

Secondary School Students' Attitude towards Arabic Components of Islamic Studies in Kwara and Oyo States of Nigeria

AJIDAGBA, U. A.

Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
&

ABDUR-RAFIU, Jamiu

The Provost, Nana Aishat Memorial College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the attitude of students towards Arabic components of the senior secondary schools (SSS) Islamic Studies Curriculum in Kwara and Oyo States of Nigeria. Descriptive method was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 400 students from eight Senior Secondary Schools in the areas covered by the study. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to collect data. One null hypothesis was tested using chi-square statistics at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that students' attitude towards Arabic components of the senior secondary schools (SSS) Islamic Studies Curriculum in Kwara and Oyo States of Nigeria was generally negative. However, there was a significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students ($X^2=6.11$). It was therefore concluded that gender may influence students' attitude towards Arabic aspects of the SSS Islamic Studies Curriculum. Based on these findings, it was recommended that both male and female students should be enlightened on the fact that Islamic Studies is for all and the knowledge of Arabic boosts one's competence in Islamic Studies. Female students should be enlightened and motivated to change their attitude towards learning Islamic Studies by provision of incentives through Qur'anic competition and scholarship awards.

Key words: Arabic; Attitude; Curriculum; Islamic Studies; Students

Cite as: AJIDAGBA, U. A. , & Jamiu, A. (2015). Secondary School Students' Attitude towards Arabic Components of Islamic Studies in Kwara and Oyo States of Nigeria. *Arab World English Journal*, 8 (1).

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol6no2.21>

Introduction

Islamic Studies revolves around learning about Islam and its creeds. The primary sources of Islamic Studies are Qur'an and Hadith. The original language of these two prime sources of Islamic knowledge is Arabic. Thus, the description of the Qur'an and Hadith and their inevitability in the practice of Islam make it imperative that Arabic should be recognized as part and parcel of Islamic studies. This implies that in an attempt to study and practice Islam properly, one needs to dispose positively to the knowledge of Arabic. Ajidagba (2004) was of the view that a student of Islamic studies who is bereft of knowledge of Arabic but relies solely on his/her proficiency in English language to get through in Islamic studies will have academic problem. To avert this problem, there is the need to sensitise students of Islamic studies to the necessity of getting acquainted with the knowledge of Arabic. It is against this background that this study is carried out to examine secondary students' attitude towards Arabic components of Islamic Studies with a view of unraveling the importance of Arabic in Islamic studies and how students are disposed to learning Arabic components of Islamic studies.

Purpose of the Study

The significances and relevance of Arabic in the teaching and learning of Islamic studies have called for the inclusion of Arabic aspects in the Islamic Studies Curricula. However, the kind of attitudes displayed towards learning a subjects matter is often influences students' performance and achievement in that subject (Adam, 2014). It is against this background that this study is carried out mainly to investigate secondary school students' attitudes towards the Arabic components of Islamic Studies curriculum in Kwara and Oyo States of Nigeria. The specific purposes of the study are:

1. The attitudes of students to the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic studies curriculum
2. Influence of gender on students' attitudes towards the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic studies curriculum

Research Questions

The following questions were answered in the study:

1. What are the attitudes of students to the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic studies curriculum?
2. Does gender influence students' attitudes towards the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic studies curriculum?

Research Hypotheses

One null hypothesis was tested

H₀: There is no significance difference in the attitudes of male and female students towards the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum

Review of Related Literature

Islamic studies is the academic programme under which the doctrine, culture, history, law, and ethics of Islam are taught (Hammudah, 1981). Ayinla (2006) also opined that Islamic education, referred to in the Qur'an (3:110) is the process of shaping character, within the Islamic world view, which requires Muslim family to expose its children to all knowledge as a means of understanding the parameters set in the Qur'an for a constructive relationship with God, other

human beings and nature. Islamic studies is a subject through which the Islamic codes of conduct are imparted to the students. Thus, Islamic code of conduct according to Lawal (2003) include honesty, goodness to parents, tolerance, kindness, forgiveness, trustworthiness, righteousness, cordial relationship with others, egalitarianism, purity, reliability, dependability, politeness, humbleness, kindness, obedience, brotherhood etc. Islamic Studies as academic discipline attempts to study, analyze, utilize and develop, Islam for the improvement of the understanding and application of the derivatives of Islam to the advantage of humanity and its complex environment (Oloyede, 2012).

Abdul-Raheem (1986) opined that in the study and practice of Islam, Arabic is considered to be an inevitable tool. Islamic studies is a subject which requires a working knowledge of Arabic language. Oladosu (2000) submitted that Arabic is important and basic to the teaching of Islamic Studies because one is intimately linked with the other. In fact the connection between the two can hardly be over stressed. Oladosu (2000) further stressed that the original Arabic text of the Holy Qur'an is recognized, and that a functional knowledge of Arabic Language is crucial to the understanding of the content of the Holy Qur'an and other branches of Islamic Studies. The functional knowledge of Arabic is not only desirable but it is also required of every Islamic Studies teacher because it would avail them the opportunity of having deep knowledge of all branches of Islamic Studies. Spiritually, Arabic occupies a paramount position as both Arab and non-Arab Muslims are bound by the norms of Islam to use the language in all religious devotions.

The description of the Qur'an and its inevitability in the practice of Islam makes it imperative that Arabic should be recognized as part and parcel of Islamic studies. Not only that AI-Quran, the primary source of Islamic teaching, was revealed and written in Arabic, but also other Islamic literatures were also largely written in Arabic, and to get to the root of the meaning of such literature, a good knowledge of Arabic is essential (Ajidagba, 2002).

Ajidagba (2002) asserted that the relationship that exists between Arabic and Islamic Studies is horizontal one. According to Ajidagba (2004), both Islamic studies and Arabic were regarded as twin subjects because the primary sources of the former, which are the Quran and Hadith, were revealed and taught in Arabic. Abdus-salam (2006) stated that the place of Arabic Language in teaching and learning of Islamic Studies is enormous. This is because the knowledge of Arabic Language will facilitate the understanding of Islamic Studies. Arabic components of Islamic Studies curriculum can be understood with the knowledge of Arabic Language. Furthermore, it was noted by Abdul-Rasheed (2006) that scholars could gain accurate knowledge only by referring directly to original sources. It was noted that it would be difficult to non-Arabist students of Islamic Studies to have meaningful access to the original sources of references.

Students are significant component in the teaching and learning process. During the practical classroom instruction, a student is regarded as the receiver or decoder and his role as receiving or decoding is probably the most important in the communication process (Adegbija, 2004). While explaining the place of students in the instructional process, Adegbija (2004) stressed further that in instruction, the learner should be the focus at every stage from the planning to the end. In fact, the teacher should know that there would be no instruction without learner. The above view shows that students' interest should be given utmost consideration.

Kehinde (2002) asserted that attitude is referred to as one's feelings, thoughts and predisposition to behave in some particular manners towards some aspects of one's environment. The attitudes of students to learning in a given situation may be influenced by some circumstances. One's reaction of a situation(s) is attitudinal, whereas attitude as a variable in education is influenced either positively or negatively by quite a number of factors (Ajidagba, 2004). The factors that determine students' attitude towards a concept may be the nature of the concept, teacher's attitude towards the concept and teacher's teaching methodology (Kehinde, 2002).

Ajidagba (2002) noted that one the principles of retention is the understanding of the meaningful relationship among the parts of a given subject. In Islamic studies, Arabic is a part. Therefore, to ensure retention in learning Islamic studies the meaningful relationship between it and Arabic must be understood by students. It is when this happens that learning can take place and performance enhanced.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive research of the survey type. It sought to describe the attitudes of the SSS Students towards Islamic Studies. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was structured to have two sections: A and B. section A contained personal information about the students while section B contains a questionnaire that has 12 items. However, students were required to respond to the questionnaire items and the responses were scored as:

Strongly Agree - 4 points

Agree - 3 points

Disagree - 2 points

Strongly Disagree - 1 point

In addition, Senior Secondary School students that are offering Islamic Studies in the sampled areas were the respondents. In so doing, 400 students were selected from eight senior secondary schools where Islamic Studies is offered. The data collected were analyzed by the use of frequency counts and percentage distributions to answer research questions. In addition, the chi-square statistics (χ^2) was used to test the null hypothesis formulated.

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of the Students Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	205	51%

Female	195	49%
Total	400	100%

Table 1 shows that out of the 400 students that participated in the study, 205 students (51%) were males and 195 students (49%) were females.

Answering Research Questions

To answer the research questions, respondents' reactions to the questionnaire items were scored. Those who scored less than 24 were considered as having negative attitude and those who scored 24 and above were regarded as having positive attitude.

Research Question 1:

1. What are the attitudes of students to the Qur'an aspects of the senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum?

Table 2: Frequency Counts and Percentages Showing Students' Attitudes to Arabic Components of the SSS Islamic Studies Curriculum

VARIABLES	NO	POSTIVE	%	NEGATIVE	%
Male	205	52	25.37	153	76.63
Female	195	30	15.38	165	84.62

As it was reflected in Table 2, 205 male students (51%) were involved in the study while 52 (25.37%) displayed positive attitude towards the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum and 153 (74%) displayed negative attitude to the Arabic components of Islamic Studies curriculum. The total number of female students that were involved in the study were 195, 30 representing (15.38%) showed positive attitude towards Arabic components of Islamic Studies curriculum and 165 which is (84.62%) displayed negative attitude to the Arabic components of Islamic.

Testing Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significance difference in the attitudes of male and female students towards the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum

Table 3: Chi-square Analysis of Attitude of Male and Female Students to Arabic Components of SSS Islamic Studies Curriculum

Male	Female	Total	df	X ²	Tab.VX ²	Decision
------	--------	-------	----	----------------	---------------------	----------

Positive	52(42.03)	30 (39.98)	82				
				1	6.11	3.84	HO ₁ Rejected
Negative	152 (162.98)	165 (155.03)	318				
Total	205	195	400				

Significance level = $P \leq 0.05$

The calculated X^2 value is 6.11 while the critical X^2 value at df of 1 is 3.84. The calculated value is therefore greater than the table (critical) value at alpha=0.05 significant level. The null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female students towards the Arabic components of the senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum is hereby rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in their attitudes.

Discussion

The individual's attitude to a phenomenon could be viewed as similar to what Ajidagba (2004) perceived as reaction to a situation. Attitude is a psychological construct representing an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item. In line with Ajidagba (2004), attitude as a variable in education is influenced either positively or negatively by quite a number of factors. It is evident from the findings of this study that students' attitude towards is generally negative. What have accounted for the negative attitude displayed by the students to the Arabic components of Islamic Studies might be lack of motivation or teacher's teaching techniques. This is because Ajidagba (2004) has earlier suggested that provision of incentives to students who answer questions on Arabic aspects of Islamic Studies would not only motivate them, it would also encourage others to develop interest in answering questions in Arabic.

More so, the findings of this study also indicated that gender of students influence their attitudes towards the Arabic components of senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum. The attitude of male students towards Arabic component of Islamic Studies curriculum is more attractive than that of female. The reason may be due to their background knowledge in Arabic. For some parents do send their male wards to traditional quranic schools during the weekends or in the evenings when they return home from the formal schools while female wards would be at home after school assisting their mothers in domestic affairs. Another reason that accounts for negative attitudes of female students towards Arabic components of Islamic Studies curriculum may be due their perception of the Islamic Studies as masculine subject. This is in line with Adegbeye (1998) and Shittu (1999) who respectively found that female students display negatively to some school subjects due to their perception that they are masculine subjects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study attempted to investigate the attitudes displayed by the students during the cause of learning Arabic components of Islamic Studies curriculum. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the importance of the knowledge of Arabic should be reiterated more in secondary schools. Because this would not only enrich their knowledge of Islamic studies, it would adequately prepare them for more in depth study of the subject. Both male and female

students should be enlightened on the fact that Islamic Studies is for all and the knowledge of Arabic boosts one's competence in Islamic Studies. Therefore, the perception of Islamic Studies as masculine subject should be refuted. Female students should be enlightened and motivated to change their attitude towards learning Islamic Studies by provision of incentives through Qur'anic competition and scholarship awards. A student who is bereft of knowledge of Arabic but relies solely on his/her proficiency in English language to get through in Islamic studies at higher level, will have academic problem. To avert this problem, there is the need to sensitise students of Islamic studies to the necessity of being acquainted with Arabic. Textbooks in Islamic studies should be written in a way that Arabic would be emphasized instead of transliteration.

About the Authors:

Dr. Uthman AbdulRahman Ajidagba (NCE, BA (Ed), M.Ed, PGDPA, Ph.D) is a senior lecturer in department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. His areas of research interest include religious studies education, general education, curriculum studies, primary education studies and Arabic in Islamic Studies. He is currently the chairman, Kwara State INEC.

Abdur-Rafiu Jamiu (NCE, BA (Ed), M.Ed) teaches in Departments of Curriculum Studies and Islamic Studies, Nana Aisha Memorial College of Education, Ilorin. He is currently the provost of Nana Aisha Memorial College of Education, Ilorin. His research interest includes religious education, general education, curriculum studies, primary education and Arabic in Islamic Studies.

References

- Abdul Raheem, H.I. (1986), An evaluation of Arabic component of the Islamic studies curriculum of the colleges of education affiliated to the University of Ilorin. An Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation University of Ilorin.
- Abdul Raheem, H. I. (2002). Arabic as an alternative medium of instruction in Nigeria. *Ilorin Journal of Teachers' Education*,(2),27-29.
- Abdul-Rasheed, A. (2006). The effect of using Arabic language in the teaching of Islamic studies in some selected secondary schools in Kisi Township. An unpublished B. A. (Ed.) project. University of Ilorin.
- Abdul-Salam, A. (2006). The effect of using Arabic language in the teaching and learning of Islamic studies in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. An unpublished B. A. (Ed.) project. University of Ilroin.
- Adam, Z. S. (2014). Influence of parenting styles on secondary school students' attitudes towards Islamic Studies in kwara central senatorial district, Nigeria. An unpublished M.Ed project, submitted to department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
- Adegbija M. V. (2004). The Communication Process: Models and Implication for Instruction. In Abimbola I. O. and Abolade A. O. (eds). *Fundamental Principles and Practice of*

Instruction. University of Ilorin, Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology.

- Adegboye A. O. (1998). Effects of Students' Attitudes towards Mathematics on Mathematical Achievement. *Ilorin Journal of Science Education* 1(2). 186-196
- Ajidagba, U.A (2002). Student Competence in Arabic language as a predictor of performance in Junior Secondary School Islamic Studies. *Ilorin Journal of Education* 2 (1) 85-92
- Ajidagba, U.A. (2004). Reactions of Senior Secondary Students to Islamic Studies questions in Arabic, *Institute Journal of Studies in Education* 2 (1) 23-27.
- Ayinla, S. A. (2006). Islamic Education in Ilorin: Issues, Problems and Prospects. *Ilorin Journal of Teacher Education* 3(1) 78-86.
- Hammudah, A. (1981). *Islam in Focus*. Kuwait: The International Islamic Federation of Students Organization.
- Kehinde, A.O. (2002). Correlates of attitude towards Science and academic achievement of students in Science subjects. *Journal of Science Teacher Association of Nigeria* 10 (2) 120-128
- Oladosu, A.G.A.S. (2000). Importance of Arabic in the Teaching of Islamic Studies in Primary Schools. Being a Paper Presented at the Seminar for Arabic Teachers in Primary Schools. Organized by Committee of Muslim Organization, Kwara State College of Education.
- Oloyede I. O. (2012). "*Islamics: the Conflux of Disciplines*". Being the One Hundred and Sixteen (116th) Inaugural Lecture, University of Ilorin. Ilorin: Library and Publication Committee, University of Ilorin.
- Shittu, A.O. (1999). Attitude of male and female students towards Mathematics in Primary Education Department in Colleges of Education. *Nigerian Journal of Research in Education* 2(1) 31-38