

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ISLAMIC STUDIES
COMPONENTS OF RELIGION AND NATIONAL VALUE (RNV)
IN THE 9-YEAR BASIC CURRICULA**

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining the current status of Islamic Studies as a result of the review of its curriculum and the attendant criticism. The problem could be traced to the two pronouncements made in resolution to the institutionalization of Religion and National Value (RNV), a revised version of 9-Year Basic curriculum. The first pronouncement calls for the withdrawal of RNV Curriculum. After a while, the Senate again ordered that Religious Studies be separated from RNV and be taught as standalone subject. The absence of coherence in the two pronouncements led to the enquiries that: which Islamic Studies curriculum is currently in use; has Islamic Studies been accorded the pronounced position as a standalone subject both in teaching and assessment and; has the separated copy of Islamic Studies curriculum been made available for implementation as well as the content? Data were gathered from Islamic Studies teachers randomly selected from the six education districts, the districts and Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) officials, all in Lagos state, through a modified Polar-Question Type Questionnaire and a Structured Interview Schedule. Qualitative data analysis was employed. The results obtained showed a manifestation of policy summersault, most schools implemented RNV curriculum in teaching and assessments were done following 25 percent format of RNV; Islamic Studies is yet to be an autonomous subject in term of assessment; and it is yet to be separated from RNV curriculum. Consequently, necessary recommendations were made.

Keywords: Comparative, Islamic Studies, Religion and National Value, Curriculum.

Background to the Study

Curriculum, depending on the types is limited to core and hidden curriculum. Core curriculum encapsulates general behaviour or knowledge intended for all learners. It could be subject based or societal norms,

written or un-written aspect of curriculum, and could include area of specialization of which every student must have one. Hidden curriculum, on the other hand, refers to all the various norms, values and practices that are not usually talked about but often constitute a vital learning experience. Sieving from the stream of the types provided in order of written curriculum, societal curriculum, phantom curriculum, concomitant curriculum, rhetorical curriculum, the electronic curriculum and competency curriculum (Wilson)¹ is enough to give one the crystal clear place of curriculum in education. In brief, written curriculum is the written formal instruction to achieve an educational goal; societal curriculum is the socializing forces that educate all; phantom curriculum involves messages that acculturate learners; concomitant curriculum includes what is sanctioned by the family; rhetorical curriculum comes from scholastic criticism of an idea made public; electronic curriculum is experienced via internet; and competency curriculum is designed to make learner adapt to the changing needs encounters in everyday life.

It is, thence, deducible that, all educational activities whether written or unwritten, planned or unplanned, formal or informal, learner or societal centered are the content of any curriculum. It also encompasses information like what to teach and whom to be taught; what outcome is expected to affirm influx of learning; what should learner and the teacher do to achieve the desired result. Hence, it is logical to say that curriculum of any society projects the types of education run in the society. In a nutshell, it is an educational document which must not be slipshod but in tandem with individual and societal needs.

Whatever the need of the society or the individual may be, the education of such persons or a person must, primarily, bear them sound intellect, pure moral and able physics. These are referred to as educational domains: Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor where cognitive domain is the intellectual development; affective domain is the moral values and norms building process; and psychomotor deals with the physical or bodily development. This elementary importance of education is enunciated in Nigeria Educational Policy Document, the manifestation of which is evident in her curriculum through the subjects or courses selected. It must be elucidated here that, this is not to say that Nigeria curriculum design is subject centered, rather it is best described as eclectic. This is the combination of all the available designs.

Accordingly, the need for moral probity of Nigerians informed the inclusion of Religious Studies in her curriculum. Since Nigeria is a multi-religious state by practice, both Christian Religious Studies and Islamic

Studies are developed in achieving the purpose. These are, however, the religious studies in the formal setting. For Islamic Studies, its efficacy has been recognised. So, it was said in the introduction of Islamic Studies curriculum that Islam addresses itself to the whole way of life of individuals and society so as to achieve a balance.² In the same token, Islamic studies objectives state in the concluding part that: “Education in the Islamic sense produces a cultured, well-behaved, considerate, reasonable and God-fearing man or woman, in other words, a disciplined person.”

Despite the prime position curriculum holds in any educational system, as illustrated above, and the imperativeness of that of Islamic education, as acknowledged by National Policy on Education (NPE),³ the various treatments of the documents have remained unpalatable over the years. Though, the ill treatment on curriculum pervades Nigeria educational practices, Islamic Studies curriculum is a major victim. Chapter 4 section 35 sub sections 1-3 of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, no person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony of observance relates to a religion other than his own, or a religion not approved by his parents or guardians.⁴

This was an attempt by the governments to make Nigerian education religious inclined. This policy, unfortunately is nothing but a lip service. However, inadequacy of such is the provision for Religious and Moral education in the fourth edition of the National Policy on Education (2004) which does not seem to indicate that there is or would be satisfactory religious education in Nigerian schools.

Not until the recent development, Religious Knowledge in the primary school curriculum was listed among the twelve subjects that should be taught in the junior secondary school and one of the three prevocational electives out of which only one may be taken. Furthermore, although religious education is listed as a core subject in the senior secondary school curriculum, it is paired with three other school subjects. This means that a student may not study it even though it is listed separately under non-vocational elective. This is a good example of curriculum that does not reflect its philosophy.

The implication of this status of religious studies in the National Policy on Education is that as important as religious education is acknowledged to be in the education of a child, it is possible for a child to go through the primary and secondary school education without being adequately, if at all, exposed to religious education.

Justification for some of the government decisions or policies on Religious curriculum development is evident in the public opinion. An open letter, “Additional Notes to President Buhari”, written on August 11, 2016 by Yahya Balogun via a platform called “Nigerians In-America”, states that:

.....it is pertinent to remind you that Nigeria is a secular state. Religion should be separated from political or state affairs.....religion should not take precedent over education and social norms. Nigeria should be yearning for national integration and social order instead of promoting those nuances or religious idiosyncrasies that bring suspicion and disunity among people.⁵

All the instances above but with the tout for the claim that Religions had failed us but Moral Instruction should be the right panacea for moral upbringing in Nigerian children taunted scholars of Religious studies.

Bidmos (2010) articulates feasible solutions to the banes hindering the workability of Religious education in Nigeria.⁶ He started with the government policy stated above and other factors vis-à-vis acute shortage of Islamic studies teachers, scarcity of resource material for the kind of Islamic studies teachers available (Mallams) with respect to some new topics included and, in particular, the need to review the Islamic studies curriculum in use then.

Ajidagba, through an empirical research, also revealed the position given to Islamic studies, as an elective, in the National policy of education and the curriculum as a great influence on the students’ choice of Islamic studies. The subject has been relegated and subjected to a spiritual talk. “This is the psychological trait of the word ‘elective’, he opined.⁷

Despite these reactions of the scholars above, the new trend is rather a grace to grass scenario. In the presidential summit on the state of education in Nigeria which was held on 4th and 5th October, 2010,⁸ the basic quest was on the need for reduction in content of the curriculum offering. This, it was reasoned, will be in tandem with the International model. It was given that pupils in countries like Kenya offer seven

subjects; Tanzania, eight subjects; USA, six Consequently, NERDC was mandated to revise the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum.

The outcome of the summit and the curriculum review workshop which started in December, 2011 and ended 2012 September, for Religious studies, is the “Religion and National Value (RNV) curriculum”. This pack contains Islamic Studies, Christian Religious Studies, Social studies, Civic education and Security education. This was claimed to be “an integrated threads for organising the contents of the new subjects into a coherent whole.”⁹

The frightening noise over the implementation shows that nothing is well with the revised form of the curriculum. Away from the fuzzy and fussy nature of the curriculum, the cogent questions are: when the subjects combined together are to be taken by different teachers as explained by Prof. Ismail Junaid, the NERDC Executive Secretary, what was the need for the “integration”?; is following the global model blindly not a sign of bandwagon?; and can one call such a package in the curriculum, ‘Integration’?. Apart from abuse of the integration concept, should a mere noise from the public, such as the one above on curriculum overloading, be a justification for reduction in its content? Or, has the loaded content not been developed to achieve a particular goal? Are the subjects not carefully developed for a particular educational outcome? Bidmos points out that all the processes on Islamic Studies curriculum or that of Religious Studies in general, was to replace Religious education with Moral Instruction.¹⁰ It could also be in tune to jettisoning religious studies. He, however, inquired that: “Forty-three years after its introduction, what has been the impact of Moral Instruction intervention?; He lamented that despite the obvious government’s failure to implement the 9-Year Basic curriculum as mentioned above, government still blames her failure on the subject.

Part of stakeholders’ perception is the Jamiu’s,¹¹ who submitted, among others, that majority of the stakeholders: parents, teachers and religious leaders agreed that; (a) the idea of merging Religious studies with other subjects cannot make it achieve its traditional goal; (b) the new curriculum will only secularise our educational system; (c) the 9-Year Basic curriculum stands to achieve more objective than the RNV curriculum.

In response to the cries of these stakeholders, there followed two pronouncements. At the teething stage of the reactions of the stakeholders in 2016, government ordered for the immediate withdrawal of the controversial curriculum from circulation.¹² Also, following the directive

of the National assembly on 11th July, National Council on Education (NCE) at its 62nd meeting held between July 27 and 28, 2017 which was presided over by Malam Adamu Adamu, and supported by Minister for State on Education, Prof. Anthony Gozie Anwukah had pronounced Islamic Studies and Christian Religious Studies as core and stand-alone subjects. Accordingly, NERDC has commenced the separation of Islamic Studies (ISS) and Christian Religion Knowledge (CRK) from RNV curriculum and would make the separated copies available to school in 2018.¹³

What follows the two pronouncements is total confusion. With the first pronouncement, one would think that the 9-Year Basic Curriculum should be in use. But with the second pronouncement, the first thought could easily be faulted. So, the questions that follow are: (1) which curriculum is now in use; (2) has Islamic Studies been accorded the proper position against the plan in RNV curriculum and; (3) has the separated copy been circulated as decreed above and what is its content like if available? It is based on the above that the study took an exploratory look at the issues surrounding the Religion and National Value curriculum.

Research Method

The study adopted Descriptive Survey Design. This is because the study tends to critically study the situation of an educational aspect in the country. It tends to confirm the actual curriculum in use for teaching and learning of Islamic Studies cum the status of the subject. All public Junior Secondary schools in Lagos state, Federal and State schools constitute the population for this study. For Basic School system, in Lagos state, is run by the Federal government, State government and Private organisations or Individuals. Also, the six (6) Education Districts and Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) are parts of the population.

The sample for the study involves twenty Junior Secondary (20) schools (Upper Basic, that is, 7 – 9) per education district in Lagos state. The delimitation is the Federal and State Junior secondary schools. A simple stratifying sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample. Then, NERDC and each district office in Lagos state were added.

A modified Polar type Questionnaire of yes or no questions was adopted but made to accommodate other forms of questions; and structured interview were the two instruments for this study. The interview gives the opportunity to get data from institutions that are involved in the curriculum development and administration. The questionnaire was used to get data from teachers in the schools.

Analysis of Data

Research Question 1 - Which curriculum is in use for teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Lagos state secondary schools?

Table 1: Type of curriculum in use

Items	Yes		No		Total
1. Are you aware that there are two ISS curricula in circulation?	15	60%	10	4%	25
2. Have you confirmed from colleagues in other schools?	12	48%	11	4.4%	23
3. Which type of curriculum do you use?	RNV		9-Year basic		
	24	96%	1	4%	25
4. What academic session did you start using the curriculum, if RNV?	2014/15		2015/16		25
	8	32%	9	36%	

From Table 1 above, it is clear that 60% of the teachers are aware that two types of ISS curricula are in circulation. Though, 96% which is twenty-four (24) out of the twenty-five (25) schools used RNV, majority did not start the use of it as at 2014/15 academic session, the very year it was launched. Therefore, the curriculum in use is RNV curriculum. The number of schools using 9-Year basic is very insignificant.

Research Question 2- Has Islamic Studies been accorded the pronounced position as standalone subject in both teaching and assessment?

Table 2: The position of ISS

Items	Yes		No		Total
5. Do you ever teach ISS using 9-Year Basic curriculum?	17	68%	8	32%	25
6. Do you currently use the ISS component of RVN curriculum in teaching the subject?	24	96%	1	4%	25
7. Is it taught along other subjects in the RNV?	24	96%	1	4%	25
8. If '7' above is yes, what is the assessment like?	25% for ISS		100% for ISS		25
	25	100%	0	0%	
9. Are you aware of the pronouncement that schools should withdraw the use of RNV curriculum?	14	56%	11	44%	25
10. If '9' above is yes, did you comply?	0	0%	13	52%	13

Table 2 above shows that 96% of the total schools teach ISS with RNV separately but 100 percent of those teaching ISS have it assessed along other subjects in RNV curriculum. This is to say that, even the only school using the 9-Year Basic curriculum usually has its examination to be Twenty-five percent of other subjects in RNV curriculum. Accordingly, ISS is only a stand-alone subject in teaching but not in assessment in the school.

Research Question 3- Has the separated copy of ISS curriculum been made available and which curricular content does it contain; 9-Year Basic, RNV or None?

Table 3: Separated type of ISS curriculum

Items	Yes		No		Total
11. Are you aware of any other pronouncement that Religious Studies (ISS/CRS) be separated from the RNV curriculum?	13	52%	9	36%	22
12. Did your school head share such information/circular with you?	0	0%	22	88%	22
13. Do you have such a separated copy of Religious Studies curriculum in your school?	0	0%	22	88%	22
14. If '13' above is yes, what is the curriculum like?	No response				0

From Table 3 above, it is obvious that about fifty-two percent, 13 out of the twenty-two teachers who responded to the above items were aware of the pronouncement that Religious studies curriculum should be separated from the RNV curriculum. However, none of the schools has such a separated copy, let alone the idea of what the content is. The implication of this is that the separated copy of the ISS curriculum is yet to be made available for public use. Hence, no one has the knowledge of its content.

Table 4: Interview (Note: N.A= Not Aware)

S/ N	Items	Responses			% Responses		
		District IV	District III	NERD C	Yes	No	N.A
1.	Is it true that a directive was given either from the Minister of Education or any agency that RNV curriculum should be stopped from being used as a result of the controversies over it?	N.A	N.A	Yes	33%	0%	67%
2.	Do you know if schools did withdraw from the use of the RNV curriculum?	N.A	N.A	N.A	0%	0%	100%
3.	Has there been any MEMO again that ISS and CRS be stand alone subjects?	N.A	N.A	Yes	33%	0%	67%
4.	Does that mean that the assessment is 100%? For Islamic studies?	-	-	Yes	33%	0%	0%
5.	Or just be taught separately but the assessment will be based on 20% of the RNV?	-	-	No	0%	33%	0%
6.	Has NERDC been instructed to separate the two subjects from RNV?	-	-	Yes	33%	0%	0%
7.	What will the curriculum look like?	No Response		No idea.			0%
8.	If the subjects have been separated, have the copies been circulated to schools?	-	-	No	0%	33%	0%

9.	Do you know if the ISS curriculum in use is either the 9-Year Basic or RNV?	-	-	N.A	0%	0%	33%
10.	If RNV, can you tell if it is being taught and assessed separately from other component of RNV?	-	-	N.A	0%	0%	33%

Table 4 is the result from the interview. The two districts have no idea of what the items one to three are. Also, there were no responses, at all, for items four to ten. However, NERDC was able to supply answer to most of the items except for items two, seven, nine and ten. The interpretations of the responses are: (a) there was a pronouncement from the Federal Government for schools to withdraw the use of the RNV but NERDC could not tell if schools complied. However, as the producer and distributor of the curriculum, the sales of the curriculum had been stopped: (b) there was another pronouncement on the stand alone position of Religious Studies where NERDC has been instructed to produce separated copies of ISS and CRS curriculum. However, NERDC, as an agency of the Federal Government, could not also tell what would be the content of such separated copy of the curriculum. Thus, the separated copy is yet to be produced.

The implications of this are: (a) Research Question 1- the curriculum being implemented in schools could not be 9-Year Basic since the Districts were not officially aware of the pronouncement on the withdrawal of RNV. (b) Research Question 2- ISS could not stand alone in terms of assessment, since NERDC is yet to produce and distribute the separated copies of the Religious Studies curricula. (c) Research Question 3 – the separated copy of ISS curriculum is yet to be produced and what the content should be is yet to be decided.

Discussion of the Findings

According to this study, RNV curriculum is the one currently in use in Lagos state schools. However, a school was found using the 9-Year Basic curriculum. This would be the case as most schools are yet to receive official circular with regard to this information. This could be verified from the responses given by NERDC officials during the interview granted.

It could also be gathered from this study that, ISS has not been accorded the pronounced position. This is because the subject is only

being taught alone as it were during the use of 9-Year Basic curriculum. But when it comes to assessment, the subject is being given 25% percent of the total questions under RNV curriculum. According to NERDC, government had made the pronouncement but not officially circulated in schools, thus, portends policy summersault.

Finally, this study reveals that NERDC has not published the separated copies as instructed by the government. Also, the content of the curriculum is yet to be decided. This result is corroborated by the report of Jamiu on the nature of the RNV curriculum in use for teaching and learning of ISS.¹⁴

Recommendations

Upon the findings and conclusion, it is thus pertinent to recommend that:

1. Federal government must set up a functional Educational Task Force that will ensure compliance of her policies at all levels and to give the necessary feedback.
2. There is a need for a comparative Intrinsic Evaluation of RNV and 9-Year Basic curriculum to help the government take the right decision on the appropriate Islamic Studies Curriculum content for the level under study.

Conclusion

In the context of this report, there is obvious manifestation of policy summersault in Nigerian educational sector as it affects religious studies. The type of curriculum in circulation by most schools is RNV whereas pronouncements have been made with respect to its withdrawal. Also, even within a state, a school was not aware of any institutionalization of the RNV, hence, still using the 9-Year Basic curriculum.

In the same vein, ISS is still being assessed as a subject under RNV curriculum which could not earn it a standalone subject. Accordingly, no separated copy of the curriculum has been published as the content of such is yet to be determined, and so, nothing has changed despite the presidential directive on the matter.

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