Is it Active Teaching? A Qualitative Analysis of Female Islamic Studies Teachers' Performance

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the research is to find out how Islamic studies female teachers apply active teaching. This study is intended to identify the factors that affecting their employability, and to suggest some concepts of active teaching for female Islamic studies teachers of selected intermediate and high schools of Saudi Arabia. Method: The qualitative analytical method was relied on the direct observation of female teachers during the implementation of the teaching process. Findings: The study found that despite the application of modern active teaching methods and the employment of educational activities, the active teaching practice was ineffective. It is evident that there are differences in the ways that Islamic studies teachers apply active constructive teaching. It is apparent that the two significant factors influencing the applied method of active teaching are the profound conceptual ignorance of the primary goal of active learning, and the inability to effectively bring some of its concepts and core principles into practice.

Keywords: *Active teaching, Teaching skills, Teaching competencies, Performance competencies, Educational competencies, Cognitive competencies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Amawi (2018) in his research revealed that technological and knowledge development has prevailed in all fields and enforced change in many sectors, including education and educational institutions. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has exerted efforts to make quantum leaps in educational outcomes because of their impact on the level and type of social progress. Al-Thabiet (2020) in his research revealed that the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia in 2003 endorsed the project of developing learning strategies entitled "Alaemni Kif Ataalam" (Teach me How to Learn) to develop active learning practices by training in activating such strategies. The knowledge economy has evolved rapidly, causing a challenge for the teacher facing the generations of the third millennium and requiring teachers to keep pace with the latest developments, not traditional, and lagging behind those who cannot understand and teach the third millennium generation who adjust rapidly with technology.

Motivated by the challenges of the first millennium, the concept of active learning emerged and received considerable attention in the early 21st century. It is one of the solutions that has considerably affected education; it is simultaneously a learning and instructional method. It depends on learners' contribution through many strategies, including constructive dialog, positive listening, as well as analyzing and resolving the

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issues individually or in a group in a rich environment, in which the teacher assumes supervision and guidance.

According to many studies, e.g., Al-Rashidi (2021) and Dabash (2022), active learning is based on several considerations, such as preparing an educational environment that motivates the inner mental processes of the learner that demonstrate one's ability to understand, retrieve, and use information in similar contexts. Active learning is not novel. It was addressed by many studies, such as Abu Seif (2017), Al-Salawi (2020), Al-Hajraf (2022), and Al-Zayed (2020), that highlighted its benefits. Active learning is constructivism-based, and the student is responsible for developing one's learning through the interaction between new information and background knowledge. Learning occurs if the new information is compatible with the background knowledge.

The Saudi Vision 2030 aims to improve education by improving basic learning outcomes (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2013). Aldoghan and Alabd Allatif (2021) in their research demonstrated that a teacher is one of the most important outcomes of education because the teacher "can achieve educational outcomes and turns them into reality". Al-Rubaie and Al-Saob (2019) in their research revealed that the courses in Islamic studies are an important pillar of education in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the teachers of Islamic studies should be qualified well to adjust to educational developments.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Abu Adl (2020) in his research revealed that the knowledge and technological changes and global events, especially after COVID-19 and the transfer to distance education and utilizing many tools and techniques as a kind of knowledge challenge, have changed the educational environment. They have shown the poor professional knowledge and preparation of some teachers, including the inability to keep pace with the immediate needs, such as the sudden transformation of the entire educational process into online education from face-to-face. They have demonstrated the capabilities and applications of active learning among teachers. Living in the era of digital knowledge and artificial intelligence necessitates the professional and knowledge development of teachers to be able to develop and adjust to rapid changes in knowledge. Although many studies addressed active learning in terms of its importance and application in education, according to the researcher's experience (as an educational supervisor of Islamic studies for more than 23 years), it is not applied correctly. Therefore, the researcher was motivated to determine the application method of active learning in the classroom among female teachers of Islamic studies.

1.2 Research question

The study raises the following major question:

- What is the application method of active learning in the classroom among female teachers of Islamic studies?

The question is divided into the following minor questions:

- To what extent does the applied practice of active learning differ according to academic qualification and years of experience among female teachers of Islamic studies?

- What factors do affect the application method of active learning among female teachers of Islamic studies?

1.3 Research objective

This study has three objectives. They are:

- To evaluate the application method of active learning in the classroom among female teachers of Islamic studies.

- To determine the extent of difference in the applied practice of active learning with regard to academic qualification and years of experience among female teachers of Islamic studies.

- To determine the factors affecting the application method of active learning among female teachers of Islamic studies.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study adds to the educational literature adopting the qualitative approach related to active learning. It provides information and results that benefit educators on the reality of active learning to develop professional development programs. The study results and processing method can be used as performance feedback for the teachers of Islamic studies and can provide suggestions for the improvement of active teaching practice.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Table 1 shows the literature on active learning and its importance.

Researcher/ Year of publication	Essential points of the study
(Al-Khalidi, 2013)	revealed that the practice of constructive instruction among the teachers of Islamic education was moderate and affected by academic qualification, but gender, experience, and educational stage did not affect.
(Freeman et al., 2014)	Freeman and others compared the exposition-based course designs with constructivist-based course design in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematic) disciplines and determined that students learning through traditional learning fail 1.5 times more than students learning through active learning.
(Shin, Sok, Hyun, & Kim, 2015)	showed that active learning methods help under graduate nursing students get competency.
(Kalra, Modi, & Vyas, 2015)	proved that learning in small group based teams of post graduate and under graduate students improves higher order thinking and promotes active learning.
(Jariyapong, Punsawad, Bunratsami, & Kongthong, 2016)	showed that active learning in the form of body painting improves the understanding of gross anatomy among medical students in anatomy class room.
(Stoltzfus & Libarkin, 2016)	showed that class room spaces and infrastructure impacts active learning and scaling up increases active learning. Thus educational institutes consider scaling up without incorporating expensive technologies.

(Arjomandi, Seufert, O'Brien, & Anwar, 2018)	showed that active teaching strategies can improve student engagement and suggested that non-traditional students show better engagement than the traditional students.
(Al-Maliki, 2018)	illustrated that the degree of practicing active learning principles among the teachers of Islamic education was high from the perspectives of teachers and educational supervisors.
(Shihab et al., 2018)	showed the keenness of the teachers of Islamic education on the practice and application of effective instruction methods from the supervisors' perspective.
(Andres, 2019)	showed that active teaching can help in managing difficult courses and motivates learning. Suggested that active teaching should address both emotional response and cognitive load of complicated coursework and should provide efficacy to build opportunities during instruction delivery.
(Al-Rubaie and Al-Saob, 2019)	illustrated that experience played a considerable role in the high degree of differentiated instruction among the teachers of Islamic education, but social gender did not have an impact.
(Patall et al., 2019)	showed that students with more agentic engagement in creative classroom through competence, connectedness and autonomy make teachers more supportive for the autonomic learning of students. This in turn, loops back and increases agentic engagement of students.
(McEnroe-Petitte & Farris, 2020)	showed gaming as an active teaching methodology can promote deeper learning and critical thinking in nursing students.
(Al-Maqati and Yousry, 2020)	aimed to identify the reasons for the reluctance of some teachers to apply active learning, such as the lack of desire to change the traditional method of instruction.
(Al-Qahtani and Al-Saif, 2020)	showed some obstacles facing the female teachers of Islamic education while using active learning.
(Al-Thabiet, 2020)	aimed to analyze the application of active education at pre-university education institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and recommended disseminating the culture of active education in the family and the society and providing a supportive educational environment.
(Al-Zayed and Tawfiq, 2020)	illustrated the poor level of active learning methods, including lesson delivery, classroom management, and evaluation, among female teachers of Shar'ia sciences in the secondary school, showing the teachers' use of traditional instructional methods.

(Yassin, 2020)	was conducted in the public schools of the Zarqa region and showed that the degree of active learning strategies and principles among teachers of Islamic education was high in favor of experienced teachers, but sex was not statistically significant.
(Al-Sahari and Al-Mahfouz, 2021)	aimed to determine the availability of active education principles among the teachers of Shar'ia sciences and showed that the active education principles (planning, implementation, and evaluation) were moderate.
(Abu Al-Hajj, 2022)	reported some obstacles related to the teacher, student, and curriculum.

The literature review showed the high practice of active learning strategies in quantitative studies, such as Yassin (2020), Al-Rubaie and Al-Saob (2019), Al-Maliki (2018), Al-Khalidi (2013), Abu Al-Hajj (2022), Al-Sahari and Al-Mahfouz (2021), Al-Maqati and Yousry (2020), and Al-Qahtani and Al-Saif (2020), but the present study adopted the qualitative approach in data collection from the direct observation blog. Regarding the tool, all previous studies utilized the questionnaire for data collection, but the present study employed direct observation because the aim was to directly observe the teaching practice and identify the mechanics of applying active learning.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Active learning

Active learning is a well-known educational term in the 21st century. It was addressed in the literature with many definitions. For instance, Walaa (2012) defines active learning as "allowing students to participate in classroom activities that encourage them to think and comment on the information being discussed, so they are not passive listeners but should develop their skills of handling information through analysis, synthesis, and evaluation by a discussion with others or writing that motivates active learning." According to Saadeh et al. (2006), "it is a method of learning and teaching in which students participate in different activities that allow positive listening, conscious thinking, and appropriate analysis of the subject. Learners share opinions, while a teacher facilitates education, which motivates them to achieve the educational objectives".

Al-Hassani and Fatima (2019) argue that active teaching is an educational philosophy that focuses on the child's life and interaction with their surroundings. It helps the child think about educational contexts. Several studies, such as Al-Hassani and Fatima (2019), Issa and Khutot (2015), Al-Khalidi and Al-Qadi (2015), and Al-Salawi (2020), report the advantages of active learning, including creating an active educational setting with educational situations that motivate learners to promote thinking processes and supporting learners' self-teaching abilities, which positively affects retaining the teaching impact, recalling similar situations, building personalities, and promoting self-trust. In this study, the term 'active learning' refers an active educational method adopted by the female teachers of Islamic studies and based on the active participation of all elements of education, i.e., teacher, learner, and environment, in the classroom. It is concerned with activating the mental processes of the learner by simulating authentic situations related to the learners.

Chi and Wylie suggest that active learning results in better cognitive engagement than the passive learning. Thus it is better than passive learning, but it can do only gradually so (Chi & Wylie, 2014). Students believing they learn better with formal lectures are

dissatisfied with the practice of active learning and they are less likely to take part in a class which uses extensive active learning instructions, even though the active learning improved their overall performance in class (Deslauriers, McCarty, Miller, Callaghan, & Kestin, 2019). For instance, in an experimental study, (Deslauriers et al., 2019) found that students learned better (evidenced from a multiple choice test) in an active learning phase, but they felt they learned better in formal lecture phase. However, evaluating the efficiency of different strategies of active learning is difficult, because these strategies fall under same categories, like group discussion and group work (Driessen, Knight, Smith, & Ballen, 2020).

One important factor that determines instructors' choice of implementing active learning is the students' satisfaction level. For instance, students may repel or deliberately oppose strategies of reformed instructions (Gaffney & Gaffney, 2016). Flipped classroom, a parallel instructional method has been proven to improve learning performances, higher order knowledge building, deeper interactions and collective efficiency (Hwang & Chen, 2019). Field based learning creates obstacles for certain group of learners including people having young children or vision or mobility impairments. A growing area of research is working on the inclusive practice of field learning (Carabajal, Marshall, & Atchison, 2017; Gilley, Atchison, Feig, & Stokes, 2015; Hendricks, Atchison, & Feig, 2017). The concerns of field based learning also apply to active learning as it requires mobility or active behaviors (Lombardi, Shipley, Astronomy Team, & Team, 2021).

3.2 Teaching skills and learning principles associated with active learning

To achieve its outcomes, active learning largely depends on an active, effective teacher who is aware of its concept, considers its principles, and practices its teaching skills, so it would be called "active teaching". Al-Khalidi (2015) in his research revealed that an active teacher is a creative designer and dexterous implementer of an active learning environment. Many studies, e.g., Al-Rashidi (2021), Amawi (2018), Al-Hajraf (2022), and Al-Zayed and Tawfiq (2020), illustrate that applying active learning requires some teaching skills that integrate theory into practice, i.e., the following three skills, as shown in figure (1):

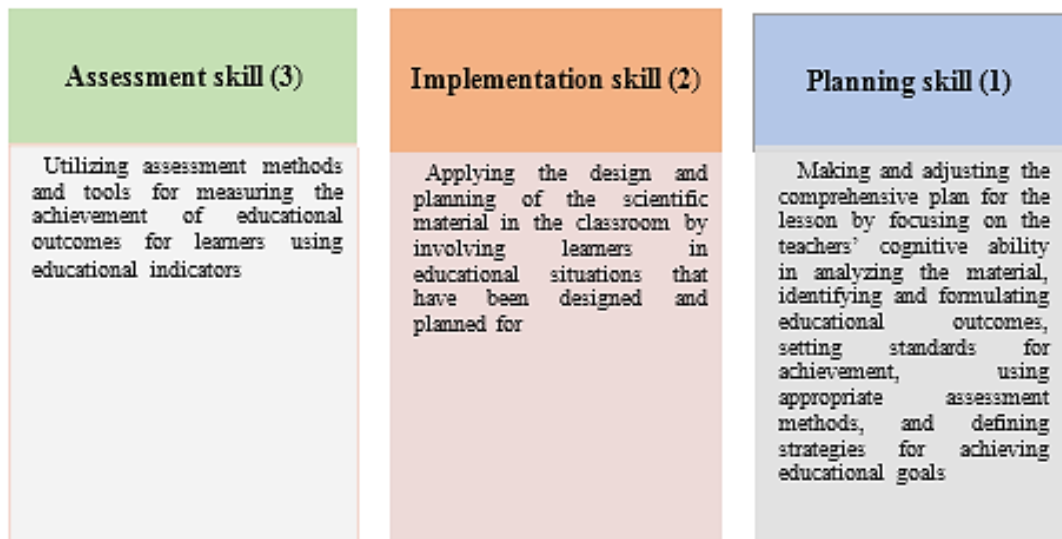| Assessment skill (3)	Implementation skill (2)	Planning skill (1)
Utilizing assessment methods and tools for measuring the achievement of educational outcomes for learners using educational indicators	Applying the design and planning of the scientific material in the classroom by involving learners in educational situations that have been designed and planned for	Making and adjusting the comprehensive plan for the lesson by focusing on the teachers' cognitive ability in analyzing the material, identifying and formulating educational outcomes, setting standards for achievement, using appropriate assessment methods, and defining strategies for achieving educational goals

Figure 1: Teaching skills

Some studies, such as Dabbash (2022), Al-Khazim and Al-Qatim (2020), and Al-Khalidi and Al-Qadi (2015), report a set of principles that teachers should consider when applying active learning, as shown in figure (2):
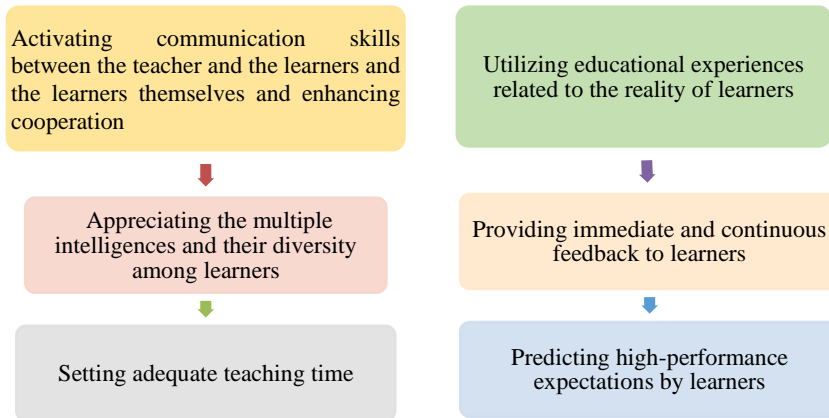
Figure 2: Principles of active learning

Gleason (2011) in his research demonstrated that because it is a multi-modal approach, active teaching does not depend on a single teaching strategy. Thus, Abdul Karim and Qutb (2020) demonstrated that it addresses individual differences and various teaching styles and integrates the methods.

Although there are several strategies for active teaching, they are not up to date as expected. When considering Islam, it has deep educational thought. For instance, the biography of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him - PBUH) includes modern teaching strategies and demonstrates applying active learning with its principles and strategies to the companions, as (PBUH) used collaborative learning, discussion, problems solving, concept maps, brainstorming, simulation and role-playing to educate his companions.

Al-Khalidi (2013) in his research revealed that active learning strategies require the teacher to employ some interactive teaching activities that depend on the extent of the teacher's creativity and innovation to bring diversity to the teaching-learning environment and motivate learners to participate in education such as short scenarios, one-minute activity, and interactive presentations.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Method and Tool

The study adopted the qualitative approach in the case study. It was based on direct observation of applying active learning by the female teachers of Islamic studies and analyzing the phenomenon using a blog for the direct observation of active learning.

4.2 Sampling

The sample comprised 16 female teachers of Islamic studies at the intermediate and high schools, as shown in table (2).

Table 2: Specifications of the study sample

Variables	Categories	Number
1- Academic Qualification	Bachelor	12
	Diploma	4
2. Teaching stage	Intermediate School	8
	High school	8
3- Years of Experience	Less than (10) years	5
	From (10) to less than (20) years	7

	From (20) years and more	4

4.3 Reliability

The qualitative method differs from the quantitative, which utilizes accurate procedures to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. The qualitative relies on the philosophical theory of the researcher, who is an active member of building the facts. It employs reliability instead of validity and reliability in the quantitative method. Reliability is evidence used to persuade the reader that the study results are accurate, high-quality, and trustworthy. According to Al-Adsani and Al-Latif (2021), ensuring the quality and reliability of qualitative research necessitates four criteria: Credibility, generalizability, reliability, and objectivity. The researcher recruited the female supervisors of Islamic education for observations to benefit from their opinions during observation and result analysis.

4.4 Credibility

The researcher used the pluralism strategy by employing some female supervisors to obtain various perspectives of assessing the female teachers' application of active learning.

4.5 Generalizability

The researcher reviewed the literature, compared its results to the study, and supported the results with quotations from observation. Moreover, the sample included female teachers of Islamic studies, which enables generalizing the results to others in other communities. According to Gray (2014), enhancing generalizability requires that the sample should not be less than (12) participants with no less than (65) minutes of application. Both conditions were met; the participants were (16) and the observation period covered the time of the lesson, i.e., (45) minutes.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study results by applying direct classroom observations to the sample and direct and relevant quotations from the observations. The researcher analyzed and decoded the list of observations. Analyzing the data of observations revealed three main themes: Performance competencies, cognitive competencies, and professional and educational competencies, as shown in figure (3).
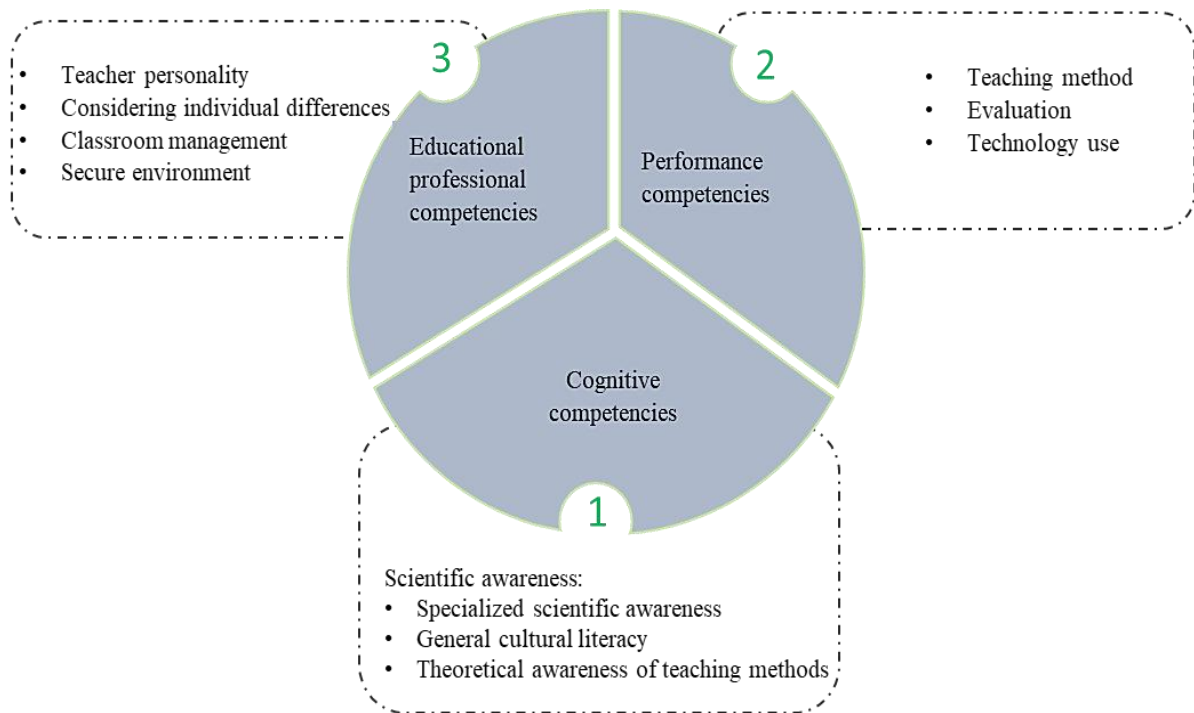
Figure 3: The three main themes

Cognitive competencies: The teacher's scientific familiarity, general culture, and cognitive and theoretical awareness of the teaching methods

Professional and educational competencies: Competencies related to managing the educational process, such as classroom management, providing a secure educational environment, handling individual differences, and learning styles among learners.

5.1 Cognitive competencies

Analyzing the data of the observations of cognitive competencies revealed that several themes were included and would be addressed by evidence of the behaviors of the participants. This can be addressed as scientific awareness and it includes three sub-themes as follows:

5.1.1. Specialized scientific awareness

The direct classroom observation illustrated that the teachers mastered their specialization scientifically in the different majors of Islamic studies, including (Tawheed, Fiqh, Qur'an, Hadith, and Tafsir) and rated (95%). The teachers could answer student inquiries about the subject of the lesson, create cognitive links to the life of students by making appropriate real-life situations in introducing new concepts or explanations, and using evidence from the blog of observations. Observation (2) "the teacher discussing with the students during explanation/ the teacher was keen on knowing the extent of her students' understanding" illustrated that the teacher's discussion with students aimed to make the students understand the lesson. The teacher argued that the scientific awareness of the course and its majors is not a specialization taught and studied only, but it is the religion of teachers from childhood, and it is fostered through specialized study.

5.1.2. General cultural literacy

There were no clear indications of the teachers' mastery of the general culture. Rather, they were committed to the lesson without providing enrichment information. The researcher argued that this result was obtained because of the limited time of the class and the cognitive load of the course. It might be concluded that teachers could not manage time and fear running short of time without providing the required content, so they did not provide enrichment information as students would not be tested for such information.

In the blog of observations, "the lesson was on monotheism, but the teacher did not give examples of the multiple gods of some peoples. The extrapolation was not related to reality, and the content was provided without examples".

5.1.3. Theoretical awareness of teaching methods

Some indications highlighted the degree of theoretical awareness of the teachers of Islamic studies of educational theories, methods, and strategies. To activate active teaching, the teachers endeavored to utilize some methods and strategies, e.g., colorful concept maps, collaborative teaching, think-pair-share, and informational inquiry. However, such strategies were not implemented adequately. The teachers demonstrated moderate awareness of these strategies.

5.2 Performance competencies

They included six sub-themes as follows:

5.2.1. Teaching methods

Most teachers (60%) tried to activate the educational social domain and promote teamwork by applying collaborative learning and distributing students to heterogeneous groups. However, the teachers could not conduct teaching methods and group activities adequately. The teachers only distributed the groups, believing this was a form of collaborative learning without noticing that it aimed to employ the social aspect of learning. Thus, the teachers neglected group management, including inactive students and the lack of a specific time for students to complete the task. Moreover, some teachers tried to complete the task to move to the next stage of the lesson to avoid running short of time before completing the specified content. Thus, they could not activate collaborative learning principles correctly and purposefully. The researcher attributed this result to the misunderstanding of active learning strategies and methods among most participants. Although the teachers had theoretical knowledge of the concepts and methods of active learning as indicated, the free direct observation revealed application errors in terms of the principles and application of active learning. Additionally, most students were unaware of the purpose of activating these methods, resulting in the lack of achieving the social aspect of active learning. The researcher noticed that some students in the group did not try to participate, but the teachers neglected that, and the high-achievers did not seek to teach others. Hence, the aim of the heterogeneous group, i.e., utilizing high-order thinking to enhance the low ones as an important principle of active learning, as shown by Al-Maliki (2018), was not achieved.

Despite the lack of clearly applying the mechanism of active teaching methods that indicated the style of improve class, the personality and spontaneous style of most teachers (60%) provided an active and vital environment. This result agreed with the findings of (Al-Shehri and Al Mobeet, 2020). The researcher argued that the frequent employment of the improved class method was due to the continuous effect of COVID-19 because most teachers were applying preventive measures, precautions of making groups, and activating individual or bilateral activities, as revealed in a friendly discussion with three female teachers of the participants.

The observation revealed that the method adopted by most participants (60%) was the improved lesson. Although some tried to conduct some activities or techniques, they were confused about applying educational concepts, such as a teaching method, strategy, or activity. Most teachers applied some educational activities, such as the hot seating and postman, and called them educational strategies, although they are activities. The researcher argued that there was confusion due to the poor translation of the word strategies into Arabic, although the correct translation is tactics or procedures.

5.2.2. Assessment

The free direct observation allowed identifying the adopted assessment methods and types by the teachers of Islamic studies. Analyzing the asked or prepared questions in the lesson showed that a few teachers employed high-order thinking questions, and most were limited to low-level thinking questions. A similar result was concluded when reviewing the questions of assessment and assignment. The constructive assessment was ignored during the explanation and moved from one paragraph to another without ensuring adequate application and checking student understanding before moving forward, which violated active constructive teaching based on a solid foundation of mastery and cognitive construction, as shown by Al-Abyad and Hassoun (2016).

In sum, assessment methods were traditional and lacked diversity. For instance, when applying the "understanding table," two teachers asked students to write "what you know" in the first column and "what to learn" in the second but did not ask them "what learned" to achieve the learning outcomes. They did not benefit from the students' notes in "what you know" to build on background knowledge and know if that knowledge was poor. Background knowledge is the basis of new information and experience. This finding confirms that the teacher should know and evaluate the background of the learner, including information and experience, before starting the new lesson, as reported by Hariri (2007), Youssef (2018), and Hindi (2013). Additionally, all participants did not apply modern assessment methods, such as checklists that include actions and indicators of teaching outcomes when the students implement a task. There was no indication of using "rubrics" to measure the degree of students' skills in implementing and mastering a task. The teachers did not also use personal structural evaluative records for each student. Moreover, the students did not know how they were evaluated or the required skills, except for retrieving the information from the lesson. This result could be because of the heavy load of teachers, the lack of adequate time for such assessments, or the lack of knowledge of these methods. Youssef (2018) reported, "the difficult classroom management during student assessment".

5.2.3. Technology use

The teachers hardly used educational technology that was limited to PowerPoint presentations of definitions and topics that lacked excitement and creativity. Another teacher presented a concept map that attracted the students to complete it. In a friendly discussion with the teacher, the teacher reported that she tried to do her best to use integrated presentations, but she had a poor experience. The researcher noticed a defect in the management of (6) female teachers in presenting narrative content, such as asking the students during the presentation, believing that she tried to foster students' concentration on the presented material, but this procedure distracted students. To sum up, using educational technology was limited to using integrated audio clips in the presentation with no electronic games or utilizing modern technologies for curricular and extracurricular interaction (Clicker and Google Class). The researcher did not notice discussion groups via WhatsApp, as shown when asking the participants, who mostly reported being limited to on-site communication with students. The researcher argued that this result was concluded because most teachers adopted the traditional method because using technology requires more time and effort for preparion, as reported by Jassim and Abjal (2011).

5.3 Professional and educational competencies

They covered four sub-themes as follows:

5.3.1. Teacher personality

Observation demonstrated the teachers' efforts to apply active learning and preparing activities, but the classroom was dominated by monotony, boredom, and student reluctance to participate actively. Another experienced teacher could trigger the

enthusiasm and interaction of students. Although she hardly applied active learning, she had charisma, mastered the content, balanced interaction with students, and employed voice tone and body language. This result agreed with the findings of Al-Shehri and Al Mobeet (2020) that teachers' personalities and spontaneous styles sometimes triggered the activity and vitality of the class.

5.3.2. Considering individual differences

Individual differences were not considered in the questions asked of students. The forms of questions did not vary. When a student reported a lack of understanding the question, the teacher repeated the question in the same wording, although she should word it differently. The assignments also did not demonstrate considering individual differences because the teacher gave all students the same assignment. Educational cooperative groups were not activated adequately. Classroom observations showed that "some students did not participate in groups, and others avoided participation, but the teacher did not try to encourage them to participate." This indicated neglecting individual differences or a lack of full awareness of individual differences and teaching styles.

5.3.3. Classroom management

The observation revealed some active learning principles, such as the interest of most participants in providing a classroom environment dominated by respect and cooperation. Despite encouragement, varying tones was not utilized, and only one tone was used. Classroom management was not well-disciplined in terms of

- Handling students' answers: The teacher did not handle students' answers, correct wrong answers, or take actions for incomplete, by luck, or wrong answers.

- Management of learning groups: The groups were not managed in a manner that achieved their purpose, i.e., achieving the social educational aspect. Some students used to depend on active classmates in the group, which developed their dependency because of incompetent classroom management, poor supervision, and the lack of using personal assessment records for each student. Additionally, the purpose perceived by students of completing the task was the speed of completion to excel other groups. The author argued that this result was achieved because the teacher made speed a criterion of winning and receiving reinforcement instead of allocating the appropriate time to perform the task and setting mastery and achievement as the basic criteria. In short, the teacher violated the principles of active constructive teaching by allocating the time to learning and teaching to achieve proficiency and achieving cognitive cooperation-based educational outcomes, as reported by many studies, including Al-Khalidi(2013), Al-Abyad and Hassoun (2016), and Mahmoud (2016).

- Activity management: Some participants showed shortcomings in distributing worksheets. The teacher distributed them to open cooperative groups while giving directions and guidance to the groups. Consequently, the students suffered distraction and lack of focus in listening to instructions because they focused on the open worksheet to gain some time in understanding to answer quickly, as used in activities. This is contrary to the principles of active learning, which requires complete focus on learners and the teacher to be careful and attentive to distractions, as illustrated by Al-Sanani (2020).

- Communication skills: Despite having a secure environment, some teachers lacked the skills to handle students' answers, had poor group management, and did not care about avoiding distractions, which affected some communication skills, such as listening, visual communication, reinforcement, and instant feedback. The researcher noted in some classroom observations that the teacher's condition and mood, as she was in the last months of pregnancy, affected communication with students. Educational communication skills are one of the skills that teachers must pay attention to because they promote cognitive achievement and retaining information among learners, as shown by Al-Bajari (2015).

5.3.4. Secure learning environment

The free direct observation allowed the researcher to experience various educational environments. It showed how each teacher prepared the active educational environment as she perceived, which Al-Shehri and Al Mobeet (2020) called "realism" "i.e., investing the available capabilities to apply active learning strategies according to the teacher's capabilities and needs of student."

• Educational environment and logistic readiness: The observation helped determine the logistic readiness of the classrooms. Although all classrooms had single mobile chairs and tables to help rearrange the classroom by the teacher as appropriate, the number of students and the narrow classroom often hindered the environment. Some classrooms had projectors without a display screen. The researcher was keen to attend all classrooms, either well-furnished or not, to determine the extent of utilizing the devices by the participants. Some devices did not work, and only a teacher not included in the sample brought her projector to avoid any errors, so the researcher was keen to attend her class.

• Social and psychological educational environment: It is a basic element of education, and the teacher should prepare a motivating environment by activating the social aspect of learning based on the mutual human relations characterized by compassion, kindness, and responsibility with students (Mawali and Waabou, 2019). Preparing such a secure educational environment that is appropriate for creating positive relationships in the classroom indicates the teachers' educational professional competencies. It was observed that most participants (60%) could prepare a comfortable learning environment, demonstrating the students' desire to participate and rapid response. The teachers' method of asking questions, allowing the students to think about the answer, and choosing the respondent promoted safety.

5.4 Answering study questions

5.4.1. Answering the first question: What is the application method of active learning in the classroom among female teachers of Islamic studies?

Analyzing and discussing data showed that the application of active learning was only good for traditional learning. Despite applying active teaching methods and utilizing educational activities, it was traditional and suffered deficiencies. Teachers are familiar with the definitions and theoretical aspects of active learning, but they need to understand its main purpose and apply its principles in the classroom. Moreover, the teachers lacked the basic techniques and should acquire the skills of implementation for the success of the applied aspect of active learning. This result agreed with the results of (Al-Zayed and Tawfiq, 2020).

5.4.2 Answering the 2nd question: What was the extent of difference in the applied practice of active learning according to academic qualification and years of experience among female teachers of Islamic studies?

Academic qualification and years of experience did not clearly affect the practice and application of active learning among female teachers of Islamic studies. This result agreed with the findings of Al-Khalidi (2013) that no differences were noted due to academic qualification or years of experience. However, it was noted that the teacher's personality clearly affected the teacher's performance and the response of the students, which agreed with Al-Shehri and Al Mobeet (2020).

5.4.3 Answering the 3rd question: What factors do affect the application method of active learning among female teachers of Islamic studies?

The researcher believed that the most important factors affecting the application of active learning were the deep conceptual awareness of the main purpose of active learning and the poor application by making learning learner-centered, the lack of the proper

understanding of applying the principles of active learning in the classroom, and the lack of necessary techniques and implementation skills. Other factors included getting used to the routine of teaching in the classroom, fear of change, and rejecting some teaching methods by teachers and students. These results agreed with the results of Al-Ghamdi (2018) and Al-Rashidi (2021).

VI. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that there are some misconceptions among female teachers of Islamic studies that limits the execution of active teaching. The following are the misconception among the considered study population

- For instance, "applying active learning depends on the quality and content of the course, and it is based on several activities." A proverb says, "too much of anything is good for nothing." Applying this proverb shows that by using too many activities, learners will feel bored and sometimes have undesirable behaviors. Active learning motivates learners to participate in a certain activity. The aim and continuity of teaching are more important than the task itself.

- Lack of convergence between the knowledge and application gaps. Teachers strived to apply active learning and use teaching methods and educational activities but encountered knowledge and application gaps. For instance, they applied cooperative learning apparently but neglected its main purpose, i.e., the social aspect and triggering high-order thinking levels by questions and activities. So, the teachers thought that forming high-order questions was limited to using "do/ does/ did." Although this is a question, it is a low-order one. The teacher did not focus on students but on believing that she applied cooperative education. In fact, the teacher applied the methods and strategies of active teaching, but traditionally, i.e., "an application gap" caused by the "knowledge gap," namely the lack of understanding and adequate knowledge of theory.

- Lack of focus on the preparation but on the quality and formulation of questions. Active learning is based on investigating knowledge from a set of puzzling questions prepared by the teacher or motivating students to ask. Then, the teaching is moderated by the teacher, and the questions are answered more effectively by learners.

- Conducting discussion in active learning may cause a lack of control over the discussion with learners. Teachers should understand that a proper discussion includes teacher-student interaction, making the discussion environment characterized by mutual respect.

- Active learning depends on learners' activity dynamically. It is about activating the learner's thinking, not activating movement. The students do not necessarily move in the classroom.

- To make education student-centered, the role of the teacher should be minimized. The role of the teacher maximizes in active learning because the teacher is responsible for managing learning from planning, designing educational activities, and providing appropriate resources and assessment methods.

6.2 Recommendations

This study suggest the following recommendations: 1) Good training for teachers in educational competencies, especially the competencies of active learning 2) Correcting misconceptions among female teachers of Islamic education through good preparation 3) Utilizing the study results to provide applied training courses for teachers 4) Conducting field prospective studies based on the direct observation of the reality of active learning 5)Guiding students and clarifying the purpose, importance, and benefits of active learning

6) Stressing the use of active learning strategies in Islamic studies courses 7) Conducting applied training courses of active learning 8) Selecting distinguished teachers to apply active learning based on micro-teaching 9) Activating the benefit of novice teachers from the experienced 10) Providing a supportive work environment for the use of active learning strategies

6.3 Limitations

Like any other study, this study has certain limitations. Several factors considered in this study could render the generalizability of the results. They are:

Objective limits: Determining the applied method of active learning in the classroom.

Temporal limits: The study has been conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023

Spatial limits: General education (intermediate and high) schools in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia

Human limits: The study has been conducted among the female teachers of Islamic studies in public schools

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