

OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF CURRICULUM IN TEACHING ISLAMIC STUDIES IN NIGERIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The paper is on the conceptual framework for judging quality curriculum in teaching Islamic studies in Nigeria Secondary School system. It defines curriculum, quality curriculum, objectives of Islamic studies curriculum, and the teaching process in Islamic studies which include traditionalism, progressivism, Western philosophy, and an eclectic approach that takes both traditional and progressivist perspectives on education into account. The paper also discusses quality curriculum in Islamic studies, criteria for judging curriculum quality in Islamic studies, and characteristics of a quality curriculum. The paper recommends that Islamic studies teachers should endeavor to effectively utilize the criteria for judging curriculum quality to ensure that standards are met and that multiple processes or approaches of teaching Islamic studies should be employed by the teachers in the classroom, Learning experiences that would promote the moral upbringing of learners should form the bedrock of Islamic curriculum in the school system, Islamic studies teachers should be conversant with the Islamic studies curriculum for effective assessment, quality teaching and easy assimilation by learners.

Keywords: Curriculum, quality curriculum, Islamic studies, teaching process.

INTRODUCTION

The learner's educational experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, that they had while being guided by a school are referred to as curriculum. The word can mean a variety of things, such as set study schedules and possibilities offered by the school. According to UNESCO (2022), Curriculum serves as a systematic, deliberate description of what, why, and how well students should learn certain things. intentional way.

The educational objectives, topics, sequencing in relation to the time allotted for learning activities, and qualities of the teachers and students are all defined by the

curriculum. (Braslavskyin UNESCO, (2022).

The four main components of a curriculum are typically objectives, material, instructional methodologies, and evaluation (Guga, 2019). The needs for the Islamic studies being taught in Nigerian schools rests mainly in helping towards producing individuals who will be spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally sound, strong as well as balanced who are expected to develop a critical mind capable of solving complex problems, dynamic and progressive in their lives. Islamic studies is one of the subjects taught in the Nigerian schools which provides training to Muslim students to behave morally upright and to apply the tenets of Islam in all fields of life ranging from government jobs, industries and private organizations.

A quality curriculum needs to be planned and designed comprehensively and qualitatively to be able to meet the set objectives of the curriculum. Like many other subjects, Islamic studies has a number of objectives expected to be achieved by the teachers teaching the subject as well as the students being taught who are the real target. The objectives of the Islamic Studies curriculum, according to NERDC (2012), are to make learners functional human beings, useful to themselves and the society at large; inculcate in the minds of the learners, the consciousness of Allah and to help them realize that Allah watches all their movements and will bring them to give accounts of their deeds in the Day of Resurrection; prepare learners towards a balanced personality that is spiritually dedicated to the cause of Allah, morally sound and socially accommodating; prepare the learners through intensive training for religious tolerance, ethical harmony, human equality and brotherhood, in order to restore peaceful co-existence particularly in Nigeria and the rest of the World; instill the love of prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the minds of the learners, through identifying some of his qualities such as tolerance, amnesty, fidelity, magnanimity and forbearance; and acquaint the learners with Islam as a code of conduct and the best way of life.

Badmus (2017) posits that the objectives of Islamic studies are meant to give Muslims the fundamental knowledge they need to live morally upright lives, to develop Muslims mentally, physically, and spiritually sound so that they can live healthy lives, to in-still in Muslims the virtues of tolerance and brotherhood so that they can coexist peacefully in society, to fully inform Muslims about the socio-political cum economic issues affecting their modern worlds or societies so that they can play their roles in the development of their communities and to in-still in Muslims a strong sense of religious conviction. NBAIS/NERDC (2011) itemized the objectives of the Islamic studies curriculum including strengthening students to be familiar with variety of Islamic knowledge;

providing students with knowledge of characteristics of human beings and behaviors (psychology of education) and Islamic jurisprudence; shaping the minds of the students to know the position of Islam on the circumstances surrounding the World in which the student is living; offering students with the opportunity of knowing more sources of Islamic law (Shari'ah), discretion (ijtihad) on legal matters and methods of deducing judgement (istinbat) in Islamic law; guiding students to the knowledge of Islamic studies curriculum; shaping the minds of the students to learn creed or belief system and the best way to defend the creed system with proofs; and learning the traditions (hadith) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and its position in the affirmation of Islamic laws and societal living.

These objectives were aimed at training students to appreciate Islam as a whole way of life, comprehend, accept, and apply the teachings and personal examples of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions.

Teaching Process in Islamic Studies

Teaching process are the ways, approaches or methods used in the delivery of Islamic studies curriculum. It encompasses a number of techniques which may aid in achieving the desired goals of the contents of Islamic studies. Ashaaria, Ismaila, Puteha, Samsudina, Ismaila, Kawangita, Zainala, Nasira, & Ramzib (2011) expatiated that the process or models of teaching Islamic studies as classified by Taha Alwani (n.d) are:

- a. The traditionalist approach holds that the Ummah has historically been viewed as self-sufficient and capable of being presented either just as it is or with minimal alterations. This strategy is known as the honest strategy. These schools use a subject-centered curriculum and a mostly memorization-based traditional manner of instruction (Rosnani in Ashaaria et al., 2011);
- b. The modernist perspective: This perspective takes into account a structured civilisation using Western ideas and its worldview. It is frequently referred to as a modernistic approach. Under this strategy, Islam is taught as a subject without in-depth analysis and the curriculum and teaching practices are fundamentally secular; and
- c. The eclectic approach to education: This method takes into account both conventional and modernist viewpoints. In which one must choose the most sound ideas from traditional thought and the ideas that one believes to be true in contemporary thought. This way of teaching Islamic studies is distinctive and brand-new. It fills the gap between traditionalist and modernist approaches to teaching Islamic studies, enabling the achievement of the goals through the combination of both. .

According to Wong (2013), teaching process involves that a teacher should:

- a. Master his/her subject matter well and be passionate about it;
- b. Know the age group of his students;
- c. Know needs of students and be able to discuss them in classroom;
- d. Be able to relate subject matter with students' needs;
- e. Prepare early and go through his/her materials before lesson delivery;
- f. Know how to organize teaching materials from unknown to known and from simple to complex;
- g. Use different teaching strategies in the delivery of lessons;
- h. Be able to arouse the students' interest in the subject matter; and
- i. Help students to interact with the subject matter and learn for themselves.

Quality Curriculum in Islamic Studies

High-standards-aligned teaching resources that are pedagogically sound, knowledge-rich, and academically demanding have been dubbed "quality curriculum" (Learning First, 2019). The main goal of a quality curriculum is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to lead fulfilling lives. This goal is achieved by fostering in students the knowledge, skills, and values they need to develop along with the abilities and competencies that go along with them. The quality of student learning and how well they apply it to their own personal, social, physical, cognitive, moral, psychological, and emotional development are crucial markers of a high-quality curriculum. (Stabback, 2016).

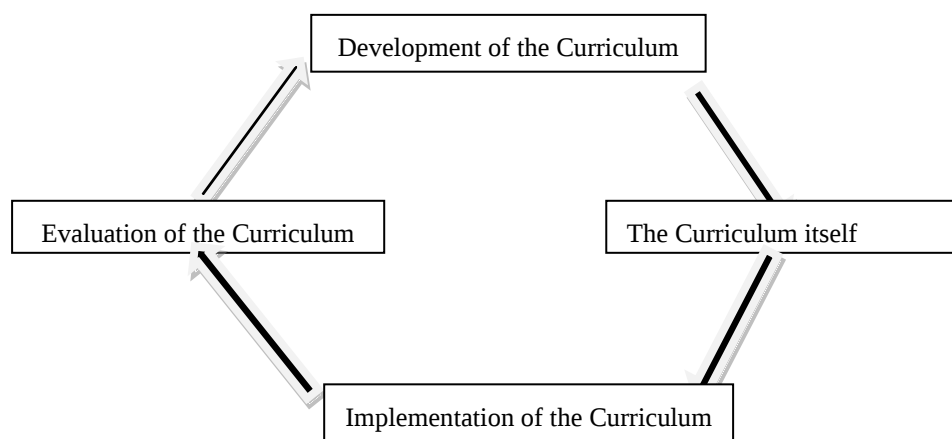
In teaching Islamic studies as a subject, instructions and instructional materials should meet the set standards, pedagogy should be effective, knowledge imparted to learners should also be rich and rigorous. The Islamic studies curriculum should enable students to develop their insights, abilities, and virtues they will need in order to improve their lives in the future. It ought to give students the skills they need to be successful in life. These factors contribute to a high-quality curriculum in Islamic studies where students can effectively apply what they have learned to their own lives, societal needs, satisfying work, and developmental projects.

Criteria for Judging Curriculum Quality in Islamic Studies

There are many criteria for judging curriculum quality to ascertain its worth or otherwise for all subjects, Islamic studies inclusive. According to Ritchhart (2007), a good program effectively engages students in gaining deeper understanding by meeting seven universal requirements. These common criteria are:

- a. rigorous approach that encourages learners to gain a deeper understanding rather than simply demonstrate their previous knowledge.
- b. proper activities, wherein the pupils' classroom interaction correspond to the actual performance as expected.
- c. Autonomy, where students must be able to recognize opportunities to utilize their knowledge and skills in the present, make wise decisions, and effectively put it to use.
- d. Thorough in thought and demanding of students more than rote memorization and reproduction;
- e. persistent effort is made to expose not just what students comprehend and cannot grasp, but also how they grasp it. t;
- f. Encouraging; and
- g. Analytical, which focuses on one's actual learning, aids in connections and helps to anchor comprehension. Stabback (2016) enumerated the categories of criteria for judging the quality of curriculum from the broader processes of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1:Components of Evaluating Progamme:



Source: Stabback (2016)

The list below outlines the factors that must be considered for each of the aforementioned categories:

Table 1.1: Evaluation Standards for Curriculum Quality

Category	Description
Development of the curriculum	Good curriculum creation procedures are organized, structured, comprehensive, collaborative, guided by education experts, cyclic in form, and resilient.
The actual curriculum	High-quality course content: respects every learner and believes that every child matters equitably . It is structured based on presumptions on how children are taught. Usually it contains, meaningful, and relevant information; and helps students build competence.
Curriculum Implementation	A high-quality curriculum incorporates and establishes clear expectations for students, teachers, schools and learning environments, parents and employers, educational institutions and authorities in order to be executed successfully.
Evaluation of curriculum	A good quality instruction is one that is consistently reviewed by experts based on a clear purpose and scope,. It uses valid and reliable data, within a definrd framework, and is evaluated in a systematic and planned manner at various levels of the educational system. .

Source: Stabback (2016).

Curriculum quality can be determined by evaluating its contents, methods of its delivery as well as the evaluation techniques. More specifically, the mission and goals of a

program, quality of students and teachers and instructional resources are to constantly assessed. (Khan, Spruijt, Mahboob & Van Merrienboer, 2019)

Characteristics of a Quality Curriculum

Quality curriculum is a type of curriculum that focused on how learners should developed, posters the habit of critical thinking, communication skills and creative for problem solving. Barrett (2017) posited that a quality curriculum is one that enables teachers to: continually assess and modify teaching as necessary; offer students opportunities to venture in creative activities; provides differentiation for all levels of learners to close achievement gaps and also contains efficient assessments strategies. More over it should be able to develop learners character and resiliency and also enable them to gain academic mastery, build on existing knowledge, establish meaningful connections between ideas and concepts in relation to their lives, collaborate with their peers, and use a range of expressions to communicate their understanding.

According to Bound, Rushbrook, and Sivalingam (2013), a quality curriculum is one that is founded on the principles of curriculum designer autonomy, the creation of flexible and dynamic programs that encourage creative interpretation by facilitators and learners, the production of curriculum that is firmly based on meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders, and designed using consistent underpinning structural assumptions and philosophical principles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

One of the major objectives of Islamic studies curriculum is ensuring that the set objectives were achieved by instructors and the learners who are at the receiving end. The evaluation aspect of the curriculum serves the purpose of judging the quality of Islamic studies curriculum where the curriculum will be judge to ascertain whether the learners have acquired what is expected as planned and designed in the curriculum or otherwise.

Recommendations

The suggestions listed below were made:

- a. Learning experiences that would promote moral upbringing of learners should form the bedrock of Islamic curriculum in the school system,
- b. Islamic studies instructors may endeavour to effectively utilizes the criteria for judging curriculum quality to ensure that standards are met;

- c. Multiple approaches of teaching Islamic studies should to be employed by the teachers cater for individual differences among students in their classrooms;
- d. Islamic studies teachers should be conversant with the Islamic studies curriculum so as to determine its quality or otherwise.

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