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**AN EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF UPPER BASIC ISLAMIC
STUDIES CURRICULUM IN KWARA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The concern of this research is the problem faced by teachers and students of Islamic Studies at the Upper Basic level in the course of implementing the Islamic Studies curriculum vis -a- vis the suitability of the curriculum to the students it was designed for, the time scheduled for the subject and the adequacy of the three year Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum. In this respect, this study evaluates the implementation of Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum in Kwara Central Senatorial district. All the Islamic Studies teachers numbered 355 in the Upper Basic Schools, in Kwara Central Senatorial district were used as population of this study. A total number of one hundred and thirty five (135) Islamic Studies teachers were sampled: Ilorin West 45, Ilorin East 38, Ilorin South 35, while Asa 17. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select 135 Islamic Studies teachers as a sample. Questionnaire was carefully designed for the purpose of collecting relevant information from the respondents. Two research questions were raised for the study, and the data collected were answered using descriptive statistics of percentage. The findings revealed that the three years stipulated in the curriculum are inadequate for effective accomplishment of the task in the curriculum. Based on this finding, it was recommended that the number of the periods allocated weekly to Islamic Studies should be increased in order to cover the syllabus.

Keywords: Evaluation, Implementation and Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum

Introduction

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is a nine-year basic education programme which was launched and executed by the government and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national integration. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo flagged off UBE on 30th September, 1999 in Sokoto, Sokoto State (Yusuf & Ajere, 2010). The vision statement of Universal Basic Education is to provide a world class education intervention and regulatory agency for the promotion of uniform, qualitative and functional basic education in Nigeria.

The mission statement of UBE is to operate as an intervention, coordinating and monitoring agency to progressively improve the capacity of states, local government

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agencies and communities in the provision of unfretted access to high qualitative basic education in Nigeria. (NERDC, 2007). UBE encompasses six years primary education (Lower Basic Education), and the three years of junior secondary education (Upper Basic Education). The objectives of UBE include:

- i. To ensure unfretted access to nine years of formal education.
- ii. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system, through improved relevance quality and efficiency.
- iii. Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skill as well as the ethical moral civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for – life – long learning.
- iv. The provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age (NERDC, 2007).

This last objective corroborates the saying of Holy Prophet Mohammed (SAW), thus, knowledge is mandatory upon all Muslims (Ibn Majah p.224). Moreover, the major objectives of Islamic Studies in UBE are:

- i. To impact moral character on their lives (of pupils or students) and make changes for better living.
- ii. To inculcate values, societal, moral, interpersonal among others. (NERDC, 2007).

In the educational field, Universal Basic Islamic Studies curriculum plays an integral role which should not be undermined. Oladosu (2014) maintained that curriculum is so basic and crucial to the teaching and learning processes so that any attempt to bypass it will result in a phenomenal disaster. Enaohwo and Umeuduagu (1996) who posited that a well structured curriculum is germane to effective delivery of lesson hereby enhancing a good performance.

The term Curriculum is a Latin word whose etymology stems from ‘Curere’ which connotes, among other meanings, “a running course”. In the Latin usage of the word, it is translated into “A Race Course” which signifies the distance which must be covered in order to arrive at a specific target or goal. (Oladosu, 2014)

In addition, Abdulsalam and Issa (2002) noted that the position of teachers in achieving the objective, skills cannot be overemphasized. The roles of teachers in achieving the objective of any school or subject curriculum is enormous. Salam (1999) reiterated that a teacher is a curriculum interpreter. In other words, a teacher in Islamic Studies needs to know his subject matter and then needs to know all aspects of educational technology so as to enable him/her implement the curriculum properly.

To determine the effectiveness of a curriculum, it is necessary to evaluate it (Onwuka, 1985). Abiri (2007) Opined that curriculum evaluation is an assessment and measurement of the content and organization of any instructional programme or material. It may be more or less general in coverage. Olutola (1998) who posited those three years as stipulated in the Upper Basic Education curriculum are grossly inadequate for effective

accomplishment of the task in the curriculum. However, in most cases, it can be limited by one or more factors of geographical area, instructions, subject matters, and levels or sectors of education concerned. An overview of the above discussion indicates that evaluation can be done in any area of curriculum development such as the objective, content, methodology, instructional materials and aids (Ibrahim 2006 & Abiri, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

It seems that many of the students in senior schools are no longer choosing Islamic studies as a subject. As the number of the students of Islamic studies in school settings are drastically reduced due to the unclear reasons, and the extent to which the students engage in anti-social vices like thuggery, raping, stealing and involvement in secret cults might be as a result of poor implementation of the Islamic Studies curriculum.

The researcher's great concern is the problem faced by teachers and students of Islamic studies at the Upper Basic level in the course of implementing the curriculum. So for instance, some of the issues trailing the Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum are unavailability of teaching aids, inadequacy of Islamic studies textbooks, the time schedule for the subject, the inadequacy of the three years Upper Basic Islamic studies curriculum programme, the introduction of many new topics which make the package complex and extensive, incompetence of some Islamic Studies teachers, attitudes towards the subject among others.

However, many scholars have carried out studies on evaluation of implementation of curriculum in different level of education. For instance, Abdulganiyu (2006) did a work on evaluation of the implementation of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Islamic Studies curriculum in Kwara State Colleges of Education. More so, Ajidagba (2002) wrote on an evaluation of the national senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum in Kwara State, Nigeria. To the best of researcher's knowledge, no study has been conducted on evaluation of implementation of Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum in Kwara central senatorial districts. It is therefore, important to look at the Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum by investigating its objectives and implementation. This is the gap that this study intends to fill.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to evaluate the Implementation of Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum in Kwara Central senatorial Districts. Specifically, It evaluates;

- i. suitability of Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum for students it was designed.
- ii. adequacy of three years Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum to accomplish the task set by the curriculum.

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Research Questions

The following research questions were raised based on the problem:

- i. What are the perceptions of teachers on the suitability of Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum for students it was designed?
- ii. What are the perceptions of teachers on the adequacy of three year Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum to accomplish the objectives set by the curriculum?

Methodology

A descriptive design of survey type was adopted for this study which made the research to obtain the opinion of the representative sample of the target population in order to obtain information of the perception on entire population. The population of this study consists of all Islamic Studies teachers in Upper Basic schools in Kwara Central Senatorial District. A total of 355 Islamic Studies teachers in the 271 Universal Basic schools in the senatorial district were used as population. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select 135 Islamic Studies teachers as a sample. 45 in Ilorin West, 38 in Ilorin East, 35 in Ilorin South and 17 in Asa. The instrument used in collecting data for this study was a questionnaire. A self-designed questionnaire on Suitability of Current Upper Basic Islamic Curriculum and Adequacy of three years Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum. The questionnaire had two sections: Section A contains items that were used to answer research question one (1): What are the perceptions of teachers on the suitability of Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum for students it was designed? While section B contains items that were used to Answer research question two (2): What are the perceptions of teachers on the adequacy of three years Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum to accomplish the objective set by the curriculum? To ensure the validity of the instrument used in this study, the questionnaires were given to two experts in the Department of Arts Education and Test and Measurement in Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin for face and content validity. On the basis of their suggestions and recommendations, necessary modifications were made on the draft of the questionnaire. In order to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted. In the pilot study, a total number of 45 Islamic Studies teachers in the Upper Basic Schools in Kwara Central Senatorial District were randomly selected. The respondents were not to be part of the samples for the main study. The administration and collection of data was done personally by the researcher with the help of a research assistant. A test re-test method was used. A descriptive statistics of percentage was used to answer all the research questions. Mean score statistics was used for analyzing the research questions. A mean score of 2.5 and above was used as the criterion. This means that any item that was rated 2.5 and above is a positive factor for evaluation of implementation of Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum.

Result

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of teachers on the suitability of Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum for students it was designed?

Table 1: Suitability of Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum

S/N	Statement	A	D	X
1	The objectives of Islamic Studies in Upper Basic Curriculum are clearly stated	89 (65.9%)	46 (34.1%)	3.31
2	The content of the Islamic Studies Upper Basic curriculum is consistent with the set objectives	88 (65.2%)	47 (34.8%)	3.30
3	The objectives of the Islamic Studies Upper Basic Curriculum cannot be achieved without teachers knowledge of Arabic Language	84 (62.2%)	51 (37.8%)	3.24
4	The Islamic Studies Upper Basic Curriculum preparing students with adequate intellectual exposure that will enable them pursue further education in Islamic Studies at senior secondary schools level	85 (63.0%)	50 (37.0%)	3.25
5	The Islamic Studies curriculum is not practicable for the students	78 (57.8%)	57 (42.2%)	3.15
6	The contents of the curriculum are complex for the students	92 (68.1%)	43 (31.9%)	3.36
Overall Mean Average				3.27

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Table 1 show that 65.9 percentages of the teachers agreed that the objectives of Islamic Studies Upper Basic Curriculum are clearly stated while the remaining respondent disagreed with the statement. Also, 65.2 percentages of the teachers agreed that the content of the Islamic Studies Upper Basic Curriculum is consistent with the set objectives while the remaining respondents have contrary opinion. Furthermore, 62.2 percentage of the teacher agreed that the objectives of the Islamic Studies in Upper Basic curriculum cannot be achieved without teacher's knowledge of Arabic Language while 37.8 percentages of the respondents opposed the idea. Also, 63 percentage of the teachers agreed that the Islamic Studies Upper Basic Curriculum preparing students with adequate intellectual exposure that will enable them pursue further education in Islamic Studies at senior secondary schools level while the remaining respondent have divergent opinion. Meanwhile 57.8 percentages of the Islamic Studies teachers agreed that curriculum is not practicable for the students while the remaining respondent are not in support of the statement. More so, 68.1 percentages of the teachers were of the opinion that the contents of the curriculum are complex for the student while the remaining respondents disagreed. The cumulative overall means score of 3.27 of the respondents which was greater than the benchmark of 2.50 clearly shows that the perceptions of teachers on the

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suitability of Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum for students it was designed were above average and they were of the opinion that despite the fact that the content of the curriculum is suitable but where the problem lies is in the area of implementation. This finding is similar to the findings of Enaohwo and Umeuduagu (1996) who posited that a well structured curriculum is germane to effective delivery of lesson thereby enhancing a good performance.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of teachers on the adequacy of three years Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum to accomplish the task set by the curriculum?

Table 2: Adequacy of Three Years Upper Basic Islamic Studies Curriculum

S/N	Statement	A	D	X
1	The objectives of the Islamic Studies Upper Basic Curriculum cannot be achieved within the three years stipulated	99 (73.3%)	36 (26.7%)	3.46
2	The Hadith: Prophetic traditions aspect of the curriculum cannot be covered adequately within the three years of Upper Basic programme	92 (68.1%)	43 (31.9%)	3.36
3	The Tarikhi: Historical development of Islamic aspect of the curriculum cannot be achieved within the three years stipulated	98 (72.6%)	37 (27.4%)	3.45
4	The Quran aspect of the curriculum cannot be covered adequately within the three years of Upper Basic programming	94 (69.6%)	41 (30.4%)	3.39
5	The Tawhid (theology) aspect of the curriculum cannot be covered adequately within the three years of Upper Basic programme	91 (67.4%)	44 (32.6%)	3.34
6	The Fiqh (Jurisprudence) aspect of the curriculum cannot be covered adequately within the three years of basic programme	93 (68.9%)	42 (31.1%)	3.37
Overall Means Average				3.40

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Table 2 shows that 73.3 percentages of the teachers agreed that the objectives of the Islamic Studies Upper Basic curriculum cannot be achieved within the three years stipulated while the remaining respondents are not in support of the statement. Furthermore, 68.1percentages of the teachers agreed that the Hadith: Prophetic traditions aspect of the curriculum cannot be covered adequately within the three years of Upper Basic programme while the remaining respondents had divergent opinions. Also, 72.6 percentages of the teacher agreed that the Tarikh: historical development of Islamic aspect of the curriculum cannot be achieved within the stipulated three years while 27.4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, 69.6 percentage of the teachers agreed that the Quran aspect of the curriculum cannot be covered adequately within the

three years of Upper Basic programming while the remaining respondents have contrary opinion. More so, 68.9% of the teachers were of the opinion that the Fiqh (jurisprudence) aspect of the curriculum cannot be covered adequately within the three years of the basic programme while the remaining respondents opposed the idea. Meanwhile 68.9 percentages of the Islamic Studies teachers agreed to the opinion that curriculum is not practicable for the students while the remaining respondents opposed the statement. The cumulative overall means score of 3.40 of the respondents which was greater than the benchmark of 2.50 clearly shows that the perceptions of teachers on the adequacy of three years Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum to accomplish the task set by the curriculum were above average and they were of the opinion that the content of the curriculum is too complex for the level of the students and the number of period use for the learning is not enough and there is need to revisit. This finding confirmed the finding that corroborates that of Olutola (1998) who posited those three years as stipulated in the Upper Basic Curriculum is grossly inadequate for effective accomplishment of the task in the curriculum.

Discussion

The first finding of this study indicates that despite the fact that Islamic Studies teachers were of the opinion that the content of the curriculum is suitable for the students, the problem lies is in the area of implementation. The finding is in line with Ajidagba (2002) in his study of an evaluation of the national senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum in Kwara State, Nigeria. He found that senior secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum is suitable for the students and its objectives are clearly stated. Similarly, the finding corroborates Abdulganiyu's (2006) work on evaluation of the implementation of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Islamic Studies curriculum in Kwara State Colleges of Education. He found that the content of the NCE Islamic Studies curriculum is consistent with the set objectives and that the NCE Islamic Studies Curriculum prepares students with adequate intellectual exposure that will enable them pursue further education at the university level.

Meanwhile, this study considers teachers as the implementers of curriculum planning; this statement supports the view of Salam (1999) who reiterated that a teacher is a curriculum interpreter. In other words, a teacher of Islamic Studies needs to know his subject matter and then needs to know all aspects of educational technology so as to enable him/her implement the curriculum properly. Ajidagba,(2002), AbdulGaniyu,(2006) and Yusuf, (2014) stated that the human (teachers) and material resources are to be used for effective accomplishment of curricular goals and objectives.

The second finding shows that the perception of Islamic studies teachers on the adequacy of three years Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum to accomplish the task set by the curriculum was above average and they were of the opinion that the content of the curriculum is too complex for the level of the students and the number of periods allocated for the learning are not enough and there is need to revisit. This finding negates that of AbdulGaniyu (2006) who found that the perception of Islamic Studies lecturers on

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the adequacy of three years NCE Islamic Studies curriculum to accomplish the task set by the curriculum were sufficient and they were of the opinion that the content of the curriculum is standard for the level of the students and the number of credits unit for the lecture are enough.

The Islamic Studies teachers' perception that the content of the Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum is too complex for the level of the students and the number of period allocated for the learning are not enough, might be, as a result of large number of students in the classroom which make it difficult for the teacher to go round the class for necessary assessment. Large number of students in the classroom is contrary to the regulation of FGN (2013) who stipulated that: teacher-students ratio shall be 1:35 at the Upper Basic Education Level. However, the stipulated teacher-student ratio by the FGN (2013) in most cases, obtainable in some private schools while it could be unrealisable in public schools where students are too many in classrooms.

Nevertheless, evaluation can be done in any area of curriculum development such as the objective, content, methodology and instructional materials (Ibrahim 2006 & Abiri, 2007).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

It was concluded that despite the fact that the content of the curriculum is suitable; the implementation of the content is very difficult. Also, the contents of the curriculum are so much complex for students at the basic level that the three-year duration, coupled with sparse number of periods allocated to learning the contents, are inadequate. In this direction the objectives of the curriculum cannot be accomplished.

Recommendations

In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Complex contents of the Upper Basic Islamic Studies curriculum should be simplified. For instance, in the Qur'an aspect of the curriculum, all the long chapters should be reviewed.
2. Number of lesson periods of Islamic Studies on school time-table should be increased. By this, the teacher will have more time to extensively discuss the contents of the curriculum.

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