

Islamic Teacher Preparation in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

Dr. (Mrs). Abdullah, U.O. and Dr. Luqman Adedeji

Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.

Abstract

This paper examines the challenges facing Islamic Teacher preparation in Nigerian universities through a consideration of a number of input factors ranging from admission criteria, course content, teaching practice programme, evaluation of student achievement, particularly in the affective domain, organizational climate, in-service training of teachers and follow-up programmes for new teachers. The paper further establishes the relevance and practicability of the objectives of Islamic Teacher Education and suggests systems or models for its effective implementation.

Keywords: *Teacher Preparation; Islamic Teacher; In- Service Training.*

Introduction

Prior to Nigeria's independent, attempt at the training of teachers were undertaken by religious organizations such as the Christian missionaries and Muslim organizations in which case the teacher occasionally performed the role of a preacher, an Imam or a pastor. However, with the opening of St. Andrew's College, Oyo, by the Church Missionary society in 1896, formal Teacher Education began in Nigeria. The college produced teachers for the primary school system. Government's interest in education was expressed mainly in the form of regulating conditions of the service of those in the profession and organizing a number of evening classes and short vacation courses such as in-service programmes for serving teachers.

The Elliot commission of 1943 and the Ashby commission of Enquiry of 1959 are note-worthy for their far-reaching recommendations in the search for a suitable education system in general and Teachers Education in particular. The Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) was inspired by the Ashby Commission which recommended the training of Grade One teachers in special grade One Colleges which should be associated with University Institutes of Education. The recommendation was accepted by the Federal Government and a plan was drawn to produce teachers with a diploma in Education, who will be well qualified in educational principles and subject areas to teach at senior primary and lower secondary levels. The diploma was the Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) obtainable in Advanced Teachers' Colleges after a three-year post Secondary Education or after the completion of a Grade-two course.

Presently, every State of the Federation maintains at least one College of Education in addition to the twenty-one maintained by the Federal Government (1997) and those run directly as adjuncts to institutes of Education in some Universities. Arabic and Islamic Studies are offered in some of these Colleges and after a successful completion of the three-year course, the candidate is qualified to teach the subject in the Junior Secondary School. It is pertinent to mention that many of the Islamic Studies teachers in secondary schools are N.C.E. holders (Abdullahi, 1989; Adedeji, 2007). This is not to say, however, that there are no university graduate teachers of the subject in schools, but this group constitutes a small number. It is also noteworthy

that some products of well established private Arabic Schools and Colleges used to be recruited to teach in the primary and secondary schools after some induction training in educational principles and subject areas but this practice has since gone into extinction.

The National Policy on Education (2004) recognizes the fact that “no Education System can rise above the quality of its teachers”. The policy aims at producing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world. The document further states categorically that Teacher Education will continue to be given major emphasis in all our educational planning and that the “N.C.E.” will ultimately become the minimum basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession.

The Nigeria 1969 Curriculum Conference described the teacher as the “key man” in Nigeria’s educational industry. Baloch (1980) emphasized that the education and preparation of teachers, no doubt, is the most crucial and most challenging problem involved in the reconstruction of any educational system. Akorede (1980) also noted that teachers are the most important group of people in the fulfillment of a nation’s educational objectives.

Educational systems, in many developing countries including Nigeria are undergoing fast and tremendous changes and the systems are becoming increasingly complex. However, in all these issues, the place and relevance of Islamic Teacher preparation have not been given the serious attention and systematic analysis which they deserve.

The table below presents the statistics of Islamic studies teachers in three states:

Table 1:

State	No of schools	Estimated required no of Islamic Studies Teachers	Islamic Studies Teachers on around
Kano	212	424	211
Kwara	360	720	347
Lagos	372	744	288
Total	944	1,888	846

The table above shows that there are about 212 post-primary institutions in Kano state, 360 in Kwara state and 372 in Lagos state respectively. The data reveals that if we go by the ideal of having at least two Islamic Studies teachers per school, it means that we need about 1,888 teachers in these states alone. Whereas, the number of teachers in use (i.e. 846) is not up to half of the required numbers of teachers. This quantitative analysis further buttresses the ineffectiveness of Islamic Studies teaching in the country.

It is against this background that the study examines the issue of Islamic teacher preparation.

Statement of the Problem

This study addresses two basic problems. One is the lack of well trained Islamic studies teachers as rightly observed by Bidmos (1996). According to him, the teaching of Islamic studies is seriously handicapped by

lack of well trained teachers inspite of the commitment expressed by the Government to the provision of such teachers. The National Policy on Education (2004) categorically stated that:

For improving the teaching of moral and religious Education Government will ensure through the various State Ministries of education, the provision of suitable curriculum and training of teachers for the subject.

Bidmos (1996) further observed that the commitment to produce suitable curriculum has been fulfilled but with regard to the provision of well trained teachers for Islamic studies, adequate attention is yet to be paid to the issue. He emphasized that Islamic studies teachers are in short supply and that the teachers available are not properly trained.

The second problem is the use of secular approach in the preparation of Islamic teachers in Nigeria. The existing Teacher Education Programmes are geared to help develop the mind and body only. Their curricula comprise of course work and student teaching experience. In these programmes, Religious Education (particularly Islamic Education) is not given adequate recognition as a goal of education. It is taken in a secular sense and only lip service is paid to it. By secularism in this context is meant Moral Education concerning this world only and excluding the hereafter and without recognition of Allah as the law giver and the sole source of values. Consequently, the existing Teacher Education Programmes of the various faculties of education in Nigerian Universities are grossly deficient and inadequate for training Islamic Studies teachers. And except for Ahmadu Bello University and University of Lagos arrangement, whereby, both Islamic Studies content and methodology are taught in the same department, no ideal situation exists.

The problems can be summarized in the form of the following questions:

- (1) What are the constraints on the input factors in Islamic Teacher preparation in the country?
- (2) What deficiencies are identifiable in the existing Islamic Teacher preparation programmes?
- (3) What are the factors impeding effective implementation of an Ideal Islamic Teacher preparation in the country?
- (4) What are the emergent basic considerations if successful curriculum changes are to be achieved in Islamic Teacher preparation?
- (5) What are the future Challenges facing Islamic Teacher preparation in the next decade?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent, to which the preparation of Islamic studies teachers was related to their job performance in the classroom. The study also looked at motivation and support system. Furthermore, the study investigated the input factors in the Islamic Teacher preparation programmes in Nigerian Universities with emphasis on its relevance, adequacy and effectiveness, as well as its areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were tested for this study:

- (1) There will be no significant difference in the opinion of non-degree holders and degree-holders of Islamic Studies about the relevance of their training on their job performance.
- (2) Students' attitude towards Moral and Religious Studies is not independent of their Islamic teachers' personality traits.

Methodology

The study which is an ex-post facto survey of the state of the art in Islamic Teacher Education was carried out in seven states out of the then thirty states in Nigeria. However, until 1992, there were twenty-one (21) states in the Federation and out of these states; ten of them offered Islamic studies/ Education as a course of study in their various Universities. Most of the newly created states are yet to start running Islamic studies / Education programme in their universities and this was only where universities existed at all. This, therefore, constitutes a major limitation to the sample of this study. Consequently, a total of thirty (30) Islamic studies lecturers randomly selected from seven states that have university where Islamic studies/Education is available as a course of study were involved in the study. One hundred and eighteen (118) secondary school Islamic studies teachers randomly selected from the same states and a total of four hundred and twenty three (423) junior secondary school Islamic studies students formed the sample for this study.

A questionnaire, 'Lecturer assessment of input into the Islamic teacher Education programme (LAIITEP) was administered on the lecturer respondents for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section one elicited information on the demographic data of respondents while section 2, which consisted of 88 items, was divided into six sub-sections. Sub-section A1, focused on quality related input into the Islamic teacher preparation programme. (Items 1-9). Sub-section A2 which sought information on the available course work in Islamic studies in the various institutions consisted of eleven items (items 10-20). Sub-section A3 sought information on the various types of Islamic studies courses offered in the institutions (items 21-42) contained twenty-two items. Sub-section B, was made up of ten items (43-52) and it dealt with students' Teaching Experience, Sub-section C, was on the organizational climate of the institutions, and has seventeen items (53-69), sub-section D centred on the use of practical activity in teaching certain topics in Islamic studies and it contained seven items (70-76). Sub-section E, focused on the evaluation of student teachers with six items (77-82) while sub-section F, which also consisted of six items (83-88) sought information on the provision of facilities for in-service education and follow-up programmes for serving teachers.

Other supplementary instruments used were:

- (a) Teacher assessment of teacher effectiveness instrument (TATEI); and
- (b) Islamic students Attitude in the Affective Domain (ISSAAD)

Respondents were required to rate the variables on each of these items on a Likert-type five point rating scale ranging from 5 (very good) to 1 (very poor) but Section A required a "Yes" or "No" response.

The questionnaires were duly completed and returned by respondents.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The instruments namely: LAIITEP, TATEI and ISSAAD were moderated by five curriculum experts at the pre-pilot stage; two in Islamic studies, one in curriculum development and two in measurement and evaluation; for content and face validation. The items on each of the instruments were critically scrutinized, corrected, and the ambiguous ones were indicated for necessary modification. Using the Test- Re-test reliability method; the reliability co-efficient on LAIITEP was 0.90 and TATEI 0.72 respectively. The split half reliability co-efficient for internal consistency of ISSAAD was 0.56.

Data Analysis

The mean, standard deviation and percentages of TATEI were computed. The multiple regression analysis was computed to show the degree of relationship of a single dependent variable on the independent variables was controlled (Kerlinger, 1964). This was used to test the significance of the relationship between students'

attitude towards moral and religious studies and their Islamic teachers' personality traits. The t-test statistics was used to test two hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance and varying degrees of freedom.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

The hypotheses which states that there will be no significant difference in the opinion of non-degree holders and degree holders of Islamic studies about the relevance of their training on their job performance was tested using t-test statistical method and the result is presented on the table below

Table 2: N=118

Category of Teachers	N	X	S.E.	T-Value
Degree holders	102	30.40	0.58	9.62
Non-degree holders	16	24.75		

Significant at 0.05

Table 1above indicates that there were significant differences in the opinion of non-degree holders and degree holders of Islamic studies on the relevance of their training to job performance. The calculated t-test value of 9.62 is greater than the table value, thereby leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two

The hypothesis which states that student attitude towards Moral and Religious studies is not independent of their Islamic Studies teachers' personality traits was tested using Multiple Regression Analysis. The result is presented in the table below

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis
Dependent Variable: Students' Attitude VI

Independent variables. Teachers' personality traits	B	Beta
V2 (moral traits)	0.8334	0.937
V3 (religious traits)	0.0524	0.062

Analysis of Variance	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F Value
Regression	421	7834.62	727.620	16.48
Residual	2	167.949	44.152	
Total	423	8,002.57		

Multiple R	0.98264	S.E 0.735
R Squares	0.9652	

The table above reveals the calculated F value of 16.45 which is greater than the F value. Hence, the hypothesis that students' attitude towards moral and religious studies is independent of their Islamic Studies teachers' personality traits is hereby rejected.

It means that students in this study were highly influenced by their Islamic Teachers' personality traits and this was further confirmed by the 90 percent positive response by their teachers to the question of students' involvement in practical Islam. A high percentage of teacher respondents (95%) claimed to be practicing Muslims who teach students by example rather than by precepts.

Discussion of Findings

The study has revealed that although the Islamic Teacher Education programmes in most of the institutions covered by the study have been designed in line with Islamic principles, a lot more need to be done in the area of quality-related input and organizational input. For instance, there is a need to review some of the available courses, to modify some and replace some others completely. Furthermore, a general reconstruction of the Islamic Teacher Education system seems inevitable considering the dire need for the development of a new type of broad-based institution which provides for integrated programmes of education whereby students who choose to become "teachers" within the educational system continue to follow common studies along with their fellow students, but undertake additional studies in studies in educational psychology, and also receive special guidance methodology which will contribute to their self development and professional competence as teachers. This innovative dimension calls for the establishment of modern model Islamic Teacher Education Institutes to demonstrate the immense potentials of Islamic Education and the relevance of its methods to societal development. Such institutes, if established, will, at least, cater for the interest of the Nigerian Muslim Community. This is due recognition of the multi-religious nature of the country.

Even though success in Islamic Education cannot be adequately measured by the students' academic achievement only but more importantly by his probity and religious commitment as a model of Muslim personality, lecturers hardly evaluate students in this regard. The persistent moral degeneration of teachers of religion themselves can be partly attributed to this. To ameliorate this precarious condition therefore, there is need to place more emphasis on assessment of students' affective achievement during pre-service and in-service education of Islamic Studies teachers.

The study also revealed six most crucial constraints to effective Islamic Teacher preparation in the institutions covered by the present study. These include:

Deficiency in the admission criteria: if we accept that the level of interest is important to learning effectiveness, then the admission criteria into the Islamic Teacher Education programmes in Nigerian Universities need to be reconsidered. The present situation whereby little or no importance is attached to the candidate's background faith, level of interest and commitment to Islamic moral ideals should, as a matter of necessity be addressed.

Most of the course work and manuscripts of the existing Islamic Teacher Education programmes do not consist of a harmonious blend of courses rooted in Islamic tradition and those followed in some modern systems of education. In other words, contradictions do occur in some of the educational theories. Consequently, majority of the Islamic studies Teachers are not adequately prepared for classroom challenges due to their training deficiency.

A major deficiency occurs in the failure of lecturers and teachers to evaluate Islamic Students' achievement in the affective domain- an aspect which is considered indispensable in a field like Islamic Education.

Poor organizational climate which constitutes great impediment to practical Islam in schools and campuses and lack of regular in-service training courses, refresher courses and follow-up programmes for serving teachers are some of the factors impeding effective Islamic teacher preparation in Nigeria.

Other factors include, persistent use of the lecture method to the detriment of other didactic approaches to teaching; lack of professionally trained Islamic studies / Education lecturers, inadequate library facilities , shortage of textbooks on Islamic Teacher Education, lack of facilities for involvement of students in practical-oriented Islamic activities, and other anti-Islamic clubs.

With these factors in view, it is unrealistic to expect teachers who were trained under this condition to be effective for maximum output when they eventually find themselves in the school system.

The findings of this study seem to suggest the need for lecturers to be exposed to regular in-service training programmes and refresher courses on contemporary Islamic studies teaching practice. Such programmes are available abroad (in countries like Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait and London). Regular attendance and/ or sponsorship of lecturers to organized workshops, seminars and conferences are among other strategies that could be exploited to enhance lecturers' quality-related input into the Islamic Teacher Education Programme.

Implications of the findings for Nigeria

The direct implication of the findings for Nigeria can be seen as a form of challenge which is posed to the country concerning the future of Islamic education. The implications are addressed here in form of what could be done to improve the quality of Islamic Teacher Education programmes and more importantly in Secondary School Islamic studies teaching.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has identified the input variables into the Islamic Teacher preparation in the country as defective hence the unfavorable output evidenced by teaching ineffectiveness. For Islamic Studies teaching to be effective in schools, a complete system for Islamic Teacher preparation is advocated. Taking parts and dealing with them in isolation may result in a wasting of effort and even in frustration.

Islamic Teacher preparation should not be a carbon copy of the programmes in the West or anywhere else. Muslim teachers, in addition to caring for the minds and bodies of their students, are also responsible for inspiring their souls.

Consequently, the teacher preparation for Islamic Studies must respond to this additional responsibility by reviewing the admission criteria to provide for the background faith of the candidate, including additional relevant courses and establishing a conducive organizational climate.

Furthermore, there is the need to modify and improve upon student-teaching practice, organize voluntary service for *da'wah*, adopt proper evaluation techniques and make provision for in-service educational programmes.

If Islamic education is to survive and assume the role it used to play in the past, it will have to reconsider the way teachers are trained. For this purpose, there appears to be alternatives. The first one is a complete reconstruction of the Islamic Teacher Educational system by establishing a model Teacher Education Institute to demonstrate the immense potentials of Islamic education, while the other alternative is a review and modification of the existing Islamic Teacher Education programmes in the country.

Furthermore, faculties of Education should attach greater importance to teaching practice. Methods and patterns of teaching practice should be diversified; and not restricted to the old traditional patterns. In order to improve methods and patterns of teaching practice, the following recommendations are offered:

- (a) Modeling: teachers supervising practical training should, now and then, conduct model lessons, from observing which, students can improve their own teaching performance. Resource persons can also be invited to do the same job.
- (b) Showing of educational films of models of good teaching performance for students to emulate.
- (c) Diversified methods of micro-teaching and
- (d) Only experienced Islamic Educationists should be assigned to Islamic Student teachers on teaching practice.

Follow-up programmes: Refresher courses and vacation courses should be provided for teachers after graduation for further improvement so that graduation should be considered as an entry point into a field where a person has to attain continuous growth and development in accordance with the concept of life-long education in Islam.

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