



Challenges Associated with the Teaching and Learning Islamic studies in Primary Schools in *Shari'ah* Implementing states in Nigeria: A Study of Sokoto, Kano and Zamfara

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges associated with the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools in Shari'ah-implementing states in Nigeria, with particular reference to Sokoto, Kano, and Zamfara States. Islamic Studies occupies an important position in the educational development of Muslim children, as it provides learners with knowledge of Islamic beliefs, acts of worship, moral values, social responsibilities and the principles guiding individual and communal life. Despite its significance, the effective teaching and learning of the subject at the primary school level may be constrained by several factors. These include inadequate qualified teachers, insufficient instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teacher training and professional development, limited teaching time, poor availability of relevant textbooks and other learning resources and challenges associated with curriculum implementation. The study adopts a quantitative research method, with data collected through consultation of libraries and other relevant sources. The study seeks to identify the major challenges confronting the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies and to examine their implications for pupils' academic achievement and moral development. The findings revealed useful information for educational authorities, curriculum planners, school administrators, teachers and other stakeholders in developing appropriate measures to improve the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools within the study area.

Original Research Article

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Introduction

In the name of Allah most gracious most merciful may peace and blessing of Allah be upon our noble prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), his family and all those who follow his path till the last day.

Education is widely recognised as an essential instrument for individual and societal development. It enables individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies necessary for meaningful participation in society. At the primary school level, education provides the foundation upon which subsequent levels of learning are built. It is therefore important that the subjects taught at this level are effectively delivered in order to achieve the intended educational objectives.

Primary education constitutes the first tier of Nigeria's formal education system and serves as the foundation upon which subsequent levels of education are built. At this level, formal education begins for most children. Some pupils may have previously attended Qur'anic schools, nursery schools, or both, while others may have had no prior formal educational experience. Consequently, primary school pupils are generally regarded as beginners in the formal education system, and the nature and methods of instruction appropriate for them differ from those admitted at the post-primary level.

In this regard, Islamic Studies is introduced at the primary school level to provide pupils with basic knowledge of Islam, its teachings, values and practices. For many pupils, this stage represents their first formal exposure to Islamic Studies

within the school system. Given the importance of primary education as the foundation of subsequent learning, effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies at this level is essential.

Within the Nigerian educational system, Islamic Studies constitutes an important area of learning, particularly in communities with large Muslim populations. The subject provides pupils with knowledge of the fundamental principles of Islam, including Islamic beliefs (*Aqidah*), acts of worship (*Ibadah*), moral conduct (*Akhlaq*), the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), Qur'anic studies and aspects of Islamic social relations. Beyond the acquisition of religious knowledge, Islamic Studies is intended to contribute to the moral and character development of learners by encouraging values such as honesty, justice, discipline, respect, responsibility, compassion and obedience to Allah (S.W.T).

The importance attached to Islamic education in Muslim societies can be traced to the earliest period of Islam. The Qur'an and *Sunnah* emphasise the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. Allah (S.W.T) states:

Read in the name of your Lord who created" (Qur'an 96:1).

Similarly, Allah states: "Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees" (Qur'an 58:11).

These Qur'anic injunctions demonstrate the central position of knowledge in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) also emphasised the responsibility of acquiring knowledge, making education an important means through which Islamic values and teachings are transmitted from one generation to another.

In Nigeria, the development of Islamic education predates the emergence of Western-style formal education. Islamic learning was historically transmitted through Qur'anic schools, scholars, mosques and other traditional institutions of learning. With the development of the modern educational system, elements of Islamic education were incorporated into the formal school curriculum. Following the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, efforts were made to expand access to primary education and to provide opportunities for children from different religious and social backgrounds. Islamic Studies subsequently became an integral component of the curriculum in schools serving Muslim communities. (National Policy on Education, revised 3rd edition)

The teaching and learning of Islamic Studies are particularly significant in the Northern states of Nigeria, where Islam has historically played an important role in the social, cultural, educational and institutional development of many communities. Sokoto, Kano and Zamfara States are among the states in which Islamic values and institutions have had considerable historical influence. The three states also operate within the broader context of *Shari'ah* implementation in Nigeria. Consequently, the effective

teaching of Islamic Studies at the primary school level is of particular educational and social importance because it provides pupils with foundational knowledge of Islamic principles and values.

However, the existence of Islamic Studies within the school curriculum does not necessarily guarantee effective teaching and learning. The achievement of educational objectives depends substantially on the availability of qualified and competent teachers, appropriate instructional materials, adequate learning facilities, effective teaching methods, suitable class sizes, sufficient instructional time and supportive school environments. Where these conditions are inadequate, the quality of teaching and learning may be adversely affected.

the challenges associated with Islamic Studies education should therefore be examined within the specific educational contexts in which teaching and learning take place. Although Sokoto, Kano, and Zamfara States share important historical and religious characteristics, their primary school systems may differ in terms of teacher availability, school facilities, educational resources, administration, and curriculum implementation. A comparative examination of the three states can therefore provide a broader understanding of the factors affecting the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies at the primary school level.

It is against this background that this study examines the challenges associated with the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools in *Shari'ah*-implementing states in Nigeria, with particular focus on Sokoto, Kano and Zamfara States. The study seeks to identify the major challenges affecting the effective teaching and learning of the subject and to examine their implications for pupils' academic, moral, and religious development. It is expected that the findings will assist policymakers, curriculum planners, educational administrators, school proprietors, teachers, government authorities and other stakeholders in developing appropriate strategies for strengthening the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Nigerian primary schools.

Historical Background of the Emergence of Islamic Education in Nigerian Primary Schools

It is noteworthy that a comprehensive understanding of the challenges confronting the teaching and learning Islamic Studies in Nigerian primary schools, particularly in Kano, Sokoto and Zamfara states, requires an examination of the history of Islam and Islamic education in the geographical area now known as Nigeria.

Isa M (2013:1) viewed that the name Nigeria was given to the country by some Europeans referring to the inhabitants of this part of West Africa. The word 'Nigeria' is said to mean 'the short black man'. In its broad sense, Nigeria means all the territories that surrounded the river Niger valley with numerous ethnic groups and tribes that amounted to three hundred and seventy-one (371), with over five hundred (500)

languages spoken, and three main dominant religions. (There are however, similarities in the beliefs and religion of its peoples. The tribes have been helping one another in some instances with regards to using a common defense strategy toward the attacks or repel wars imposed on them. Muhammad. B (11902) described West African region as a vast land with a lot of trees, rivers, and farmlands, among others. He went ahead to further described the economic strength of its people hinged on the production of millet, guinea corn, cocoa, cassava, kola nut, among others. Its people were mostly cattle herdsman. Those who inhabited and developed the land comprised of non-Arabs who became Arabized and Arabs who became indigenized in the area.

In another version of history, Abdurazaq (2023) viewed that the name of the Nigeria was suggested in 1902 by flora show a than proposed wife of Lugard. Since then Nigeria continues to progress politically and educationally, it continues to progress as many institutions of learning were established.

It is believed that the first group to bring Islam and Islamic education to Nigeria was through peaceful means (Bawa, 2003). Historians have not agreed of the precise date on the coming of Islam to Nigeria. But it is established historically that the existence of Islam was very much felt in the area of kanem Borno since the 8th century C.E. kanem Borno had since become part of Nigeria. The first of its ruler that accepted Islam was Hulme Jilme (1085-1097). He was a true Muslim. It was said that there was a very much relationship between his kingdom and the Maghrib. That relationship greatly helped Islam and Muslims. And so it was when his son Mai Dumama became the first king (1150-1202). Mai Dumama created a good environment for the spread of Islam and developed his kingdom through its teachings. However, many historians are of the opinion that Islam was established in the kingdom during the reign of Mai Dumama II who was cited by Ibn khaldun in his book because of the institutions he was reported to have established for the study of *Fiqh* and the glorious Qur'an. Things went on in similar manner till the reign of Ali bn Dumama (1476-1503). However, it was during the reign of Mai Idris Alooma that Islam spread to cover the whole land. (Isa M, 2013:3)

Balogun (1999) argued that Islam was first introduced in Hausaland before the fifteenth century. The introduction of Islam into this area is generally associated with the coming of Wangarawa a group of Mande Dyula Muslim merchants and cleric from Mali. These traders played a leading role in the spread of Islam into Hausaland. That included; Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, Gobir, Daura, among others (Lawal & Abdullahi, 2025;12). The Kano chronicle put the advent of the Wangarawa in Kano and the introduction of Islam during the reign of Sarkin Kano Yaji the 11th ruler of Kano (13-1385). According to this document, the Muslim immigrants under the leadership of Abdurrahman Zagaite preached Islam to the then Sarkin Kano (Bawa, 2003)

From the above it is established that the people of the city-state of Kano had accepted Islam through the *Wangarawa* and those who came with it originally were from Mali. What is clear is that Hausaland had become Muslim territories in the 15th century after *Hijrah* as a result of the gradual spread of Islam there. Such spread was not achieved on the basis of any inversion or overpowering the people by any group, but through peaceful means.

The first to have accepted Islam among the rulers of Kano was Usman Zamanqawi followed by Kanjiji, after him came Muhammadu Rumfa who raised the banner of Islam high in Kano (Kani, 2007:23)

Busari (2018) maintained that the history of Islamic studies in Sub-Saharan Africa is as old as the history of Islam in the region itself and it dates back to the 4th-5th A.H equivalent to 10th -11th C.E. barring some minor variables, the philosophy, curricula, institutions and goals of Islamic studies had historically remained the same in all Muslim societies; the discipline is intended to produce spiritual guides, produce good citizen, upheld public morality and custodians of the intellectual tradition of Islam.

It is widely believed that Islam entered Africa through trans-Saharan trade and gradually spread among the ruling elites before being embraced by both urban and rural populations. As Islam gained wider acceptance, Qur'anic schools were established by Muslim scholars across the region to facilitate the teaching and learning of the Qur'an and other Islamic sciences. This development continued both before and after the emergence of Sheikh 'Uthman ibn Fodiyo (1754-1817). Consequently, Islam and qur'anic education gained considerable momentum across various parts of Northern Nigeria and subsequently extended to some parts of Southern Nigeria.

Adeyimi (2016) opined that by the early 20th century following the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria, the colonial government expanded the scope of religious education in the country. However, traditional Islamic education remained more prevalent in Northern Nigeria, whereas Christian missionaries had established a strong presence across Southern Nigeria. The missionaries extended their activities to various parts of the region, promoting Christian evangelism, biblical education, and church programmes, while also introducing and promoting Christian religious instruction in schools.

Northern Nigeria remained firmly rooted in Islamic education, with the emirates, Muslim Scholars and elites of the period generally resisted the spread of western ideologies, Christian missionary activities and western-style education (Rosalind, 2001)

Fafunwa (1974) maintained that Islam and Islamic education reached western Nigeria en-route Ilorin through the activities of the 19th century *jihādists*. Many scholars and teachers from Katsina, Kano, Sokoto, and Borno settled in Ilori and established schools where Qur'an and other religious sciences

were predominantly taught to the inhabitants. From Ilori, the scholars moved further to the west and established learning centers in Ibadan, Lagos. Badagry, Abeokuta, Oshogbo, and Jebu-Ode and all these centers have had tremendous in the Islamic scholarship in the area. (N.T.I cycle 1, Module 8, nd:75). Islam and Islamic education did not make much headway in the east as it did in other parts of the country. The Christian missionaries, the followers of African traditional religion, and animists offered a formidable resistance to Islam and Islamic education in the area. However, the effort of the Nupe Muslim scholars has led to the establishment of Qur'anic schools in Auch, Agbede, and Uggella where Muslims were taught al- Qur'an. (Lawal & Abdullahi, 2025:76)

Primary education constitutes the foundational level of formal education, generally provided to children between the ages of six and eleven years, or beyond, depending on the educational structure of a particular context. It serves as the bedrock upon which subsequent levels of education are developed, equipping learners with essential knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for their continued educational and personal development. Consequently, the quality of primary education has significant implications for the effectiveness and overall success of the entire education system. Against this background, the Nigerian government introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme in September 1976 as a major educational reform aimed at expanding access to primary education across the country. The scheme was designed to provide free and universal primary education and make primary schooling compulsory, thereby promoting wider educational participation and reducing disparities in access to basic education. Islamic studies was subsequently incorporated into the primary school curriculum, thereby becoming an integral component of primary education.

Challenges facing the Teaching and Learning of Islamic studies in Nigeria Primary Schools

The challenges confronting the teaching and learning of Islamic studies in Nigerian primary schools can be broadly categorized into three major areas: societal, governmental and teacher-related challenges. These challenges are presented and discussed below.

1. Societal Challenges

The teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Nigerian primary schools are influenced by several societal factors. These include parental attitudes, inadequate parental involvement, misconceptions about the relevance of Islamic Studies. Previous studies have identified interest, parental factors and other social considerations among the factors affecting the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Nigerian schools (Busari, 2018). Similarly, Kazeem and Balogun (2013) identified challenges relating to acceptability, resources and public enlightenment in Islamic education in Nigeria.

Parents serve as the first and most influential educators in their children's lives. Their level of awareness, educational background and commitment to their children's education play a significant role in shaping the children's intellectual, moral, social and academic development. Consequently, effective parental involvement is essential for fostering meaningful learning outcomes and supporting the overall educational development of children (Alokan et al, 2013). Salisu (2019) opined that Lack of parental support is one of the major challenges affecting the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools. Teaching and learning are collaborative processes that require the active participation of both the school and the home. These two institutions should complement each other's efforts in promoting pupils' academic, moral and religious development. Parents are expected to reinforce what is taught in school by encouraging their children to attend classes regularly, complete assignments, revise lessons, practice Qur'anic recitation and develop positive Islamic values and behaviors at home. (Adamu, 1990)

However, some parents pay inadequate attention to their children's Islamic Studies education, particularly when greater emphasis is placed on subjects perceived to have more direct economic or career benefits. This attitude may reduce pupils' interest and commitment to the subject. Furthermore, where parents do not provide the necessary learning materials, monitor their children's academic progress, or cooperate with teachers, the efforts of the school may not produce the desired learning outcomes. Islamic Studies requires continuous reinforcement beyond the classroom because many of its objectives involve the development of religious knowledge, moral conduct, attitudes and practical behaviours. (Tijani, 2019)

Low Social Status of the Teaching Profession: The issue of the low social status accorded to the teaching profession remains a significant challenge in many societies. Islamic Studies teachers are not exempt from this perception and may, at times, experience inadequate recognition from pupils, parents, and members of the wider community. This attitude is partly influenced by the belief that Islamic knowledge can be acquired informally through family upbringing, Qur'anic schools and community religious activities. As a result, some individuals tend to place greater value on teachers of science and other subjects that are perceived to offer more direct economic and professional opportunities. Such perceptions may lead to diminished respect, inadequate recognition and reduced professional esteem for Islamic Studies teachers. The persistence of this challenge not only affects the morale and motivation of teachers but also undermines the overall status and effectiveness of the teaching profession. (Mustapha, 2019)

Bankado, Aliyu & Hayatu (2022) observed that Lack of interest among pupils constitutes another significant challenge to the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies. This situation may be attributed to inadequate

attention and commitment to the subject by relevant authorities, coupled with the lukewarm attitude of some parents and pupils towards Islamic Studies. Consequently, some pupils show little enthusiasm for attending Islamic Studies lessons and tend to attach greater importance to other subjects and their teachers. Effective learning is largely dependent on learners' interest, commitment and active participation. Where these factors are lacking, achieving the desired learning outcomes becomes difficult. Salisu (2019) opined that Islamic Studies teachers are expected to make deliberate efforts to stimulate and sustain pupils' interest in the subject despite the challenges confronting the profession. The use of appropriate teaching methods, relevant instructional materials, practical examples, and engaging classroom activities can help to motivate pupils and foster a positive attitude towards Islamic Studies.

Therefore, effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies require a strong partnership between parents and teachers. When both the home and the school fulfil their respective responsibilities and work collaboratively, pupils are more likely to develop sustained interest in the subject and demonstrate the knowledge, values and behaviours expected of them. Conversely, when one party fulfils its responsibilities while the other neglects its role, the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is likely to be undermined.

The importance of seeking and transmitting authentic knowledge is consistent with the Qur'anic injunction: "So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know" (Qur'an 16:43). This principle underscores the importance of directing pupils towards competent teachers and reliable sources of knowledge.

2. Government-Related Challenges or shortcomings of the Government and Policy affecting the teaching and learning of Islamic studies in Nigerian primary schools in *shari'ah* implementing states

Government-related factors constitute another important category of challenges confronting the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Nigerian primary schools. These include inadequate funding, insufficient instructional materials, shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate school facilities, large class sizes, overcrowded class rooms, inadequate supervision, limited opportunities for teachers' professional development, political and bureaucratic neglect, heavy work load, role overloaded and inadequate policy implementation and curriculum oversight. Government policies governing Islamic studies curriculum are often inadequately implemented and inconsistency monitored across states, resulting in variations in curriculum content, educational standards and the quality of instruction.

Empirical studies conducted in Nigeria have documented several of these challenges. For example, a study of Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers in North-Central Nigeria identified poor conditions of service, uncondusive teaching

and learning environments, inadequate educational facilities, inadequate funding and poor management of available resources as factors affecting the attainment of Universal Basic Education goals (Fantuzo, 2025). Similarly, research conducted in public primary schools in Zamfara State identified inadequate qualified and trained teachers, lack of refresher courses, and insufficient teaching materials and textbooks as challenges to effective Islamic Studies instruction (Lawal, 2025).

The availability of appropriate instructional materials is particularly significant because Islamic Studies encompasses Qur'anic studies, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, history, morals and other areas that require suitable teaching resources. Busari (2018) also identified inadequate textbooks, teaching aids, teachers' competence and limited time allocated to Islamic Studies among the challenges affecting the subject in Nigerian schools.

Therefore, effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies requires sustained government commitment to adequate funding, recruitment and deployment of qualified teachers, provision of relevant textbooks and instructional materials, improvement of school facilities, and regular monitoring of curriculum implementation.

Nduka & Adewale (2018) observed that inadequate opportunities for refresher courses, workshops and other forms of professional development may limit teachers' ability to adopt contemporary pedagogical approaches and digital technologies. A recent study of Islamic education in Nigerian public schools similarly identified lack of qualified teachers, inadequate instructional materials, curriculum inconsistencies, poor funding and insufficient motivation as significant challenges.

Teachers therefore require regular professional development, adequate teaching resources, supportive working conditions and opportunities to participate in curriculum review. Such measures can enhance their pedagogical competence and contribute to improved learning outcomes in Islamic Studies at the primary-school level.

Heavy workload and role overload are common to Islamic studies teachers because they are often assigned multiple subjects and additional administrative responsibilities, which reduce the time available for adequate lesson preparation, effective classroom instruction and meaningful engagement with pupils.

Political and bureaucratic neglect constitutes another significant challenge facing Islamic studies teachers. The subject often receives inadequate institutional advocacy within Ministries of Education, which may result in its limited inclusion in major educational reforms, digital learning initiatives and teacher professional development programmes.

Another important challenge relates to instructional materials and other learning resources. The effective teaching of

Islamic Studies may require relevant textbooks, Qur'anic materials, charts, audio-visual resources, digital learning materials and other instructional aids. Where such resources are inadequate, outdated, or inaccessible, teachers may depend excessively on verbal explanation and conventional methods of instruction. This situation may limit pupils' opportunities for active participation and may affect their understanding and retention of subject matter.

Classroom conditions may also influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Overcrowded classrooms, inadequate furniture, insufficient teaching facilities and limited access to suitable learning environments can make it difficult for teachers to give adequate attention to individual pupils. Similarly, insufficient time allocated to Islamic Studies may restrict teachers' ability to cover the curriculum effectively and engage pupils in meaningful learning activities.

3. Teacher-Related Challenges

An Islamic Studies teacher is an educator who has devoted his or her professional life to imparting relevant knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to pupils. Such a teacher is expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to the academic and moral development of the learners. As a practicing Muslim, the Islamic Studies teacher is also expected to exemplify the teachings and values of Islam through personal conduct and character. In this regard, the teacher should serve as a role model and an embodiment of Islamic principles, demonstrating qualities such as integrity, dedication, knowledge, confidence, inspiration and the ability to motivate learners.

However, despite these expectations, Islamic Studies teachers face a number of challenges that may hinder their effectiveness in teaching and learning. These challenges can negatively affect their ability to discharge their responsibilities effectively and achieve the desired learning outcomes. Some of the major challenges confronting Islamic Studies teachers are summarized and discussed below.

One of the major challenge confronting Islamic studies teacher is lack of Arabic language background. An Islamic Studies teacher requires a sufficient background in the Arabic language to perform his or her teaching responsibilities effectively. The effective development of Islamic education would be difficult to achieve without adequate proficiency in Arabic, which serves as the principal language of Islamic religious sources. The Glorious Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, while the Prophetic traditions (Hadith) were originally recorded and transmitted in the Arabic language. Similarly, the classical works of Qur'anic exegesis (*Tafsir*) and Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) were predominantly written in Arabic. Consequently, adequate knowledge of Arabic is essential for Islamic Studies teachers to access, understand, and interpret these primary and classical sources accurately. However, despite the centrality of Arabic to Islamic Studies, some teachers lack sufficient proficiency in the language, thereby limiting their ability to engage directly with the

original sources and obtain accurate information necessary for effective teaching and learning (kazeem & Bologun, 2013) & (Muhammad, 2016)

Teachers constitute a central component of the teaching and learning process; consequently, their qualifications, pedagogical competence, motivation and commitment have significant implications for the effective teaching of Islamic Studies. One of the major teacher-related challenges is the inadequate availability of qualified and professionally trained Islamic Studies teachers.

Similarly, Mustapha (2019), Adebayo (2018) & Adegum & Olumia (2025) noticed that Inadequate Timetable Allocation or Timetable programming constitutes another significant challenge to the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools. Islamic Studies is often disadvantaged in the allocation of periods on the school's general timetable. While other subjects may be allocated four or more periods per week, Islamic Studies is frequently allotted only two periods. More concerning is the fact that these periods are often scheduled after 12:00 noon, when pupils may already be physically and mentally fatigued from the day's academic activities. As a result, their level of concentration, participation, and comprehension may decline considerably. This situation places additional demands on the Islamic Studies teacher, who may have to exert considerable effort to sustain pupils' attention and effectively communicate the lesson. Consequently, inadequate and poorly scheduled instructional periods may negatively affect the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies.

Another serious challenge confronting Islamic Studies teachers is inferiority complex, which may manifest in a lack of self-confidence and professional assertiveness. Some Islamic Studies teachers tend to relegate themselves to the background and demonstrate little confidence in their abilities and professional competence. Consequently, they may appear uninspiring and less motivating to both their colleagues and students. In some cases, they withdraw from their colleagues and show limited interest in interacting or collaborating with other teachers. (N.T.I., MODULE 8,2000) & (Umar et al, 2004)

Salisu (2018), Ahmad (2016), Barkado (2022) viewed some Islamic Studies teachers do not make sufficient efforts to remain abreast of current local and international developments. This limitation may negatively affect their ability to relate Islamic Studies to contemporary issues and realities. In addition, teachers who possess strong proficiency in Arabic may sometimes pay inadequate attention to improving their command of the English language. This is particularly significant in Nigeria, where English serves as the official language and remains an important medium of communication, education, administration and diplomacy. Therefore, Islamic Studies teachers need to develop confidence, broaden their general knowledge, strengthen their communication skills and engage actively in continuous

professional development to enhance their effectiveness in teaching the subject.

Another challenge confronting some Islamic Studies teachers is their inability to project a positive and professional image in the classroom. Some teachers have limited knowledge of contemporary teaching methodologies and continue to rely predominantly on the traditional oral, teacher-centered, one-way approach to instruction. They may also make inadequate use of instructional materials and, in some cases, lack the skills required to develop or improvise appropriate teaching aids (Oladiti & Suleiman, 2015)

Consequently, the teaching of Islamic Studies may become less engaging, monotonous, abstract and difficult for learners to understand. The inappropriate use of teaching methods can also make the subject appear uninteresting or intimidating to pupils, thereby reducing their motivation and participation. Furthermore, some teachers rely on examples that are outdated or disconnected from Pupils' contemporary experiences and current social realities.

Another significant challenge confronting some Islamic Studies teachers is inadequate knowledge of the Qur'an. Some teachers have limited ability to read the Qur'an correctly and may also lack sufficient memorisation of relevant short chapters and verses that could be used to support and substantiate their explanations and arguments during instruction. This deficiency may create a negative impression among pupils and undermine the teacher's credibility and effectiveness in the classroom (Abdul, 1983)

Abdurrahman (1993) added that inadequate knowledge of the Qur'an may affect the teacher's confidence and ability to motivate pupils to develop an interest in the subject. Where a teacher is unable to confidently recite or appropriately cite relevant Qur'anic verses in the course of teaching, pupils may perceive the teacher as less competent and inspiring. Consequently, the wider community may also regard such a teacher as lacking the professional competence expected of an Islamic Studies teacher. Therefore, adequate knowledge, correct recitation, and familiarity with relevant Qur'anic verses are essential qualities for effective teaching of Islamic Studies.

Insufficient mastery of subject matter is another challenge confronting some Islamic Studies teachers. Some teachers possess inadequate knowledge of certain areas or branches of Islamic Studies, which negatively affects their ability to present and explain the subject matter accurately, comprehensively, and effectively. This deficiency may result in ineffective content delivery, limited classroom interaction, and difficulties in responding adequately to pupils' questions. Therefore, teachers need to develop a comprehensive understanding of the various branches of Islamic Studies through continuous learning, professional development, and regular engagement with relevant scholarly materials (Adigu, 2015)

Another challenge relates to teachers' pedagogical skills and the effective utilisation of instructional materials. Some teachers may continue to rely predominantly on conventional teaching approaches, thereby limiting pupils' participation and opportunities for experiential learning. Busari (2018) notes that pedagogy and teacher-related factors constitute important challenges to Islamic Studies education in Nigeria. Research on instructional and multimedia materials has also highlighted teachers' competence, inadequate teaching aids and materials, and other resource-related constraints affecting Islamic Studies instruction.

Hishamuddin (2012) maintained that inadequate opportunities for refresher courses, workshops and other forms of professional development may limit teachers' ability to adopt contemporary pedagogical approaches and digital technologies. A recent study of Islamic education in Nigerian public schools similarly identified lack of qualified teachers, inadequate instructional materials, curriculum inconsistencies, poor funding and insufficient motivation as significant challenges.

Teachers therefore require regular professional development, adequate teaching resources, supportive working conditions and opportunities to participate in curriculum review. Such measures can enhance their pedagogical competence and contribute to improved learning outcomes in Islamic Studies at the primary-school level.

One of the major challenges that may affect the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies is the availability of qualified teachers. Effective teaching of the subject requires teachers who possess both adequate knowledge of Islamic Studies and appropriate pedagogical skills. Teachers are expected not only to understand Islamic concepts but also to employ teaching strategies that are appropriate to the age, cognitive level and learning needs of primary school pupils. Inadequate numbers of professionally trained Islamic Studies teachers may therefore constitute a significant challenge to effective curriculum implementation.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of Islamic Studies may be influenced by the methods employed by teachers. Primary school pupils require teaching approaches that are interactive, practical, participatory and appropriate to their developmental level. Excessive reliance on teacher-centered approaches, memorisation and passive learning may limit pupils' understanding and their ability to relate Islamic principles to everyday life. Contemporary approaches, including discussion, demonstration, storytelling, role-play, question-and-answer, collaborative learning, and appropriate digital technologies, may provide opportunities for more effective learning when properly implemented.

Conclusion

The teaching and learning of Islamic Studies at the primary-school level constitute an important component of religious, moral and educational development in Nigeria. In the *Shari'ah*-implementing states of Sokoto, Kano and Zamfara,

the subject occupies particular significance because of the states' Islamic heritage and the emphasis placed on Islamic values and moral development. However, despite its importance, the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies continue to be constrained by a number of societal, governmental and teacher-related challenges.

The study has established that inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, insufficient instructional materials, poor learning facilities, inadequate professional development, limited parental support and the influence of contemporary digital and social environments can adversely affect the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies. These challenges may consequently limit pupils' interest, participation and attainment in the subject.

It is therefore imperative that the governments of Sokoto, Kano and Zamfara States, together with relevant educational stakeholders, adopt sustainable measures to address the identified challenges. Particular attention should be given to teacher recruitment and professional development, provision of instructional materials and conducive learning environments, integration of appropriate digital resources and increased parental and community participation. Such interventions would contribute to improving the quality of Islamic Studies education and strengthening pupils' knowledge, moral character and understanding of Islamic values. Ultimately, a well-supported system of Islamic Studies education at the primary-school level can contribute meaningfully to the broader educational and moral development of pupils in the three states.

Recommendations

Based on the challenges identified, the following recommendations are proposed:

Adequate Government Funding: The governments of Sokoto, Kano and Zamfara States should provide adequate funding for the effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools. Such funding should cover textbooks, instructional materials, classroom facilities, libraries and other essential educational resources.

Recruitment of Qualified Teachers: Governments and relevant educational authorities should recruit sufficient numbers of qualified and professionally trained Islamic Studies teachers and ensure that they are appropriately deployed to primary schools, particularly schools experiencing teacher shortages.

Continuous Professional Development programmes (CPDP): Regular workshops, seminars, refresher courses and other professional-development programmes should be organised for Islamic Studies teachers. Such programmes should focus on modern teaching methodologies, classroom management, assessment techniques and the appropriate use of digital technologies.

Provision of Instructional Materials: Relevant authorities should ensure the provision of adequate and age-appropriate

textbooks, Qur'anic copies, Hadith materials, charts, audio-visual resources and other instructional materials for the teaching of Islamic Studies.

Integration of Digital Technology: Schools should be encouraged to make appropriate use of digital resources in teaching and learning Islamic Studies. Teachers should be trained to use reliable digital Qur'anic and Hadith resources to complement conventional classroom instruction.

Strengthening Parental and Community Participation: Parents, Islamic scholars, community leaders and school authorities should work together to encourage pupils' interest in Islamic Studies. Parents should also be encouraged to reinforce Islamic moral and religious education at home.

Effective Supervision: State Ministries of Education and relevant quality-assurance agencies should strengthen the supervision of Islamic Studies teaching and learning in primary schools. Regular monitoring can help identify deficiencies in teacher availability, instructional resources, curriculum implementation and teaching practices.

Improvement of Learning Environment: Government and school authorities should improve classroom conditions, reduce overcrowding where possible, and provide conducive learning environments that enable effective interaction between teachers and pupils.

Curriculum Review: The curriculum for Islamic Studies at the primary-school level should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant to pupils' educational, moral and social needs while maintaining its Islamic foundations.

Motivation of Teachers: Appropriate incentives and recognition should be provided to Islamic Studies teachers to enhance their commitment and motivation. Improved conditions of service may also contribute to teacher retention and effectiveness.

Encouragement of Research: Universities and research institutions should be encouraged to conduct further empirical studies on the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools, particularly in *Shari'ah*-implementing states. Findings from such studies can assist policymakers in developing evidence-based interventions.

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