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ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL FEMALE STUDENTS TOWARDS ISLAMIC STUDIES IN ILORIN SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE

SAIDU, A. Ph.D

Saidu abubakar@unilorin.edu.ng

(Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria),

ALIYU, Yunus

(Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria),

Aliyu.y@unilorin.edu.ng

SALIMA, S.S. Ph.D

Saliman.ss@unilorin.edu.ng

(Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria),

MUHAMMAD-JAMIU, I.

(kwara state teaching service commission, Ilorin),

Abstract

This paper investigated the attitudes of secondary school female students towards Islamic Studies in Ilorin south Local Government Area of Kwara State. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected for this study was analyzed using frequency count and percentage. The finding of the study shows that the attitudes of secondary school female students in Ilorin south Local Government Area of Kwara State is positive towards the acquisition of Islamic Religious Studies. And also, the parents of the students encouraged their children to enroll for Islamic Religious Studies.

It was recommended that Religious Studies should be made compulsory for all secondary school students as it builds their mind spiritually through the teaching of piety which is capable of eradicating corruption from the country.

Background to the Study

Religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems, and world views that relate humanity to supernatural and to spirituality. It is part and parcel of man and cannot be separated from it. It plays important roles in the life of an individual and in the society at large in such a way that it binds people together, explains the human predicaments, helps to control human behaviour and provides an individual with emotional support in respect of uncertainty of life. In nations where the government holds a large amount of control over population, religion can play a substantial role. Hence, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up an Advisory Council of Religious Affairs (A.C.R.A) in 1987 to co-ordinate the effort of different religious bodies in the country with a view to emphasizing the factors which bind mutual understanding and cooperation (Policy and Legal Advocacy, 2012).

On this note, in any society where religion covers all aspects of human life, the people of such society or nation will experience peace and tranquillity and happiness will spread within the people regardless of individual belief or faith. That informs the reason where Quran states, if your lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one Ummah [Nation or community] (Quran 11: V 118)

The term religion was derived from Latin word "Religio" which means "to bind together". Scholars from various fields of study try to define religion according to their respective field of study or in order to satisfy their needs and purposes. As stated earlier, there are numerous definitions of religion and few will be mentioned to back this assertion. The typical dictionary definition of religion refers to belief in a superhuman controlling power or in a personal God or gods entitled obedience and worship (Oxford Advance learner Dictionary,). However, writers and scholars have expanded upon the "religion" definitions as insufficient to capture the diversity of religious thought and experience. For instance (peter 1999) Religion as a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive and long- lasting moods and motivation in men formulating conception of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such aura of factuality that the moods motivations seem uniquely realistic.

In Encyclopedia Britannica, (1995) religion is also defined as a particular system or a set of systems in which doctrine, myths, rituals, sentiments and other similar elements are inter- connected.

There are different types of religions in the world, these include Islam, Christianity, Judaism and many others. Some of these religions are subjects of study in schools, particularly at primary and secondary levels. Thus, both male and female students' attitudes towards the study of each of the above mentioned religions must be considered so as to arrive at a qualitative education. Precisely,

the attitudes of female students, particularly at the secondary schools level, towards the study of Islam will be the focus of this paper.

In order to understand the importance of studying Islamic Religious Studies as a course or subject in schools and the attitudes of female students to its study, it is very necessary to briefly introduce what the word Islam connotes. Linguistically, the term Islam is derived from Arabic word Aslama which means to surrender, to submit wholly to Allah as can be found in the Holy Quran-an "he said I have submitted myself to the Lord of the universe"(Q2:V132).

Technically, Islam is seen differently by different scholars and authors depending on their perception and understanding of the concept. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000) defines Islam as "the Muslim religion, based on belief in oneness of God and revealed through Muhammad as a prophet of Allah. It is also defined as a comprehensive way of life and submission in totality to the will of Allah, the creator and sustainer of the universe and sole source of value. Mikail (1995) submitted that Islam is a religion of peace and submission to Allah's will. Islam itself is a way of life and at the same time a religion which has been perfected by Allah Himself for believers who are known as Muslims. As stated in the Holy Quran "It is He (ALLAH) who has named you Muslims" (Q22: V 78) Islamic studies have been a course of study before the introduction of 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1989 (Expansion of Primary Education 2013) and the content of its study is as follows under three categories: A. Guidance: Quran, Hadith, and moral Education B. Islamic law: Taohid, Transaction and Worship C. Historical aspect: the life history of prophet Muhammad and four orthodox caliphs, the spread of Islam to west Africa and the contribution of Muslims to the modern civilization

With the introduction of 6-3-3-4 system of education, the content of Islamic studies premised on what Muslim students should know such as memorization of portions of the Quran and Hadith and their meanings, to know how to perform the duties of prayer, fasting, zakat and hajj so as to elevate the evidence for the authenticity of the Quran and so on, as well as learning essential historical information. The syllabus therefore was compiled in three sections which are: Hidayah (guidance), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and Tarikh (historical development of Islam. Hidayah section comprises of the Quran, Hadith, and Tahdib (moral education). In the Fiqh section, the following can be found: Tawhid (belief), Ibadah (worship) and mu'amalat (human transactions) which includes Shari'ah, Marriage, Divorce, Custody of children, Inheritance and others. Tarikh encompasses sirah (the life history of the Prophet Muhammad) and the leadership of the four rightly guided caliphs, the spread of Islam to West Africa, contributions of Muslims to World Civilization (Lemu, 2002).

The objectives of Islamic Studies include: to prepare students spiritually, morally, socially and intellectually for his role as a Muslim in the World in which

he lives. It is also to enhance students' knowledge of Islam both formally and otherwise throughout his life in accordance with the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.W.A). Thus----- It also gives students an insight into the broad view of Islam both of the past and present. Therefore, the study of Islamic religion is very important because it prepares the students right from Primary School up to University level spiritually, morally and intellectually in any society they found themselves.

The term attitude can be defined as a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, events, ideas or just about anything in your environment. However, the above stated definition is not generally accepted by scholars rather, there is debate about precise definition. For, instance, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined an attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor. Ajzen, (2001) opined that attitude is an affect towards an object. Affect (i.e. discrete emotions or overall arousal) is generally understood to be distinct from attitude as a measure of favorability. Allen (2001) affirmed that attitude is an arrangement of mental process, a mental "set" internal disposition on the way certain mental process are organized in a ferism to make him ready to act on a particular way. A person is said to have an attitude towards an object, act, method and process. He added that although attitude is generally endearing, it can be changed but nevertheless, they are capable of being changed. This is one of the important purposes of studying them.

If society tends to be improved through education, the attitude held by individual and the society as a whole should be continually measured and modified as when necessary. Hence, attitudes of students, particularly female students to Islamic studies are therefore needed to be measured in order to determine the extent to which the aims and objectives of the subject are achieved.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes of secondary school female students towards the study of Islamic studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. Specifically, the research analyzed:

- a) the attitude of senior secondary female students towards the study of Islamic Religious Studies
- b) Interest of the senior secondary female students in the acquisition of Islamic Religious Studies
- c) the attitudes of parents to the study of Islamic studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State

Research Questions

This research is aimed at finding answers to the following questions

- a) What are the attitudes of senior secondary female students to Islamic Religious Studies?
- b) Do secondary school female students in Ilorin South Local Government have interest in the acquisition of Islamic Religious Studies?
- c) What are the attitudes of parents towards the study of Islamic studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

Methodology

The research seeks to describe, explain and analyze the attitude of female students towards Islamic studies secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government area of Kwara as a target population. Therefore, descriptive research was adopted for the study

The population for this study is all female students in Senior Secondary Schools of Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select 12 out of 60 Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area. Simple random sampling which was seen by Moore and McCabe (2006) as that which consists of sample from the population chosen in such a way that every set of sample has an equal chance to be the sample actually selected. Hence, purposive random sampling technique was used to select all 446 female students who are offering Islamic Religious Studies in the selected Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State.

The instrument employed in this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire tagged "Questionnaire on Attitudes of Female Students Towards Islamic studies (QAFSTIRS) was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with biographical data of the respondent while section B is based on the examination of the attitude of female students towards the study of Islamic religious studies. The data collected for this study were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage.

RESULTS

Research Question One: *What are the attitudes of secondary school female students to Islamic Religious Studies?*

Table 1: Attitudes of secondary school female students to Islamic Religious Studies.

No.	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED	
		F	(%)	F	(%)
1.	I am always eager to attend Islamic studies classes	327	73	119	27
2.	My Islamic studies note is up to date	401	90	45	10
3	Islamic studies is difficult to understand	27	6.0	419	94
4	I hate reading Islamic studies text books	80	18	366	82
5	Islamic studies is too difficult for my liking	83	19	363	81.3

The table 1 shows that out of 446 female students sampled, 327 (73%) Agreed to be always eager to attend Islamic studies classes while 119 (27%) disagreed. 401 (90%) female students agreed that their Islamic studies notes were up to date while 45 (10%) had divergent opinions. Also 27 (6.0%) female students agreed that Islamic studies are difficult to understand while 419 (94%) opposed their idea. 80 (18%) female students hate reading Islamic studies while 366 (82%) have interest in the reading. 83 (19%) did not like Islamic Studies as a subject while 363 (81.3%) liked it.

Research Question 2: *Do secondary school female students have interest in the acquisition of Islamic Religious Studies?*

Table 2: Interest of secondary school female students in the acquisition of Islamic education

Research Question 2: Do secondary school female students have interest in the acquisition of Islamic Religious Studies?

Table 2: Interest of secondary school female students in the acquisition of Islamic education

No.	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED	
		F	(%)	F	(%)
1.	I have interest in Islamic studies as other subjects	401	90	45	10
2.	I enjoy doing Assignment In Islamic Religious Studies	390	87.4	56	13
3.	I like to further my education in Islamic studies	291	65	155	35
4	If I have my way, I will not offer Islamic Religious Studies	36	8	410	92
5	Islamic studies should be removed from the school subjects	43	10	403	90.3

Table 2 shows that out of 446 female students sampled 401(90%) had interest in Islamic studies while 45 (10%) disliked it. 391 (87%) enjoyed Islamic studies while 56(13%) had contrary view. 291 (65%) showed interest in furthering their education in Islamic studies while 155 (35%) wanted to further their education in another course. 36 (8%) said that were forced to offer Islamic studies while 410 (92%) were not forced. So, on so 43 (10%) did not want Islamic studies to be offered in the school while 404 (93.3%) want it to be offered.

Research Question 3: *What are the attitudes of parents to the study of Islamic studies in Ilorin South Local Government Area?*

Table 3: Positive attitudes of parents to the study of Islamic Religious Studies

No.	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED	
		F	(%)	F	(%)
1.	My parents enjoyed my attendance of Islamic studies classes	422	95	24	5.3
2.	My parents want me to further my career in Islamic Religious Studies	382	86	64	14.3
3	My parents do not want me to offer Islamic studies because of their interest in other field	47	11	399	89.4

Table 3 shows that out of 446 female students sampled, 422 (95%) parents were happy with their children offering Islamic studies while 24 (5.3%) parents were not happy. 382 (86%) parents wanted their children to be future specialist in Islamic studies while 64 (14.3%) parents wanted their children to further their education in another course. 47 (11%) parents did not want their children to offer Islamic studies while 399 (89.4%) parents disagreed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that secondary school female students of Ilorin South Local Government Area of kwara state have positive attitudes towards the study of Islamic studies with the support of their parents. Hence, the following recommendations were made:

- Necessary resources that can facilitate effective learning of Islamic studies should be provided by the Government and other stake holders so as to stimulate the interest of female students in the study of Islamic Religious Studies.
- Policy makers should ensure that they make policies that will promote the teaching and learning of Islamic studies in schools.
- That Religious Studies should be made compulsory for all secondary school students as it builds their mind spiritually through the teaching of piety which is capable of eradicating corruption from the country.

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