INFLUENCE OF LEARNING ISLAMIC STUDIES ON MORAL UPBRINGING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ILORIN SOUTH, KWARA STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to evaluate the influence of learning Islamic Studies on the moral upbringing of primary school pupils in Ilorin-south, Kwara State. The study's guiding principles were formulating a research question and two hypotheses. The study utilised the descriptive survey research approach. The study population consisted of Islamic Studies instructors in the Ilorin-south Local Government Area of Kwara State. A sample of 100 teachers was selected for the study. In order to gather pertinent data, a meticulously constructed questionnaire was administered to the chosen educators. The gathered data were subjected to descriptive statistical tools of frequency and percentage to analyse the respondents' demographic information and answer the research questions; the hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics, specifically the t-test, with a significance level set at 0.05.

The study results indicate that Islamic Studies benefits the moral upbringing of primary school pupils in Ilorin-south. Furthermore, the analysis reveals no statistically significant variation in the teachers' responses based on their years of experience but gender.

Based on the research findings, the researchers made several recommendations, one of which was that the early enrollment of children could facilitate the acquisition of substantial knowledge from a young age, providing them with a favourable opportunity to cultivate their interests and passions.

Keywords: Muslim, Education, learning, Islamic education, moral upbringing

INTRODUCTION

The cultivation of a strong moral framework holds significant importance in the life of an individual adhering to the Islamic faith. The primary focus of this endeavour pertains to instructing and cultivating students to develop exemplary etiquette and virtuous conduct. In this instance, cultivating moral values in students is inherently intertwined with the educational system, wherein education plays a crucial role in moulding the moral development of primary school kids.

This process has even become deeply ingrained in the community's cultural fabric. Furthermore, including Islamic studies in the elementary school curriculum shapes students' moral development, fostering their adherence to Islamic principles and values.

Education, specifically concerning teaching and learning, is a subject of discourse within the Qur'an. The Qur'an, regarded as the divine word of God, serves as a definitive guide for the lives of Muslims, leaving no room for debate (Siregar, 2017). Hence, it is appropriate for a follower of Islam to demonstrate attentiveness in education.

The field of education encompasses various subjects, including Islamic Studies, which focuses on imparting knowledge related to fundamental aspects of life such as Aqidah (Islamic creed), worship, and character development (Prasetyo et al., 2021). Education is not solely a means of transmitting scientific knowledge from educators to learners but rather a transformative journey that shapes one's character. Education encompasses three primary objectives: the transmission of knowledge, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the dissemination of values. Hence, education can be comprehended as a transformative process that encompasses the development of values within the framework of personality formation, encompassing all relevant components. Conversely, teaching primarily focuses on transmitting knowledge and skills (Aladdiin, 2019).

The concept of learning has been delineated and assigned several definitions and interpretations by scholars in educational psychology.

The concept has been elucidated as a measurable augmentation of knowledge, encompassing the acquisition and retention of factual information, skills, and methodologies that can be used later. It can also be characterised as modifying or conforming to a given circumstance or enhancing it.

Education is not limited to formal educational institutions and commences even before a child's enrollment in a school setting. Learning can be conceptualised as a lasting transformation since it entails introducing change inside pupils by an instructor through various methods such as cultivating certain abilities, altering attitudes, or comprehending the underlying principles governing the learning environment (Sequeira, 2012). Knowledge acquisition is an inherent aspect of human nature.

The human species has demonstrated remarkable flexibility and adaptation, mostly due to our inherent potential for learning (Ormrod, 2008). Islamic education is a deliberate and purposeful undertaking that seeks to facilitate the development and refinement of students' unique identities, empowering them to live their lives in alignment with the principles and teachings of Islam.

Therefore, it is deemed suitable for individuals who follow the Islamic faith to give precedence to their engagement in the field of education, specifically Islamic education, which encompasses essential facets of existence such as Aqidah (Islamic creed), worship, and the cultivation of character (Prasetyo et al., 2021). Moral upbringing entails a reciprocal interaction between an instructor, the tutor or teacher, and the learner, the pupil. This interaction aims to cultivate the pupil's distinct psychological predispositions, which serve as the bedrock for developing attitudes and moral conduct in an individual.

Janusz Marianski (2006) posits that an individual's morality can be defined as the values, standards, and judgements that stem from their perceptions of good and evil and which govern the interactions among members of a specific society. According to the author, the elements encompassed under these constructs consist of goals, norms, moral evaluations, behavioural patterns, and penalties. Hence, moral upbringing refers to the systematic procedure of acquainting the learner with ethical principles and moral standards. The examination of moral upbringing and character is intricately linked to the concept of personality. Within the Islamic framework, the embodiment of an exemplary human personality is epitomised by the revered figure of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).

The individual possesses an inherent equilibrium between the physical and metaphysical aspects of their being, manifesting an integral and flawless configuration of personality (Hadi & Uyuni, 2021; Zahra et al., 2021).

The Qur'an contains evidence supporting the notion that Allah states that the Messenger of Allah serves as an exemplary model for individuals who place their trust in Allah and the Last Day and who frequently recall Allah. The user's text "Q33:21" provides no context or information. Hence, Muslim students in basic educational institutions must receive comprehensive instruction not only on the manifestation of Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.) character but also on perceiving him as a paradigmatic figure to emulate in diverse facets of their lives, encompassing conduct and religious devotion. In addition to the points mentioned above, it is increasingly evident that instilling moral values in our children is underscored by the consistent emphasis of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the moral development of offspring.

The individual, invoking a blessing of peace upon him, expressed the belief that prioritising cultivating one's child is more advantageous than providing a mere measure of sustenance. According to the source cited as At-Tirmidhi, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) guided parents

regarding the most valuable gift they can offer to their children, namely the cultivation of moral values within them.

According to reports, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) stated that there is no gift a parent can bestow upon their child that is superior to the cultivation of moral values within them. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "qualification" refers to possessing specific traits or accomplishments that render an individual suitable for a particular role or position. Qualification refers to skills, abilities, or accomplishments that render an individual suitable for a specific occupation or undertaking. As an illustration, a legal professional must demonstrate competence by completing the bar examination. In education, qualification refers to the formal procedure by which an individual is conferred with a certification, degree, or other authoritative acknowledgement denoting a specific level of expertise or proficiency in a particular domain (Madaan, 2012).

Qualification is frequently associated with successfully completing a prescribed educational programme or attaining a passing score on an examination. It is a precondition for employment and career progression within a certain professional domain (Tilbury, 2008).

There are two primary categories of qualifications: official qualifications and informal qualifications.

Official organisations, such as government agencies, professional associations, or educational institutions, acknowledge formal qualifications. Typically, attaining a certificate necessitates successfully fulfilling a prescribed curriculum or the achievement of a passing score on an examination. Moreover, certificates frequently serve as a condition for professional engagement and pursuing advanced educational endeavours (Bates, 2008).

In contrast, informal qualifications lack official recognition, yet they may still hold significance for an individual. According to Yorke (2004), credentials in many fields are frequently derived through practical experience, acquired abilities, or notable achievements rather than from a structured educational programme. In the field of developmental psychology, the notion of age encompasses two dimensions: chronological age, denoting an individual's numerical age in years, and developmental age, which pertains to the level of maturity exhibited by an individual, considering many aspects such as physical, cognitive, and emotional development. There is variability in the rate of development among individuals, resulting in differences between the two factors mentioned above.

The influence of age on behaviour is a significant consideration since it can impact cognitive processing, decision-making, and

social interactions. For instance, it has been shown that younger individuals exhibit a higher degree of impulsivity and face challenges in regulating their emotions. In contrast, older individuals tend to demonstrate greater patience and emotional stability. Children typically exhibit a proclivity for comprehending the world more tangibly, whereas adults possess a greater capacity for abstract thinking. As individuals age, they tend to exhibit a greater inclination towards preserving the existing state of affairs.

In contrast, younger individuals tend to be more receptive to embracing change. Within social psychology, the term "gender" pertains to the societal and cultural distinctions between those who identify as male and those who identify as female. Gender is a concept separate from biological sex regarding the physiological distinctions between males and females. Biological sex and gender, fundamental aspects of personal identity, play a crucial role in shaping an individual's sense of self (Bee & Boyd, 2019).

Therefore, the relevance of gender to behaviour lies in its potential to influence individuals' communication patterns, relationship formation, and social interactions. Gender roles and stereotypes have the potential to exert an influence on individuals' behaviour.

Gender roles are a fundamental component of the fabric of nearly all societies (Basow, 2018). The impact of incorporating Islamic Studies into the curriculum for primary school students encompasses various aspects of moral development, including but not limited to self-reliance and self-respect. This subject promotes the importance of individual effort in securing a livelihood, thereby safeguarding one's dignity and honour.

Conversely, it strongly discourages laziness, idleness, dependency on others, and feelings of inferiority. In order to establish a secure and ethically structured society, it is imperative to assess and replace the improper raising of students in primary schools with a more appropriate moral education. Primary school students' lack of moral development can often be attributed to long-term poverty. This detrimental circumstance disproportionately impacts a significant portion of primary school learners in Nigeria, particularly in the region of Ilorin South. Simultaneously, Islamic Studies teachers must acknowledge that addressing the correct raising of future generations is essential to guide and cater to their pupils effectively.

The responsibilities and demands placed on educators have become increasingly complex in contemporary times.

This is because teachers are considered to be in the loco parentis of their students, assuming the roles of both educators and caretakers within the school environment. The demands placed on educators have increased significantly, particularly due to the proliferation of diverse educational resources, social media platforms, and technological devices that students are exposed to in the present period. Morgan (2016) posits that excessive internet engagement among students has the potential to impede their moral growth.

Aggressive content on social media platforms can significantly impact the focus, behaviour, and decision-making abilities of individuals, particularly students, in real-life situations. Teachers must comprehensively understand their obligations and actively fulfil their duties in guiding students towards ethical behaviour. By doing so, teachers can effectively contribute to the moral development of their students. The moral education of future generations is a shared responsibility, necessitating accountability for those who fail to fulfil this task. The concept of answerability in the context of Shariah extends beyond mere legal responsibility within a judicial system, as it also encompasses a profound sense of being held accountable on the day of resurrection (Al-Aakhirah) (Alaro, 2017).

Teachers encounter several obstacles when it comes to the moral upbringing of primary school kids and the implementation of moral education in schools. Nevertheless, when problems develop, society tends to attribute responsibility to schools and teachers without fully comprehending their circumstances or challenges. Therefore, society must involve parents to gain knowledge and comprehension of the difficulties encountered by schools and teachers in implementing moral education and cultivating students' moral values.

The potential for parental involvement with teachers is anticipated to aid instructors in surmounting problems, particularly emphasising the moral development of primary school students.

Moreover, the swift societal transformations in lifestyle have resulted in a dearth of affection within the social fabric among adolescents. These phenomena were influenced by factors such as moral upbringing, individual lifestyles, and social activities during adolescence in their daily lives. The ongoing discourse on legal and moral considerations is mostly centred on the profound transformations occurring in social dynamics. The moral evaluation of adolescents in the past decade has been subject to extraordinary scrutiny within the contemporary milieu.

The report highlights a growing challenge in which students engage in aberrant behaviour frequently associated with educational institutions. Nevertheless, swift transformations significantly impact social life by influencing cognitive and emotional processes (Aswati, 2007).

Social phenomena significantly impact various aspects of individuals' lives, including their lifestyle, moral values, and behavioural patterns (Nurullah, 2008).

A substantial body of research has been produced on students' moral development and lifestyles. Several studies have documented the impact of peer relationships, school atmosphere, and curriculum implementation on students' cognitive development (Howes, 2000; Gazelle, 2006; Nelson & DeBacker, 2008). The impacts of teaching and learning in Islamic Studies focus on the moral development of primary school students. According to Halstead (2007), virtues such as sincerity, patience, compassion, love, soul combating, and common virtues such as self-feeling, obligation, and a call for Islam are intended to promote personal and community well-being and safeguard human welfare.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following question was raised:

a.   What is the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers in Ilorin-south?

H_{O1}: there is no significant difference in the influence of Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on years of experience.

Ho_2: there is no significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on gender.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design utilising a survey methodology. The present investigation was constrained by limitations of its geographical, instrumental, environmental/locale, and sample scopes. The study focused on examining the influence of learning Islamic studies on the moral development of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, Kwara State, with a specific geographical scope. Ilorin South comprises four districts: Akanbi, Balogun Fulani, Okaka, and Oke-Ogun. The study focused on school instructors as the target demographic. The researchers employed a stratified sample strategy to choose twenty (20) primary schools, with five (5) schools selected from each district.

Furthermore, one hundred (100) respondents were chosen for this study. The selection process involved using a random sampling approach to choose five (5) teachers from each of the twenty (20) selected schools. Data collection was conducted using a researcher-designed structured questionnaire consisting of a series of topics that aimed to assess the impact of learning Islamic studies on the moral development of primary school students.

The data obtained from the participants was analysed using descriptive statistical tools of frequency and percentage to address the research inquiries. Inferential statistics, namely the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), were employed to examine the formulated hypotheses.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents in frequency counts and percentages.. The respondents were relatively new to teaching with 93% of them having experience of up to fifteen years. 3.4% of the respondents were female. This indicate that there are more of male respondents than female.

Table 1: Mean Rating of the Influence of Learning Islamic Studies on Moral Upbringing of Primary School Pupils

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std
1	Parents and guardians should be involved in reinforcing the moral lessons learned through Islamic studies at primary school	79	21	-	-	3.79	0.41
2	Positive change occurs when primary school pupils are exposed to learning Islamic Studies at early stage	48	50	1	1	3.45	0.58
3	Consistent learning of Islamic Studies can help reform pupils negative attitude in their environment	65	33	1	2	3.63	0.53
4	Learning Islamic Studies promotes environmental ethics and responsibility	3	55	1	1	3.40	0.57
5	Learning Islamic Studies encourages future critical thinking and ethical decision making among primary school pupils	53	44	1	2	3.49	0.60
6	There are specific moral dilemmas or ethical issues that Islamic Studies should address for primary school pupils	51	46	1	2	3.47	0.59
7	Learning Islamic Studies at early stage contributes to a sense of responsibility and accountability among pupils	51	45	1	3	3.46	0.61
8	Learning of Islamic Studies helps pupils exhibit better self-discipline and self-control	52	45	2	1	3.47	0.63
9	Learning Islamic Studies at early stage enhances the integration of moral upbringing in primary school pupils	65	34	1	-	3.64	0.50
10	Learning Islamic Studies helps pupils develop sense of gratitude and contentment	58	38	2	2	3.52	0.64
	Grand Mean					**3.53**	**0.57**

Table 1 shows the item 1, 3 and 9 which states that "Parents and guardians should be involved in reinforcing the moral lessons learned through Islamic studies at primary school"; "Consistent learning of Islamic Studies can help reform pupils negative attitude in their environment" and "Learning Islamic Studies at early stage enhances the integration of moral upbringing in primary school pupils" respectively have the highest mean scores 3.79, 3.63 and 3.64. which are greater than the benchmark 2.5 indicate an Agreement. All other items have mean scores that are above the benchmark score of 2.5, then it can be said that there is a positive influence of learning Islamic studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Three null hypotheses were generated and tested as well for this study. The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical method and ANOVA as the case may be at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: there is no significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on years of experience.

Table 2: *ANOVA Results of Perceived Influence of Learning Islamic Studies on Moral Upbringing.*

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-value	p-value
Between Groups	2	0.02	0.10	0.113	0.893
Within Groups	97	8.576	0.088		
Total	99	8.596			

Table 2 shows the ANOVA results regarding difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on years of experience, the F-value calculated of 0.113 with a p-value of 0.893. The p-value calculated is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05. The hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on years of experience.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on gender.

Table 3: *T-Test Results of Difference in The Influence of Learning Islamic Studies on Moral Upbringing Based On Gender.*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. t-value	p-value
Male	55	3.594	0.248	96	2.143	0.035
Female	43	3.466	0.340			

Table 3 shows a calculated t-value of 2.143 and a p-value of 0.035. The p-value calculated is less than the constant value of 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on gender. The male teachers were observed to have higher impact as its mean 3.594 is greater than the female teachers 3.466.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Finding shows that, there is a positive influence of learning Islamic studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils. The result of a positive influence of learning Islamic Studies on the moral upbringing of primary school pupils is consistent with a body of research that has explored the impact of religious education on moral development. Several studies have found that religious education, including Islamic Studies, can have a positive influence on students' moral values and ethical decision-making. For instance, research by Saroglou et al. (2004) suggests that religious education fosters prosocial behavior, empathy, and a sense of community responsibility.

In the context of Islamic Studies, teachings that emphasize compassion, honesty, and social justice can contribute positively to the moral upbringing of primary school pupils, aligning with findings from studies on moral education in religious settings.

Moreover, the positive influence of Islamic Studies on moral development can also be attributed to the role of religious leaders and educators in promoting ethical values. Studies such as the one by Nazari and Khajeheian (2015) have emphasized the significance of teachers and religious authorities as moral role models who convey moral teachings and virtues to students. In Islamic education, teachers often play a pivotal role in transmitting not only religious knowledge but also moral principles, which can have a lasting impact on students' character development and moral decision-making.

Finding also reveals that, there is no significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by the teachers based on years of experience. The finding that there is no significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on the moral upbringing of primary school pupils, as expressed by teachers based on years of experience, underscores several potential factors at play. It suggests that within the context of the study, the years of experience of teachers may not be a decisive factor in shaping the moral development of students in Islamic Studies.

This finding could be attributed to factors such as standardized curricula, consistent teaching methods, and shared pedagogical approaches among teachers regardless of their experience levels. Additionally, the influence of teachers on moral development may be overshadowed by other factors such as family, peer interactions, and societal norms, which play a substantial role in shaping the values and ethics of primary school pupils. Future research should delve deeper into these factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in moral development within the Islamic Studies classroom.

One important body of research in this area examines the role of teachers in moral education. For instance, Kohlberg's theory of moral development emphasizes the importance of moral education in schools and suggests that teachers play a critical role in fostering moral reasoning in students. However, the current finding suggests that, within the specific context of Islamic Studies, teacher experience may not be a significant factor in shaping students' moral development. This finding may align with research by Berkowitz (2002), who argued that moral education outcomes can depend on various factors beyond just teachers, including peer interactions and family values.

Furthermore, studies on religious education and moral development within an Islamic context can be particularly relevant. For instance, a study by Al-Essa (2009) explored the impact of Islamic education on the moral development of Kuwaiti youth. While this study focused on a different age group and context, its findings may shed light on the role of Islamic Studies in shaping moral values. It's essential to consider the nuances of Islamic education and its effectiveness in imparting moral values, as it may differ from broader moral education theories.

Lastly, it was discovered that, there is a significant difference in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on the moral upbringing of primary school pupils as expressed by teachers based on gender which is resonates with previous studies examining the intersections of gender and education. Numerous research works, including those by Ahmed (2000) and Khaleque (2004), have highlighted the role of cultural and gender norms in shaping moral development within an Islamic framework. These studies argue that Islamic education often adheres to traditional gender roles, and this may lead to divergent moral expectations and experiences for male and female students.

For instance, girls may be encouraged to prioritize modesty and family values, while boys may be expected to demonstrate qualities like leadership and responsibility.

This gendered approach to Islamic education can result in teachers perceiving and fostering different moral attributes in male and female students, thereby contributing to the observed significant difference.

Furthermore, research on gender differences in moral development outside of religious contexts, such as the works of Gilligan (1982), has also shown that gender can influence how individuals approach moral dilemmas and make ethical decisions. This perspective suggests that the observed gender-based differences in the influence of learning Islamic Studies on moral upbringing may be part of a broader pattern in which gendered moral frameworks are ingrained in educational practices.

CONCLUSIONS

The values taught in Islamic studies affect the behaviour of primary school pupils positively outside the classroom; instilling the teachings of Islamic Studies at early stage helps in shaping the morals of primary school pupils; the teaching of Islamic Studies to primary school pupils encourages them to be more charitable and helpful to those in need in their various environs; the teaching of Islamic Studies plays a vital role in promoting tolerance and respect for diversity among pupils in primary school; the knowledge and understanding of Islamic Studies help promote honesty, good behavior and generosity in primary school pupils.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that: all stakeholders of education should get more involved in educating of children; the goals of teaching and learning Islamic Studies should be clearly stated in the curriculum of Islamic Studies and necessary review and/or revision should be carried out to scrutinize outdated ones from basic level to higher levels; the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies should be taken more serious by Islamic scholars (professionals in the field of Islamic Studies) in conjunction with Muslim scholars (professionals in other fields but have Islamic knowledge) because a society where morality is the order of the day will have a less record of criminal cases; Islamic studies teachers should ensure that they are diligently performing their job, in order to give the students more opportunity to acquire moral teachings of Islam which would prevent them from disrupting the society.

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