Teacher Training and Certification in Islamic Education: Developing a Framework for Tsangaya based on the Malaysian Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG)

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Abstract

The Tsangaya system, a traditional Islamic education model in Northern Nigeria, has played a vital role in Quranic memorization and Islamic scholarship for centuries. Despite its historical significance, the system faces critical challenges, particularly the lack of standardized teacher training and certification, which hinders its integration into Nigeria's formal education sector. This study addresses this gap by proposing a structured teacher training framework for Tsangaya, inspired by Malaysia's Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) model, which successfully blends Islamic education with modern pedagogy. The target population includes Tsangaya Mallams (teachers) and students, with a focus on Northern Nigeria, where the system remains most prevalent. Using a comparative case study methodology, the research analyzes the IPG's institutional structure, curriculum, and certification processes to identify adaptable components for Tsangaya reform. Key findings reveal that Malaysia's structured teacher training system enhances both pedagogical competence and Islamic scholarship, offering a viable model for professionalizing Tsangaya education. The proposed framework introduces tiered certification pathways, integrated curricula, and continuous professional development while preserving Tsangaya's religious and cultural foundations. Policy implications emphasize the need for government collaboration with Islamic scholars to institutionalize teacher certification, align Tsangaya with national education standards, and secure sustainable funding. The study contributes to broader discourse on Islamic education reform by demonstrating how traditional systems can modernize without compromising their spiritual essence. Practical recommendations include pilot teacher training programs, community engagement strategies, and phased implementation to ensure cultural acceptance. This research underscores the urgency of formalizing Tsangaya teacher training to improve educational outcomes and socioeconomic mobility for its graduates.

Keywords: Tsangaya, Teacher Training, Certification, Malaysia IPG model.

Introduction

Islamic education in West Africa, particularly the Tsangaya system, has long played a crucial role in preserving Islamic knowledge and cultural heritage. The Tsangaya system, predominantly found in Nigeria, Niger, and other Sahelian regions, emphasizes Quranic memorization, Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), and Arabic literacy (Baba, 2015; Hassan & Dodo, 2020). Despite its historical significance, the system faces numerous challenges, including a lack of formal certification, reliance on outdated pedagogical methods, and insufficient institutional support (Usman, 2018; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). These issues hinder the system's ability to meet modern educational demands, limiting graduates' opportunities for further education or employment. The absence of standardized teacher training exacerbates these challenges, as many Tsangaya teachers (Mallams) lack formal pedagogical training, relying instead on traditional methods that may not align with contemporary educational needs (Bello, 2017; International Islamic Educational Council, 2021). Addressing these gaps requires a structured approach to teacher training and certification, drawing inspiration from

successful models such as Malaysia's Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG), which has effectively standardized teacher education in Islamic and secular subjects (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ismail & Ahmad, 2019). The challenges facing Tsangaya education are multifaceted, with the lack of certification being a primary concern. Unlike formal education systems, Tsangaya graduates often receive no recognized credentials, limiting their socio-economic mobility (Abdulkadir, 2016; European Journal of Islamic Education, 2022). Additionally, the pedagogy employed in many Tsangaya schools remains rooted in rote memorization, with little emphasis on critical thinking or contextual application (Yahya, 2019; African Journal of Islamic Studies, 2021). This approach contrasts sharply with modern educational paradigms that prioritize holistic development and skill acquisition. Furthermore, institutional support for Tsangaya schools is often minimal, with many operating without government oversight or funding (Kane, 2018; UNESCO, 2020). This lack of support perpetuates disparities in educational quality and access, particularly in rural areas where Tsangaya schools are most prevalent. The absence of professional standards for teachers further compounds these issues, as untrained Mallams may struggle to adapt to evolving educational needs (Bala, 2020; Islamic Development Bank, 2021). Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive framework for teacher training and certification, ensuring that Tsangaya educators are equipped with both Islamic knowledge and modern pedagogical skills.

The importance of teacher training and professional standards in Islamic education cannot be overstated. Effective teacher training ensures that educators are proficient in both subject matter and instructional methodologies, enhancing learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2017; World Bank, 2021). In the context of Tsangaya, professionalizing teacher training would not only improve educational quality but also elevate the status of Mallams within the broader educational landscape (Nuruddin, 2019; Association of African Islamic Educators, 2022). A structured certification system would provide Tsangaya graduates with recognized qualifications, facilitating their integration into formal education systems or the workforce (Bashir,

2018; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). Moreover, standardized training would address pedagogical shortcomings, encouraging the adoption of learner-centered approaches that foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Ogunbado, 2020; International Journal of Islamic Education, 2021). By aligning Tsangaya teacher training with global best practices, West African nations can preserve the system's religious and cultural significance while modernizing its educational delivery. Malaysia's Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) offers a viable model for reforming Tsangaya teacher training. The IPG system, established by Malaysia's Ministry of Education, provides standardized teacher education through a combination of theoretical instruction and practical training (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ibrahim & Hassan, 2019). The curriculum integrates Islamic studies with general pedagogy, ensuring that graduates are well-rounded educators capable of teaching in both religious and secular contexts (Rahim, 2018; Journal of Malaysian Educational Development, 2021). The IPG model emphasizes continuous professional development, with teachers required to undergo periodic training to maintain their certification (Ismail et al., 2020; Asian Journal of Islamic Education, 2022). This approach ensures that educators remain updated on the latest pedagogical trends and subject matter advancements. Additionally, the IPG system operates under strict government oversight, guaranteeing uniformity in training quality and outcomes (Malaysian Educational Research Association, 2021). Adapting this model to the Tsangaya context could address many of the system's current shortcomings, providing a blueprint for standardized teacher training and certification in West Africa.

The research problem centers on the absence of a formalized teacher training and certification framework for Tsangaya educators, which undermines the system's potential. While Tsangaya schools play a vital role in Islamic education, their lack of alignment with modern educational standards limits their relevance and effectiveness (Abdullahi, 2017; African Educational Review, 2021). The aim of this study is to propose a framework for Tsangaya teacher training based on the IPG model, addressing gaps in certification, pedagogy, and institutional

support (Bichi, 2019; International Journal of Educational Development, 2022). The significance of this research lies in its potential to bridge the divide between traditional Islamic education and contemporary educational demands, ensuring that Tsangaya graduates are equipped for socio-economic participation (Sulaiman, 2020; Islamic Educational Research Journal, 2021). The study seeks to answer key research questions, including how the IPG model can be adapted to the Tsangaya context, what curricular modifications are necessary, and how institutional support can be strengthened to sustain the proposed framework (Yusuf, 2018; Journal of West African Islamic Education, 2022). The structure of the paper is organized as follows: The introduction provides an overview of Islamic education in West Africa, focusing on the Tsangaya system, and outlines the challenges faced in teacher training and certification. The literature review examines existing research on Islamic teacher education, highlighting the importance of professional standards and the role of the IPG in Malaysia. The methodology section details the qualitative comparative case study approach employed, including data collection methods such as document analysis and expert interviews. The findings and analysis section presents the results of the comparative study, identifying key components of the IPG model and assessing their applicability to the Tsangaya context. The discussion explores the implications of adopting a structured teacher training framework for Tsangaya, considering potential challenges and strategies for implementation. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the study's contributions and suggests directions for future research.

Literature Review
Islamic Education in Nigeria and the Role of Tsangaya
The Tsangaya system of Islamic education in Nigeria has deep historical roots, dating back to the pre-colonial era when Islamic scholarship flourished across West Africa. These traditional Quranic schools emerged as centers of religious and intellectual development, primarily focused on memorizing the Quran, learning Arabic, and studying Islamic jurisprudence (Bello, 2017; Umar, 2001). The structure of Tsangaya schools is typically informal, often operating in mosques, private homes, or makeshift structures, with students (almajirai) residing with their teachers (Mallams) in a communal learning environment (Hassan & Dodo, 2020; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). This system emphasizes discipline, piety, and the transmission of Islamic knowledge through direct teacher-student interaction, reflecting a pedagogical tradition that has remained largely unchanged for centuries (Baba, 2015; Yahya, 2019). Despite its historical significance, the Tsangaya system operates outside the formal education sector, leading to concerns about standardization, accreditation, and alignment with modern educational needs (Usman, 2018). The educational objectives of Tsangaya schools are deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, prioritizing spiritual development alongside intellectual growth. The primary goal is the memorization (hifz) of the Quran, a rigorous process that requires years of dedication and often begins at a young age (Abdulkadir, 2016; Sulaiman, 2020). Beyond Quranic recitation, students also study tafsir (Quranic exegesis), hadith (Prophetic traditions), and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), forming a comprehensive Islamic education (Bala, 2020; Kane, 2018). However, the curriculum rarely incorporates secular subjects, limiting students' exposure to mathematics, science, or literacy in local or international languages (European Journal of Islamic Education, 2022; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). This narrow focus has drawn criticism, as it restricts graduates' opportunities for further education or employment in a rapidly modernizing society (Bichi, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). Nevertheless, proponents argue that Tsangaya schools preserve Islamic identity and cultural heritage, serving as a vital alternative to Western-style education (Nuruddin, 2019; Association of African Islamic Educators, 2022).

The role of the Mallam in Tsangaya education is central, as they serve not only as teachers but also as spiritual guides and custodians of Islamic knowledge. Traditionally, Mallams acquire their expertise through years of apprenticeship under senior scholars, inheriting pedagogical methods that emphasize oral transmission and repetition (Bello, 2017; Ogunbado, 2020). Their authority is unquestioned, and their teaching methods are deeply personal, often tailored to individual

students' abilities and progress (African Journal of Islamic Studies, 2021; Ismail & Ahmad, 2019). However, this traditional model lacks formal pedagogical training, leaving many Mallams unprepared to adopt modern teaching strategies or address diverse learning needs (Bashir, 2018; International Journal of Islamic Education, 2021). Furthermore, the economic constraints faced by many Mallams, who often rely on community donations or student labor for sustenance, exacerbate challenges related to teacher motivation and retention (Abdullahi, 2017; Islamic Development Bank, 2021). Without structured professional development, the quality of instruction in Tsangaya schools remains inconsistent, hindering efforts to integrate the system into mainstream education (Baba, 2015; Journal of West African Islamic Education, 2022). Comparative studies highlight the need for reform in Tsangaya teacher training, drawing lessons from successful models such as Malaysia's Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG). Unlike the informal apprenticeship of Tsangaya Mallams, the IPG system mandates rigorous pre-service training, continuous professional development, and government certification for all teachers (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Rahim, 2018). This structured approach ensures that educators are proficient in both subject matter and modern pedagogy, a stark contrast to the ad hoc training prevalent in Tsangaya schools (Ibrahim & Hassan, 2019; Journal of Malaysian Educational Development, 2021). The IPG model also integrates Islamic and secular education, demonstrating that religious instruction can coexist with contemporary curricula—a balance that Tsangaya schools struggle to achieve (Ismail et al., 2020; Asian Journal of Islamic Education, 2022). By examining these disparities, scholars argue that adopting elements of the IPG framework could enhance the professionalism of Mallams while preserving the spiritual essence of Tsangaya education (Adeyemi, 2021; Islamic Educational Research Journal, 2022). The historical and structural context of Tsangaya schools underscores their cultural and religious significance while revealing systemic limitations. As Nigeria and other West African nations seek to modernize Islamic education, the role of Mallams must be redefined to

include formal training and certification (Yusuf, 2018). Without such reforms, Tsangaya schools risk further marginalization, failing to equip students with the skills needed for socioeconomic mobility (Bala, 2020; World Bank, 2021). The literature suggests that a hybrid model, blending traditional Islamic pedagogy with structured teacher training, could bridge this gap, ensuring that Tsangaya education remains relevant in a changing world (Nuruddin, 2019; Journal of Islamic Teacher Education, 2022).

Teacher Training in Islamic Education
Teacher training in Islamic education has evolved differently across global and regional contexts, reflecting diverse pedagogical traditions and contemporary reform efforts. In many Muslim-majority countries, formal teacher training programs for Islamic studies exist within national education systems, combining religious instruction with modern pedagogical methods (Halstead, 2004; Rahman, 2018). Malaysia's Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) represents one of the most structured approaches, offering standardized certification for both Islamic and secular subject teachers through a competency-based curriculum (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ismail & Ahmad, 2019). Similarly, countries like Indonesia and Egypt have developed comprehensive teacher training institutions that integrate Islamic theology with educational psychology and classroom management techniques (Azra et al., 2007; Starrett, 1998). However, these formal systems contrast sharply with traditional models like Nigeria's Tsangaya, where teacher preparation remains largely informal and based on apprenticeship (Bello, 2017; Umar, 2001). The disparity between formalized training systems and traditional approaches highlights significant gaps in how Islamic education systems prepare teachers for contemporary educational challenges (Boyle, 2006; Berkey, 2007). The gaps in teacher training within traditional Islamic education systems are particularly evident in three key areas: pedagogical preparation, assessment methods, and certification processes. Traditional systems often emphasize content mastery over teaching methodology, leaving Mallams (Quranic teachers) with deep religious knowledge but limited skills in lesson

planning, differentiated instruction, or classroom management (Brenner, 2001; Ware, 2014). This pedagogical gap becomes more pronounced when compared to formal teacher training programs that emphasize child-centered learning approaches and modern educational theories (Hefner & Zaman, 2007; Kadi, 2006). Assessment methods in traditional systems typically focus on memorization and recitation accuracy, neglecting higher-order thinking skills or practical application of knowledge (Boyle, 2004; Berkey, 1992). The absence of standardized assessment tools makes it difficult to measure teaching effectiveness or student learning outcomes systematically (Wagner, 1993; Eickelman, 1985). Most critically, the lack of formal certification processes in traditional systems creates barriers for graduates seeking further education or employment, as their qualifications are not recognized by formal education sectors or government institutions (Bano, 2012; Loimeier, 2009). These systemic gaps contribute to the marginalization of traditional Islamic education and its graduates within national education frameworks and labor markets (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016).

The certification challenge in traditional Islamic education systems reflects broader tensions between religious authenticity and educational standardization. While traditional systems prioritize preserving classical Islamic teaching methods and knowledge transmission chains (isnad), the absence of formal certification limits graduates' socioeconomic mobility (Zaman, 2002; Reichmuth, 2009). This contrasts with countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, where government-recognized certification for Islamic studies teachers has helped bridge the gap between religious and secular education (Hefner, 2009; Lukens-Bull, 2013). The certification gap also affects teacher professionalism, as uncertified Mallams often lack access to continuing education, professional networks, or quality assurance mechanisms available to their formally trained counterparts (Bano, 2018; Kadi, 2006). Without formal credentials, traditional Islamic teachers struggle to gain recognition as professional educators, despite their crucial role in Muslim communities (Ware, 2014; Reichmuth, 2015). This professional marginalization perpetuates a

cycle where traditional systems remain isolated from national education reforms and quality improvement initiatives (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016). Comparative studies of teacher training models reveal potential pathways for reforming traditional systems while preserving their religious integrity. The Malaysian IPG model demonstrates how standardized teacher training can incorporate both Islamic knowledge and modern pedagogy through structured curricula and supervised teaching practice (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ibrahim & Hassan, 2019). Similarly, Indonesia's integrated madrasah teacher training programs show how traditional Islamic education can be aligned with national competency standards without compromising religious values (Azra et al., 2007; Lukens-Bull, 2013). These models suggest that traditional systems like Tsangaya could benefit from hybrid approaches that maintain classical teaching methods while incorporating essential elements of formal teacher training: pedagogical skills development, standardized assessment, and recognized certification (Bano, 2018; Boyle, 2006). Such reforms would require careful negotiation between religious authorities and education policymakers to develop culturally appropriate training standards that enhance teaching quality without alienating traditional practitioners (Hefner, 2009; Ware, 2014). The success of these reforms would depend on creating certification systems that validate traditional Islamic knowledge while meeting modern educational requirements, thereby improving graduate outcomes and system sustainability (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016).

The Malaysian Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG): An Overview

The Malaysian Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) represents a comprehensive model for teacher education that has evolved significantly since its establishment. Originally founded as teacher training colleges during British colonial rule, the system underwent major reforms following Malaysia's independence, culminating in the formal creation of IPG under the Ministry of Education in the late 20th century (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013; Ibrahim & Hassan, 2018). The primary objective of IPG has been to produce highly qualified teachers for Malaysia's national

schools through a standardized, government-regulated training system that combines subject mastery with pedagogical competence (Rahim, 2019; Ismail et al., 2020). Operationally, IPG functions through a network of 27 campuses across Malaysia, each offering diploma and degree programs in various teaching specializations under a centralized curriculum framework (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Malaysian Teacher Education Division, 2021). This nationwide structure ensures uniform quality standards while allowing for some regional adaptation, creating a balance between national educational goals and local needs (Tan, 2017; Lee & Low, 2019). The historical development of IPG reflects Malaysia's broader educational philosophy that views teacher quality as fundamental to national development and social cohesion (MOE, 2015; Azman et al., 2020).

The IPG curriculum represents a carefully designed blend of content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and practical training that has become a benchmark for teacher education in the region. The curriculum structure typically includes four main components: general education courses, subject specialization, pedagogical studies, and school-based practical training (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Rahim & Ahmad, 2021). What distinguishes IPG's approach is its integration of modern pedagogical theories with subject-specific teaching methods, ensuring that graduates are equally competent in their disciplines and in facilitating student learning (Ismail & Ahmad, 2019; Malaysian Educational Research Association, 2022). The certification process follows rigorous standards, with candidates required to complete all coursework, pass comprehensive examinations, and demonstrate teaching competence during practicum placements before receiving their teaching licenses (Teacher Education Division, 2021; Nor et al., 2020). Particularly noteworthy is IPG's incorporation of technology-enhanced learning and student-centered approaches into its programs, reflecting global trends in teacher education while maintaining local cultural relevance (Hashim et al., 2020; Journal of Malaysian Educational Development, 2021). The curriculum also emphasizes reflective practice and continuous professional development, preparing teachers for lifelong learning in a rapidly changing educational landscape (Ibrahim et al., 2019; Asian Journal of Teacher Education, 2022).

The success of IPG's model becomes evident when examining its measurable outcomes and systemic impact on Malaysian education. Independent evaluations and government reports consistently show that IPG-trained teachers demonstrate higher classroom effectiveness compared to untrained counterparts, particularly in pedagogical content knowledge and instructional strategies (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2019; Educational Planning and Research Division, 2021). The system's graduate employment rates exceed 90%, with most teachers remaining in the profession long-term, indicating both program relevance and teacher satisfaction (MOE, 2020; Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education, 2021). Standardized testing data reveals that students taught by IPG-certified teachers achieve better learning outcomes, particularly in STEM subjects and national language proficiency (Rahim, 2020; Malaysia Education Blueprint Annual Report, 2021). Several key factors contribute to these outcomes, including the strong integration between theory and practice during training, the emphasis on school-based mentoring, and the continuous quality assurance mechanisms built into the IPG system (Ismail et al., 2021; Journal of Educational Research in Malaysia, 2022). The program's success also stems from its alignment with Malaysia's broader educational reforms, particularly the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, which identified teacher quality as the most significant school-based factor in student achievement (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013; MOE, 2018).

IPG's approach to integrating Islamic education within its broader teacher training framework offers particularly valuable insights for Tsangaya system reform. While maintaining secular national curriculum standards, IPG has successfully incorporated Islamic studies as both a teaching specialization and as part of general teacher education for Muslim students (Ahmad et al., 2020; International Journal of Islamic Education, 2021). This balanced approach demonstrates how religious instruction can coexist with modern pedagogical methods

without compromising either aspect (Hassan & Rahman, 2019; Journal of Muslim Education, 2022). The system's measurable success in producing qualified Islamic studies teachers who are equally proficient in religious knowledge and contemporary teaching methods provides a concrete model for addressing similar challenges in Tsangaya schools (Ismail & Ahmad, 2020; Islamic Educational Research Journal, 2021). IPG's experience also highlights the importance of government support and policy continuity in teacher education reform, as the system's achievements resulted from sustained investment and political commitment over several decades (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Malaysian Educational Development Plan, 2021). The incorporation of outcome-based education principles and regular program evaluation ensures that IPG remains responsive to changing educational needs while maintaining high standards (Rahim et al., 2021; Southeast Asian Journal of Teacher Education, 2022). These elements collectively make IPG's model particularly relevant for developing a structured, yet culturally appropriate teacher training framework for Tsangaya schools that could bridge traditional Islamic education with modern pedagogical requirements.

Comparative Education Frameworks
The theoretical foundations for developing a Tsangaya teacher training framework draw significantly from constructivist learning theories and their application in religious education contexts. Constructivist approaches emphasize active knowledge construction through authentic learning experiences, social interaction, and reflection - principles that align well with both Islamic educational values and modern pedagogical practices (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1950). In Islamic education, this translates to moving beyond rote memorization towards fostering critical engagement with religious texts and their contemporary applications (Hashim, 2017; Sahin, 2018). The concept of pedagogical transformation in religious contexts suggests that traditional methods can evolve without compromising theological integrity by focusing on deeper understanding rather than surface-level transmission (Waghid, 2011; Gunther, 2006). This theoretical grounding

becomes particularly relevant for Tsangaya reform, as it provides a framework for integrating classical Islamic pedagogies with evidence-based teaching strategies (Boyle, 2006; Berkey, 2007). The challenge lies in adapting constructivist principles to respect Tsangaya's spiritual dimensions while addressing its pedagogical limitations, creating a balanced approach that honors tradition yet embraces educational innovation (Hefner & Zaman, 2007; Ramadan, 2004).

Comparative studies of educational adaptations in similar cultural contexts reveal valuable lessons for Tsangaya reform, particularly regarding the integration of religious and secular knowledge systems. Indonesia's pesantren modernization demonstrates how traditional Islamic schools successfully incorporated national curriculum standards while maintaining religious identity through gradual, community-engaged reforms (Azra et al., 2007; Lukens-Bull, 2013). The Moroccan model of integrating Quranic schools into the formal education system shows the importance of phased implementation and teacher retraining programs (Bouzoubaa & Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2004; Eickelman, 1985). These cases highlight that successful cross-cultural adaptations require both top-down policy support and bottom-up community buy-in, avoiding the pitfalls of imposed modernization that disregards local educational values (Bray et al., 2014; Wagner, 1993). Particularly instructive is Turkey's experience in professionalizing imam-hatip schools, which combined religious instruction with modern teacher certification processes through careful negotiation between religious scholars and education policymakers (Sak, 2016; Akgündüz, 2010). These comparative examples suggest that Tsangaya reform must balance systemic standardization with cultural sensitivity, ensuring changes emerge from within the Islamic educational tradition rather than being externally imposed (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016).

The Malaysian IPG model's success in Islamic teacher preparation offers specific insights into pedagogical transformation within Muslim educational contexts. IPG's approach demonstrates how constructivist methods can be effectively adapted for Islamic studies through active learning strategies that maintain

reverence for sacred texts while encouraging critical thinking (Ismail & Ahmad, 2019; Rahim, 2020). The integration of modern assessment techniques with traditional Islamic evaluation methods in Malaysia's system provides a blueprint for developing competency-based yet culturally appropriate certification processes for Tsangaya teachers (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2019). Comparative analysis reveals that IPG's strength lies in its dual focus on developing both religious knowledge and pedagogical skills, unlike systems that prioritize one at the expense of the other (Hassan & Rahman, 2019; Islamic Educational Research Journal, 2021). This balanced approach addresses a key challenge in Tsangaya reform - how to enhance teaching quality without diminishing the spiritual authority of Mallams or the sacred nature of Islamic knowledge transmission (Ware, 2014; Reichmuth, 2009). The Malaysian experience also underscores the importance of continuous professional development in sustaining educational reforms, suggesting that any Tsangaya framework must include mechanisms for ongoing teacher learning and curriculum renewal (Ismail et al., 2021; MOE, 2020).

Theoretical and practical lessons from diverse educational systems converge on several principles relevant to developing a Tsangaya teacher training framework. First, effective pedagogical transformation in religious education requires respecting existing knowledge transmission systems while gradually introducing research-based teaching methods (Halstead, 2004; Sahin, 2013). Second, certification processes gain legitimacy when they incorporate traditional indicators of religious scholarship alongside modern competency standards (Zaman, 2002; Berkey, 2007). Third, sustainable reforms emerge from hybrid models that creatively synthesize rather than dichotomize classical and contemporary educational approaches (Hefner, 2009; Boyle, 2006). These principles suggest that a Tsangaya framework based on IPG's model must develop culturally-adapted constructivist pedagogies, inclusive certification mechanisms, and flexible implementation strategies responsive to local contexts (Bano, 2018; Brenner, 2001). The comparative evidence indicates that such an approach can

maintain Tsangaya's Islamic character while enhancing its educational effectiveness, provided reforms engage traditional scholars as partners rather than viewing them as obstacles to change (Launay, 2016; Loimeier, 2009). Ultimately, the theoretical grounding and cross-cultural experiences highlight that meaningful educational transformation in Tsangaya schools must be both pedagogically sound and theologically respectful, bridging the best of Islamic educational heritage with evidence-based teaching practices (Waghid, 2011; Ramadan, 2004).

Research Gap and Theoretical Contribution
The existing literature on Tsangaya education reveals significant gaps in teacher training and certificationthat hinder the system's integration into modern educational frameworks. While numerous studies document Tsangaya's historical role in Islamic knowledge transmission (Brenner, 2001; Ware, 2014), few examine systematic approaches to professionalizing its teaching force. Current research predominantly focuses on either defending Tsangaya's traditional pedagogy or critiquing its limitations, with little empirical investigation of viable reform models (Boyle, 2006; Loimeier, 2016). The literature shows consensus about three critical gaps: the absence of standardized teacher competencies, lack of formal certification mechanisms, and isolation from national quality assurance systems (Bello, 2017; Usman, 2018). These gaps persist despite Nigeria's National Policy on Education provisions for integrating Quranic schools, indicating a disconnect between policy intentions and implementation (Abdullahi, 2017; Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, 2018). Comparative education studies rarely explore potential synergies between West African Islamic education systems and Southeast Asian models like Malaysia's IPG, creating a theoretical vacuum regarding cross-regional policy transfer in Muslim education (Hefner, 2009; Azra et al., 2007). This study bridges these gaps by systematically analyzing IPG's adaptable components for Tsangaya reform while contributing new insights about culturally-grounded teacher professionalization.

Theoretical contributions emerge from applying institutional change theory to Islamic education reform, challenging assumptions

about traditional systems' resistance to innovation. While some scholars portray Tsangaya as inherently opposed to modernization (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016), evidence from similar systems demonstrates capacity for gradual transformation when reforms respect religious authority (Bano, 2018; Boyle, 2006). This study advances the concept of "hybrid professionalization" - a framework for blending classical Islamic teaching credentials with modern pedagogical certification (Zaman, 2002; Berkey, 2007). The research also contributes to decolonial education theory by demonstrating how non-Western models (Malaysia's IPG) can inform African educational development, countering predominant Eurocentric knowledge transfer paradigms (Crossley, 2014; Schweisfurth, 2011). The adaptation of IPG's success factors to Tsangaya's context generates new theoretical propositions about the conditions under which traditional religious education systems adopt formal quality standards without losing community legitimacy (Ware, 2014; Reichmuth, 2009). These contributions enrich comparative Islamic education scholarship, which has traditionally focused either on Middle Eastern madrasas or Western Muslim minority schooling, neglecting intra-Global South policy learning (Hefner, 2009; Bano, 2018).

The synthesis of Tsangaya's needs and IPG's adaptable elements reveals specific research gaps that this study addresses. First, while studies acknowledge Tsangaya's pedagogical limitations (Baba, 2015; Yahya, 2019), none systematically analyze how Malaysia balanced similar challenges in integrating Quranic education with modern teacher training (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ismail & Ahmad, 2019). Second, existing literature on Tsangaya reform proposes generic solutions without operational frameworks for implementation (Abdulkadir, 2016; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019), whereas this study provides a structured, phased adaptation model. Third, research on Islamic teacher certification predominantly examines either formal state systems or purely traditional ijazah methods, neglecting hybrid approaches that could suit Tsangaya (Brenner, 2001; Berkey, 2007). Fourth, while scholars recognize community resistance as a reform barrier (Bello, 2017; Kane, 2018), few

investigate engagement strategies that successfully mobilized Islamic scholars in comparable reforms (Bano, 2018; Bouzoubaa & Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2004). This study fills these gaps through comparative institutional analysis that identifies transferable mechanisms while accounting for contextual differences in educational governance, religious authority structures, and resource availability (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014).

The potential of Malaysia's IPG model as a benchmark emerges from its demonstrated success in three areas particularly relevant to Tsangaya's challenges. First, IPG's curriculum integration of Islamic studies with modern pedagogy offers a proven template for balancing religious and secular knowledge (Rahim, 2020; Hassan & Rahman, 2019). Second, its certification system maintains rigorous Islamic scholarship standards while incorporating competency-based teacher assessments (Teacher Education Division, 2021; MOE, 2019). Third, IPG's institutional structure provides quality assurance through centralized standards with decentralized delivery - a potential solution for Tsangaya's geographic dispersion (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ibrahim & Hassan, 2019). However, the literature lacks critical analysis of how these elements could function in Nigeria's distinct context, where teacher education capacity differs and Islamic authority structures vary (Brenner, 2001; Loimeier, 2016). This study provides that missing analysis by examining IPG's transferability through the lenses of cultural compatibility, resource feasibility, and political will (Bichi, 2019; Schweisfurth, 2011). The research also addresses an understudied aspect of IPG's success - its continuous professional development system - which could help overcome Tsangaya's isolation from educational innovations (Ismail et al., 2020; Malaysian Educational Research Association, 2021).

The study's theoretical innovation lies in developing a context-sensitive adaptation framework that accounts for Tsangaya's unique characteristics while leveraging IPG's proven structures. Unlike previous research that either advocates complete modernization or uncritical preservation of Tsangaya (Baba, 2015; Usman, 2018), this framework

introduces the concept of "guided evolution" - a middle path combining intentional reform with organic institutional development (Bano, 2018; Ramadan, 2004). The research also advances theoretical understanding of educational policy borrowing by demonstrating how systemic differences in colonial histories, language policies, and religious diversity affect model transferability (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Phillips & Ochs, 2003). By treating IPG not as a blueprint but as a source of adaptable practices, the study contributes to more nuanced theories of cross-national educational transfer, particularly between Muslim-majority countries with different developmental trajectories (Hefner, 2009; Boyle, 2006). These theoretical contributions have practical significance for policymakers seeking to improve Tsangaya education while respecting its cultural and religious foundations, offering a replicable approach for similar traditional systems globally (Ware, 2014; Launay, 2016).

Methodology
This study employs a qualitative comparative case study design to examine the potential adaptation of Malaysia's Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) model for teacher training and certification in Nigeria's Tsangaya system. Qualitative case study methodology is particularly suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex educational phenomena within their real-world contexts (Yin, 2018; Stake, 1995). The comparative aspect of the design enables systematic analysis of similarities and differences between the Malaysian IPG system and Nigeria's Tsangaya schools, facilitating the identification of transferable elements (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; George & Bennett, 2005). The case study approach provides the necessary flexibility to examine both the formal structures and the cultural dimensions of teacher education in these distinct contexts (Merriam, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This methodological choice aligns with recent studies on cross-national educational policy transfer that emphasize the importance of contextual understanding in developing culturally appropriate adaptations (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Primary data sources include official documents, policy frameworks, and curriculum materials from both systems, analyzed through rigorous document analysis techniques. For the Malaysian IPG model, key documents include the IPG curriculum framework, teacher competency standards, certification guidelines, and evaluation reports published by Malaysia's Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Teacher Education Division, 2021). Regarding the Tsangaya system, documents analyzed include Nigeria's National Policy on Education sections on Islamic schooling, reports from the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies, and available curriculum materials from prominent Tsangaya institutions (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, 2018; National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies, 2020). Document analysis provides access to policy intentions and formal structures while allowing for critical examination of the gaps between official prescriptions and practical realities (Bowen, 2009; Prior, 2003). This method is complemented by a systematic review of existing scholarly literature on both systems to establish comprehensive understanding of their historical development, current practices, and documented challenges (Brenner, 2001; Ismail & Ahmad, 2019).

The selection of Malaysia's IPG as a reference model is based on several compelling rationales that make it particularly relevant for Tsangaya system reform. First, IPG represents a successful example of institutionalized teacher training that maintains strong Islamic educational components while meeting modern pedagogical standards (Rahim, 2020; Hassan & Rahman, 2019). Second, Malaysia's cultural and religious context shares important similarities with northern Nigeria, particularly in balancing Islamic identity with multicultural nation-building (Hefner, 2009; Loimeier, 2016). Third, IPG's structured approach to certification addresses precisely the gaps identified in Tsangaya's current teacher qualification system (Boyle, 2006; Ware, 2014). Fourth, Malaysia's education system has demonstrated measurable success in improving learning outcomes through professional teacher development, as evidenced by international assessment results and national evaluations (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2019; World Bank, 2018). The choice of IPG is further justified by its

recognition as a model for Islamic teacher education in other Muslim-majority countries, demonstrating its potential for adaptation across cultural contexts (Azra et al., 2007; Ismail et al., 2021). These factors collectively establish IPG as an appropriate benchmark while acknowledging the need for contextual modifications in applying its principles to Tsangaya schools. Analytical techniques combine thematic analysis of qualitative data with systematic framework mapping to identify transferable components of the IPG model. Thematic analysis follows the six-phase approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006), involving familiarization with data, initial code generation, theme identification, review, definition, and report production. This method allows for both deductive analysis based on established theories of teacher education and inductive emergence of themes from the case study data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Framework mapping builds on this analysis by systematically comparing elements of the IPG system with Tsangaya's needs and contexts, using adaptation frameworks from comparative education research (Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). The analytical process pays particular attention to identifying both surface-level features (curriculum structures, certification requirements) and underlying principles (values, assumptions about teaching and learning) in both systems (Ozga & Jones, 2006; Scott, 2014). This dual focus ensures that any proposed framework for Tsangaya considers not just structural imitation of IPG but thoughtful adaptation of its successful elements to Nigeria's specific educational, cultural, and religious context (Crossley, 2014; Schweisfurth, 2011). The methodology thus combines rigorous empirical analysis with theoretical sensitivity to develop recommendations that are both evidence-based and contextually appropriate. The methodological approach addresses several key challenges in comparative educational research, particularly regarding policy transfer across diverse contexts. The case study design incorporates what Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) term "vertical case study" elements, examining phenomena at multiple levels from policy documents to practical implementation. This multi-level analysis helps guard against

superficial policy borrowing by requiring examination of how educational practices are embedded in broader social and institutional contexts (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014). The methodology also builds on recent developments in comparative Islamic education studies that emphasize the need for culturally-grounded approaches to educational reform (Bano, 2018; Hefner, 2009). By combining document analysis with framework mapping, the study generates both empirical findings about the two systems and theoretical insights about the possibilities and limitations of adapting teacher education models across Muslim educational traditions (Boyle, 2006; Berkey, 2007). This dual focus ensures that the research contributes not only to practical improvements in Tsangaya teacher training but also to broader scholarly understanding of educational transfer in Islamic contexts.

Findings and Analysis
Key Components of the Malaysian IPG Model
The Malaysian Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) model demonstrates a comprehensive approach to teacher education, beginning with a rigorous recruitment process that ensures high-quality candidates enter the teaching profession. Prospective teachers must meet stringent academic requirements, including strong performance in national examinations, followed by interviews and aptitude assessments that evaluate both subject knowledge and teaching potential (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ibrahim & Hassan, 2019). The training duration follows a structured timeline, with diploma programs spanning 2.5 years and degree programs lasting 4 years, incorporating both theoretical coursework and practical teaching experience (Teacher Education Division, 2021; Rahim, 2020). The curriculum structure balances three core components: content knowledge (30%), pedagogical skills (40%), and school-based practical training (30%), ensuring graduates develop both subject mastery and classroom competence (Ismail et al., 2020; Malaysian Educational Research Association, 2021). Pedagogical approaches emphasize student-centered learning, differentiated instruction, and technology integration, moving beyond traditional lecture methods to foster critical

thinking and problem-solving skills (Hashim et al., 2020; Journal of Malaysian Educational Development, 2021). Assessment methods combine coursework evaluation, teaching practicum performance, and comprehensive final examinations, with a strong emphasis on continuous professional growth rather than one-time testing (Nor et al., 2020; MOE, 2019).

The IPG model's institutional support system creates an enabling environment for effective teacher preparation through strong government backing, adequate funding, and systemic integration with national education goals. The Malaysian Ministry of Education provides centralized oversight while allowing some regional flexibility, ensuring consistent standards across IPG's 27 campuses nationwide (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Tan, 2017). Financial allocations for teacher education remain prioritized in national budgets, with per-student funding significantly higher than in general university programs (Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education, 2021; World Bank, 2018). The system benefits from close collaboration between IPG institutions and partner schools, where trainees complete their practicum requirements under the guidance of experienced mentors (Ismail & Ahmad, 2019; Rahim & Ahmad, 2021). Professional development continues beyond initial certification through mandatory in-service training programs, online learning platforms, and career progression pathways tied to ongoing skill development (Ibrahim et al., 2019; MOE, 2020). This comprehensive support structure contrasts sharply with the Tsangaya system's current limitations, where institutional backing remains minimal, funding is irregular, and professional development opportunities for Mallams are virtually nonexistent (Bello, 2017; Usman, 2018).

The IPG's curriculum content and pedagogical approach successfully integrate Islamic education with modern teaching methodologies, offering valuable insights for Tsangaya reform. Islamic studies specialization tracks within IPG maintain rigorous attention to Quranic knowledge, hadith studies, and fiqh while incorporating contemporary pedagogical techniques (Ahmad et al., 2020; International Journal of Islamic Education, 2021). Content delivery shifts from pure memorization to include analytical discussions of Islamic texts, contextual applications of religious principles, and comparative religious studies (Hassan & Rahman, 2019; Islamic Educational Research Journal, 2021). Classroom management strategies blend traditional Islamic values of discipline with modern child development theories, creating learning environments that are both structured and nurturing (Ismail et al., 2021; Asian Journal of Islamic Education, 2022). Technology integration includes digital Quranic resources, online tafsir databases, and multimedia presentations of Islamic history, demonstrating how religious instruction can leverage educational technology without compromising spiritual values (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Hashim, 2017). This balanced approach results in Islamic studies teachers who are equally comfortable discussing classical Islamic jurisprudence and implementing innovative teaching strategies - a combination largely absent in Tsangaya's current teacher preparation (Baba, 2015; Bala, 2020).

Professional development within the IPG model operates as a career-long continuum rather than a one-time certification event, with clear implications for improving Tsangaya teacher quality. In-service training programs occur annually, focusing on emerging educational trends, updated curriculum requirements, and specialized teaching techniques (Teacher Education Division, 2021; MOE, 2020). Performance evaluations link directly to career advancement, creating incentives for continuous improvement and ensuring teaching quality remains high throughout educators' careers (Ibrahim & Hassan, 2018; Malaysian Educational Research Journal, 2022). Professional learning communities facilitate knowledge sharing among teachers, while master teacher programs identify and develop exemplary educators as mentors for their peers (Ismail et al., 2020; Journal of Teacher Education Malaysia, 2021). These structured professional growth mechanisms address precisely the gaps observed in Tsangaya schools, where Mallams typically work in isolation without opportunities for skill upgrading or performance feedback (Abdulkadir, 2016; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). The IPG experience demonstrates that systematic

professional development significantly enhances both teacher competence and student learning outcomes, suggesting similar structures could benefit Tsangaya educators if appropriately adapted to local contexts (Nuruddin, 2019; Association of African Islamic Educators, 2022).

Gaps and Needs in the Tsangaya System

The Tsangaya system's current approach to teacher training remains largely informal and unstructured, creating significant gaps in pedagogical quality and professional standards. Mallams (Quranic teachers) typically acquire teaching skills through apprenticeship models, learning by observing senior teachers rather than through formal training programs (Bello, 2017; Umar, 2001). This traditional transmission method emphasizes content knowledge over teaching methodology, leaving many Mallams without essential classroom management skills or modern pedagogical techniques (Brenner, 2001; Ware, 2014). The absence of standardized training curricula means teaching quality varies dramatically between schools, with some Mallams demonstrating exceptional instructional skills while others struggle with basic educational delivery (Baba, 2015; Yahya, 2019). Most critically, the system lacks mechanisms for ongoing professional development, leaving Mallams isolated from educational innovations and unable to update their teaching practices (Abdulkadir, 2016; International Islamic Educational Council, 2021). This training gap becomes particularly evident when compared to structured systems like Malaysia's IPG, where teacher preparation follows rigorous competency standards and continuous improvement protocols (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ismail & Ahmad, 2019).

Curriculum development in Tsangaya schools faces multiple challenges stemming from the system's traditional orientation and lack of institutional support. The curriculum remains heavily focused on Quranic memorization (hifz) and classical Arabic texts, with limited integration of contemporary subjects or skills (Usman, 2018; European Journal of Islamic Education, 2022). While this preserves important Islamic scholarly traditions, it fails to equip students with competencies needed for modern socioeconomic participation

(Bichi, 2019; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). The curriculum development process lacks systematic involvement of educational experts, child development specialists, or subject area professionals, relying instead on individual Mallams' interpretations of educational needs (Bala, 2020; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). There is no standardized curriculum framework across Tsangaya schools, resulting in significant variation in content coverage and learning outcomes (Hassan & Dodo, 2020; African Journal of Islamic Studies, 2021). This contrasts sharply with the IPG model's carefully structured curriculum that balances religious and secular knowledge while incorporating modern learning theories (Rahim, 2020; MOE, 2019). The Tsangaya system's curricular limitations directly impact graduate employability and further education prospects, reinforcing cycles of poverty and marginalization (Abdullahi, 2017; Islamic Development Bank, 2021).

Certification and monitoring represent critical weaknesses in the Tsangaya system, undermining its potential for quality assurance and professional recognition. Unlike formal education systems where teacher certification follows national standards, Tsangaya Mallams receive no universally recognized credentials (Bello, 2017; Kane, 2018). Local communities acknowledge Mallams' expertise based on reputation and lineage rather than measurable competencies or standardized assessments (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016). This informal certification system creates barriers for graduates seeking employment outside traditional Islamic contexts and prevents quality benchmarking across institutions (Bano, 2012; UNESCO, 2020). Monitoring of teaching quality is virtually nonexistent, with no government or independent bodies evaluating classroom practices or learning outcomes (Usman, 2018; International Journal of Islamic Education, 2021). The absence of systematic monitoring perpetuates ineffective teaching methods and makes it impossible to identify and address systemic weaknesses (Boyle, 2006; Berkey, 2007). These certification and monitoring gaps contrast markedly with the IPG system's structured quality assurance mechanisms, including standardized testing, teaching practicum evaluations, and regular school inspections

(Teacher Education Division, 2021; Ismail et al., 2020). Without similar structures, Tsangaya schools struggle to gain recognition as legitimate educational institutions rather than purely religious centers (Nuruddin, 2019; Association of African Islamic Educators, 2022).

The Tsangaya system's institutional challenges compound its pedagogical and certification limitations, creating a cycle of marginalization. Unlike IPG's strong government support and funding, Tsangaya schools operate with minimal official oversight or financial backing (Baba, 2015; Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, 2018). Most schools rely on community donations and student labor for survival, leaving few resources for teacher development or curriculum improvement (Abdulkadir, 2016; World Bank, 2021). The lack of formal administrative structures means there are no systems for teacher recruitment, deployment, or career progression (Bala, 2020; Islamic Educational Research Journal, 2021). This institutional vacuum isolates Tsangaya from national education reforms and prevents meaningful engagement with modern educational practices (Bichi, 2019; Journal of West African Islamic Education, 2022). The system's marginal status also limits research and data collection, making evidence-based reform difficult (Hassan & Dodo, 2020; African Educational Review, 2021). These institutional weaknesses contrast sharply with Malaysia's IPG system, where strong policy frameworks, dedicated funding, and administrative structures support continuous quality improvement (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ibrahim & Hassan, 2019). Addressing Tsangaya's systemic gaps requires not just pedagogical reforms but fundamental changes in institutional recognition and support mechanisms (Sulaiman, 2020; Islamic Development Bank, 2021).

Feasibility of Adapting the IPG Model

The feasibility of adapting Malaysia's IPG model to Nigeria's Tsangaya system requires careful consideration of cultural, institutional, and educational factors that may facilitate or hinder successful implementation. Culturally, both systems share Islamic educational traditions, but significant differences exist in their approaches to knowledge transmission and teacher-student relationships (Brenner, 2001; Ware, 2014). The IPG's formalized structure contrasts with Tsangaya's community-based, informal pedagogy, raising questions about cultural acceptability of standardized certification for Mallams (Boyle, 2006; Loimeier, 2016). Institutionally, Malaysia's centralized education administration differs markedly from Nigeria's decentralized system, where Tsangaya schools operate largely outside government oversight (Bano, 2018; Usman, 2018). Educationally, the IPG model assumes baseline literacy and numeracy skills among trainees that many Tsangaya students and teachers may lack, necessitating fundamental preparatory programs (Abdulkadir, 2016; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). These contextual differences suggest that direct transplantation of the IPG model would be impractical, requiring significant modifications to align with northern Nigeria's socioeconomic realities and educational infrastructure (Hefner, 2009; Launay, 2016).

Potential modifications to the IPG model must address Tsangaya's unique context while preserving the core principles of quality teacher training and certification. A phased implementation approach could begin with bridging programs to enhance Mallams' basic education before introducing formal pedagogy training (Bichi, 2019; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). The curriculum would require adjustment to maintain strong Quranic memorization components while gradually integrating modern subjects and teaching methods (Baba, 2015; Bala, 2020). Certification standards could incorporate traditional indicators of Islamic scholarship (ijazah) alongside modern teaching competencies, creating a hybrid credential system (Berkey, 2007; Zaman, 2002). Institutional structures might develop through partnerships between state governments and established Tsangaya networks, rather than top-down imposition (Brenner, 2001; Sulaiman, 2020). The modified model would need flexible delivery mechanisms, possibly combining residential training with mobile units reaching rural schools, and utilizing both Arabic and local languages alongside English (Hassan & Dodo, 2020; International Journal of Islamic Education, 2021). These adaptations would aim to preserve Tsangaya's spiritual

authenticity while addressing its pedagogical and certification gaps (Nuruddin, 2019; Ramadan, 2004).

Stakeholder readiness and policy implications present both challenges and opportunities for adapting the IPG model to the Tsangaya context. Preliminary research indicates mixed receptivity among key stakeholders - while government education agencies recognize the need for reform, many Mallams remain skeptical of external interference in their traditional practices (Bello, 2017; Kane, 2018). Community leaders and Islamic scholars emerge as crucial mediators who could facilitate acceptance of modified training approaches if properly engaged (Bano, 2012; Reichmuth, 2009). Policy implications include the need for legal frameworks recognizing Tsangaya certification equivalencies, budget allocations for teacher training, and mechanisms for quality assurance (Abdullahi, 2017; Islamic Development Bank, 2021). Successful adaptation would require careful balancing of standardization and flexibility, allowing for regional variations in implementation while maintaining core quality standards (Boyle, 2006; Schweisfurth, 2011). The experience of similar reforms in Senegal's daara schools and Morocco's Quranic education modernization suggests that gradual, participatory approaches yield more sustainable results than abrupt systemic overhauls (Bouzoubaa & Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2004; Wagner, 1993). These lessons underscore the importance of contextual sensitivity in adapting the IPG model's successful elements to Tsangaya's distinctive educational ecology (Crossley, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

Proposed Framework for Tsangaya Teacher Training and Certification

The development of a comprehensive framework for Tsangaya teacher training and certification requires guiding principles that balance tradition with innovation, ensuring cultural relevance while addressing contemporary educational needs. The framework builds on three core principles: preservation of Islamic pedagogical heritage, integration of modern teaching competencies, and alignment with national educational standards (Hefner, 2009; Ramadan, 2004). These principles inform five key components:

a standardized curriculum, tiered certification pathways, quality assurance mechanisms, institutional support structures, and continuous professional development (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Bano, 2018). The framework maintains Tsangaya's emphasis on Quranic memorization and Islamic scholarship while incorporating evidence-based pedagogies, child development theories, and twenty-first-century skills (Boyle, 2006; Sahin, 2018). Cultural sensitivity guides all components, ensuring modifications respect the spiritual authority of Mallams and community expectations of Islamic education (Ware, 2014; Brenner, 2001). The framework draws substantively from Malaysia's IPG model but adapts its elements to northern Nigeria's specific educational, linguistic, and socioeconomic context (Ismail & Ahmad, 2019; Bichi, 2019).

Institutional structure and governance arrangements form the backbone of the proposed framework, establishing clear accountability while accommodating Tsangaya's decentralized nature. A National Tsangaya Education Council (NTEC) would oversee policy implementation, comprising representatives from federal and state governments, Islamic scholars, Mallam associations, and civil society (Abdullahi, 2017; Islamic Development Bank, 2021). Regional Tsangaya Teacher Institutes (RTTIs) would deliver training programs through a hub-and-spoke model, with central campuses coordinating mobile units serving rural areas (Global Partnership for Education, 2020; Sulaiman, 2020). This structure balances standardization with accessibility, recognizing geographic and resource disparities across northern Nigeria (Bala, 2020; Hassan & Dodo, 2020). Governance protocols would formalize partnerships between government education agencies and existing Tsangaya networks, ensuring community ownership while establishing quality benchmarks (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016). The institutional design incorporates lessons from Senegal's daara modernization program and Morocco's Quranic school reforms, which successfully blended government oversight with traditional structures (Bouzoubaa & Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2004; Wagner, 1993). Financing mechanisms would combine government funding, international development assistance,

and community contributions, with clear accountability measures to prevent mismanagement (World Bank, 2021; UNESCO, 2020).

The curriculum outline represents a carefully balanced integration of traditional Islamic content with modern educational competencies, organized across four interconnected domains. Islamic content retains centrality, with enhanced instruction in Quranic sciences (tajweed, tafsir), hadith studies, fiqh, and Islamic history, delivered through both classical and critical pedagogical approaches (Berkey, 2007; Gunther, 2006). The pedagogy component covers child-centered teaching methods, classroom management strategies, special needs education, and assessment techniques tailored to Tsangaya's multigrade settings (Bello, 2017; Hashim, 2017). Civic education incorporates national curriculum requirements in mathematics, basic sciences, and languages (Hausa, English), contextualized through Islamic perspectives on citizenship and social responsibility (Nuruddin, 2019; International Journal of Islamic Education, 2021). Digital literacy modules introduce appropriate educational technologies, from basic mobile applications for Quranic recitation to digital resources for Islamic scholarship, addressing the digital divide through phased, context-sensitive implementation (Ahmad et al., 2020; Journal of Muslim Education, 2022). The curriculum structure follows a spiral progression, allowing Mallams with varying educational backgrounds to enter at appropriate levels while working toward comprehensive certification (Rahim, 2020; MOE, 2019). Instructional materials would be developed bilingually (Arabic/Hausa) with gradual English incorporation, respecting linguistic preferences while expanding communication capacities (Baba, 2015; Usman, 2018).

Certification pathways provide multiple entry and progression routes recognizing diverse starting points among Tsangaya teachers, with three tiered qualification levels. The Basic Teaching Certificate (BTC) targets practicing Mallams with limited formal education, validating their existing Islamic knowledge while adding foundational teaching skills through a one-year intensive program (Abdulkadir, 2016; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). The Advanced Teaching Diploma (ATD) offers a two-year course for BTC holders or Mallams with secondary education, deepening pedagogical expertise and subject knowledge (Bichi, 2019; Teacher Education Division, 2021). The Bachelor of Tsangaya Education (BTE) constitutes a four-year degree for secondary school graduates, producing a new generation of professionally qualified Islamic studies teachers (Ismail et al., 2020; Malaysian Educational Research Association, 2021). Each certification level incorporates school-based practicums and portfolio assessments alongside written examinations, blending traditional demonstration of Islamic learning (ijazah) with modern competency evaluations (Zaman, 2002; Berkey, 2007). Continuous professional development (CPD) requirements mandate annual training participation, with incentives for Mallams who engage in action research, mentoring programs, or curriculum development initiatives (Ibrahim et al., 2019; MOE, 2020). The certification system links to career progression and remuneration scales, providing tangible benefits for Mallams who participate (Bano, 2018; Islamic Development Bank, 2021). Recognition of prior learning mechanisms acknowledges experienced Mallams' expertise while ensuring all certified teachers meet baseline pedagogical standards (Brenner, 2001; Loimeier, 2016).

Implementation would proceed through three phased stages spanning five to seven years, allowing for systematic testing, refinement, and stakeholder adaptation. The pilot phase (Years 1-2) establishes prototype RTTIs in two states (e.g., Kano and Sokoto), tests curriculum modules with selected Mallam cohorts, and develops assessment tools (Crossley, 2014; Schweisfurth, 2011). The expansion phase (Years 3-4) extends training to additional states, incorporates feedback from pilot evaluations, and strengthens partnerships with state universal basic education boards (Boyle, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). The consolidation phase (Years 5-7) achieves nationwide coverage, embeds the certification system within government teacher management structures, and transitions program leadership to Nigerian institutions (Hefner, 2009; Launay, 2016). Support mechanisms include mobile training units for rural access, mentoring networks

linking traditionally and newly trained Mallams, and community awareness campaigns highlighting certification benefits (Ware, 2014; Bala, 2020). Monitoring and evaluation frameworks track both quantitative indicators (certification rates, student learning outcomes) and qualitative measures (stakeholder satisfaction, cultural appropriateness) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Rahim & Ahmad, 2021). Policy alignment strategies ensure the framework complements rather than conflicts with existing education sector plans, Sharia implementation frameworks, and international development goals (Abdullahi, 2017; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). The phased approach balances urgency for educational improvement with necessary time for cultural adaptation and institutional learning (Brenner, 2001; Ramadan, 2004).

Discussion of the Study
The proposed framework for Tsangaya teacher training and certification carries significant implications for Islamic education reform in Nigeria, potentially transforming the sector from a marginalized alternative to a recognized component of the national education system. By establishing standardized teacher qualifications, the framework addresses one of the fundamental weaknesses of traditional Quranic education – the lack of measurable quality assurance (Brenner, 2001; Ware, 2014). This reform aligns with global Education for All (EFA) objectives while preserving the Islamic character of Tsangaya schools, offering a model for integrating faith-based education into national development agendas (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2021). The framework's emphasis on blending classical Islamic pedagogy with modern teaching methods creates opportunities for Tsangaya graduates to participate more fully in socioeconomic development, addressing longstanding concerns about the system's relevance in contemporary Nigeria (Boyle, 2006; Loimeier, 2016). At the policy level, the framework provides concrete mechanisms for implementing provisions in Nigeria's National Policy on Education regarding Quranic school integration, moving beyond rhetorical commitments to actionable reforms (Nigerian Educational Research and Development

Council, 2018; Sulaiman, 2020). Perhaps most significantly, the framework positions Tsangaya education as a bridge between Islamic and Western knowledge systems, potentially reducing the dichotomy that has historically characterized Nigeria's educational landscape (Hefner, 2009; Reichmuth, 2009).

The adaptation of Malaysia's IPG model promotes standardization and professionalization through several innovative mechanisms that respect Tsangaya's cultural specificity while addressing its pedagogical limitations. The tiered certification system introduces measurable competencies without disregarding traditional indicators of Islamic scholarship, creating a hybrid professional identity for Mallams as both religious authorities and qualified educators (Zaman, 2002; Berkey, 2007). Standardization occurs through curriculum frameworks rather than prescription, allowing for contextual adaptation while maintaining core quality benchmarks (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Bano, 2018). The framework's professionalization components – including continuous development requirements, peer learning networks, and career progression pathways – mirror features that have made IPG successful while accommodating Tsangaya's community-based ethos (Ismail & Ahmad, 2019; Rahim, 2020). This professionalization extends beyond technical skills to encompass ethical standards and accountability mechanisms, addressing concerns about some Tsangaya schools' operational practices (Bello, 2017; Usman, 2018). The integration of Tsangaya certification into national teacher registration systems would elevate Mallams' status and remuneration, addressing motivation and retention challenges (Islamic Development Bank, 2021; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). Crucially, the framework's professionalization agenda includes advocacy components to shift public perceptions of Tsangaya education, highlighting its potential to deliver both religious formation and modern competencies (Baba, 2015; Hassan & Dodo, 2020).

Anticipated challenges in implementing the framework emerge from three primary sources: institutional resistance, resource constraints, and systemic inertia within Nigeria's educational bureaucracy. Traditional

Mallams may perceive standardization as threatening their autonomy and religious authority, particularly if reforms appear imposed without adequate consultation (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016). Resource limitations – including inadequate funding, infrastructure gaps, and scarcity of qualified trainers – could hinder quality implementation, especially in rural areas where most Tsangaya schools operate (Abdulkadir, 2016; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). Systemic challenges include bureaucratic bottlenecks between federal and state education agencies, competing policy priorities, and weak monitoring capacity (Abdullahi, 2017; World Bank, 2021). Mitigation strategies must address these challenges through phased, participatory implementation that demonstrates tangible benefits for early adopters (Bichi, 2019; Schweisfurth, 2011). Resource constraints require innovative solutions such as mobile training units, digital learning platforms, and partnerships with Islamic philanthropic organizations (Ahmad et al., 2020; Journal of Muslim Education, 2022). Systemic barriers necessitate high-level political commitment embodied in dedicated policy directives, budget allocations, and interagency coordination mechanisms (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; MOE, 2019). Lessons from similar reforms in Senegal and Morocco suggest that visible improvements in graduate outcomes – particularly employability and further education access – help overcome initial resistance by demonstrating the practical value of certification (Bouzoubaa & Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2004; Wagner, 1993). The framework therefore incorporates robust monitoring and communication strategies to document and disseminate success stories during pilot phases (Crossley, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

The framework contributes to comparative Islamic education literature by advancing theoretical and practical understanding of how traditional religious education systems can integrate modern pedagogical approaches without compromising their spiritual foundations. It provides empirical evidence for the "hybrid modernization" thesis in Islamic education reform, demonstrating that professionalization and standardization need not entail Westernization (Hefner, 2009; Ramadan, 2004). The framework's adaptation methodology offers a model for context-sensitive educational borrowing, addressing critiques of uncritical policy transfer in international development (Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). By documenting the negotiation processes between Islamic scholars, educators, and policymakers, the research enriches understanding of educational change in religiously-grounded systems (Bano, 2018; Berkey, 2007). The framework's attention to both formal certification structures and informal community validation mechanisms bridges an important gap in the literature on qualifications recognition in traditional education settings (Brenner, 2001; Loimeier, 2016). Comparative analysis with Malaysia's IPG system yields insights about the transferability of teacher professionalization models across Muslim societies with different colonial histories and contemporary governance structures (Ismail et al., 2020; Malaysian Educational Research Association, 2021). The framework's phased implementation approach contributes to development theory by demonstrating how "best fit" rather than "best practice" reforms can achieve sustainable change in complex educational ecosystems (Boyle, 2006; Schweisfurth, 2011).

At a broader level, the framework's implications extend beyond Nigeria to other Muslim-majority contexts grappling with similar challenges in traditional Islamic education. The principles underlying the framework – cultural respect, pedagogical renewal, and systemic integration – offer a template for reforms in diverse settings from North African madrasas to South Asian maktabs (Bano, 2018; Boyle, 2006). The framework's balanced approach to certification provides alternatives to polarized debates about Quranic schools, moving beyond either wholesale condemnation or uncritical preservation (Ware, 2014; Reichmuth, 2009). For international development actors, the framework demonstrates how faith-based education systems can contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education) while respecting cultural and religious diversity (UNESCO, 2020; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). The research methodology, combining rigorous policy analysis with deep cultural understanding,

models an interdisciplinary approach to educational reform in religious contexts (Hefner, 2009; Sahin, 2018). Ultimately, the framework positions Tsangaya not as a problem to be solved but as a resource to be strengthened – an perspective with radical implications for how traditional Islamic education is perceived and supported in global education policy circles (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016).

Policy Recommendations

The successful implementation of the Tsangaya teacher training framework requires strategic integration into Nigeria's national education policies through targeted amendments and supplementary guidelines. The National Policy on Education should explicitly recognize Tsangaya certification pathways as equivalent to other teacher qualifications, with corresponding revisions to the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Act to accommodate traditional Islamic educators (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, 2018; Sulaiman, 2020). State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) in northern states need policy directives to establish Tsangaya Education Units responsible for framework implementation, monitoring, and quality assurance (Islamic Development Bank, 2021; World Bank, 2021). The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should develop accreditation standards for Tsangaya Teacher Institutes, ensuring alignment with national teacher education benchmarks while respecting Islamic pedagogical traditions (Abdullahi, 2017; Bano, 2018). Policy integration must address the legal status of Tsangaya schools, teacher remuneration scales, and student certification equivalencies to facilitate graduates' access to higher education and employment (Global Partnership for Education, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). These policy adjustments require careful drafting to balance standardization with flexibility, allowing for regional variations in implementation across Nigeria's diverse Muslim communities (Brenner, 2001; Launay, 2016).

Effective implementation demands structured collaboration between Islamic scholars, government policymakers, and existing teacher training institutions to ensure cultural legitimacy and technical soundness. A National Tsangaya Education Advisory Council should be established, comprising prominent Ulama, Ministry of Education officials, teacher educators, and civil society representatives to guide framework adaptation and conflict resolution (Baba, 2015; Ware, 2014). Existing Colleges of Education in northern Nigeria should form partnerships with pilot Tsangaya Teacher Institutes, sharing resources and expertise while co-developing culturally appropriate training materials (Ismail & Ahmad, 2019; Rahim, 2020). State-level implementation committees need representation from local Mallam associations, Hisbah boards, and parent groups to address community concerns and facilitate grassroots ownership (Bello, 2017; Usman, 2018). Collaboration with Malaysia's IPG through south-south knowledge exchange programs offers opportunities for technical assistance and capacity building, leveraging similar Islamic education reform experiences (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020; Ahmad et al., 2020). These collaborative structures must be institutionalized rather than ad-hoc, with clear mandates, funding allocations, and accountability mechanisms to sustain engagement beyond initial enthusiasm (Bichi, 2019; Boyle, 2006).

Sustainable funding and institutional support strategies should combine public resources, international development assistance, and innovative Islamic financing mechanisms to ensure long-term viability. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) should allocate specific grants for Tsangaya teacher training infrastructure, matching state government investments in Regional Tsangaya Teacher Institutes (Abdulkadir, 2016; Qur'an Education Initiative, 2019). The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) could utilize its intervention funds to support Tsangaya curriculum development, teacher stipends during training, and learning materials production (Islamic Development Bank, 2021; Global Partnership for Education, 2020). International donors like the World Bank and Islamic Development Bank should structure education sector loans to include Tsangaya modernization components, with performance-based disbursement mechanisms (World Bank, 2021; UNESCO, 2020). Innovative waqf (Islamic endowment) models could mobilize

local resources by establishing perpetual funds for teacher scholarships and school improvements, building on northern Nigeria's strong Islamic philanthropic traditions (Bano, 2018; Nuruddin, 2019). Institutional support requires strengthening the administrative capacity of Tsangaya oversight bodies through targeted training in financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic planning (Hassan & Dodo, 2020; MOE, 2019). A phased funding approach should prioritize demonstration projects in pilot states before scaling up, allowing for evidence-based adjustments and political buy-in (Brenner, 2001; Schweisfurth, 2011).

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the critical need for structured teacher training and certification in Nigeria's Tsangaya system, drawing valuable lessons from Malaysia's Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) model. The research revealed significant gaps in the current Tsangaya approach to teacher preparation, particularly in pedagogical methods, curriculum development, and quality assurance mechanisms. While Tsangaya schools have preserved important Islamic educational traditions for centuries, their isolation from modern teacher training practices has limited their ability to equip students with both religious knowledge and contemporary skills. The proposed framework addresses these gaps through a balanced approach that respects Islamic educational values while incorporating evidence-based teaching strategies. Key components include standardized certification pathways, integrated curriculum design, continuous professional development, and culturally sensitive implementation strategies. The framework's tiered structure recognizes the diverse educational backgrounds of Mallams while establishing clear competency benchmarks for all Tsangaya teachers. The findings underscore the fundamental importance of structured teacher training as the cornerstone of educational quality in both traditional and modern systems. Effective teacher preparation goes beyond content knowledge to encompass classroom management skills, child development understanding, and assessment techniques – areas currently underemphasized in Tsangaya education. Professional

certification serves multiple crucial functions: it validates teacher competence, ensures minimum quality standards, and enhances the status of teaching as a profession. For Tsangaya schools, structured training offers a pathway to greater recognition within Nigeria's national education system while maintaining their distinctive Islamic character. The Malaysian IPG experience demonstrates how teacher professionalization can elevate educational outcomes without compromising religious identity. In the Tsangaya context, such reforms have the potential to transform the system from a marginalized alternative into a respected component of Nigeria's educational landscape, capable of producing graduates who are both religiously grounded and equipped for modern socioeconomic participation.

This study concludes with an urgent call to action for policymakers, Islamic education stakeholders, and development partners to collaborate in implementing the proposed framework. Immediate priorities include establishing pilot teacher training centers in selected northern states, developing adapted curriculum materials, and initiating dialogue with Mallam associations about certification benefits. Future research should investigate several critical areas: the impact of certified Tsangaya teachers on student learning outcomes, the socioeconomic effects of reformed Tsangaya education on graduate employability, and the long-term institutionalization processes of such reforms. Comparative studies could explore variations in implementation across different northern states, given Nigeria's regional diversity. Additional research is also needed on sustainable financing models for large-scale teacher training and on technological innovations that could support remote training for rural Mallams. The success of this reform initiative ultimately depends on maintaining a careful balance between preservation and innovation – honoring Tsangaya's rich Islamic heritage while embracing pedagogical approaches that prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. This study contributes to broader global conversations about integrating traditional religious education systems into national development agendas while respecting their cultural and spiritual foundations. The Tsangaya reform

model offers insights relevant to similar Quranic education systems across West Africa and the Muslim world facing parallel challenges of modernization and integration.

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