CAUSES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' POOR PERFORMANCE IN ARABIC ASPECT OF ISLAMIC STUDIES IN KWARA SOUTH
(Punca Prestasi Lemah Pelajar Sekolah Menengah dalam Bahasa Arab Bagi Pengajian Islam di Kwara South, Nigeria)

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Abstract

Students and teachers of Islamic Studies that are deficient in Arabic language but depend solely on their competence in English language to study and teach Islamic Studies may find it difficult. In view of this problem, there is the need to look into how students and teachers of Islamic Studies cope with this situation. This study examined causes of students' poor performance in Arabic aspects of Islamic Studies in senior secondary schools in Kwara South Senatorial District, Nigeria by correlating the level of relationship among competence level of Islamic studies teachers in Arabic language, Islamic studies students background knowledge of Arabic language, availability of relevant Islamic Studies textbook, and academic performance of Islamic Studies students. Thirty (30) school administrators, forty (40) Islamic Studies teachers and one hundred and fifty (150) Islamic Studies students were randomly selected from the senior secondary schools from each of the four sampled local Government Areas, which gave a total number of eight hundred and eighty respondents. Meanwhile, the simple random sampling technique was used because it allowed the researcher to give every local government area equal opportunity of being selected after knowing the exact size of their numbers; the required sample size was then selected using the table of random number. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect relevant information from the respondents. Three research hypotheses were formulated for the study and data collected were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical Techniques at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that teachers of Islamic Studies that are deficient in Arabic language should endeavour to undergo in-service training in Arabic language so that the objectives of teaching and learning of Islamic Studies could be achieved.

Keywords: Causes, secondary school students, Poor performance, Arabic aspects, Islamic Studies

Abstrak

Pelajar dan guru Pengajian Islam yang kurang mahir dalam bahasa Arab namun bergantung sepenuhnya kepada kecekapan mereka dalam bahasa Inggeris untuk belajar dan mengajar Pengajian Islam mungkin akan merasa sukar. Mengambilkira masalah ini, terdapat keperluan untuk meneliti bagaimana pelajar dan guru Pengajian Islam menghadapi situasi ini. Kajian ini mengkaji punca prestasi pelajar yang lemah dalam aspek Bahasa Arab bagi Pengajian Islam di sekolah menengah tinggi di Kwara South Senatorial District, Nigeria dengan mengaitkan tahap hubungan dalam kalangan guru-guru pengajian Islam dalam bahasa Arab, latar pengetahuan bahasa Arab dalam kalangan pelajar pengajian Islam, ketersediaan buku teks Pengajian Islam yang relevan, dan prestasi akademik pelajar Pengajian Islam. Tiga puluh (30) pentadbir sekolah, empat puluh (40) guru Pengajian Islam dan seratus lima puluh (150) pelajar Pengajian Islam dipilih secara rawak dari sekolah menengah tinggi dari setiap empat sampel Kawasan Kerajaan Tempatan, yang memberikan sejumlah lapan ratus dan lapan puluh responden. Sementara itu, teknik persampelan rawak mudah

digunakan kerana ia membolehkan penyelidik memberi setiap kawasan kerajaan tempatan peluang yang sama untuk dipilih selepas mengetahui saiz sebenar populasi mereka; saiz sampel yang diperlukan kemudiannya dipilih menggunakan jadual nombor rawak. Borang soal selidik yang direka oleh penyelidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul maklumat yang relevan daripada responden. Tiga hipotesis penyelidikan telah dirumus untuk kajian dan data yang dikumpul telah diuji menggunakan Teknik Statistik Korelasi Detik Produk Pearson pada tahap signifikan 0.05. Dapatan kajian mendapati bahawa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara tahap kecekapan guru-guru Pengajian Islam dalam bahasa Arab dan prestasi akademik pelajar Pengajian Islam. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, adalah disyorkan agar guru Pengajian Islam yang lemah dalam penguasaan bahasa Arab perlu berusaha menjalani latihan dalam perkhidmatan dalam bahasa Arab supaya objektif pengajaran dan pembelajaran Pengajian Islam dapat dicapai.

Kata kunci: *punca, pelajar sekolah menengah, prestasi lemah, aspek bahasa Arab, Pengajian Islam*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Arabic language has a inseparable nexus with Islamic Studies. On one hand, it is a vehicular language between Allah and His creatures. On the other hand, it is a means of accessing, interpreting and teaching the contents of Islamic divine laws. Suffice to say that Arabic is the language of Islam. Hence, a student of Islamic Studies who is bereft of knowledge of Arabic but relies on his proficiency in English language to get through in Islamic Studies will have academic challenges (Ajidagba, 2004). Meanwhile, individual's attitude to a phenomenon could be viewed as similar to what Ajidagba (2004) perceived as a reaction to a situation. Attitude is a psychological construct representing an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item. In line with this statement, attitude as a variable in education is influenced either positively or negatively by quite a number of factors. It is evident from the aforementioned statement that some Islamic Studies students' attitude towards Arabic components of Islamic Studies is generally negative. This arises from lack of motivation, and lack of knowledge of Arabic language as well as teachers' teaching techniques. This might have informed why Ajidagba (2004) had earlier suggested that incentives should be given to students who answered questions on Arabic aspects of Islamic Studies for motivational purpose. It is believed that such motivations would encourage others to develop interest in mastering the Arabic aspects of Islamic Studies.

2.0 THE ATTITUDE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES STUDENTS

Attitude is referred to as one's feelings, thoughts and predisposition to display some particular manners towards some aspects of one's environment. Some of the factors that determine students' attitude towards a concept may be the nature of the concept, teachers' attitude towards the concept, and teachers' teaching methodology (Kehinde, 2002). More so, the attitudes of students to learning in a given situation may be influenced by some circumstances, for instance, one's reaction to a situation(s) is attitudinal; hence, attitude as a variable in education is influenced either positively or negatively by quite a number of factors (Ajidagba, 2004).

However, Ajidagba (2002) noted that one of the principles of retention is the understanding of the meaningful relationships between parts of a given subject. In Islamic Studies, Arabic is a part. Therefore, to ensure retention in learning Islamic Studies, the meaningful relationship between it and Arabic must be understood by students. It is when this happens that learning can take place and performance enhanced. Rice (2017) submitted that teachers' attitude is one of the most important school-related factor influencing students' performance. Hence, credence is given to the common saying in education that "good teachers produce good students". in terms of individual performance when their teaching traits, attributes and characteristics might have been measured and evaluated

2.1 The Concept of Teaching
Teachers are touchstones for students throughout their academic journeys. They are a reliable consistent force in the daily school life of a student. It should be noted that the sum total of teachers' characteristics including gender, qualification, experience, use of instructional resources, reflective practices and mastery of subject matter are all what usually reflect in teachers' effectiveness; by extension, students' academic performance (Sodipe, 2019). On pedagogical skill, most people agree that good teachers are caring, supportive, concerned about the welfare of students, knowledgeable about their subject matter, generally

excited about the work that they do, and are able to help students learn (Thommas, 2016). In addition, Ololube (2019) stated that teachers need to be competent and have mastery knowledge in their area of specialisation and also be able to apply different methods and strategies of teaching, and understand the learning processes of students. Ololube (2019) further stated that teacher's expertise and knowledge of subject matter differ from ordinary scholarly knowledge and pedagogy.

2.2 The Relevance of Arabic Language to Islamic Studies

Language, being a sole vehicle, through which communication occurs, also possesses a serious threat to Islamic Studies students. It is an undeniable fact that Islam as a religion is divinely built in terms of worship, teachings and supplication in Arabic language. Equally, the Holy Book of Islam (Al-Qur'an) was revealed and continued to be recited mainly in Arabic language. Hence, all the activities in Salat and some other devotional acts are done in Arabic language. No doubt, this has caused a huge gap among the learners and teachers who are vast in Arabic and the innocent students who lack the understanding of Arabic language but are offering Islamic Studies in English language (Busari, 2018).

Similarly, Oladosu (2000) submitted that Arabic is important and basic to the teaching of Islamic Studies because one is intimately linked with the other. In fact, the connection between the two can hardly be overstressed and separated. He added that a functional knowledge of Arabic language is crucial to the understanding of the content of the Glorious Qur'an and other branches of Islamic Studies. This functional knowledge of Arabic is not only desirable, but also required of every Islamic Studies teacher because it would avail them the opportunity of having deep knowledge of all branches of Islamic Studies.

Spiritually, Arabic occupies a paramount position as both Arab and non-Arab Muslims are required and bound by the norms of Islam to use the language in all religious rites. The description of the Qur'an and its inevitability in the practice of Islam makes it imperative that Arabic should be recognised as part and parcel of Islamic Studies. Not only that, AI-Quran, the primary source of Islamic teachings, was revealed and written in Arabic, while other Islamic literature were also largely written in Arabic. To get to the root of the meaning of such literature, a good knowledge of Arabic is essential (Ajidagba, 2002). More so, Ajidagba (2002) added that the relationship that exists between Arabic and Islamic Studies is horizontal. To Abdus-salam (2006), the place of Arabic language in the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies is enormous. This is because the knowledge of Arabic language facilitates the understanding of Islamic Studies, and the Arabic components of Islamic Studies curriculum can majorly be understood through the knowledge of Arabic language. In addition, it was observed by Abdul-Rasheed (2006) that scholars could gain accurate knowledge only by referring directly to the original sources. Moreover, it would be difficult for Islamic Studies students who have no knowledge of Arabic to have meaningful access to the original sources of references in Arabic because of their inadequacies.

In most Nigerian certificate examinations: Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), Islamic Studies candidates are expected to write or read chapters and verses of the Qur'an in Arabic, and this constitutes a great loss of marks between the students who are well groomed in Arabic language and their counterparts who are not. Based on the situation above, Abdul (2013) affirmed that many Islamic Studies teachers lack the basic elementary knowledge of Arabic in terms of semantics (Nahw), Morphology (sarf), Logic (Mantiq), Rhetorics (Balagah), and so on. Abdul (2013) further explained that many Islamic Studies teachers could not genuinely transmit meanings of subject matter rendered in Arabic to students. This trend causes many losses in the moral, religious and interrelated teachings of Islamic Studies. At the end, students bear the brunt in terms of academic and behavioural renaissance, which in turn adversely affects their academic upbringing.

As regards Islamic Studies textbooks, Oladunjoye (2014) submitted that availability of relevant teaching materials to teach Islamic Studies in any school cannot be overemphasised as those materials would go a long way to improve the performance of the students. In addition, Busari (2018) stated that the unavailability and inadequacy of up-to-date Islamic Studies textbooks in some schools created a great deficiency in students' academic and moral performance. Besides, the content of some Islamic Studies books in Nigeria failed to cater for the academic, religious, and moral aspirations of students who initially had no Islamic educational background. These students often face problems in understanding the topics and contents of Islamic Studies textbooks, which are not self-explanatory enough and are far from being easily understood.

3.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has been observed that some Islamic Studies students find the Arabic components of Islamic Studies difficult to learn in Nigerian secondary schools, especially in Kwara South Senatorial District, and this may have been responsible for the poor performance in the subject. Also, students' failure in Islamic Studies may have been attributed to the problem of some Islamic Studies teachers who have not mastered Arabic language, while many of these teachers seem to be half-baked in the language. More worrisome is the fact that some schools tend to employ non-specialist teachers to handle Islamic Studies as a secondary school subject.

The researcher's great concern is the attitude of some parents who placed western education above Islamic education by engaging their children in western education lesson classes after returning from school instead of allowing them to attend Qur'anic and Islamiyah schools. Also, the dearth of relevant textbooks may be part of the impediments to the good performance of Islamic Studies students.

Several research works have been carried out on attitudes of students towards the Arabic aspects of Islamic Studies. One of such research works is that of Oladosu (2000) who investigated the importance of Arabic in the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in primary schools. It was a paper presented at the seminar for Arabic teachers in primary schools. Another of such research works is that of Ajidagba (2004) who worked on secondary school students' attitudes towards the Arabic components of Islamic Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria. Hence, this study focused on causes of students' poor performance in Arabic aspects of Islamic Studies in secondary schools in Kwara South Senatorial District, Nigeria.

4.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to examine causes of students' poor performance in Arabic aspect of Islamic Studies in senior secondary schools in Kwara South Senatorial District, Nigeria.

In specific terms, the study correlated:
a) Relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students.
b) Relationship between Islamic Studies students' background knowledge of Arabic language and their academic performance.
c) Relationship between availability of relevant Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance in Islamic Studies students.

4.1 Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
a) Is there any relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students?
b) Is there any relationship between background knowledge of Islamic Studies students in Arabic language and their academic performance?
c) Is there any relationship between availability of relevant Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance of Islamic Studies students?

4.2 Research Hypotheses
Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were tested in this study:
Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students.
Ho$_2$: There is no significant relationship between background knowledge of Islamic Studies students in Arabic language and their academic performance.
Ho$_3$: There is no significant relationship between availability of Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance of Islamic Studies students.

5.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlative research type. The correlative research method is used to determine if there is any relationship between two variables. Afolabi (2007) stated that the correlation coefficient is a statistical

tool designed to express in mathematical terms the degree of relationship between any two variables studied such as relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students. Meanwhile, the population of the study consisted of all Islamic Studies students, Islamic Studies teachers and school administrators in senior secondary schools in Kwara South Senatorial District of Nigeria, with a total number of one hundred and forty four (144) senior secondary schools. Schools in four out of seven local Government Areas were considered as target population. Thirty school administrators, forty Islamic Studies teachers and one hundred and fifty Islamic Studies students were randomly selected in senior secondary schools from each of the four sampled Local Government Areas, which gave a total number of eight hundred and eighty respondents.

The simple random sampling was adopted because it allows the researcher to give every local government area equal opportunity of being sampled after knowing the exact size of their numbers, the required sample size is then selected using table of random number. Furthermore, a researcher-designed questionnaire was used for the study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A items were used to test research hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students. Section B items were used to test research hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between background knowledge of Islamic Studies students in Arabic language and their academic performance. Moreover, Section C items were used to test research hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between availability of Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance of Islamic Studies students.

To determine the validity of the instruments, the questionnaire was adequately validated by experts from the Department of Arts Education, Islamic Studies Education unit, and the Department of Social Science Education, Evaluation, Tests and Measurement unit, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. In addition, the reliability of research instrument was ascertained through test-retest method. The researcher administered sixty (60) copies of the structured questionnaire twice to a group of respondents that were not part of the main sample. The two results of administration were compared using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient statistical method; the coefficient of correlation of 0.75 was obtained. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

6.0 RESULTS

Product Moment and related coefficient of correlation, according to Adedayo (2008), are based on the concomitant variation of the numbers of sets of ordered pairs. What this mean is that higher values should vary together with higher values, medium values with medium values and low values with low values or higher values with low values, and so on. Thus, it is said that there is a positive or negative relation as the case might be. Hence, the Pearson Products Moment Correlation statistical technique was used to test the three hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students.

Table 1 Competence Level of Islamic Studies Teachers in Arabic Language and Students' Academic Performance

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Competence Level of Islamic Studies Teachers in Arabic Language	880	5.84	.78				
				878	.661	.000	Ho1 Rejected
Academic Performance of Islamic Studies Students	880	3.78	.47				

*Significant P< .05

Table 1 shows the calculated r-value of .661, while p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05) at 878 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and academic performance of Islamic Studies students, was rejected. This means that a significant relationship

existed between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and the academic performance of Islamic Studies students.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between background knowledge of Islamic Studies students in Arabic language and their academic performance.

Table 2 Background Knowledge of Islamic Studies Students in Arabic Language and Students' Academic Performance

Variable	N	X̄	SD	df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Background Knowledge of Islamic Studies Students in Arabic Language	880	4.11	.63				
				878	.522	.000	Ho2 Rejected
Academic Performance of Islamic Studies Students	880	3.78	.47				

*Significant P< .05

Table2 shows the calculated r-value of .522, while p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05) at 878 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between background knowledge of Islamic Studies students in Arabic language and their academic performance, was rejected. This means that there was a significant relationship between background knowledge of Islamic Studies students in Arabic language and their academic performance.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between availability of Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance of Islamic Studies students.

Table 3 Availability of Islamic Studies Textbooks and Students' Academic Performance

Variable	N	X̄	SD	Df	Cal r-value	P-value	Decision
Availability of Islamic Studies Textbooks	880	4.22	.48				
				878	.476	.000	Ho3 Rejected
Academic Performance of Islamic Studies Students	880	3.78	.47				

*Significant P< .05

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value of .476, while p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05) at 878 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between availability of Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance of Islamic Studies students, was rejected. This means that a significant relationship existed between availability of Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance of Islamic Studies students.

7.0 DISCUSSION

Based on the results, the first finding revealed that a significant relationship existed between competence level of Islamic Studies teachers in Arabic language and the academic performance of Islamic Studies students. This finding confirmed the statement of Oladosu (2000) that the functional knowledge of Arabic is not only desirable, but also required of every Islamic Studies teachers, because it would avail them the opportunity of having deep knowledge of all the components of Islamic Studies. Oladosu (2000) stressed further that the original Arabic text of the Holy Qur'an is recognised and that a functional knowledge of Arabic language is crucial to the understanding of the content of the Holy Qur'an and other components of Islamic Studies. Ololube (2019) added that teachers need to be competent and have mastery knowledge in their area of specialisation and be able to apply different methods and strategies of teaching as well as

understanding the learning processes of students and that teachers' expertise and knowledge of the subject matter differ from ordinary scholarly knowledge and pedagogy.

The second finding revealed that there was also a significant relationship between background knowledge of Islamic Studies students in Arabic language and their academic performance. This finding is correlated with the findings of Ajidagba (2004) that a student of Islamic Studies who is bereft of knowledge of Arabic, but relies solely on his proficiency in English language to get through in Islamic Studies will face academic challenges. Ajidagba (2004) went further to assert that both Islamic Studies and Arabic language are regarded as twin subjects, because the primary sources of the former (which are the Qur'an and Hadith) were revealed and taught in Arabic. The students might improve in the Arabic aspect of Islamic Studies if parents can make Qur'anic and Islamiyya schools a priority.

The Last finding showed that there was a significant relationship between availability of Islamic Studies textbooks and academic performance of Islamic Studies students. This finding corroborates the findings of Oladunjoye (2014) that availability of relevant teaching materials to teach Islamic Studies in any school cannot be overemphasised as those materials would go a long way to improve the performance of the students. In addition, Busari (2018) supported this statement that the unavailability and inadequacy of up-to-date textbooks of Islamic Studies in some schools create a great deficiency in students' academic and moral performance. Furthermore, the content of some Islamic Studies books in Nigeria fail to cater for the academic, religious, and moral aspirations of students, who initially had no Islamic educational background. These students are often faced with the problems of understanding the topics and contents in those textbooks, which are quite often not self-explanatory enough and are far from being easily understood. Busari (2018) added that language (Arabic) being a sole vehicle through which communication occurs also poses a serious threat to Islamic Studies students.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This research concluded that Islamic Studies teachers' knowledge of Arabic language assisted in teaching the Arabic components of Islamic Studies, and that non-specialist Islamic Studies teachers find it difficult to teach Arabic components of Islamic Studies. Moreover, background knowledge in Arabic language has influence on the performance of Islamic Studies students. In addition, the insufficient Islamic Studies textbooks that cover Arabic aspects of Islamic Studies has been discovered to be a contributing factor to poor performance of students. Recommendations

  a) From the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:
  b) Teachers of Islamic Studies who are deficient in Arabic language should endeavour to enrol for in-service training in Arabic language, so that the objectives of teaching and learning of Islamic Studies would be achieved.
  c) During recruitment process of Islamic Studies teachers, emphasis should be placed on employing teachers of Islamic Studies who have background knowledge in Arabic Language, so that it could have a positive effect on the academic performance of Islamic Studies students.
  d) Parents should encourage their children to attend Qur'anic and Islamiyah schools at home in order to enhance their understanding of Islamic Studies, especially the Arabic aspect.
  e) Government, at all levels, should make relevant Islamic Studies textbooks available and accessible to students and teachers for effective teaching and learning at all times.

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