

## Synergizing Tertiary Education Islamic Studies Curriculum For A Sustainable Tomorrow

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### *Abstract*

*Islamic Studies is a subject taught at all the levels of formal education today without prejudice to religious background, belief inclinations or geographical boundries. Its study concentrates on the teaching of some subjects like religious studies in addition to other secular subjects like Languages, Law, Mathematics, Science, History, Philosophy etc. This subject has religious and secular topics in its curriculum content. However in the recent times, the number of students studying this subject in the universities has continued to decrease across the globe and particularly in Nigeria. This decrease has been a sort of concern to teachers teaching the subject, concerned Muslims and Islamic lecturers in the universities whose jobs are being threatened for lack of students to enroll for the subject in the universities. This study therefore attempted to look into the reasons why students do no longer wish to study the subject in the universities. It was observed that students these days would want to study a course which would gaurantee them future job security and incomes. This study confirmed that Islamic Studies might not be able to guarantee this presently because of the content of the curriculum in use. The study concentrated on lecturers who had been in service for over a decade and analysis of the findings further confirmed that the present curriculum of Islamic Studies needed to be synergized to accommodate practical oriented skills, computer appreciation and Islamic financial courses to make Islamic Studies adequate and worthwhile for study to sustain its tomorrow's future. This would make the subject more attractive and enable the students acquire practical skills which would make them function more effectively in the society without jeopardising their religious beliefs and practices.*

*Keywords: synergy, Islamic studies, sustainable tomorrow*

### INTRODUCTION

Synergy in a simple term is the combination of two things to achieve a better result than the result of what the invidividual things would give. Synergizing is the combination of two things or ideas for the purpose of achieving a more meaningful and useful result than what is currently on ground. By this, one

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is to take an idea, a philosophy or a thinking, compare it with another idea or thinking with the intention to use both ideas and come out with a more robust idea which is likely to bring better result than if the distinct ideas were to be used separately.

Islamic Studies is a subject taught at all the levels of formal education today. Some individuals however have a feeling that Islamic Studies is the study of religious doctrines and teaching religious practices. With this feeling, they believe that Islamic Studies is restricted or should be restricted to religion and that it has nothing to do with mundane world. (Syed 2007). Ramadan (2004) points it out that people have wrong impression of Islamic studies as they confine it mainly to technical memorization of Quranic verses, prophetic traditions and rules of spirituality. This concept of belief has been seen not to be adequate in the sense that it does not describe fully what the concept of Islamic Studies is.

Islamic Studies concept as opined by Boyle (2004) is the study which concentrates on the teaching of some subjects like religious studies in addition to other secular subjects like English, Mathematics, Science, History and so on. This study has religious and secular subjects in its curriculum content.

Bidmos (2008) supports the above view that Islamic Studies is the acceptance of God to manage man's daily routines which include politics, commerce, legislation, family life, international relations, and prosecution of wars; conflict resolution, inheritance, leisure and using the world to prepare for the hereafter. He further adds that it is wrong to restrict Islamic Studies to the teaching of worship and prayers alone and that it is also wrong to assume that religion especially Islam is restrictive to intellectual pursuits or is anti-science. He concludes that Islamic Studies is the critical and comprehensive study of the guidelines divinely prescribed for man to manage his life. In a nutshell, Islamic Studies caters for the spiritual and material aspects of man which could be summarized in the chart below personally prepared to illustrate the concept:

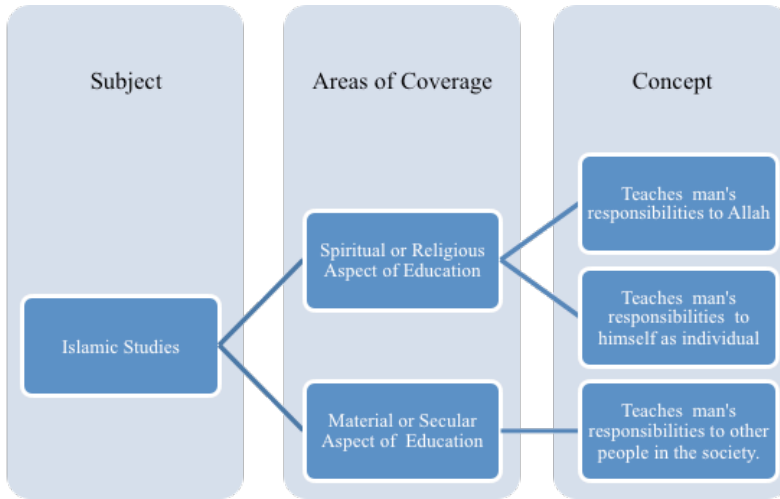


Figure 1 : Concept/Meaning and Areas of Coverage of Islamic Studies

The study of Islamic religion cannot be detached from the study of Islamic Studies, hence, there is no doubt that Islam which is the focus of Islamic Studies transcends the study of religion because Islam has been described as a way of life. Therefore, Islamic religion which is the pivot on which Islamic Studies is concentrated according to Rahim (1992) is the study of a religion which protests against idolatry, inequality and evil ways of the society. It is the religion which enjoins its followers to lead a pure, simple and decent life. Abdallati (1990) also sees the acquisition of Islamic teachings as total submission to the will of God and obedience to His law. To him, it is through the submission to the will of God and obeying His laws that one can achieve true peace and enjoy lasting purity.

A close look into the curriculum content, list of courses taught in the Islamic Studies programmes of some tertiary educational institutions reveal that the sustainable tomorrow of Islamic Studies programme, teachers and students may be a dream if the present curriculum is not looked into.

While in some countries (e.g. Nigeria), government policies may not favour the study of Islamic Studies; in other countries (Malaysia, Egypt) however where Islamic Studies is favoured by the government educational policy, the difference in the number of students who study Islamic Studies compared to other disciplines is marginal in the sense that students prefer to study subjects that can guarantee them future job and incomes.

To reflect that this problem is not restricted to a particular region, the Islamic Studies curriculum of some tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria, Malaysia, Qatar etc were looked into. The study however had its full concentration on four higher institutions in Nigeria, two state owned Universities and two state owned Colleges of Education.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The present curriculum of Islamic Studies in Nigeria contains the teaching of *Tawhid*, *Figh* and *Sirah*. This curriculum seemed to focus mainly on the spiritual aspect of education due to the fact that Islamic Studies curriculum reviewers at the inception of the new structure of education aimed at given students detail and comprehensive information that would enable them practice their religion even if they did not study it at any other level after the junior secondary education level. It was as if they did not consider creating avenues for Islamic Studies graduates to fill quota in the labour market. It emphasized spirituality at the expense of secularity and whereas Islamic Studies curriculum is to cater for both spiritual and secular aspects of a man's life.

Azra (2011), described similar type of curriculum which focused on (Tawhid) Belief in Unity of Allah, (Muamalat) morality and interpersonal relations and (Tarikh) history as one tailored to areas which make Islamic Studies emphasized the legal and formal aspects of Islam which focused on *shari'ah* (Islamic law) and *aqidah* (Islamic faith). To him, the result of this kind of endeavour had been the emergence of a tendency in Islamic Studies to associate Islam mainly with practices and rituals, which meant studying Islam in order to better practice Islam.

Lik (2011) pointed out that in Brunei, programmes which had integrated Islamic Studies with other disciplines such as literature, linguistics, history, English, geography, or economics, has made students to be more widen in their horizons of thoughts and learning and has made them to become more articulate in diverse fields beyond purely Islamic Studies.

Dean (2005) on the other hand observed that the Pakistan education encouraged exclusionary and passive citizenship. Their curriculum and textbooks did not distinguish between Islamic education and citizenship education. It was observed that Pakistani students acquired knowledge and learned some important values in schools which did not include skills like problem solving, decision-making and civic mindedness and critical consciousness required for effective participation in democratic life. A rich curriculum of any subject Islamic Studies inclusive should prepare students

for all round and holistic development whereby the students would be useful to themselves and the society in which they belong.

In Indonesia as observed by Azra (2011), the study of Islam was formerly dominated by an idealized, historical view of religion which emphasized Islam's doctrinal and legal aspects but tended to ignore empirical realities. According to Abu Bakar (2011), Malaysia is another experience where Islamic Studies has gone through a progression of phases, from religious to linguistics, pragmatics and liberality. It was observed that one big challenge which Islamic Studies faced in Southeast Asia was the issue of the appropriateness of developing programmes in Islamic Studies based on the blind imitation of Middle Eastern models. Kamal (2011) noted that local Muslim organizations and "politically-oriented individuals" relied on Middle Eastern scholars and activists who lacked knowledge of the cultural, social and political history and complexity of Southeast Asian countries. This was restructured to meet the contemporary realities and needs of Southeast Asian countries.

The university curriculum apart from preparing the children for learning, acquiring, memorization and calculative skills equally prepares the students for the future and their adult life. This is inclusive of Islamic Studies curriculum like any other subject which is to prepare the children for the life tasks ahead of them when they grow up and eventually leave the school.

Parents too want their children to enroll for subjects that would make it easier for them to get job and earn source of income. They believed that studying Islamic Studies at whatever level might not be able to do this. Related researches conducted by Lawal (2003) and Azeez & Adeshina (2013) established the fact that parents encourage their children to choose subjects that would lead them to sciences and at the second option commercial studies. Students themselves because of the orientation they get from their parents preferred to choose subjects that would lead them to sciences and commercial fields because they believed that these subjects would secure their future in terms of job security and uninterrupted income.

Job marketability is another important aspect considered for choosing a subject to be studied by students and it was a clear fact that students would not want to enrol for any subject or course which could not promise them future jobs and incomes. Mohamed Khaled Nordin (2012), Malaysian Higher Education Minister, lends credence to this view when he asserted that, the marketability of graduates churned out by universities should stretch beyond geographical borders.

Rosnani (2007) corroborated the view with the position that many graduates of Islamic Studies from the Middle East found it difficult to cope with dynamic societies in all spheres of human activity, such as socio economics, politics, and health. He asserted that in reality they did not live up to expectations. He noted that few of them who reached the highest levels of learning were absorbed into the university departments and faculties of Islamic Studies as lecturers but that the new graduates remained jobless and lacked initiatives to do anything except to rely on talks or sermons about individual worship rituals dealing with what is legal (*halal*) and what is not (*haram*), bringing good and bad news about the hereafter.

Rosnani posited that the Islamic Studies curriculum today had become unbalanced and lacked integration between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. He lamented that the curriculum did not show any correlational relationship between the sacred and the mundane worlds and that students were unable to see how Islamic sciences they learned could be applied to other spheres of life. Kamal (2011) too supports this view as he asserted that Islamic Studies is not just to produce a profound critique of the conventional ideology of development but also to acquire relevant courses of *al-mu`amalat* (transactions) and *fiqh al-siyasah* (the science of governance in Islam) needed for world development.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

- i. to find out why many students and majority of Muslim students in particular prefer to choose other subjects for study in the tertiary education apart from Islamic Studies.
- ii. to look into the content of Islamic Studies curriculum of some tertiary educations.
- iii. to find out if the tertiary education curriculum content is rich and attractive in terms of knowledge and skills acquisition and job marketability.
- iv. to ascertain if there is any need to synergize the tertiary education Islamic Studies curriculum to make Islamic Studies graduates more viable.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions have been tailored towards achieving the identified objectives of this study.

- i. What subjects do students prefer to study in the tertiary education today and what motivates them to choose these subjects?
- ii. What does the content of Islamic Studies curriculum of tertiary education look like?

- iii. Could the tertiary education Islamic Studies curriculum impart knowledge and skills that would easily enhance job marketability?
- iv. Is there any need to review the educational policy or to synergize the tertiary education Islamic Studies curriculum?

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study first and foremost is to point out that the study of Islamic Studies in the tertiary education is declining in the sense that fewer number of students now study the subject in higher education compared to the higher number of students studying other courses. The study is to also point out the need to review the existing Islamic Studies curriculum of tertiary education by attempting a synergy with relevant courses which would make the subject more attractive and make the Islamic Studies graduates more useful to themselves and to the society. After all, according to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), search for knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim male or female and such knowledge should be applied for the benefit of humanity in the fields of Arts, sciences, medicine and technology. The study as well is to point out the need to expose Islamic Studies students to practicals in relevant areas of needs and services rather than just sending them to schools where only teaching job is required.

### **Methodology**

This explains the method used for data collection, sample frame and the participants involved in the study.

### **Instrumentation**

Instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and document review.

### **Questionnaire**

Questionnaire was prepared for lecturers teaching Islamic Studies in the higher institutions. This study centred on the lecturers mostly those who have been teaching Islamic Studies for decades. The essence was to get information from the experiences they have had over time. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B respectively. Section A contained the demographic data, while section B contained twenty (20) item questions. These questions had five responses options based on five likert scale ranging from SD (Strongly Disagree) to SA (Strongly Agree). These were coded from 1 to 5. (Strongly Disagree, SD= 1); (Disagree, D= 2); (Partially Agree, PA= 3); (Agree, A= 4); (Strongly Agree, SA= 5).

The justification for adopting five likert scale was based on the premise that the use of odd scale as observed by Rensis Likert (1932) was most commonly

used by researchers. It enables participants to think critically before making a choice. It passes Cronbach's alpha statistical test. Unlike the 4 – point scale according to Brian Hu (2010) which tends to over- scale the answers going to the extreme values, and which might exaggerate the answers, and which might as well have survey biases trying to satisfy the researcher's opinions and views; the researcher in order to get an unbiased result and to give room for independent opinions adopted the use of 5-point Likert scale.

### **Document Review**

The researcher reviewed records of admission intakes of Islamic Studies students into the four institutions for the 2012/2013 session. Even though concentration was based on 2012/2013 admission records because of the volumes involved, a look at the previous admission intakes of these institutions did not show any marginal difference from that of 2012/2013 session. Figures collected from the institutions confirmed this. (Table Attached). A closer look into these records showed that the situation had been perennial as far as the admission intakes of Islamic Studies students was concerned. Another document reviewed was the content of Islamic Studies curriculum of these institutions. Information gathered revealed that all the curriculum collected have been in use for over a decade. Also, the list of lecturers teaching same courses over and over again for a long period of time without a change was viewed. For the purpose of academic research and for confidential reasons, the list would not be supplied in this study because names of personalities are reflected on it but the admission lists and curriculum content would be made available.

### **Sample Frame**

The research focussed mainly on four higher institutions in Nigeria. They were Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-ode; Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ijebu; Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu, Ogun State and Michael Odetola College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos State. Twenty –eight (28) Islamic Studies lecturers were involved in the study.



## Participants

Table 1 : Breakdown of Lecturers Involved in The Study

<b>Names of Institutions</b>	<b>No. of Lecturers involved</b>
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-ode (TASUED)	7 lecturers
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye (OOU)	7 lecturers
Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu (TASCE)	7 lecturers
Michael Odetola College of Primary Education, Epe (MOCOPED)	7 lecturers
Total	28

### Limitations of the Study

This could not cover all the higher institutions in the two states, one due to the fact the some of these other institutions did not offer Islamic Studies as a course of study. And two, because of the far distance of one from the other four selected which were within the same jurisdiction close to one another.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher searched for names, addresses and other particulars of lecturers working in these universities teaching Islamic Studies including their e-mail addresses. The search was done through colleagues who were in these institutions and through the institutions websites. The questionnaire prepared was given to statistical experts to make comments and observations. The researcher noted these comments and observations which were for constructive adjustments. The researcher then put the questionnaire online, sent a copy each to each of the e-mail addresses of the targetted respondents. The questionnaire carried a brief introduction and the purpose which it meant to serve. The questionnaire could be filled online or offline and responses were deposited into excell sheets which had been linked to google drive. Responses of all respondents were deposited into this store drive automatically as the filling was done by individual respondents.

The researcher purposely directed the responses in this manner to guide against human errors and mistakes which were likely to occur if the responses were to be keyed manually. This was to also give credence to adequate record and information for this would keep record of the date and time when the respondents responded to the questionnaires. However, certain limitations were noted for this exercise; firstly, it was not easy to determine from which location the respondents came from among the institutions. Secondly, it was not easy to detect whether respondents were from particular institutions or not and it was not easy to determine the particular number of respondents that came from particular institution.

The researcher thereafter imported the data into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 version for basic statistical analysis. The researcher could not subject the data to all the rudiments of statistical analysis because of the small number of respondents. Researchers have opined that to subject any data to full statistical analysis on any computer programme software, the number of respondents should be between 150 respondents and above. (MacCallum & Straham 1999) and (Gay, Geoffrey & Airasian 2009) All the researchers agree that any data whose total number of respondents fall below this figure would not likely bring a good result. Other researchers are even of the opinion that in researches dealing with human beings, number of respondents should be between 400 and 800 participants to be involved to get variable opinions for the data to be acceptable and valid. (Gay, Geoffrey & Airasian 2009 and Pallant 2010).

But for Islamic Studies which records low enrollment figures in the higher institutions for both lecturers and students, it would be a herculean task to get a sizable number of respondents to meet the standard set by researchers. Consequently, the researcher was constrained to use basic statistical analysis and simple percentage for his analysis in this study. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient recorded was .5. Although this value was below the acceptable level of .7 and above, researchers have contended that where the number of respondents is small, this could affect the reliability. Pallant (2010) was of the opinion that where there was a small number of respondents, the value of Cronbach's Alpha could be quite small as it is in the case of this study.

Therefore, the researcher obtained the statistical frequency distributions for the demographic data gathered followed by analytical interpretation using simple percentage. The frequency table resulting from electronic SPSS 21.0 version software was presented.

From this table, it showed that out of the 28 lecturers involved in this study, 27 responded by filling the online questionnaire. Out of this number, 9 of them (33.3 %) had between 1 and 10 years teaching experience, 12 of them (44.4 %) had between 11 and 20 years teaching experience, 1 of them (3.7 %) had between 21 and 30 years teaching experience while 5 of them (18.5 %) had above 31 years teaching experience. Looking at these figures, it showed that 66 % of the lecturers had above ten years teaching experience which was an indication that this study captured the right group of participants who would be able to share their experiences on the topic of research.

Six of these lecturers (22.2 %) were between 30 and 40 years of age, 12 of them (44.4 %) were between 41 and 50 years of age, 8 of them (29.6 %) were between 51 and 60 years of age while 1 of them (3.7 %) was between 61

and 70 years of age. The age range of the lecturers identified matched their years of experiences on the job which showed that there was high correlation between the lecturers' years of experience and years of age. These two were significant in determining the opinions of the respondents on the subject of study. In essence, 66.6 % of them were above 40 years of age which indicated that a higher percentage of the respondents were matured to be on the job and sharing their experiences on the study would be of immense contributions to the study and their suggestions could be of great value to finding solutions to the problem of study.

Twenty –six (96.3 %) of the respondents were Muslims while only one (3.7 %) was a Christian. This was possible because some two decades ago, non-Muslims were studying Islamic Studies as a subject for earning their income and source of livelihood.

Among the lecturers involved in this study, 24 of them (88.9 %) were males while 3 (11.1 %) were females. This only showed that in the areas of location, not many females take up teaching Jobs in Islamic Studies in the universities. As per the qualifications obtained by the respondents, 2 of them (7.4 %) were Bachelor's degree holders, 18 of them (66.7 %) were Master's degree holders, 2 (7.4 %) were Mphil holders and the rest 5 (18.5 %) were PhD holders. The basic descriptive analysis is further presented in the table below:

Table 2 : Basic Descriptive Statistical Analysis

	Range	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Years of Experience	1-10 years	9	33.3
	11-20 years	12	44.4
	21-30 years	1	3.7
	31 and above	5	18.5
Age	30-40 years	6	22.2
	41-50 years	12	44.4
	51-60 years	8	29.6
	61-70 years	1	3.7
Religion	Islam	26	96.3
	Christian	1	3.7
Sex	Male	24	88.9
	Female	3	11.1
Highest Qualification	BA / BA.Ed	2	7.4
	MA / M.Ed	18	66.7
	M.Phil	2	7.4
	PhD	5	18.5

Following the basic descriptive statistical analysis, the researcher further analyzed the respondents' responses using simple percentage.

Twenty items were prepared in the scale of measurement to measure variables like *students' choice of subject selection, Islamic Studies curriculum content, Job marketability and government policy* and five items were prepared on each of these items.

The first variable centred on *choice of subject selection by students*. Some of the items which measured this variable were (a) Students are eager to study Islamic Studies in the universities, positive responses = 8 (29.6 %), negative responses = 19 (70.3 %). (b) We always overshoot the admission quota for Islamic Studies students yearly, positive responses = 9 (33.3 %), negative responses = 18 (66.6 %). (c) Students choose Islamic Studies as the last option in the university, positive responses = 22 (81.4 %), negative responses = 5 (18.5 %). (d) Students want a course that will guarantee them future job opportunities and incomes, positive responses = 24 (88.8 %), negative responses = 3 (11.1 %).

From the above responses, there were indications that students were not willing to study Islamic Studies in the university due to the fact that they preferred to choose subjects that would fetch them job and guarantee them incomes. The few of them that were found studying it were observed to be studying it apologetically and would be ready to choose other courses if they had the option of doing so. A large percentage of the teachers confirmed that they found it difficult to fill the quota earmarked for Islamic Studies even though the quota was small compared to the quotas earmarked for other subjects in the sciences and commercial areas on yearly basis.

The second variable which was measured in this study centred on *Islamic Studies curriculum content*. Items which measured this variable include, (a) Islamic Studies curriculum of my institution has been in use since about ten years now, positive responses = 19 (70.3 %), negative responses = 8 (29.6 %). (b) I teach the same courses in Islamic Studies in the past ten years, positive responses = 18 (66.6 %), negative responses = 9 (33.3 %). (c) We have some computer courses in our institution's Islamic Studies curriculum, positive responses = 5 (18.5 %), negative responses = 22 (81.4 %). (d) Our Islamic Studies students only attend few computer courses in General courses, positive responses = 22 (81.4 %), negative responses = 5 (18.5 %).

A close look at the responses above showed that majority of the lecturers (70.3 %) were of the opinion that the Islamic Studies curriculum in use in these institutions have been in operation over a decade. There is no doubt

that the objectives set for these content then cannot match the present needs and aspirations of the society. The more reason why majority of the students would prefer to choose other subjects which they feel would meet their needs now.

In addition, a large percentage of the lecturers confirmed that they still teach the same courses in the past years. In these courses, they did not see anything new and the same approach had been used in teaching it overtime, the same text books and materials.

All the lecturers confirmed that no computer courses were included in their Islamic Studies curriculum except for the General courses, this in the opinion of this researcher cannot be adequate for immense benefits which students will gain from the study and appreciation of computer knowledge in the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies. (Salako et. al 2013)

The third variable measured in this study was the *government policy*. One of the items directed at measuring this variable was, government policy encourages students to study Islamic Studies in the university. In unison, majority of the respondents, over 77% stated otherwise that the government policy did not encourage students to study Islamic Studies in the university. This is because the government educational policy favoured the science subjects than other subjects. (NPE 2004).

The fourth variable measured in this study was *job marketability*. This was measured by items like (a) graduates of Islamic Studies acquire knowledge and skills which could make them fit well in company Jobs and banking industry, positive responses = 6 (22.2 %), negative responses = 21 (77.7 %). (b) Our societal and aspiration needs motivate students to study Islamic Studies in the university, positive responses = 7 (25.9 %), negative responses = 20 (74 %). (c) Tertiary education Islamic Studies curriculum needs to be reviewed, positive responses = 27 (100 %).

Analysis of the responses recorded by lecturers here showed that the learning acquired by Islamic Studies students presently cannot make them function in companies and banking industries. This has been due to the content of the curriculum which in the opinion of the researcher is not attractive these days to meet societal needs and aspirations. All the lecturers involved in this study agreed strongly that the present Islamic Studies curriculum needed to be reviewed if the future of this subject and its stakeholders were to be sustained.

## QUESTIONS

*What subjects do students prefer to study in tertiary education today and what motivates them to choose these subjects?*

The Nigerian educational policy provides 60% quota for the science and technological education while 40 % quota is earmarked for the humanities and social sciences. (NPE 2004) Islamic Studies has been grouped among those subjects in the humanities where 40% had been earmarked. By this, more recognition has been given to sciences and commercial subjects in lieu of arts subjects. As a result, because students wanted recognition and because they would want to be associated with government priorities, they preferred to choose those subjects which would give them this recognition and promise them future incomes. More so, it was assumed that anyone who studied these subjects could be easily absorbed in employment. Most of the advertisements and vacancies would request for these areas of studies which had not been extended to Islamic Studies. This has been a reason why students would prefer to study other subjects in the university apart from Islamic Studies which they believed was not needed.

*What does the content of Islamic Studies curriculum of tertiary education look like?*

Analysis of this study further established the fact that the teaching curriculum of Islamic Studies presently lacked the contents that could make it marketable for students studying the subject and there is no way by which we could detach the curriculum from the subject.

The analysis confirmed that the curriculum presently in use had been in operation for over a decade.

Judging by this analysis, there is no doubt that the educational objectives set for the subject cannot be the same today with the invention of computer, internet and other technological tools. This points out the need to reposition Islamic Studies in the contemporary society.

It is interesting to note that the present Islamic Studies curriculum contents across many parts of the world looked similar to that of the Nigerian experience. For instance, a cursory look at the undergraduate Islamic Studies Education curriculum content in the Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), the National University of Malaysia (UKM), Qatar University, Ohio State University and others did not make any difference to the one under study. List of topics in these programmes of study concentrate more on theory, beliefs and *akeedah*. (Ibrahim 2011)

The researcher's tour of the internet trying to look at what the curriculum content of Islamic Studies looked like throughout the world showed that Islamic Studies curriculum content in Qatar University, Dubai University, University of Brunei (Lik 2011), Pakistan University (Dean 2005), Egypt (Kamal Hassan 2011), Jordan University, Indonesia (Azra 2011), Ohio State University and Saudi Arabia were all tailored towards the same pattern. None of these universities included any course like computer appreciation in their study of Islamic Studies curriculum except for general appreciation computer courses which were tagged university or general based courses.

Majority of the countries' Islamic Studies curriculum contents did not include the teaching of practical acquisition skills which could make the students dependent on their own.

This therefore shows that the issue of job marketability for Islamic Studies students and potential graduates is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, but it is rather a global phenomenon which needs to be tackled if Islamic Studies and its affiliates would be sustained for a future and better tomorrow.

*Could the tertiary education Islamic Studies curriculum impart knowledge and skills that would easily enhance job marketability?*

Today, the ultimate goal of any educational objective or skill acquisition is to create employment opportunities for the trainee. This has been the trend throughout the world as it has been established by different researchers. (Anour 1981, Dean 2005, Rosnani 2007, Azra 2011, Lik 2011). Gone were the days when an individual or group participated in a programme for the fun of it. For instance, participating in sports about three decades ago did not attract any financial gain or compensation, but this is not the case today and also for other similar activities like drama and singing and theatre and arts. The same development now applies to education and the end product of any form of education acquired these days is to find one a good job which could secure one's source of livelihood and guarantee the future.

It was on this premise that the present national policy of education in Nigeria and across the world is based. This policy was to fashion out a marketable curriculum, but this had not been the case for Islamic Studies. Islamic Studies curriculum has been based on belief, *akeedah* and morality but not on practical acquisition of skills which could enhance job marketability. The fear of the future and the hope of securing good employments is a propelling force for determining the choice of subjects students would choose in the university.

Owoyemi (2009) in support of a marketable curriculum says, a straight forward formal education based purely on theory and brain work is not enough. He was of the opinion that a degree in History, Islamic studies, Geography, Mathematics, Economics or English might be very desirable, but that these days, an employer wants an employee who can also do something practical with his or her hands on immediately getting job. Majority of the lecturers involved in this study agreed that the curriculum needed to reviewed to include courses which would enhance job marketability for the graduates of Islamic Studies.

*Is there any need to review the educational policy or to synergize the tertiary education Islamic Studies curriculum?*

All the lecturers involved in this study supported that the curriculum be synergized to include courses which would make Islamic Studies marketable. In their submission, reviewing the educational policy without making the curriculum rich and job enhancing might not be the solution to the problem. They supported the inclusion of knowledge of computer appreciation in the present day Islamic Studies curriculum. They also consented to the fact that practical and employment based curriculum content would motivate students to study Islamic Studies in the university.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The universities and other higher institutions enjoy fair autonomy particularly as it concerns the curriculum content to be developed and taught in the institutions. The institutions should embark on the review of present Islamic Studies curriculum if the future of Islamic Studies, students and lecturers and teachers would be sustained for a better tomorrow. The proposed reviewed content of Islamic Studies curriculum should be expanded to accommodate entrepreneurial studies. The curriculum should also include topics like *murabahah, mudarabah, musharakah, Ijarah, takaful, sukuk* and other Islamic business transactions which could make Islamic Studies graduates function well in today's Islamic Banks and Islamic financial institutions. These topics are to be given full prominence and taught in details with exposures of students into their practical applications. This proposition is supported by Kayadibi (2010) in his paper titled: Employability and marketability of the graduates of Islamic Studies in Islamic banking and finance: Malaysian experience. In this paper, Kayadibi makes case for including Islamic financial courses in the Islamic Studies curriculum whereby students of Islamic Studies would be equipped with the required knowledge and skills for Islamic Banking and financial institutions because they are more suitable to work in these places. In their case, they are already grounded in Islamic theories, they only require acquiring skills of the Islamic transactions and that they would be better in Islamic Banks and financial institutions than those who studied western



banking but were only introduced to a few courses in Islamic financial theories.

### CONCLUSION

This study has identified the role of job marketability as a key factor responsible for students' choice of subject selection in the tertiary education. This has made the enrollment number of students of Islamic Studies in the higher institutions to be low. This again has been attached to the curriculum content of Islamic Studies which would have to be worked upon to achieve the desired task. Presently, the operation of Islamic banking in Nigeria is faced with the problem of personnel to work in different positions and segments of Islamic financial institutions. Enriching the Islamic Studies curriculum with some computer appreciation courses and Islamic financial theories will make Islamic Studies graduates readily fill the vacuum and it will enhance their job marketability without necessarily compromising Islamic teachings and practices.

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