

IMPACT OF ISLAMIC STUDIES CURRICULUM ON ISLAMIC SCHOOL STUDENTS' MORAL BEHAVIOUR IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE

BY

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of Islamic Studies curriculum on Islamic schools students' moral behaviour in Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos State. The objectives of the study were to: find out whether the Learning materials (curriculum, recommended textbooks etc.) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic studies teachers will be effective in inculcating moral values; examine whether Islamic studies will have any significant influence on students' moral behaviour; and to observe Islamic Studies student's moral uprightness in schools. Primary data were collected with the aid of a self-structured questionnaire administered on 304 randomly selected Islamic Studies students, while the researcher also observed the characters of the students using scheduled observation method. The data collected were analysed using frequency distribution tables, and Chi-Square, with the use of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 21.0), at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that Islamic Studies learning materials helped to inculcate in the learners true and balanced value at an age when the learners' mental and moral development is at a formative stage and that Islamic Studies curriculum has positive impacts on Islamic school students' moral behaviour. The study, therefore recommended among others that Islamic Studies teachers should realise that effective teaching can result in the attainment of both academic and moral goals; schools should provide adequate reference Islamic studies textbooks for students' use; and that parents should encourage but not enforce children to study Islamic Studies, so that they can inculcate more positive moral values.

Keywords: *Islamic studies, Curriculum, Learning materials, Methodology, Moral behaviour*

Introduction

Moral behaviour is an act that brings about good result for persons as constituents of the society (Bidmos, 2013). It is applicable to the entire international society, and it encompasses principles that help the differentiate right from wrong and could be learnt over time. Empathy and other related social awareness are vital in moral development. Morality is one's beliefs about the appropriateness of an act, thought or feeling. Moral standard is built from Childhood, which then extends into adulthood. Islamic Studies as a subject, trains students to dedicate their actions and life to Allah alone. It teaches discipline to the students, showing them that knowledge acquisition is for the benefits of this world and the hereafter. Through Islamic Studies, student's actions, decisions and approaches to all forms of knowledge, as well as their attitude to life in general are governed by the precepts of Islam (Q.3:110). Islamic studies plays a vital role in education and the development of societal values and morals. Islam as a comprehensive religion cuts across all spheres of human endeavour, be it spiritual, intellectual or other (Bidmos, 2010). All Islamic societies therefore, are very eager to put into practice Islamic education across the various levels of schooling. The implementation however, may come under different names like Religious Education, Islamic Education, or Islamic Studies. The curriculum of Islamic Studies was purposely designed to promote overall competence in nurturing Islamic moral values for successive use in adult life (Ahmed, 2013). Despite the fact that Islamic Studies was introduced in the secondary school curriculum, its objectives have not been fully attained (Adedeji, 2010). The world is fast changing, and more challenging, but the Muslims are not prepared to take a principal role due to moral decadence among them (Timehin, 2015).

According to Mairo (2011), a Muslim believes that what purifies him is doing those things that are good, which include belief and good deeds what corrupts him however is committing those things that are evil which include disbelief and evil deeds. Furthermore, the majority of secondary school students offering

Islamic Studies are in their adolescence stage, which is a confused period. Habits are formed and deformed during this period; when the young ones are governed by sentiments and moral negligence. It is a period overpowered by complexes and anxieties (Chowdhry, 2014). In Nigeria presently, several social ills exist among students, especially in Lagos State. Ranging from violence, drug addiction, lack of respect for elders, vandalism, increase in teenage pregnancy, indecent dressing, and illegal sexual habits, among others. The increase in cultism, examination malpractices, and other deviant behaviours involving adolescents appear to imply that Islamic studies at school fail to achieve its objectives. It is therefore on this note that this study examines the impact of Islamic Studies curriculum on Islamic schools students' moral behaviour in Shomolu Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Objective of the Study

As a result, this paper seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To find out whether the Learning materials (curriculum, recommended textbooks etc.) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic studies teachers will be effective in inculcating moral values.
- ii. To examine whether Islamic studies will have any significant influence on student's moral behaviour.
- iii. To observe Islamic Studies student's moral uprightness in school.

Research Hypotheses

Thus, this study tests the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: Learning materials (curriculum, recommended textbooks etc.) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic studies teachers will not be effective in inculcating moral values

H₀₂: Islamic studies will have no significant influence on student's moral behaviour

Literature Review

The Islamic Studies Curriculum

Generally, curriculum is an educational plan, forms the very basis for the whole educational practices and process. Despite the global appreciation of the essence of curriculum, there seems to be no consensus on the use of the word "curriculum" and its definition (Dash, 2015; Igwe, 2010; Onwuka, 2006). Islamic Studies is among the subjects under electives in the NPE (National Policy on Education). The curriculum of Islamic Studies was first published in 1985 as a learning activities package meant to teach some specifically selected facets of Islamic education to the Muslim children in Secondary Schools. The curriculum blueprint was done in 1982 under the auspices of the NERC (Nigerian Educational Research Council) and was published in 1985. Hitherto, it was called IRK, meaning Islamic Religious Knowledge. The Islamic scholars however, preferred the Islamic Studies (ISS) due to its appropriateness and comprehensiveness for the subject matter. Hence, the features of the ISS curriculum are different from those of IRK.

Bidmos (2010) highlighted some of these features as:

- a. **Unification:** ISS curriculum came as an enhancement in the record of Islamic Education in Nigeria. Previously, each of the Nigerian states had its own syllabus for IRK. The areas of importance varied from state to state. The current ISS curriculum however, presents a unified curriculum for the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies across the Nigerian states.
- b. The presentation of concepts in the former syllabi adopted the traditional approach, by simply selecting broad headlines and recognising the subject's general topics, leaving the teachers to sort the details themselves. The present curriculum however, breaks down the topics into minutes details by giving the teachers the information needed to impart knowledge to the students. The suitable delivery methods and applicable instructional materials and texts are also recommended.
- c. The IRK syllabi were designed for a 5-year secondary school system contrary to the present ISS curriculum that is based on the 6-3-3-4 system of education. The 6-3-3-4 system was somewhat amended in 2007 by the Federal Ministry of Education to accommodate the basic education system

(9-3-4). While new topics like child's Basic Right, human relations, and child's responsibilities, among others have been incorporated into the ISS curriculum.

The Aims and Objectives of Islamic Studies

The fundamental aim of Islamic studies is to give mankind wisdom and knowledge that bring about standard in human value and judgment applicable to all facets human endeavours and activities. This was further stressed by Islamic scholars such as like Imam Ghazali, who was of the opinion that unless the philosophy successfully broadens its scope of application and by integrating Islamic concept in all fields of knowledge, it will be unable to satisfy the new generations and save them from incursion of divided rationales of any paralyzing doubles. The goals of any system of education therefore, should be the methods of trailing its members in the society psychologically that can enable them acquire knowledge not just to curiously satisfy an intellectual or merely for worldly benefits.

Based on the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council's (2007) publication, objectives of Islamic studies curriculum are:

- a. Recognition of Allah (the Exalted) as the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists and the only source of values;
- b. Cultivation of the sense of appreciation to Allah and submission to the moral laws and guidance of Allah, not only in our worship of Him but also in our social conducts;
- c. Awakening of the intellect faculty and reasoning based on the Qur'an injunctions: "Will you not use your reasoning", "will you not ponder and reflect".
- d. Support of the pursuit of beneficial knowledge in line with the words of the Prophet (SAW): "the search for knowledge is a duty for every Muslim" and such knowledge's application for the benefit of mankind in sciences, technology, and medicine etc.;
- e. Realisation of all-round development of the individual and the community by giving appropriate weight to the social, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual human needs,
- f. Attainment of equality, brotherhood, and human rights with emphasis on practical means of achieving ethnic harmony and social solidarity instead of greed and selfishness.
- g. Reviving in the heart, the consciousness of Allah's presence as a Witness of all our thoughts, actions, as well as the behaviour, acting as a restraint on illicit acts, be it in the public or private and as a good incentive to excellent character.

The Impact of Islamic Education on Moral Development

Islam as a religion has its fixed values and standardised moral ethics that firmly established in the Quran and authentic Sunnah. As a result, social ills in Islam are uniform to all Muslims irrespective of their race, geographical location, or their levels of development and period. The word "*akhlaq*" in Islam is a common term encompassing good and bad morals. Thus, Muslim scholars relying on the Islamic rule of law – *Shariah* – and intellect categorised human behaviour into two, vis-à-vis; praise-worthy behaviours (*Akhlaq mahmudah*), which lead to immediate and eternal happiness. The second type is blame-worthy behaviours (as *akhlaq mazmumah*), which encompasses all immoral acts that will lead the perpetrator to destruction here and the hereafter (Abdullah, 2007). The social ills perspective of the sociologists can be grouped under this category. It is however important to emphasise that the sociological view of what constitute social ills is only based on people's intellect and consensus while the Islamic teaching is Divine, that is, *Shariah* compliant (Salim & Abdullah, 2013).

The term *Akhlaq* (morality) has been defined by Islamic scholars in various ways; however, this study adopts the Qur'an definition of the term. According to Miskawaih, character is a state of mind, which allows an individual to perform some actions without any deliberation or reflection (Ansari, 2007).

The Arabic term *akhlaq* (pl.)/*khulq* (s.) is mentioned in various parts of the Quran, Allah the Exalted says; "And indeed, you are of a great moral character" (*Surah al-Qalam*, 68:4). In the above verse, the word *khulq* implies particular inborn human traits, which constitute the most excellent character. In Islam,

morality is universal and all-encompassing, vis-à-vis politics, economics, education, and social on the basis of establishing and maintaining smooth relationships with the Creator and other creatures (Abdullah, 2007).

Islam preaches and emphasises the inculcation of morals in the consciousness of individuals. Allah the Exalted praised His Noble Prophet in the Quran thus: "And indeed, you are of a great moral character." (*Surah al-Qalam*, 68:4). Allah the Almighty made excellent moral the pathway to achieving the highest pedestal of Paradise. He the Almighty says in *Surah Al-Imran* 3:133- 134 "And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous. Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good." The Quran further states (*Quran Surat Fussilat* 41:34-35) "And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. The Prophet (pbuh) too emphasized good moral when he said "Fear Allah wherever you may be and follow the bad deeds with good deeds and treat people with good morals" (narrated by al-Tirmizi).

By implication, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to adapt good morals in their dealings and emulate the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was endowed with the highest moral standards. The Prophet (PBUH) was reported in an Hadith related on the authority of Abu Hurairah to have said in response to a question that "fear of Allah the Almighty and good conduct will mostly lead people to Paradise" (narrated by al-Termizi). In a narration by Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (PBUH) said "the most perfect of all the believers is the one with the best morals" (narrated by Abu Daud). Jabir also narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said that "the most beloved and nearest amongst you to me on the Day of Judgment, is the one with the best moral" (narrated by al-Tirmizi).

Furthermore, the term Islam has two connotative meaning: submission to God and peace. This submission needs a completely conscious and enthusiastic effort to surrender to the Creator. One must not just consciously but also conscientiously surrender him/herself to Allah's service. This implies that one must act within the dictates of Allah and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). "In Islam we find such comprehensive moral guidance as can ensure our progress to the highest pinnacle in every sphere of human life and activity. Islam gives us basic moral norms and values to guide and control the entire gamut of man's life. It gives a comprehensive code of behaviour for the individual and shows him the way to the highest possible moral excellence and also gives ethical principles on which the edifice of a truly righteous society can be raised and which, if accepted as the basis of individual and collective conduct, can save human life from the chaos and anarchy that have overtaken it today (Ahmed, 2007)."

Islam from inception has been very concerned with issues relating to human rights. Privacy, dignity, freedom, and equality among human beings are adequately protected in Islam. Islam has the dominant traits of morality that is superior to any other religion globally, as it holds an all-encompassing code of conduct. Ahmed (2007); Ansari (2007) claim that Islam purifies and improves not only the intrinsic but also the extrinsic human character within a self-sufficing path of culture and a social system of well-articulated features. It preaches the principles of morality towards Allah as well as towards fellow beings, and even towards the animals. Islam completely and efficiently coordinates both the material and spiritual aspects of human endeavours, establishes a realistic code and commands righteousness well within the sphere of practicability. It encourages every thought and action most suitable for the survival and peaceful coexistence of human. Morality and belief are inseparable as each is dependent on the other belief is proved to be the power of conviction that made man to obey his Lord's commandments, encourage him to achieve high moral attributes and to become absolutely good in both mind and actions. Thus, a clear manifestation of the strength of one's faith as opined by Mairo (2011) depend upon his good moral etiquette, as bad behaviour interpreted one's weakness of faith or lack of it as a whole. In a Hadith from

Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: The best of the believers is their most perfect in moral character!

Problems Militating against the Effective Teaching of Islamic Studies as a Moral Subject

Like other subjects, Islamic Studies as a school subject encounters several challenges, which include but not limited to ineffective and/or inefficient use of instructional resources; lack of Arabic language background; as well as written textbooks in other language other than Arabic etc.

1. Ineffective and/or inefficient Non-usage of modern instructional resources. For effective preparation and teaching of Islamic Studies, the teachers need enough preparation for the teaching-learning process through the effective and efficient use of instructional resources like audio-visual clips, television, projectors, etc. Qasim (2016) argues that the application of modern techniques and technologies in the teaching process would enhance learning by adding values to it.
2. Lack of Arabic language background. This at all level is a stern problem to the teaching and learning of Islamic studies. Islamic studies is synonymous to Arabic language, and as a result, cannot be separated because Arabic language is the language of instruction in Islam. Hence, verse underrating of the language is sacrosanct for Islamic studies teacher, as this will enhance his/her understanding of Islam as a whole and Islamic studies as a subject.
3. Inadequacy of textbooks written in non-Arabic languages. Many Islamic studies teachers find it complicated to get their lessons prepared as a result of the inadequate, while the medium of instruction in our schools remains English language. Qasim (2006) emphasised the need for Islamic studies textbooks to be adequately written in English, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Nupe, as well as Kanuri languages so as to help teachers in getting adequately prepared for their lessons and also assist better the students' understanding of the subject.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study so that the opinions of the respondents are obtained without any external interference. The population for this study comprised all the Islamic Studies students in Education District IV of Lagos State, From the population, 76 Islamic Studies students were randomly selected from Fazil Omar Junior High School, Aje Comprehensive Junior High School, Mobolaji Bank Anthony Junior High School, and Eletu-Odibo Junior High School, giving a total sample size of 304 students, whom data were obtained for this study, using the research questionnaire and Scheduled observation. More so, the data gathered from the instruments were analysed using frequency distribution tables, and Ch-Square, with the use of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 21.0), at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Test of Hypothesis One

Learning materials (recommended textbooks etc) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic studies teachers will not be effective in inculcating moral values.

Table 1: Chi-Square Table

Options	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	Df	P-val.	Remark	Decision
Disagree	44	101.3	-57.3	214.411 ^a	2	.001	Sig.	Rejected
Agree	196	101.3	94.7					
Strongly Agree	64	101.3	-37.3					
Total	304							

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 101.3. From table 1, it is observed that the returned p-value = 0.001 < 0.05, the criterion level of significance, thus the null hypothesis that states; "Learning materials (recommended textbooks etc) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic studies teachers will not be effective in inculcating moral values" is

rejected, while its alternative that states; “Learning materials (recommended textbooks etc) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic studies teachers will be effective in inculcating moral values” is accepted.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Islamic studies will have no significant influence on student’s moral behaviour

Table 2: Chi-Square Table

Options	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	Df	P-val.	Remark	Decision
Disagree	36	101.3	-65.3	122.101 ^a	2	.035	Sig.	Rejected
Agree	172	101.3	70.3					
Strongly Agree	96	101.3	-5.3					
Total	304							

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 101.3. From table 2, it is observed that the returned p-value = 0.035 < 0.05, the criterion level of significance, thus the null hypothesis that states; “Islamic studies will have no significant influence on student’s moral behaviour” is rejected, while its alternative that states; “Islamic studies will have a significant influence on student’s moral behaviour” is accepted.

Table 3: Report of the Observation Schedule

NO	SETTING	BEHAVIOUR	OBSERVED REPORT
1	Money was placed on the students playing ground on four occasions during break period.	Honesty	The students return the money to the bursar on three occasions and ones to the class teacher.
2	During class period with their teacher	Attentiveness	Ninety percent of the students listen attentively
3	The students were observed during break period and after closing	Aggressiveness	The students preferred to report their colleagues to their teacher than fighting though few of them resort to abuse other in the course of disagreement
4	In the mosque during prayers	Religiosity	The students hasten to prayer and try to maintain concentration and silence, but few of the two to three of them manage to play during salaah (prayer)
5	During break time	Generosity	Most of the students share their foods and money with their friends without threat or force

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 reveals that there were moral qualities among the Islamic Studies students in school. Hence, Islamic Studies curriculum has positive impacts on Islamic school students’ moral behaviour.

Discussion of Findings

From the test of the first hypothesis, it was found that learning materials (curriculum, recommended textbooks etc) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic Studies teachers will be effective in inculcating moral values. This corroborates argument that the Islamic studies curriculum has been designed to inculcate in the learner true and balanced value at an age when his mental and moral development is at a formative stage, with a view that the inner stability obtained and the guiding principle learned will help him or her to stand firm amidst the cross-current of ideas and rapid social change which are the feature of our age (FGN, 2005).

The test of the hypothesis two showed that Islamic Studies will have a significant influence on student's moral behaviour. This is in support of the claim that the Islamic studies curriculum is specifically designed to foster overall competence in the cultivation of Islamic moral values for subsequent use in adult life (Ahmed, 2013). Ahmed, (2007) and Ansari (2007) advocate that Islam refines and purifies both intrinsic and extrinsic behaviour of man within a self-sufficing orbit of culture and a social system of well-defined features. It holds the principles of morality towards the Creator of man as well as his fellow beings. It offers a complete coordination of the spiritual and material aspects of human life, lays down a practical code and demands a righteousness well within the realm of practicability. It promotes every thought and action best for human survival and peace.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it is concluded that learning materials (curriculum, recommended textbooks etc) and teaching techniques employed by Islamic Studies teachers will be effective in inculcating moral values. This implies that the learning materials helps inculcate in the learner true and balanced value at an age when the learner's mental and moral development is at a formative stage. And that Islamic Studies significantly influences secondary school students' moral behaviour and excellent character. More so, it can be concluded that Islamic Studies curriculum has positive impacts on Islamic school students' moral behaviour.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusion, this study therefore recommends that:

1. Islamic Studies teachers should realise that effective teaching can result in the attainment of both academic and moral goals;
2. Schools should provide adequate reference Islamic studies textbooks for students' use;
3. Parents should encourage but not enforce children to study Islamic Studies, so that they can inculcate more positive moral values;
4. Islamic Studies teachers should be dynamic in their methodology and encourage regular and continuous application of moral values among students;
5. Islamic Studies should be made compulsory in all schools in Lagos State; and that
6. The government, curriculum developers and Islamic scholars should publish more books on Islamic studies as a moral subject.

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