

Assessing the Implementation of Islamic Studies Curriculum in North-West Nigeria: A Critical Review

Nasir Danzaria^{1*} Abdullahi Aliyu Dada²

^{1*} Katsina State Scholarship Board, Nigeria

^{2*} Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

*¹(Nasir Danzaria)

✉ ndanzaria@yahoo.com

Abstract: The study is on the relevance of appropriate method in the implementation of the Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-west Nigeria. It is recommended that teachers in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies should maintain the use of learner - centred, demonstration and problem-solving approaches in the teaching and learning process because of their positive effects in teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Methodology, curriculum, curriculum design, curriculum implementation, Islamic Studies.

INTRODUCTION

Improving educational access and quality involves tasks that are essential to the economic, social, moral as well as political development of a country. Islamic studies education is a type of education acquired under Islamic guidance, containing universal values that cover all aspects of human and material life (Danzaria & Kangiwa, 2018). Recently, more efforts are being made in mainstreaming Arabic and Islamic Studies schools into the western system of education, and integrating secular education into Arabic and Islamic schools (Abubakre, 2016).

Islamic Studies involve all the traditional forms of religious thought such as (ilm al-kalam) Islamic Theology and (Fiqh) Islamic Jurisprudence, and it incorporates other fields such as Islamic sciences, Islamic economics, Islamic civilization, Islamic history and historiography, Islamic

law, Islamic theology and Islamic philosophy. Therefore, Islamic Studies is an interdisciplinary subject that focuses on a diverse range of experiences. Islamic Studies is one of the subjects taught in Nigerian schools which provides training to Muslim students to behave morally and uprightly and to apply the tenets of Islam in all fields of life ranging from government jobs, industries and private organizations.

Curriculum is a planned learning experience aimed at achieving desired goals and set values to attain the purpose of teaching and learning. Anyasodo and Ikonne (2020) defined curriculum as a planned experience concerned with results. Tanner and Tanner (1995) as cited in Anyasodo and Ikonne (2020) defined curriculum as the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes, formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school, for learners continuous and willful growth in personal and social competence. The curriculum of Islamic Studies, especially at the secondary school level in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies, was designed in 2011 in collaboration between the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) to facilitate the teaching of the subject in the schools and to align it with the current demands of National Policy on Education in Nigeria. Adeyemi (2016) opined that for many years back in the history of Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria, graduates from Qur'anic schools had no future because the Qur'anic or Arabic and Islamic Studies schools had no uniform curriculum.

The development of Islamic Studies curriculum planning and design was as a result of the efforts of Muslim intellectuals who realized the importance of the Western type of education in the age of industrialization, and scientific and technological advancement. These scholars realized that Muslims were not participating enough in the administration of government. They also felt that there is a need for the production of Muslim lawyers, doctors, engineers and educationists; therefore, they wanted to achieve these aims without changing the teachings of the Islamic religion (Adeyemi, 2016). A minimum of three periods per week for both Arabic and Islamic Studies was suggested for effective teaching and learning and in 2015, Islamic Studies and Arabic as subjects were assigned to a Desk Officer in the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Abuja, as other subjects had for effective monitoring, implementation and evaluation.

Curriculum design has been described as the result or the product of curriculum development (NOUN, 2012). It means the shape, framework or pattern of learning opportunities. Many curriculum designs were developed by scholars such as Mbakwem as cited in Offorma (2015) who pointed out a number of curriculum designs such as the subject, the core, the broad fields and the activity or experience curriculum designs. The activity curriculum according to Offorma (2015) is also called experience curriculum, because it is based on the experiences of the learners.

Islamic Studies in Nigeria have been shaping the culture of the people particularly the Muslims, who are the predominant in the northern part of the country. It has a long history as opined by Fafunwa (2004), who expatiated that indeed the history of the teaching of Arabic throughout the

Islamic World, and particularly in the non-Arab World (Nigeria inclusive) has been the history of the spread of Islam.

The philosophy of the Islamic Studies curriculum of the NBAIS as contained in the (NBAIS/NERDC, 2011) is that students studying in the schools under the NBAIS are expected to differ in terms of mentality and knowledge compared with the students of the conventional schools. NBAIS/NERDC (2011) itemized the objectives of the Islamic Studies curriculum to include strengthening students to be familiar with a variety of Islamic knowledge; providing students with knowledge of characteristics of human beings and behaviors (psychology of education) and Islamic jurisprudence; shaping the minds of the students to know the position of Islam on the circumstances surrounding the world in which the student is living; offering students with the opportunity of knowing more sources of Islamic law (Shari'ah), discretion (ijtihad) on legal matters and methods of deducing judgment (istinbat) in Islamic law; guiding students to the knowledge of Islamic Studies curriculum; shaping the minds of the students to learn the creed or belief system and the best way to defend the creed system with proofs; and learning the traditions (hadith) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and its position in the affirmation of Islamic laws and societal living.

Other objectives of the Islamic Studies curriculum, according to NERDC (2012), are to make pupils functional human beings, useful to themselves and the society at large; inculcate in the minds of the pupils, the consciousness of Allah and to help them realize that Allah watches all their movements and will bring them to give accounts of their deeds in the Day of Resurrection; prepare pupils towards a balanced personality that is spiritually dedicated to the cause of Allah, morally sound and socially accommodating; prepare the pupils through intensive training for religious tolerance, ethical harmony, human equality and brotherhood, in order to restore peaceful co-existence particularly in Nigeria and the rest of the World; instill the love of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the minds of the pupils, through identifying some of his qualities such as tolerance, amnesty, fidelity, magnanimity and forbearance; and acquaint the pupils with Islam as a code of conduct and the best way of life.

According to Badmus (2017) the objectives of Islamic Studies are to enable a Muslim to have basic information to live an honorable life; enable a Muslim to be sound mentally, physically and spiritually to live a healthy life; develop in a Muslim the spirit of brotherhood and tolerance to live a harmonious life in the society; fully inform a Muslim about the socio-political and economic affairs of his contemporary world or society to play his/her roles in the societal development; imbibe in a Muslim and the society a simple lifestyle.

Implementation of Islamic studies curriculum and other subjects is one of the stages of curriculum development that involves the actual execution of the planned curriculum in the classroom. Implementation is viewed as the actual operationalization of the curriculum in schools which involves translating curriculum designs into classroom activities and changing people's attitudes to accept and participate in curriculum activities (Nyaga, 2010). It is a concept that has been defined in different ways by various scholars. According to Bediako (2019), curriculum implementation refers to how the planned

or officially designed course of study is translated by the lessons to be delivered to students. The implementation, as an essential part of curriculum development that, brings into existence the anticipated changes that were included in the design of a curriculum.

Curriculum implementation according to Ogar and Aniefiok (2012) is the delivery stage in the curriculum process where all the relevant curriculum inputs are brought in direct contact with the target audience in such a way that through a variety of activities, learning experience and mastery can be maximally achieved at minimal cost. According to Offorma (2009), it refers to putting into action the planned curriculum, the execution of the planned curriculum in the classroom through the efforts of the teachers and the learners and the interpretation of the planned curriculum by the teacher, who is the implementer. Putting the curriculum into operation requires an implementing agent. Bediako (2019) identified the teacher as the agent in the curriculum implementation, and it is therefore, important to note that however beautifully a curriculum plan in Islamic Studies is designed, it will be of no relevance if not implemented by the teachers. That is why Ogar and Aniefiok (2012) affirmed that curriculum implementation is a serious exercise whose success lies squarely on the shoulders of the classroom teachers who will ensure that the set objectives as designed are achieved or otherwise.

During the implementation process of Islamic Studies curriculum, the teacher needs to take into cognizance the selection of appropriate objectives, content, method, resources, and evaluation procedures. Then the teacher puts into action his/her plans.

The main purpose of curriculum implementation in Islamic Studies is to promote teaching and learning. Each time the teacher engages in activities that focus on the attainment of objectives, he/she is engaged in the implementation of the curriculum. During the process of implementing the Islamic Studies curriculum, it is recommended that teachers monitor the learners' behaviour that will lead to the attainment of the set objectives. This agrees with Offorma (2009) who maintained that it is very important to monitor the learner's behaviors during implementation to ensure that their interaction with the learning environment is purposeful and leads to positive change in behaviour. For Nyaga (2010) the process of curriculum implementation involves preparation and making available materials/resources necessary for successful curriculum implementation. Equally important is the provision of administrative support for smooth coordination and management of the implementation process.

Certain processes need to be taken into consideration for the successful implementation of the Islamic Studies curriculum. The processes or approaches are said to be general and can be specific to suit a particular subject, depending on the set goals and objectives. As to Iechukwu (2014) the following processes are required in the implementation of any curriculum:

- a. **Focusing on the Syllabus:** A teacher needs to first of all focus on the syllabus which is derived from the curriculum. Thus, while the curriculum represents the total planned programs of the school for all the school subjects for some years pending revision, the syllabus contains the recommended topics and selected learning experiences sequentially organized to be taught from year to year in such a way that it meets the set educational goals.

- b. **Designing the Scheme of Work:** The next process is the split of the syllabus into manageable portions on term and yearly basis by the subject teachers to produce what is referred to as the scheme of work. The scheme of work is a guide to the teacher. It guides him in making his instructional plans that stipulates the specific topics to be covered within a given term.
- c. **Designing the Unit of Work:** The teacher further identified closely related subject matter and learning experiences which constitute the unit of work meant to be taught within a few weeks, between two and six weeks.
- d. **Designing the Lesson Plan:** A further split of the unit of work produces the lesson plan. A lesson plan is said to be an orderly and sequential arrangement of the lesson on paper. It comprises the subject matter to be taught, the instructional objectives to be achieved and the performance activities of both the teacher and learner in the course of lesson delivery.

For a curriculum plan to be implemented effectively in schools, Dada (2019) opined that certain considerations or guidelines must be followed. Among these principles are:

- a. The curriculum to be implemented should have few and clearly defined objectives and techniques. This is aimed at reducing areas of conflict in terms of understanding the curriculum plans and implementing them by teachers who are the grass-root implementers, with minimal disruption from policy makers and other education agencies.
- b. The curriculum to be implemented should be accepted by the various stakeholders of education, such as the parents, school boards, teachers and indeed the general public. There should be absolute support from all the stakeholders. Lack of this support from each stakeholder could mar the successful implementation of new program.
- c. There should be an effective and efficient leadership at any level of administration committed to the program right from the inception through implementation.
- d. School systems should be simple and not too rigid. This will make the teachers feel free and have easy access to necessary facilities needed for effective implementation of the curriculum.

Other approaches of curriculum implementation as elaborated by Dada (2019) include:

- a. **Contextual Approach:** The contextualized approach to curriculum implementation draws from the body of cognitive research. Of key importance for this principle is research on the transfer of learning. The research shows that learning transfers from one context to another more effectively when the learner understands not only the facts but also the “big picture” i.e the underlying principles, patterns, and relationships that is acquired through the application of knowledge.
- b. **Holistic Approach:** In implementing curriculum using a holistic approach, one must address the question of what children need to learn. Since holistic education seeks to educate the whole person, there are some key factors that are essential to this type of education. First, children need to learn about themselves. This involves learning self-respect and self-esteem. Second, children need to learn about relationships. Third, children need to learn about “resilience”.

This entails overcoming difficulties, facing challenges and learning how to ensure long-term success. Fourth, children need to learn about “aesthetics”. This encourages the student to see the beauty of what is around them.

- c. **Laissez Faire Approach:** This approach gives the teacher the full power to determine what he/she considers most suitable or appropriate to teach in the curriculum. That is the teacher is at liberty to teach what he/she wants to teach.
- d. **Authoritarian Approach:** Here teachers are directed by authority to follow a particular curriculum. The school leader directs the teachers to teach the subject in a specific way, the teacher has no control over the subject.

Many factors are responsible for the successful implementation of any curriculum design including Islamic Studies. Ilechukwu (2014), enumerated the following factors that are responsible for the implementation of the curriculum:

- a. **Availability and Utilization of Instructional Materials:** Successful curriculum implementation depends to a large extent on the availability and utilization of adequate instructional materials. Instructional materials generally make the teaching and learning process easier.
- b. **Management Support:** Effective curriculum implementation is dependent upon management support. This support may be in form of providing adequate financial resources, providing learning opportunities, providing supports such as expertise, time and learning resources, disseminating information, facilitating communication at all levels, providing support to teachers and developing ways for teachers to network and share ideas.
- c. **Teacher Effectiveness:** The teacher is a critical resource for effective implementation and realization of the educational policies and objectives at the practical level of the classroom. It is the teacher who ultimately interprets and implements the policy as represented in school curriculum. It is obvious that the quality of a nation’s education can only be as high as the quality of its teachers, and it is only an effective teacher that can demonstrate evidence of classroom management.
- d. **Consideration of the Learner’s Needs and Interests:** The curriculum is planned to meet the social, intellectual, physical and integrative needs of the learners. They are active participants and recipients in curriculum implementation. Teachers should note that students should be ready and willing to learn, otherwise teaching becomes a futile exercise and learning will not take place. The teacher needs to employ varied methods or techniques so that each learner will find a suitable method that will help him to learn as interests, needs and values of the learners differ.

Islamic Studies can be implemented using variety of suitable teaching methods to achieve desired objectives. Teaching method has been defined by Afolabi & Adesope (2010) as cited in NOUN

(2014) as a specific instructional process that differs from any other by the diversities of specialized activities. They are techniques used by teachers to help their students achieve learning outcomes.

Sikaleya (n.d) has come up with fifty methods of teaching among which include: A Panel method where students are selected as panelists to discuss a given topic; synthetic method which is the type of method of putting together known bits of information to reach the point where unknown information becomes obvious and true; Peer-tutoring method which is a type of method where a teacher selects learners who perform well to tutor other who are having difficulties with the lesson; Montessori method which stresses the development of initiative and self-reliance by permitting children to do by themselves the things that interest them, within strictly disciplined limits; question and answer method; storytelling method; team teaching method; dramatization; memorization method which involve an act of using repetition to memorize facts; and play way method which is a method that introduces elements of happiness and satisfaction in form of games.

Some methods of teaching according to NOUN (2014) includes: Lecture method which is usually teacher-dominated approach to teaching; discussion method in which students take over the subject from various points of view and the teacher serves as a moderator; demonstration method where the teacher will do a display while the students watch; discovery method which enables students to find answers themselves; project method which centers on an assignment of interest undertaken by an individual student or a group or a whole class; field trips method (excursion) which involves taking learners on an excursion outside the classroom for the purpose of making relevant observation; Individualized instructional method which is a programmed instruction in which the learning programmes are presented in carefully structured steps and the steps depend on the individual student and the nature of materials to be learned; laboratory method which is designed to be carried out by an individual or a group of students for the purpose of making personal observations from experiments; and open education method which is a flexible method which allows a learner to learn at their own pace and in a place convenient for them. This paper is aimed at discussing the relevance of appropriate method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study stems from the need to evaluate the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum of Senior Islamic Studies (SIS) in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies to ascertain whether the curriculum objectives are adequate from the point of relevance, quality and coverage to show the strength of its implementation using appropriate suitable method and the standard of its evaluation, especially whether the objectives are achieved. This prompted a study on relevance of appropriate methods in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North – West Nigeria.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to assess the appropriate use of suitable method by male and female teachers in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How appropriate is the method used by male and female teachers in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West Nigeria.

Ho There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' assessment of the use of suitable method in the implementation of the Islamic Studies curriculum in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the North-West, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive survey design with a population of one thousand three hundred and ninety-four (1,394) Islamic Studies teachers from the Senior Arabic and Islamic Studies schools in North-West Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised three hundred and six (306) Islamic Studies teachers out of the population of one thousand three hundred and ninety-four (1,394) Islamic Studies teachers. The decision to take this sample was based on the Research Advisors (2006) table for determining sample size. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the sample States for the study, where Katsina, Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa States were selected as sample States due to fewer security challenges in the states compared to the remaining three States (Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi). Multistage cluster sampling process was used in selecting the sample States where purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the sample States for the study which comprised Katsina, Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa States due to fewer security challenges in the states compared to the remaining three States (Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi). The States were clustered according to zonal education offices where simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the schools and respondents from the clustered zones.

The instrument used in conducting this study was developed by the researchers designed in four-point moderated Likert rating scale to suit the objective of the study which is on appropriate use of suitable method in the implementation of the Islamic Studies curriculum comprising five items. The questionnaire have been critically scrutinized by experts from the test and measurement unit, faculty of Education, Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina state. Pilot test was conducted where six teachers are selected randomly to save as respondents and the scores obtained were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.5 scale and the reliability coefficient of the research instruments for the teachers was 0.72.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

How appropriate is the method used by teachers in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West Nigeria?

Table 1: USE OF SUITABLE METHOD

Group Statistics

	GENDERT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
USE OF SUIT	MALE	219	14.3105	2.22464	.15033
METHOD	FEMALE	87	14.7701	1.67541	.17962

The above table indicates there is no significant difference in the mean scores of both male and female Islamic Studies teachers on the use of appropriate suitable method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West Nigeria.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The null hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance using t-test statistical tool. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' assessment of the use of suitable method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West, Nigeria.

Table 2: T-test summary table showing the difference between male and female teachers' assessment of the use of suitable method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West, Nigeria

School Location	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	t-value	Sig
Male	219	14.3105	2.22464	304	-1.740	.083
Female	87	14.7701	1.67541			

Result from table 1 revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' assessment of the use of suitable method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West, Nigeria ($t_{(304)} = -1.740$; $p > .05$). Thus, the stated hypothesis is accepted.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study revealed that male and female teachers used learner-centre method of teaching and other methods of teaching in the classroom which include demonstration and problem - solving method in conducting their lessons. This disagree with what Jikas (2015) found that there is poor appropriate teacher's utilization of teaching methods in senior secondary schools in Jigawa State.

The summary of findings from the null hypothesis indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. That is to say, there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' assessment on the use of suitable method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West, Nigeria. This means that male and female Islamic Studies teachers are appropriately using suitable method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in the

schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West Nigeria. This disagree with what Jikas (2015) found that there is poor appropriate teacher's utilization of teaching methods in senior secondary schools in Jigawa State.

CONCLUSION

The study on relevance of appropriate method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-west Nigeria becomes imperative to ascertain whether the curriculum objectives of the Islamic Studies are adequate from the point of relevance, quality and coverage and to show the strength of its implementation using appropriate suitable method and the standard of its evaluation.

Answer was found in respect to the developed research question and all the null hypothesis raised was tested and accepted. The findings revealed that male and female Islamic Studies teachers are appropriately using suitable method in the implementation of Islamic Studies curriculum in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies in North-West Nigeria. The findings would to a large extent contributes in maintaining the program for the benefit of the students, parents, society and the government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers in the schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies should maintain the use of learner-centre, demonstration and problem-solving approach in the teaching and learning process because of their positive effects in teaching and learning process.
2. Further research works should be carried out to cover other subjects being taught in schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies under the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS).

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