and learning (e.g., Ball & Cohen 1999; Johnson, 2011; Sablonnière et al., 2009; Thanh, 2010; Wang, 2011; Windschitl, 2002). However, only a few efforts have examined teachers' perceptions of the challenges in implementing such approaches in the schools in Somaliland (Korir et al., 2018). The study done by Korir et al. (2018) looked at Somali teachers' capacity for and beliefs in student-centred learning and instruction, found three categories of challenges—i.e., student-, teacher-, and curriculum-related factors—to be the most

prevalent difficulties faced by Somali teachers. However, this was discovered in just one study, and the results of a single study are by no means adequate to address the pressing issue. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that there are differences between Korir et al.'s (2018) research and the present study, the most significant one being the field of research examined or the subjects that the respondent teachers taught at school. In Korir et al. (2018), the respondents were randomly chosen teachers of different fields or specializations. In contrast, the present study only involved Somali teachers teaching various Islamic Education subjects in secondary schools in Hargeisa, the capital city of Somaliland. Thus, the study sought to address this gap in the literature by shedding light on the perceptions of Somali Islamic education teachers of the difficulties associated with the use or implementation of 21st-century approaches in teaching the Islamic Education subject in school.

Research Objectives and Questions

The principal objective of this study was to investigate Somali Islamic Education teachers' perceptions of the challenges dealing with the use of 21st-century teaching approaches in the classroom. The challenges were examined in five distinct categories, namely school-, teacher-, student-, subject-, and approach-related challenges. Its secondary objective was to examine if the teachers' perceptions of the five categories of challenges differed significantly by school type and teaching experience. In line with these objectives, the study formulated the following research questions:

1. What are the school-, teacher-, student-, subject-, and approach-related factors that Somali Islamic Education teachers perceive to be the most prevalent challenges in implementing 21-st century teaching approaches?
2. Do Somali Islamic Education teachers' perceptions of the school-, teacher-, student-, subject- and approach-related challenges differ significantly by school type and teaching experience?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Twenty-first-century teaching approaches enhance students' learning processes by allowing them to participate meaningfully and have an active voice in the classroom. These approaches are predicated on the premise that students must define their own learning goals and determine how the goals can be

achieved (Altena, 2017). Although they are widely recognized as highly beneficial for teaching mixed-ability classes (Chien, 2015), 21st-century teaching approaches have certain factors that preclude their use in the classroom. It has been reported that teachers face multiple obstacles in implementing these approaches in their classrooms. These difficulties range from environmental factors to teacher and student factors to subject limitations, and finally to the nature of the 21st-century teaching approaches themselves. Each of these factors is explicated in the subsequent sections of the review.

School-Related Challenges

School-related challenges refer to obstacles associated with school facilities, classrooms, and teachers' administrative roles (Aldossari, 2018). Some of them are:

1. **Class Size:** Numerous studies have identified large class sizes as a hindrance to the implementation of 21st-century teaching approaches (Aksit et al., 2016; Jabbour, 2013). In large classes, student involvement, the range of available learning activities, and the teacher's ability to meet the specific needs of each student are all reduced substantially (Hockings, 2005). For instance, Jabbour (2013) established that overcrowded classrooms were a factor obstructing instructors in Lebanon from adopting 21st-century teaching approaches in a study he did to investigate the reasons impeding teachers from adopting such approaches.

2. **Classroom Space and Setting:** According to reports, the inflexibility of teaching rooms with fixed furniture is a barrier to the adoption of 21st-century teaching approaches (Aksit et al., 2016; Zeki & Guneyli, 2014; Hernandez et al., 2014; Tawalbeh & AlAsmari, 2015). A fixed, forward-facing setting with immovable furniture is just not favorable for collaborative group work. Additionally, areas with immovable furniture hinder instructors and tutors' ability to move freely about a room, resulting in certain groups receiving less help than others (Hernandez et al., 2014).

3. **Teaching aids**: Teachers prepare most of their instructional materials using textbooks. Without materials, teachers may feel uneasy in the classroom (Ljevakociv, 2013). Johnson (2011) discovered that the lack of relevant teaching materials, such as textbooks and pre-made lesson plans, contributed to teachers' confusion about their classroom responsibilities. The lack of teaching materials may cause teachers to lose interest in teaching or resort to employing ineffective teaching methods.

Teacher-Related Challenges

Teacher-related challenges are barriers associated with teachers' qualifications and experience, their ability to deal with classroom management and curriculum planning, and their attitude towards teaching and learning (Aldossari, 2018). Some of the challenges in this category arise from teachers' own conceptions of and attitudes toward teaching**.** To illustrate, instructors' willingness to transfer part of their authority to students through more student-centred techniques is contingent upon the ideas they have about the role of the teacher as defined by their professional organizations (Blumberg, 2016; Jordan et al., 2014; Pham, 2016; Pham, 2010).

According to Kember (1997), teachers may be divided into two categories based on their attitude toward teaching: (1) those that are teacher-centred or content-oriented, and (2) those that are student-centred or learning-centred. Either of these attitudes has a direct influence not only on teachers' teaching styles but also on the learning strategies used by their students. The former category of teachers tends to use didactic and surface-level techniques to execute teaching and evaluation, while those in the latter category are more likely to adopt a learning approach that promotes students' own meaning-making and critical thought development.

Student-Related Challenges

Student-related challenges refer to the obstacles that arise from students themselves, such as their lack of motivation for learning, incapacity to cope with reading materials, unpreparedness to become active members, individual differences (Aldossari, 2018), and ideas about teaching and learning (Lee & Branch, 2017). For instance, most students are accustomed to being passive recipients of knowledge throughout their school years (Aksit al., 2016; Connell et al., 2016; Kember, 2009). With the heavy emphasis on meaningful learning and active participation, students may find it difficult to adapt to 21st-century classrooms (McCabe, O'Connor, & McFarlane, 2008). Students coming from societies where teachers are expected to maintain a distance from learners, in particular, may find it challenging to learn in an instructional environment that is highly student-centred (McFarlane & Berg, 2008; Pham, 2010).

Subject-Related Challenges

Subject-related challenges refer to the obstacles associated with the nature of Islamic Education as a school subject, such as its content, curriculum design, educational objectives and curriculum guide (Aldossari, 2018). The lack of course structure and design that is suitable for implementing 21st-century teaching approaches was identified in the literature as one of the barriers to their adoption and implementation in the classroom by teachers (Jabbour, 2013, An & Reigeluth, 2011, Hew & Brush, 2006). In most countries and educational contexts, teachers have little curriculum flexibility and develop conflicting understandings between 21st-century teaching approaches and what they are required to teach. Teachers are normally prescribed a curriculum implementation guide to follow, thus resulting in many teachers selecting the traditional lecturing method over 21st-century teaching approaches (Pedersen & Liu, 2003).

With Islamic Education, it is likely that teachers have little idea of how to deliver the content (e.g., recitation of Qur'anic verses, *hadith* interpretation and *fiqh* reasoning) innovatively and creatively using 21st-century instructional methods.

Approach-Related Challenges

These are challenges arising from the nature of the 21st-century teaching approaches themselves that obstruct their efficient and successful utilization by teachers in the classroom. Being highly student-centred and hinging on innovativeness, 21st-century instructional methods require extensive time, effort, and cost for their use in the classroom (Aldossari, 2018). The amount of time, effort, and money needed to execute 21st-century teaching pose a significant challenge to their classroom implementation. Teachers often work around a hectic schedule and an overloaded curriculum, resulting in most not having enough time to prepare 21st-century, student-centred lessons (Aksit et al., 2016; Tawalbeh & AlAsmari, 2015). According to Connell et al. (2016), a key step in implementing 21st-century teaching approaches is narrowing the content of a wide curriculum and the scope of what needs to be taught, which most teachers may not have the time for. This is further corroborated by Luckie et al. (2012, as cited in Connell et al., 2016), who saw considerable gains in learning when the breadth of content and materials is reduced. There has to be a change away from the typical focus on the subject's content to concentrate on how students learn and how deeply they can be prompted to do so (Blackie et al., 2010; Connell et al., 2016). Most certainly, meaningful active learning that develops students' capacity for meaning construction will always take longer than traditional lecturing and any chalk-and-talk methods.

Theoretical Framework

According to Hall (2011), a theoretical framework is a set of connected concepts that serve as a guide for conducting research. For this study, the theoretical basis for defining the constructs and their links was the constructivist learning theory, as established by Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and Jean Piaget (1896–1980). Constructivism emerged from a range of previous learning theories, each of which provided significant ideas that impacted our current knowledge. Vygotsky and Piaget united by the concept that the learner is important in that he/she must actively participate in the process of meaningful discovery and development. Vygotsky's social constructivism theory emphasizes social interaction and collaboration in the classroom, stating that "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and then on the individual level; first between people (Inter-psychological), and then within the child (Intra-psychological)" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). According to Piaget's (1968) cognitive constructivism theory, knowledge is something that learners actively construct using their pre-existing cognitive structures. As a result, learning is stage dependent. Cognitivist instructional approaches are designed to aid students in the assimilation of new material into their current knowledge and in modifying their existing intellectual framework to accommodate that information.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The ideal population encompassed all Somali Islamic Education teachers employed in all secondary schools in Somaliland. Their total number was not known to the researcher due to; first, lack of public access to the state records, and second, the researcher directly requested from the Ministry an accurate information; however, the Ministry responded that currently, they do not have the exact number of the Islamic Education teachers operate in Hargeisa. Meanwhile, the target population was defined as 212 Islamic Education teachers teaching at the 53 secondary schools (13 public, 40 private) operating in Hargeisa, the capital city of Somaliland. A total of 200 of the targeted 212 Islamic Education instructors in Hargeisa secondary schools responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 94.3%. A large majority of whom were male (95.5%) and bachelor's degree holders (70.5%). Their further characteristics are described below in Table 1.

Table 1
Sample Demographics (N = 200)

Demography	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
▪ Male	191	95.5
▪ Female	9	4.5
Teaching Experience		
▪ Less than 5 years	71	35.5
▪ 5–10 years	69	34.5
▪ 11 years and more	60	30
Academic Qualification		
▪ Bachelor	141	70.5
▪ Master	57	28.5
▪ PhD	2	1
School Type		
▪ Public School	50	25
▪ Private School	150	75

Instrument

The study used a two-part Likert questionnaire adapted from Aldossari (2018), which was reported to have a good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$). It contained 35 items on the difficulties Somali teachers might face in implementing 21st-century teaching rated on a five-point response category (i.e., "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree"). These anchors were later assigned scores ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly

Agree). Part A of the questionnaire comprised four items on the respondents' demographic information (i.e., gender, school type, academic qualification, and teaching experience), while Part B contained 35 items asking about the following five categories of challenges hampering teachers' efforts to implement 21st-century teaching approaches in the Islamic Education subject: (1) school-related challenges; (2) teacher-related challenges; (3) student-related challenges; (4) subject-related challenges; and (5) approach-related challenges. The 35 adapted items were validated by a panel of experts for content validity. Based on data from a pilot test, the questionnaire's reliability was found to be acceptable, with estimates ranging from $\alpha = .79$ to $\alpha = 0.89$ for all five constructs.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher first visited the Somaliland Ministry of Education and Higher Studies to acquire their permission to conduct the survey in the secondary schools in Hargeisa. After acquiring the Ministry's approval, he visited all 53 schools to request their participation in the study and administered the survey questionnaire to the Islamic Education teachers at each school. Data obtained from the teachers were analyzed using descriptive (i.e., means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (i.e., one-way ANOVA and independent samples t-test). The descriptive statistics were used to report the respondents' demographic data and to summarize the distribution of their responses to the 35 Likert items addressing the study's first research question. Significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the challenges by school type were determined using an independent samples t-test, while a one-way ANOVA was utilized to examine differences by teaching experience.

RESULTS

Somali teachers' distribution of responses to the 35 statements on their 21st-century teaching challenges is presented in the following five sections.

School-Related Challenges

The teachers' perceptions of the school-related challenges are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2
School-Related Challenges in Implementing 21st-Century Teaching Approaches (N = 200)

Item	Response Categories			M	STD
	SA & A	N	D & SD		
1. Unsuitable classrooms	183 (91.5)	14 (7.0)	3 (1.5)	4.15	0.599
2. Lack of educational equipment	154 (77.0)	28 (14.0)	18 (9.0)	4.00	0.786
3. Large class sizes	133 (66.5)	29 (14.5)	38 (19.0)	3.68	1.006
4. The school administration's lack of support and motivating for teachers	115 (57.5)	37 (18.5)	48 (24.0)	3.47	1.202
5. The school administration's general lack of interest	112 (56.0)	26 (13.0)	62 (31.0)	3.35	1.189
6. The school administration's not encouraging teachers to apply the approaches	110 (55.0)	39 (19.5)	51 (25.5)	3.39	1.150
7. The overload of administrative responsibilities assigned to teachers	104 (52.0)	46 (23.0)	50 (25.0)	3.36	1.098
		Average Mean		3.70	

Notes. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; M = Mean; STD = Standard Deviation

As can be observed in Table 2, classrooms unsuitable for the use of 21st-century teaching presented the biggest school-related challenge to the respondents (91.5%), followed by "the lack of educational equipment" (77.0%) and "large class sizes" (66.5%). These challenges were the top three difficulties encountered by the Somali Islamic Education teachers in implementing the approaches endorsed by more than 66.0% of the sample. Lesser percentages of agreement were observed for the challenges arising from the school administration's lack of motivational support (57.5%) and encouragement (55.0%) for teachers who wished to implement the approaches, in addition to the schools' "general lack of interest" in the effort (56.0%).

Meanwhile, the least school-related obstacle was "administrative responsibilities", which was reported by 52.0% of the respondents. The mean value for this construct was M = 3.70, which is quite close to the 4.0 mark, suggesting a solid respondent agreement that school-related factors did indeed present a challenge to the teachers.

Teacher-Related Challenges

Table 3 shows the teachers' responses to the eight items measuring the challenges of implementing 21st-century teaching approaches associated with the teachers themselves.

Table 3

Teacher-Related Challenges in Implementing 21st-Century Teaching Approaches (N = 200)

Item	Response Categories			M	STD
	SA & A	N	D & SD		
1. Teachers' lack of experience in using the 21st-century teaching approaches	139 (69.5)	28 (14.0)	33 (15.5)	3.66	0.937
2. Teachers' poor knowledge and understanding of the 21st-century teaching approaches	116 (58.0)	23 (11.5)	61 (30.5)	3.27	1.266
3. Teachers' lack of conviction in using 21st-century teaching approaches	92 (46.0)	46 (23.0)	62 (31.0)	3.09	1.157
4. Teachers' lack of qualification for the teaching profession	91 (45.5)	32 (16.0)	77 (38.5)	3.07	1.315
5. The teacher believes that order and discipline inside the classroom can only be achieved through traditional teaching methods	91 (45.5)	30 (15.0)	79 (39.5)	3.02	1.280
6. The teacher believes it is safer to use traditional teaching methods	89 (44.5)	50 (25.0)	61 (30.0)	3.12	1.229
7. Teachers' own inability to prepare 21st-century lessons	87 (43.5)	38 (19.0)	75 (37.5)	3.01	1.288
8. Teachers' belief that 21st-century teaching approaches are an absurdity leading to chaos	58 (29.0)	44 (22.0)	98 (49.0)	2.66	1.259
			Average Mean	3.11	

Notes. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; M = Mean; STD = Standard Deviation

As shown in Table 3, the biggest challenge associated with the teachers themselves was their "lack of experience" in using the approaches. This difficulty was reported by 69.5% of the sample. The second biggest teacher-related challenge was "poor knowledge and understanding of 21st-century teaching approaches" (58.0%). These challenges were the top two teacher-

related difficulties reported by the respondents. Almost the same percentages of the agreement were reported for four challenges, namely the teachers' "lack of conviction" (46.0%), "lack of qualification" (45.5%), worry over "classroom order and discipline" (45.5%), and their belief in the security of traditional teaching methods over 21st-century approaches (44.5%). About the same percentage of the sample also felt they did not have the ability "to prepare 21st-century lessons" (43.5%). Conversely, the least teacher-related obstacle was the teachers' belief that "21st-century teaching approaches are an absurdity leading to chaos" (29.0%), where close to half of the teachers *did not* support this assertion (49.0%). Overall, the mean value for the construct of teacher-related challenges hampering Somali Islamic Education teachers' use of 21st-century teaching approaches was M = 3.11, indicating just a partial agreement among the respondents that the challenges they faced in this regard had anything to do with them.

Student-Related Challenges

Table 4 shows the results of the respondents' perceptions of six items suggesting probable student-related obstacles that hampered their implementation of 21st-century teaching approaches in the classroom.

Table 4
Student-Related Challenges in Implementing 21st-Century Teaching Approaches (N = 200)

Item	Response Categories			M	STD
	SA & A	N	D & SD		
1. Students lack the culture of dialogue and discussion as they are used to traditional methods of learning	117 (58.5)	26 (13.0)	57 (28.5)	3.37	1.304
2. Students lack learning motivation	114 (57.0)	31 (15.5)	55 (27.5)	3.33	1.228
3. The differences in student interest in the methods of 21st-century learning	98 (49.0)	46 (23.0)	56 (28.0)	3.25	1.167
4. Students prefer traditional teaching methods as they are not required to be active	94 (47.0)	31 (15.5)	75 (37.5)	3.08	1.288
5. The poor achievement of some students makes teachers prefer traditional methods	93 (46.5)	38 (19.0)	69 (34.5)	3.11	1.229
6. Students find difficulty in adapting to the skills and activities of 21st-century teaching approaches	90 (45.0)	40 (20.0)	70 (35.0)	3.09	1.208
			Average Mean	3.20	

Note.: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; M = Mean; STD = Standard Deviation

As Table 4 shows, two factors, i.e., students' "lacking the culture of dialogue and discussion" (58.5%) and their "lack of motivation" (57.0%), were seen as the biggest student-related challenges by the Somali teachers of Islamic Education. A much lesser challenge perceived by the teachers was "students' varying levels of interest in 21st-century methods of learning" (49.0%). Meanwhile, similar ratings were recorded for "students' preference for traditional teaching" (47.0%), "the poor achievement of some students" (46.5%), and the "difficulties students find in adopting 21st-century teaching approaches" (45.0%). The mean value for this construct was M = 3.20, which indicates a moderate rating of student-related factors as obstacles to teachers' use of the approaches.

Subject-Related Challenges

Table 5 shows the teachers' perceptions of the subject-related challenges they encountered in implementing 21st-century teaching approaches.

Table 5

Subject-Related Challenges in Implementing 21st-Century Teaching Approaches (N = 200)

Item	Response Categories			M	STD
	SA & A	N	D & SD		
1. The Teacher's Guide does not include explanations of how to use 21st-century teaching approaches	106 (53.0)	27 (13.5)	67 (33.5)	3.19	1.319
2. The difficulty of linking the subject content to the practical life of students	105 (52.5)	27 (13.5)	68 (34.0)	3.19	1.342
3. The objectives of the subject do not consider developing students' research and thinking skills	98 (49.0)	30 (15.0)	72 (36.0)	3.10	1.328
4. The lack of topics that are exciting and thrilling to promote 21st-century teaching approaches	95 (47.5)	33 (16.5)	72 (36.0)	3.07	1.290
5. There are no model lessons for 21st-century teaching approaches	93 (46.5)	34 (17.0)	73 (36.5)	3.14	1.288
6. The difficulty of transforming the subject content according to the 21st-century teaching approaches	85 (42.5)	31 (15.5)	84 (42.0)	2.97	1.335
7. The nature of the subject content is difficult to teach using 21st-century teaching approaches	84 (42.0)	46 (23.0)	70 (35.0)	3.00	1.248

Table 5

Continued

Item	Response Categories			M	STD
	SA & A	N	D & SD		
8. The teaching objectives of the subject do not match with achieving 21st-century teaching approaches	81 (40.5)	40 (20.0)	79 (39.5)	2.99	1.266
		Average Mean		3.08	

Notes. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; M = Mean; STD = Standard Deviation

Based on Table 5, the highest percentage of agreement about subject-related challenges was "the lack of teachers' guide," which was supported by 53.0% of the sample. This was followed closely by the challenges arising from "the difficulty of linking the subject's content to students' lives" (52.5%). Challenges arising from the "objectives of the subject" (49.0%), "the lack of thrilling topics" (47.5%) and "no model lessons" (46.5%) showed almost similar percentages of agreement. Moreover, almost a similar number of respondents agreed that "the difficulty of transforming the subject content according to the 21st-century teaching approaches" (42.5%) and "the nature of the subject content" (42.0%, n = 84) constituted teaching obstacles. Meanwhile, the least of the subject-related challenges was that the "objectives of the subject do not match the use of 21st-century teaching approaches" (40.5%). Overall, the mean value for this construct was M = 3.08, suggesting a partial or moderate respondent agreement that school-related factors presented a challenge to the teachers.

Approach-Related Challenges

Table 6 contains the results of the respondents' agreement on six items dealing with the difficulties that arise from the nature of the 21st-century teaching approaches themselves.

Table 6

Approach-Related Challenges in Implementing 21st-Century Teaching Approaches (N = 200)

Item	Response Categories			M	STD
	SA & A	N	D & SD		
1. The need to train teachers intensively to use the 21st-century teaching approaches	158 (79.0)	28 (14.0)	14 (7.0)	3.99	0.830
2. The high cost of the material required to implement 21st-century teaching approaches	107 (53.5)	27 (13.5)	66 (22.0)	3.27	1.258
3. 21st-century teaching approaches require great effort to prepare and implement	105 (52.5)	34 (17.0)	61 (30.5)	3.27	1.279

Table 6
Continued

Item	Response Categories			M	STD
	SA & A	N	D & SD		
4. The use of 21st-century teaching approaches takes more time to put into practice	92 (46.0)	28 (14.0)	80 (40.0)	3.06	1.271
5. 21st-century teaching approaches take a long time to prepare	89 (44.5)	43 (21.5)	68 (34.0)	3.08	1.196
6. The range and diversity of classroom activities needed to successfully implement 21st-century teaching approaches	88 (44.0)	54 (27.0)	58 (29.0)	3.14	1.248
			Average Mean	3.30	

Notes. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; M = Mean; STD = Standard Deviation

As shown in Table 6, 79.0% of the teachers felt the need to be given extensive training in 21st-century teaching approaches as their incompetency in it was seen as the biggest challenge in this category. The second biggest approach-related challenge was "the high cost of the material" required by such approaches (53.5%), followed next by "the great effort required to prepare and implement" 21st-century lessons (52.5%). These challenges were the top three approach-related difficulties encountered by the respondents in implementing 21st-century teaching in the Islamic Education classroom, endorsed by more than half of the sample. Meanwhile, less than half of the sample, in roughly similar percentages of agreement, felt that the approaches required extensive time to put into practice (46.0%) and to prepare the lessons (44.5%). They also felt challenged by "the range and diversity of classroom activities needed to implement" if they were to adopt the approaches (44.0%).

Overall, the mean value for the construct of approach-related challenges precluding Somali Islamic Education teachers' use of 21st-century teaching approaches was M = 3.30, indicating a moderate agreement among the respondents that approach-related factors posed some degree of difficulty for them.

Ranking of Challenges

To determine the order of challenges posed by the five constructs and to compare them in their degree of difficulty as perceived by the respondents, the mean and standard deviation of each construct were extracted separately and are tabulated in Table 7.

Table 7

Order of Teaching Challenges by Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD)

Construct	M	SD
1. School-related challenges	3.70	0.579
2. Approach-related challenges	3.30	0.836
3. Student-related challenges	3.20	0.824
4. Teacher-related challenges	3.11	0.792
5. Subject-related challenges	3.08	0.917

According to the data in Table 7, the most prominent challenges in implementing 21st-century teaching approaches in Islamic Education were those associated with the school (M = 3.70, SD = 0.58), followed by challenges arising from the nature of 21st-century teaching approaches themselves (M = 3.30, SD = 0.86). The least of the challenges perceived by the teachers were those in the category of student-related factors (M = 3.20, SD = 3.08). Based on the means, none of the values exceeded the 4.0 mark, which would indicate a solid agreement that the categories of challenges cumulatively presented substantial difficulties that hampered Somali teachers' use of 21st-century teaching approaches in the Islamic Education subject. Conclusively, it can be deduced that Somali teachers' perceptions of the challenges across the five categories were just moderate as all the means fell within the range of 3 and 3.7, showing a neutral position on the part of the teachers or their partial agreement that the challenges were obtrusive.

Differences in Somali Islamic Education Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges by School Type

School type in this study consisted of two categories, i.e., private (n = 150) and public (n = 50) schools, while the challenges were of five distinct categories. Hence, five independent samples *t*-tests were run to decide if teachers from the private and public schools in Hargeisa had perceived significantly different challenges in teaching using 21st-century approaches. The results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Perceived Challenges in Implementing 21st-Century Teaching Approaches in Islamic Education: Differences by School Type (N = 200)

Category of Challenges	School Type	M	t-statistic	*p*-value	Cohen's *d*
1. School-related challenges	Private	3.66	0.269	0.788	NA
	Public	3.63			
2. Teacher-related challenges	Private	3.05	-2.025	0.044	0.33
	Public	3.31			
3. Student-related challenges	Private	3.15	-1.464	0.145	NA
	Public	3.35			
4. Subject-related challenges	Private	2.97	-3.085	0.002	0.51
	Public	3.42			
5. Approach-related challenges	Private	3.23	-2.032	0.043	0.33
	Public	3.51			

Notes. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; NA = Not Applicable for Non-Significant Differences

The mean scores in Table 8 indicate some differences in the respondents' perceptions of the teaching challenges, with the public-school teachers reporting greater difficulties in four categories of challenges, namely those associated with teachers, students, the nature of Islamic Education as a school subject and the 21st-century teaching approaches themselves. However, not all of these differences were statistically significant. Out of the five categories, the differences were statistically significant for three types of challenges where the public-school teachers had perceived significantly greater difficulties, namely teacher-related (M = 3.31, SD = 0.80), t(49) = -2.03, *p* = 0.044, *d* = 0.33); subject-related (M = 3.42, SD = 0.84), t(49) = -3.09, *p* = 0.002, *d* = 0.51); and approach-related challenges (M = 3.51, SD = 0.89), t(49) = -2.03, *p* = 0.043, *d* = 0.33). The effect sizes of these differences, however, were small and negligible for the teacher- and approach-related challenges and only moderate for the subject-related category of challenges.

Differences in Somali Islamic Education Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges by Teaching Experience

To determine if the perceived challenges differed significantly by teaching experience, a series of one-way ANOVAs were performed. In this analysis, teaching experience was divided into three distinct categories, namely (1) less than 5 years, (2) between 5 to 10 years, and (3) 11 years or more. The results of the ANOVAs are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Perceived Challenges in Implementing 21st-Century Teaching Approaches in Islamic Education: Differences by Teaching Experience (N = 200)

Challenges		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School-related challenges	Between Groups	2	1.069	3.254	0.041
	Within Groups	197	0.329		
Teacher-related challenges	Between Groups	2	0.047	0.074	0.929
	Within Groups	197	0.634		
Student-related challenges	Between Groups	2	1.013	1.496	0.227
	Within Groups	197	0.677		
Subject-related challenges	Between Groups	2	0.438	0.518	0.596
	Within Groups	197	0.846		
Approach-related challenges	Between Groups	2	0.665	0.949	0.389
	Within Groups	197	0.701		

The ANOVA results given in Table 4.9 show the main effect of teaching experience in only one category of the challenges, namely school-related challenges, $F(2, 197) = 3.254$, $p = .041$. This indicates that there was at least one significant difference between the teaching experience groups on the school-related challenges. Post-hoc analyses using Tukey's HSD indicated that the significant difference lay between teachers with 11 years or more of teaching experience (M =3.78, SD = 0.65) and their counterparts with less than 5 years of teaching in the school system (M = 3.53, SD = 0.43), $p = 0.032$. Apparently, teachers with more experience had perceived significantly greater school-related challenges than did their less experienced counterparts by a slight .25 point. As expected, the effect size of the difference was small and negligible at Cohen's $d = 0.45$. In addition, no significant difference was observed between the well-experienced teachers (M =3.78, SD = 0.65) and those who were moderately experienced (i.e., with 5 to 10 years of teaching in the school system) (M = 3.67, SD = 0.62), $p = .48$. Similarly, the moderately experienced group (M = 3.67, SD = 0.62) did not differ significantly with the least experienced group (M = 3.53, SD = 0.43), $p = .33$. These figures and results are summarized in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics of Group Differences by Teaching Experience (N = 200)

Teaching Experience	N	M	SD
Less than 5 years	71	3.53	0.43
5 – 10 years	69	3.67	0.62
11 years and more	60	3.78	0.65

Table 11
Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Test Results

(I) Teaching Experience	(J) Teaching Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Less than 5 years	5 – 10 years	-.13850	.328
	11 years and more	-.25516[*]	.032
5 – 10 years	Less than 5 years	.13850	.328
	11 years and more	-.11667	.483
11 years and more	Less than 5 years	.25516[*]	.032
	5 – 10 years	.11667	.483

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The survey results showed "unsuitable classrooms" to be the most prevalent school-related challenge the Somali teachers faced when undertaking to implement 21st-century teaching in Islamic Education. The same challenge was reported in several different studies, such as Guneyli and Zeki (2014), Aksit et al. (2016), and Tawalbeh and AlAsmari (2015). All investigations concluded that a traditional classroom setting with permanent, forward-facing seating arrangement and immovable furniture is simply not favorable to 21st-century teaching where collaborative group work and other active learning activities are expected to be conducted. Apart from the traditional classroom setting, teachers were also hampered by the lack of proper equipment needed to support 21st-century teaching.

In addition, the respondents agreed that their lack of experience, knowledge and understanding of using 21st-century instructional methods was the biggest obstacle in their classroom utilization of the methods. These reports only served to highlight how Islamic Education teachers needed to be given greater exposure to the many faces of 21st-century teaching, the methods they can employ towards this objective, and the various effective ways to implement them. Johnson (2011) found the same results as this study, reporting that instructors faced significant challenges due to their lack of knowledge and professional training.

The study also discovered students' lacking the culture of dialogue and discussion to be the most pressing student-related problem in teachers' implementation of 21st-century teaching. This turned out to be a problem for teachers as students are used to passive learning in traditional

classrooms, which do not require them to voice out their views and argue about ideas. McFarlane and Berg (2008) discovered that innovative ways of learning, such as inquiry, problem-solving and group work, could not be sustained as students preferred to return to more traditional methods of instruction, feeling safer in such classes. Also, according to Tawalbeh and AlAsmari's (2015) survey, 77.1 percent of instructors said that a barrier to 21st-century teaching methodologies was student attitude. Thus, instructors must ensure that students are appropriately familiarized with the 21st-century teaching environment where they take on greater responsibility for their own learning and understand the myriad opportunities for cognitive growth and moral development that 21st-century teaching provides (Lee & Branch, 2017). Being able to see these wonderful opportunities and the benefits of their engagement will work to improve students' attitudes toward active learning.

For subject-related challenges, the biggest difficulty faced by the respondents was the ill-alignment between the instructional objectives of the Islamic Education subject and the goals of using 21st-century teaching approaches. This considerably hindered the teachers' use of such approaches in teaching Islamic Education. The same finding was identified in the literature as one of the major barriers to the adoption of 21st-century instruction (Jabbour, 2013, An & Reigeluth, 2011). For instance, Jabbour (2013) showed that all the teachers in his study reported that the intensity of the standard curriculum negatively influenced their acceptance of 21st-century teaching approaches. Also, in terms of approach-related challenges, the study found the need for training teachers extensively on how to use 21st-century teaching methods and strategies. Teachers' lack of know-how appeared to be the greatest obstacle, necessitating the conduct of relevant pedagogical training and professional development workshops to improve their procedural skills. On top of this, teachers also need to be further educated in terms of choosing the right materials and resources for student-centred active learning. These findings support those found in previous research; that is, the amount of effort, cost, and materials required to plan and implement 21st-century teaching does pose a significant hindrance to teachers' utilization of the approaches in the classroom (Aksit et al., 2016; Tawalbeh & AlAsmari, 2015).

In summary, the most significant challenges to the implementation of 21st-century teaching approaches in Islamic Education, according to the respondents, were school-related, followed by challenges associated with the nature of 21st-century teaching approaches themselves and with various student issues. The fourth category of difficulties stemmed from teacher-associated factors, while the least of the challenges, according to the respondents, were related to Islamic Education as a school subject. The overall level of challenges was moderate, suggesting that the difficulties may not be too overwhelming and could be reasonably resolved given the proper measures. In conclusion, the results replicated the findings of other studies, including those of Al-Humizi (2007) and Al-Dossari (2018).

With respect to differences in the respondents' perceptions, the t-test results indicated no statistically significant variations between the private- and public-school teachers in two categories of challenges, i.e., those related to the school and students at p values larger than 0.05. However, significant differences were observed in the other three categories of challenges (i.e., teacher-related, subject-related, and approach-related challenges) in favour of public-

school teachers, whose mean score was higher than that of their private school counterparts. Essentially, this can be taken to mean that public school teachers felt significantly greater challenges compared to private school teachers in implementing 21st-century teaching approaches in Islamic Education. This discovery supported the concerns raised by educationists on the declining quality of Somaliland's public schools. Criticisms were levied against the Ministry of Education for their inability to find a solution to halt the decline. It was a great cause of concern that students in public schools consistently demonstrated lower academic achievements than those in private learning institutions (Center for Policy Analysis, 2019), a situation that was seen to be related to teachers' didactic and uncreative approaches to teaching and the use of ineffective instructional strategies.

In terms of teaching experience, the ANOVA results showed that there was at least one category of challenges where the Somali teachers differed, and that was regarding school-related challenges. The post-hoc Tukey HSD test pointed out where the difference lay, and it was discovered that teachers with the greatest number of years in the service significantly differed from their less experienced counterparts in their perception of the challenges. The remaining four types of challenges saw teachers with varying degrees of classroom experience having more or less the same perceptions of difficulties in implementing 21st-century teaching. The statistics allowed the study to conclude that newer teachers with less experience in the teaching profession encountered fewer challenges with 21st-century instruction than those with more extensive experience. This could be due to the fact that older, more experienced teachers have grown accustomed to the old ways of teaching—so much so that changing their instructional methods would require a substantial paradigm shift that brings along with it a significant degree of difficulty. In comparison, younger teachers with less experience are more likely to embrace the change and more likely to report fewer obstacles in adopting 21st-century methods. These results contradicted those found in earlier studies, i.e., Kartini et al. (2010), Zafer and Aslihan (2012), and Fatma and Tugay (2015), where more experienced teachers reported fewer challenges than less experienced ones. However, the findings of this study are supported by those of (Mahfooz Ul Haq & Akhtar, 2013) and Maolosi (2013), who discovered that a teacher's years of experience become a challenge to their ability to engage students and their teaching methods, as they can become less motivated as a result of long years of service and fatigue.

CONCLUSION

The findings contribute to a clearer understanding of the magnitude of the challenges confronting Islamic Education teachers in Somali secondary schools in their effort to implement 21st-century teaching. It was clear that the teachers were hampered by unsuitable classrooms, the lack of educational equipment, large class sizes and their own inadequate knowledge about 21st-century instructional approaches. Thus, they need to be supported in their effort to embrace this paradigm shift by being given proper training on how to use strategies like cooperative learning, inquiry, technology-enhanced active learning (TEAL), and the flipped classroom in their Islamic Education classes. Such training will better prepare these teachers for innovative 21st-century teaching and embrace the paradigm shift.

It is hoped that the findings of this study can be used to raise the awareness of school leaders and stakeholders in Somaliland—and beyond—about the challenges facing Islamic Education teachers. Those in authority should acknowledge the need to improve the quality of instruction for Islamic Education by increasing the pedagogical content knowledge and teaching styles of its teachers. Hence, the study recommends the conduct of further and more in-depth research into the initiatives and solutions that may be undertaken to overcome these challenges that stand in the progress of Islamic Education into the 21st century.

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