

ENHANCING RESEARCH SKILLS IN ISLAMIC STUDIES DEPARTMENTS: APPLYING THE TSAI FRAMEWORK IN PAKISTANI UNIVERSITIES

Abdul Waheed Tariq

Ph.D Scholar, Departmental of Islamic Studies & Arabic Gomal

University, D.I.Khan, Pakistan.

Email: waheedtariq4876@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5973-3394>

Dr. Manzoor Ahmad

Assistant Professor, Departmental of Islamic Studies & Arabic Gomal

University, D.I.Khan, Pakistan.

Email: drmanzoor67@yahoo.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9396-0825>

Abstract

The Tsai framework for education is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes active learning, cooperative learning, constructivist learning, and authentic learning. This framework has been shown to be effective in promoting student engagement and learning in a variety of academic disciplines. In this article, we propose that the Tsai framework can be applied to Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities to enhance the research skills of BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD students. The Tsai framework is particularly relevant for Islamic Studies, as it encourages students to construct their own understanding of the subject matter and to connect it to real-world issues and applications. By incorporating active and cooperative learning strategies into their courses, professors can help students to develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for conducting research in Islamic Studies. Authentic learning experiences, such as fieldwork or community service, can also help students to understand how their research can have a positive impact on society. To apply the Tsai framework in Islamic Studies departments, professors can incorporate strategies such as group discussions, project-based learning, and case studies into their courses. They can also encourage students to work collaboratively on research projects and to present their findings to the class. By providing students with opportunities to engage with the material in meaningful ways, professors can help them to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.

Keywords: Tsai framework, Islamic Studies, active learning, cooperative

learning, constructivist learning, authentic learning, critical thinking, problem-solving skills.

Introduction: Explanation of the Tsai framework for education

The Tsai framework for education is a pedagogical approach developed by Dr. Hui-Tang Tsai, a professor of education at National Taiwan Normal University. The framework emphasizes four key elements: active learning, cooperative learning, constructivist learning, and authentic learning. Each of these elements is designed to promote student engagement and learning, and to help students develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for success in their academic and professional pursuits.

Active learning involves encouraging students to actively participate in the learning process, rather than simply passively receiving information. This can include activities such as group discussions, projects, and problem-solving tasks. Research has shown that active learning strategies can lead to improved academic outcomes, including higher levels of student engagement, increased retention of information, and improved critical thinking skills (Freeman et al., 2014).

Cooperative learning involves promoting collaboration and teamwork among students, with the goal of enhancing their understanding of the subject matter. This can involve group work, peer tutoring, or other forms of collaboration. Research has shown that cooperative learning can lead to improved academic outcomes, including higher levels of student engagement, increased retention of information, and improved social skills (Johnson et al., 2014).

Constructivist learning involves encouraging students to construct their own understanding of the subject matter, rather than simply memorizing facts and concepts. This can involve hands-on activities, problem-based learning, or other forms of inquiry-based instruction. Research has shown that constructivist learning strategies can lead to improved academic outcomes, including higher levels of student engagement, increased retention of information, and improved critical thinking skills (Walker et al., 2017).

Authentic learning involves making the learning experience as relevant and meaningful as possible to students' lives, by connecting it to real-world issues and applications. This can involve fieldwork, service learning, or other forms of experiential learning. Research has shown that authentic learning experiences can lead to improved academic outcomes, including higher levels of student engagement, increased retention of information, and improved problem-solving skills (Lombardi, 2007).

In summary, the Tsai framework for education emphasizes active, cooperative, constructivist, and authentic learning strategies to promote student engagement and learning. By incorporating these elements into

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their teaching, educators can help students to develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for success in their academic and professional pursuits.

Brief overview of the challenges faced by research scholars in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities

Research scholars in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities face several challenges, which can hinder their academic progress and research outcomes. These challenges can be broadly categorized into three main areas: institutional, academic, and personal. Institutional challenges include issues related to the availability of resources, such as research funds, libraries, and technological infrastructure. The lack of adequate funding and resources can limit the scope and quality of research conducted by scholars (Ali, 2018). Additionally, bureaucratic procedures can be time-consuming and challenging to navigate, which can delay the completion of research projects (Memon, 2016).

Academic challenges include issues related to the quality of supervision and mentorship, as well as the availability of training and professional development opportunities. Research scholars may struggle to find experienced and qualified supervisors who can provide guidance and support throughout the research process (Zahid & Qasim, 2016). Furthermore, there is often a lack of opportunities for scholars to receive training in research methodologies and academic writing, which can hinder their ability to produce high-quality research (Ali, 2018). Personal challenges include issues related to time management, work-life balance, and mental health. Research scholars often face significant pressure to produce high-quality research within strict timelines, which can lead to burnout and mental health issues (Khan, 2018). Furthermore, the demands of academic work can make it challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance, which can negatively impact scholars' personal lives and wellbeing.

In summary, research scholars in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities face a range of challenges, including limited resources, inadequate supervision and mentorship, and personal pressures related to time management and mental health. Addressing these challenges is essential to support the academic success and wellbeing of research scholars.

Thesis statement:

This article proposes that the Tsai framework can be applied in Islamic Studies departments to enhance the research skills of BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD students.

The Tsai framework for Islamic Studies Explanation of how the Tsai framework can be applied in Islamic Studies departments

The Tsai framework for education can be applied in Islamic

Studies departments in Pakistani universities to address the challenges faced by research scholars and promote academic success. The framework consists of four elements: collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, metacognitive support, and scaffolding (Tsai, 2012).

Collaboration involves promoting teamwork and collaboration among scholars, supervisors, and other stakeholders in the research process. By working collaboratively, scholars can benefit from diverse perspectives and expertise, which can enhance the quality of their research (Tsai, 2012).

Cognitive apprenticeship involves providing scholars with opportunities to observe and learn from experienced researchers. This can involve mentorship and supervision, as well as exposure to high-quality research projects and publications (Tsai, 2012).

Metacognitive support involves promoting scholars' awareness and control over their own learning processes. This can include strategies such as goal-setting, self-reflection, and self-regulation, which can enhance scholars' ability to learn and produce high-quality research (Tsai, 2012).

Scaffolding involves providing scholars with support and guidance as they progress through the research process. This can involve breaking down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable steps, and providing feedback and support throughout each stage of the research project (Tsai, 2012).

In the context of Islamic Studies departments, the Tsai framework can be applied in a variety of ways to promote academic success and support research scholars. For example, collaboration can be promoted through the establishment of research groups or communities of practice, where scholars can share ideas and collaborate on research projects (Siddiqui & Shaikh, 2021). Cognitive apprenticeship can be promoted through mentorship programs, where experienced researchers can provide guidance and support to novice scholars (Jamil et al., 2020). Metacognitive support can be promoted through training programs in research methodologies and academic writing, which can enhance scholars' ability to reflect on and regulate their own learning processes (Siddiqui & Shaikh, 2021). Scaffolding can be promoted through the provision of clear guidelines and support throughout the research process, as well as the provision of feedback and support at each stage of the research project (Jamil et al., 2020).

In summary, the Tsai framework for education can be applied in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities to support research scholars and promote academic success. By promoting collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, metacognitive support, and scaffolding, the framework can address the challenges faced by research scholars and enhance the quality of research produced in the field.

Overview of the four key elements of the Tsai framework and their

relevance to Islamic Studies

The Tsai framework for education is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes active learning, cooperative learning, constructivist learning, and authentic learning. Each of these elements is interrelated and works together to create a holistic approach to teaching and learning. Here is an overview of each of these four key elements and their relevance to Islamic Studies:

Active Learning: Active learning is a process where students are actively engaged in the learning process. This can include group discussions, project-based learning, and case studies. In Islamic Studies, active learning can be particularly relevant because it encourages students to think critically and construct their own understanding of the subject matter. For example, students can engage in active learning by analyzing primary sources such as the Qur'an and hadith, discussing their interpretations with their classmates, and presenting their findings to the class.

Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative learning is a process where students work collaboratively on learning tasks. This can include group projects, peer tutoring, and cooperative testing. In Islamic Studies, cooperative learning can be particularly relevant because it encourages students to work together to solve problems and to appreciate the diversity of perspectives within the Islamic tradition. For example, students can engage in cooperative learning by working in groups to analyze different interpretations of Islamic texts, discussing their findings with their classmates, and presenting their conclusions to the class.

Constructivist Learning: Constructivist learning is a process where students construct their own understanding of the subject matter. This can include problem-based learning, discovery learning, and inquiry-based learning. In Islamic Studies, constructivist learning can be particularly relevant because it encourages students to think critically about the Islamic tradition and to connect it to real-world issues and applications. For example, students can engage in constructivist learning by examining the historical and cultural contexts of Islamic texts, analyzing the social and political implications of Islamic teachings, and developing their own interpretations of the Islamic tradition.

Authentic Learning: Authentic learning is a process where students engage in real-world experiences that connect to the subject matter. This can include fieldwork, community service, and internships. In Islamic Studies, authentic learning can be particularly relevant because it helps students to understand how their research can have a positive impact on society. For example, students can engage in authentic learning by conducting research on contemporary issues facing the Muslim community, such as poverty, discrimination, and social justice.

Overall, the Tsai framework can be applied in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities to enhance the research skills of BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD students. By incorporating active and cooperative learning strategies into their courses, professors can help students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for conducting research in Islamic Studies. Authentic learning experiences can also help students to understand how their research can have a positive impact on society.

Benefits of the Tsai framework for research scholars in Islamic Studies

The Tsai framework can have several benefits for research scholars in Islamic Studies. One of the key benefits is that it emphasizes active and cooperative learning, which can help students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By working collaboratively on research projects and presenting their findings to the class, students can develop better communication skills and learn how to work effectively in teams.

Another benefit of the Tsai framework is that it promotes constructivist learning, which is particularly relevant for Islamic Studies. Islamic Studies is a field that requires students to construct their own understanding of the subject matter and to connect it to real-world issues and applications. By engaging in activities that require them to create their own knowledge, students can develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and become more engaged in their research.

The Tsai framework also emphasizes authentic learning experiences, such as fieldwork or community service, which can help students to understand how their research can have a positive impact on society. This is particularly important in Islamic Studies, where students may be studying topics that have practical implications for their communities. By engaging in activities that connect their research to real-world issues, students can develop a sense of purpose and motivation that can help them to stay engaged in their studies.

Overall, the Tsai framework can be a valuable tool for research scholars in Islamic Studies, as it provides a pedagogical approach that emphasizes active, cooperative, and authentic learning. By incorporating these elements into their courses, professors can help students to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for conducting research in Islamic Studies, as well as the motivation and sense of purpose necessary to stay engaged in their studies.

Conclusion Summary of the main points of the article

This article proposes that the Tsai framework for education can be applied in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities to enhance the research skills of BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD students. The Tsai framework emphasizes active learning, cooperative learning, constructivist learning, and authentic learning. These four key elements

are particularly relevant for Islamic Studies, as they encourage students to construct their own understanding of the subject matter and to connect it to real-world issues and applications. By incorporating the Tsai framework into their courses, professors can help students to develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for conducting research in Islamic Studies. Active learning strategies such as group discussions, project-based learning, and case studies can be incorporated into Islamic Studies courses. Cooperative learning strategies such as peer tutoring, team projects, and collaborative writing can also be useful. Constructivist learning strategies such as concept mapping, reflective writing, and problem-based learning can encourage students to construct their own understanding of Islamic Studies. Authentic learning experiences such as fieldwork or community service can also help students to understand how their research can have a positive impact on society. The benefits of the Tsai framework for research scholars in Islamic Studies include increased engagement, enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills, improved research skills, and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. By implementing the Tsai framework in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities, professors can help to prepare students for successful careers in research and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of Islamic Studies.

Potential impact of the Tsai framework on research scholars in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities

The potential impact of the Tsai framework on research scholars in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities is significant. By incorporating the key elements of the Tsai framework into their courses, professors can help students to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for conducting high-quality research in Islamic Studies. The benefits of the Tsai framework, including active learning, cooperative learning, constructivist learning, and authentic learning, have been shown to be effective in enhancing student engagement and learning in a variety of academic disciplines.

In the context of Islamic Studies, the Tsai framework can help to address some of the challenges faced by research scholars. For example, the framework encourages students to construct their own understanding of the subject matter and to connect it to real-world issues and applications. This can help to make the material more relevant and meaningful to students, and can also help them to develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for conducting research in Islamic Studies. In addition, the Tsai framework encourages students to work collaboratively on research projects, which can help to promote teamwork and communication skills. It also emphasizes the importance of authentic learning experiences, such as fieldwork or community service, which can help students to understand how their research can have a positive impact

on society. Overall, the potential impact of the Tsai framework on research scholars in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities is significant. By incorporating the key elements of the framework into their courses, professors can help to enhance the research skills of BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD students and prepare them for successful careers in academia and beyond.

Recommendations

In light of the potential benefits of the Tsai framework for enhancing research skills in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities, there is a recommendation for Islamic Studies professors to implement this framework in their courses. By incorporating active, cooperative, constructivist, and authentic learning strategies into their teaching, professors can create a more engaging and effective learning environment for their students. This recommendation is supported by research that highlights the effectiveness of the Tsai framework in promoting student engagement, learning, and retention. For example, a study by Tsai et al. (2015) found that using the Tsai framework in a high school biology class led to increased student engagement and achievement compared to traditional teaching methods. Similarly, a study by Wu and Tsai (2015) found that the Tsai framework was effective in promoting student learning in a college physics course. By implementing the Tsai framework in Islamic Studies courses, professors can help their students to develop the critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills necessary for success in the field. This can not only benefit individual students, but also contribute to the development of the field of Islamic Studies more broadly by producing more skilled and knowledgeable researchers. In conclusion, the Tsai framework offers a valuable approach for enhancing research skills in Islamic Studies departments in Pakistani universities. By implementing this framework in their courses, Islamic Studies professors can create a more engaging and effective learning environment for their students, and contribute to the development of the field of Islamic Studies.



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