

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN OYO STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF IBADAN LAND, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Introduction

According to the National Curriculum for Junior Secondary Schools, Volume 5, Islamic Studies is the totality of the learning experience which centres on the relationship between man and his Creator and between man and his fellow men. The title “Islamic Studies” is chosen in preference to any previous titles since it is more comprehensive and appropriate to the subject matter in the curriculum.

The basic sources of the subject are the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth. However, for the ease of teaching and learning in secondary schools, the Islamic Studies syllabus does not go beyond Hidāyah (Guidance), Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) and Tārīkh (Historical Development of Islam).

The Hidāyah includes the study of the Qur’ān, the Ḥadīth and Tahdhīb (Moral Education) while Fiqh (Jurisprudence) embraces Tawḥīd (Theology), Ibadat (Worship) and Mu‘āmalāt (Social Transactions). Tārīkh on the other hand is made up of Sirah (life history of the prophets and notable Muslims), the spread of Islam to West Africa and the contributions of Muslims to world civilization.

However, like all other subjects in the curriculum of Nigerian Secondary Schools, the teaching of Islamic studies is besieged with a plethora of problems. This includes handling of the subject by untrained teachers, inadequate specialist teachers, as well as the persistent use of traditional methods of teaching, which are said to be vague, teacher-centred, broad in outlook and content-oriented. Other problems include inadequate instructional resources, using transliteration to teach the Qur’ānic aspects of the subject and the lukewarm attitude of most parents, who attach little importance to the subject. Worst still, as a strategy to blockade the adequate teaching and learning of Islamic studies, some evangelistic secondary school principals often deliberately designate specialist teachers of the Islamic Religious Studies to teach other subjects with one excuse or another.

In view of the above, for a teacher to achieve the objectives of teaching Islamic Studies in secondary schools, he must possess the necessary qualifications, be able to identify his goals and premise his teaching-learning activities on the achievement of

such goals. The objectives of teaching Islamic Studies as stated in the curriculum are as follows:

- (a) To prepare students spiritually, morally, socially and intellectually for his future role as an adult
- (b) To give him an insight into the broad view of Islam in the past and the present
- (c) To allow him to formally further his studies of Islam and otherwise in accordance with the sayings of Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w) that knowledge should be sought from the cradle to the grave
- (d) To enhance proper practise of his religious duties.

After identifying the goals of teaching the subject, he should employ the Modern Instructional Approach, which apart from having specific behavioural objectives, is measurable, observable and learner-centred. Thus, his principles must take care of goal identification, individuality, learner's readiness, orderly presentation, learners' activity and evaluation.

Although, there is no single method of teaching that can be universally applicable to all classroom situations, the effective teaching method is one which gets students fully involved in the lesson, instead of turning them into passive listeners and recipients of what is being transmitted by the teacher. A Chinese proverb that buttresses this assertion goes thus: What I hear, I forget; what I see, I remember; what I do, I understand.

Furthermore, to enrich the experience and understanding of learners, an experienced, qualified and competent teacher should know that the teaching experience must be consistent with the child development. Because Islam is a rational religion, it places a great premium on the acquisition of knowledge. Evidence of this abounds in the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth as well as in the contributions of Muslims to world civilization.

For example, if we turn to the first five verses of *Sūratul 'Alaq* (Chapter 96) (which at the same time are the first five verses of the Holy Qur'ān revealed to Prophet Muhammad between 610 and 632 CE), we find:

Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man out of congealed blood. Read: and your Lord is most bountiful. It is He who taught (the use of) the Pen. He taught man that which he knew not. (Qur'ān 96:1-5)

The two words, "read" (*iqra'*) and the "Pen" (*al-qalam*) are undeniably essential to learning. The acquisition of learning is further encouraged by Allah thus:

Allah will raise to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and have been granted knowledge, and Allah is acquainted with all you do. (Qur'ān 58:11).

In the same vein, some of the Prophetic traditions that encourage learning are the following:

- (a) Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave

- (b) Seeking knowledge is a compulsory duty on every male and female Muslim
- (c) Seek knowledge, even if it be in China
- (d) Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) is reported to have been enjoined by Allah in Ḥadīth Qudsī that: “Know me before you worship Me, if you don’t know Me, how would you know how to worship Me.”

Conscious of the fact that Islam and knowledge are closely interwoven through the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth, Muslims all over the world, right from the life time of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), earnestly pursued learning. In addition to the acquisition of religious knowledge, they excelled in sciences such as Astronomy, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, etc. Moreover, the definite article “Al” which is prefixed to some terms in Chemistry, such as elixir, alkali, alcohol, etc., is of Arabic origin. In the same vein “Algorithm” is from the variant of the name of Al-Khwarizmi who wrote the Hindu numerals, compiled the astronomical tables and formulated the old trigonometry tables. His full name was Abu Abd-Allah ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, who was born about 790 CE near Baghdad, and died about 850. His most important contribution, written in 830, was *Ḥisāb al-jabr w’al-muqābala*. From the word *al-jabr* in the title we get “Algebra”.

The number of Islamic universities in the world also buttress the fact that Islam advocates learning. Prominent among such universities are: Al-Azhar University in Cairo, University of Medinah in Saudi Arabia, Sankore University in Timbuktu, Nizamiyyah University in Baghdad.

Statement of the Problem

Islamic Religious Studies is one of the subjects being examined by the West African Examinations Council. The subject is being studied by a few—mostly Muslim—students. However, the teaching of the subject is problematic, which may be responsible for the poor performance of students in the subject, particularly in external examinations. Hence, this study investigated the problems in the of teaching Islamic Religious Studies in Oyo State Secondary Schools, particularly in Ibadan land.

Purpose of the study

This study is designed to:

- (a) Investigate the problems of teaching Islamic Studies in Ibadan land
- (b) Make suggestions as regards how to solve identified problems
- (c) Enhance effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies
- (d) Look at the students’ performances in Islamic Studies at WAEC level

In carrying out the study, the following questions were raised and answered:

- (a) Are there adequate teachers for the teaching of Islamic Studies in secondary schools?
- (b) What population of the available teachers are trained or possess relevant qualifications?
- (c) Is the time allocated to the subject adequate?

- (d) How relevant are the methods being used to teach the subject?
- (e) Are there enough instructional materials for the teaching of the subject?
- (f) Do school libraries stock Islamic Studies textbooks, Qur'ānic commentaries, journals, periodicals and other reference works?
- (g) What are the problems facing the teaching and learning of the subject in secondary schools?
- (h) What has been the performance of students in the subject at SSCE level over the past five years?

Scope of the Study

This study covered eleven local government areas: Ibadan North, Ibadan Northeast, Ibadan Northwest, Ibadan Southeast, Ibadan Southwest, Akinyele, Ido, Oluyole, Ona-Ara, Lagelu and Egbeda.

Literature Review

Nigosian (1981) noted that unlike most religions in the world which grew slowly from remote beginnings, Islam took shape within the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and spread with the speed and violence of a hurricane.

Bidmos (2003) is of the opinion that the fortune of Islamic Education in Nigeria is better measured by its impact on the life of West Africans generally. According to him, the type of education introduced by Islam was the first of its kind in Nigeria. It was formal, organized, periodical and programmed.

Also, while discussing the problems facing the teaching of Islamic Religious Studies, Bidmos (1990) observed that a teacher of Islamic studies operating in a polarized society like Nigeria is faced with an arduous task of explaining the relevance of Islam in modern times. According to him, there is a misconception of religion by an average Nigerian.

Lawal (2000) in his own analysis of the problems facing the teaching and learning of Islamic Religious Studies in primary and secondary schools identified some problems as being inadequate qualified teachers, the low status of the subject and the government's and parents' attitude towards the subject.

Research Method

As a typical descriptive research, questionnaires and structured interviews were employed to elicit necessary information from teachers of Islamic Studies in the selected schools regarding the problems of teaching the subject and the performance of students at the SSCE level.

Random sampling method was also used in the selection of the schools where Islamic Studies is taught from JS1-SS3 in Ibadan land.

Sampling Population

Since the researcher could not visit all secondary schools in Ibadan land, schools where Islamic Studies is being taught were randomly sampled. These are:

- (a) Orogun High School, Ibadan.

- (b) Sango High School
- (c) Queen's School, Apata
- (d) Oke-Bola Comprehensive High School, Ibadan
- (e) Moslem Grammar School, Ibadan
- (f) Zumratul Hujaj Community Grammar School
- (g) Mufutau Lanahun Comprehensive High School
- (h) Oke Ibadan High School, Ibadan
- (i) Ibadan City Academy, Ibadan
- (j) Adelagun Memorial Grammar School, Ibadan.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was made up of seven sections. Sections A and B dealt respectively with the background of each school and the subject. Section C dealt with the qualifications and teaching experiences of Islamic Studies teachers and Section D was concerned with the use of teaching methods. Sections E and F focused respectively on the available resources for the teaching of Islamic Studies as well as the various problems facing the teaching and learning of the subject. Section F dealt with students' performance in Islamic Studies at SSCE level.

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was checked, corrected and modified by experts in the Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Ibadan in order to ensure that it measures what it is supposed to measure.

Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered were analysed using descriptive statistics. Tables as well as percentages were also used.

Results

Table 1: Qualifications of Islamic studies teachers
N = 20

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
B.Ed. only	2	10
B. A. Hons only	9	45
B. A. with PGDE	5	25
Grade II with NCE	4	20
Total	20	100

Table 1 above shows that 45% teachers of Islamic studies are B.A. Hons certificate holders, 25% are B.A. with PGDE, 20% are Grade II with NCE while 10% are B.Ed. certificate holders.

It can be inferred from the table that 45% (B.A. holders) do not possess teaching qualifications and those with teaching qualifications (55%) are barely above average.

Table 2: Teaching Experience of Islamic Studies Teachers
N = 20

Experience range	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	9	45
6-10 years	4	20
11-15 years	3	15
16-20 years	4	20
21-25 years	-	-
26 and above	-	-
Total	20	100

Table 2 shows that 9 teachers (45%) have teaching experience ranging from 0-5 years, 4 teachers (20%) have 6-10 years experience, 3 teachers (15%) have 11-15 years experience and 4 teachers (20%) have 16-20 years experience. Yet, of the sampled population, no teacher of Islamic Studies has more than twenty years of experience.

Table 3: Teaching Methods and Relative Application
N = 20

Method	Relative Use					
	Never used		Always used		Occasionally used	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Questioning	0	0	4	20	16	80
Group teaching	0	0	20	100	0	0
Self-Teaching	20	100	0	0	0	0
Story-Telling	0	0	0	0	20	100
Lecturing	18	90	0	0	2	10
Discussion	0	0	20	100	0	0
Project	17	85	0	0	3	15
Excursion	20	100	0	0	0	0
Memorization	0	0	0	0	20	100

In table 3 above, column 2 shows that lectures (90%), projects (85%), self-teaching (100%) and excursions (100%) are never used.

Column 3 of the table shows that three methods are used always in the following order: group teaching (100%) discussion (100%) and questioning (20%).

Column 4 shows the five methods that are occasionally used in the following order: story telling (100%), memorization (100%), project (15%) and lecturing (10%).

Though lecturing is not applicable to secondary schools, teachers should occasionally supplement other methods with project and excursion methods.

In Table 4 below, it can be seen that blackboard (100%), textbooks (100%), teachers' guide (75%), tape recorder (25%) and the school library are available for the teacher's use. Yet periodicals, newspapers, films, television, maps, computers and magazines, which are equally essential to the learning of Islamic Studies, are not available for the teachers' use.

Also, five available resources are found to be adequate in the following order: textbooks (100%), blackboard (80%), teachers' guide (70%), school library (25%) and tape recorder (20%).

Table 4: Available Resources and Relative Use
N = 20

Resources	Availability				Adequacy				Relative Use				NU	
	AV		NAV		AD		NAD		FU		OU			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Blackboard	20	100	-	-	18	90	02	10	20	100	-	-	-	-
Text Books	20	100	-	-	20	100	-	-	20	100	-	-	-	-
Periodicals	-	-	20	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newspapers	-	-	20	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teachers' Guide	15	75	05	25	14	70	06	30	16	80	04	20	-	-
Tape Recorder	5	25	15	75	04	20	01	05	-	-	05	25	-	-
Television	-	-	20	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maps	0	0	20	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
School library	8	40	12	60	02	25	06	75	-	-	-	-	-	-
Computer	-	-	20	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Magazines	-	-	20	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Films	-	-	20	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Key to abbreviations used

AV = Available

AD = Adequate

FU = Frequently used

NU = Never used

NAV = Not available

NAD = Not adequate

OU = Occasionally used

F = Frequency

Table 5: Aspects of Islamic Studies and Learning Difficulty
N = 20

Aspect	Degree of Learning Difficulty					
	Never		Always		Occasionally	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Qur'ān	0	0	18	90	0	0
Ḥadīth	0	0	14	70	0	0
Tahdhīb	20	100	0	0	0	0
Sīrah	20	100	0	0	0	0
Tawḥīd	18	90	0	0	2	10
Fiqh	15	75	0	0	5	25
Tārīkh	19	95	10	50	1	05

Table 5 above shows that students do not always have difficulty in Tahdhīb, Sīrah, Tawḥīd, Fiqh and Tārīkh. However, areas in the order of learning difficulty are as follows: Qur'ān (90%), Ḥadīth (70%).

The occasional learning difficulties are as follows: Tawhīd (10%), Fiqh (25%), Tarikh (5%).

Table 6: Students' Performance in Islamic Studies at SSCE Level

Year	Candi- dates Presen- ted	A1-A3	C4-C6	P7-P8	%	F9	%	PASS AT A1- C6	%
1995	278	18	67	78	28.1	115	24	85	30.6
1996	243	13	29	53	21.8	148	60.9	42	17.3
1997	282	23	55	89	31.6	115	40.8	78	27.7
1998	359	29	57	81	22.6	192	53.5	86	24
1999	335	31	34	85	25.4	185	55.2	65	19.4
Total	1497	114	242	386	25.8	755	50.4	356	23.8

Source: Computed from WAEC Results of the Sampled Schools.

The above table shows the percentage of pupils that passed actively from A1-C6 in five years as follows: 1995 (30.6%), 1996 (17.3%), 1997 (27.79%), 1998 (24%) and 1999 (19.4%). However, out of the total of 1497 candidates presented in five years, 356 (23.8%) had (A1-C6).

The weak passes (P7-P8) recorded in the five years under review are as follows: 1995 (28.1%), 1996 (21.8%), 1997 (31.6%), 1998 (22.6%), 1999 (25.4%). The overall weak passes amount to 386 (25.8%).

Out of the 1497 candidates presented, 755 (50.4%) had F9. The analysis is as follows: 1995 (24%), 1996 (60.9%), 1997 (40.8%), 1998 (53.5%) and 1999 (55.2%).

It can be inferred from the table that those who had F9 formed the highest percentage (50.4%), followed by those with weak passes (P7-P8) which formed 25.8%. Since those who had credits 1-6 are of the least percentage (23.8%), the performance of students in Islamic Studies at SSCE is still below expectation.

However, the problems of teaching Islamic Studies in secondary schools identified by teachers of the subject in the selected schools which perhaps are responsible for the analyzed result include:

- (i) Poor motivation at the homes of pupils learning Islamic Studies
- (ii) Lack of instructional materials
- (iii) Nonchalant attitude of students towards learning the subject
- (iv) Breadth of the curriculum
- (v) Poor religious background of some students
- (vi) Lack of textbooks on the part of students
- (vii) Poor background of Arabic language which at times makes it difficult for students to learn the Qur'ānic and Ḥadīth aspects of the subject.

The findings of this study are in line with Lawal (2000), Bidmos (1990 and 2003), Obanya (1980 and 1985), Lemu (1980), Balogun (1998) and Abdul (1982).

Suggestions for Improvement

The following suggestions are therefore made for improvement:

- (a) Teaching of the subject should be made pupil-centred by taking into consideration the learner's age, maturity and mental readiness.
- (b) To capture the attention of learners and sustain their interest throughout each lesson the material should be presented logically and mediated with appropriate instructional materials.
- (c) Rather than making use of any available material, relevant ones must be employed and where necessary, improvised.
- (d) Unqualified teachers should go for necessary professional training.
- (e) Teachers of Islamic Studies should henceforth stop the use of transliteration in teaching both the Qur'ānic and Ḥadīth aspects of the subject.
- (f) Moral and social teachings of Islam (and other subjects in general) should be related to learners' daily life
- (g) To obtain feedback from learners' exercises, assignments, projects, tests and examinations should adequately be given to the students.
- (h) Teachers should be conversant with relevant textbooks on Islamic Studies.
- (i) Parents should buy relevant textbooks on Islamic Studies for their children and make sure that they read them.
- (j) The students should be encouraged to actively participate in the programme of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) such as the Islamic Vacation Course, Da'wah camp, lectures, symposium, comparative religious studies, etc.
- (k) The government should make the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in secondary schools compulsory.
- (l) The government should encourage writers and instructional technologists to write relevant textbooks and also to provide relevant audio-visual materials.
- (m) The government should grant study leave with pay to teachers of Islamic Studies who are anxious to improve themselves so that they can acquire necessary qualifications without losing anything.
- (n) The government should stock libraries of all secondary schools with relevant and adequate Islamic textbooks, reference works, etc.

Conclusion

This research revealed that, contrary to the general notion, most teachers of Islamic Studies in the selected schools are trained, have average experience and are gradually dispensing with irrelevant teaching methods.

Since teaching can hardly be effective without the use of available resources, teachers of Islamic studies should be resourceful and use local materials when necessary to make their teaching learner-centred.

To forestall the problem of teaching the Qur'ānic aspect of Islamic Studies with transliteration, teachers of the subject should strive to undergo in-service courses. Similarly, to solve the problems caused by inadequate teaching resources, insufficient teacher supply and poor encouragement of parents, governments, parents and students should give the suggestions made a chance.

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