

THE GRADUATES EXPERIENCE AND CAREER AMBITIOUS IN RELATION TO MADRASAH CURRICULUM IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

This study can be viewed as a means to identify solutions to the problems that confront curriculum of the madrasahs in South-West Nigeria. The study suggests relevant and useful curriculum for the madrasahs. The study incorporates all the subjects that are necessary to give the madrasah the appropriate recognition it deserves from the Nigerian government. Since Islamic education is part and parcel of a Nigerian educational system, the development of a workable curriculum should be pivotal to the nation's educational set-up. In other words, it will provide an integrated form of curriculum, namely the integration of Islamic education with Western education. Since adequate and appropriate planning of Islamic religious studies plays a vital role in improving the quality of Islamic education, the results of this study is of importance to predominantly three groups:

First it is of immediate importance to the Arabic Institute of Nigeria (Al-Ma'had al-'Arabi al-Nigeri), Islamic Preaching School (madrassah Da'wah Islamiyyat) and Arabic and Islamic Training School in Ibadan (madrassah Ta'lim Al-Arabi), South-West Nigeria. The second group that will benefit from this study is composed of other private madrasahs and Islamic schools in Nigeria, which are in the process of adapting the curriculum of the dominant madrasahs above. The third group that may find this study useful is composed of communities with various levels of understanding of Islamic religious knowledge in Ibadan and the rest of Nigeria.

It is hoped that this study will demonstrate that it is possible to realize the ideas pertaining to Islamic education as expressed by the World Conferences on Muslim Education, the Ministry of Education, Nigeria, and other contemporary forums of thought without undermining the values of acquired Islamic knowledge. Although the Nigerian Ministry of Education has its own Curriculum Development Centre which formulates and evaluates the effectiveness of curricula for all educational institutions in Nigeria, an independent analysis of this study might also provide useful information to obtain feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. Consequently, some suggestions and modifications may be recommended to improve the curriculum and ensure viable avenues for pursuing the aims of Islamic education.

THE DATA PRESENTED AND RESULTS

Students' Demographic Analysis

This section presents the background information of the sampled respondents. The demographic profiles of the respondents consisted of gender, level of study, the graduating *madrasah*, the year of graduation, activities after graduation, further qualifications, and parents' expectation and level of education, which were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 4.1 Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	219	79.9
Female	55	20.1
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.1 shows the gender distribution of samples. Accordingly, out of 274 respondents, 219 (79.9%) were male and the remaining 55 (20.1%) were females.

Table 4.2 Level of the study

Levels	Frequency	Percent
Thanawiyah	170	62.0
Undergraduate	77	28.1
Master	27	9.9
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.2 shows the distribution of the level of education of the graduates. 170 (62.0%) of them obtained a *Thanawiyah certificate*, and 77 (28.1%) had degree certificates. As show in Table 4.2, only 27 (9.9%) respondents had master degrees while no respondents had a doctorate degree.

Table 4.3 Graduating Madrasah

Names of the School	Frequency	Percent
(<i>Al-Ma'had al-'Arabi al-NigerÊ</i>) (Arabic Institute of Nigeria)	130	47.4
<i>Madrasah Da'wah Al-Islamiyyat</i> (Islamic Preaching School)	109	39.8
<i>Madrasah Talim</i> (Arabic and Islamic Training School)	35	12.8
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.3 shows that from the total 274 samples that graduated from *madrasahs*, 130 (47.4%) graduated from the Arabic Institute of Nigeria (*Al-Ma'had al-'Arabi al-NigerÊ*) 130 (39.8%) graduated from the Islamic Preaching School (*madrasah Da'wah Al-Islamiyyat*), while 35 (12.8%) graduated from the Arabic and Islamic Training School (*madrasah Ta'lim Al-Islami*).

Table 4.4 Year of Graduation

Duration	Frequency	Percent
last year	84	30.7
2-5 years	38	13.9
5 and above	152	55.5
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.4 shows the year of graduation. 84 (30.7%) graduates responded that they graduated last year, 38 (13.9%) graduated 2 year to 5 years ago, while 152 (55.5%) graduated more than 5 years ago.

Table 4.5 Activity after Graduation

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Working	41	15.0
Working and enrolled in school	30	10.9
Enrolled in school	60	21.9
Unemployed	10	3.6
imam of masjid	26	9.5
Teaching in the same <i>madrasah</i> I graduated	70	25.5
Teaching in another <i>madrasah</i>	37	13.5
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.5 shows the activities of graduates (engagement after graduation) approximately 2 years after graduation. 70 (25.5 %) of the respondents are teaching in the same *madrasah* from which they graduated, 60 (21.9%) are enrolled in school 37 (13.5%) are teaching in other *madrasahs*, and 26 (9.5%) are *Imams* of *Masjids*.

Table 4.6 Certifications

	Frequency	Percent
WAEC	108	39.4
NECO	27	9.9
<i>Madrasah</i> examination only	139	50.7
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.6 shows the distribution of the qualifications of the respondents. The majority of respondents, 139 (50.7%) have *madrasah* certification, 108 (39.4%) acquired West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and 27 (9.9%) acquired National Examination Council (NECO) certification.

Table 4.7 Expectations of Parents

Expectation	Frequency	Percent
University degree	47	17.2
Diploma	12	4.4
Master	20	7.3

PhD	140	51.1
Thanawiyah	24	8.8
I don't know their expectation	21	7.7
I have no parents	10	3.6
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.7 shows the distribution of the expectations of parents. Students whose parents expected their children to acquire a university degree numbered 47 (17.2%), diploma 12 (4.4%), master degree 20 (7.3%), PhD 140 (51.1%), *Thanawiyah* 24 (8.8%) while those that were not aware of their parents' expectations numbered 21 (7.7%) and those without parent were 10 (3.6%). The majority, 140, expected their children to obtain PhDs (51.1%) with a frequency of 51.1%. Parents expecting university degrees came second while the least expected qualification was *Thanawiyah*.

Table 4.8 below shows the Parental Level of Education

Education level	Frequency	Percent
High school	24	8.8
Polytechnic	17	6.2
Secondary level	24	8.8
Primary level	91	33.2
Did not pass primary school	20	7.3
Never attended school	13	4.7
Thanawiyah school	40	14.6
Iddadiya	2	.7
I don't know	43	15.7
Total	274	100.0

Table 4.8 shows the distribution of the parental level of education. The results show that 91 (33.2%) respondents had parents who had obtained primary education. They were the majority with. 40 (14.6%) of the parents had *Thanawiyah* certification (secondary higher certificate) 24 (8.8%) had high school certification, while 13 of the respondents' parents never attended school.

Table 4.9 Relevance of Islamic Studies Curriculum to the Society

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1 The course content of the <i>madrasah</i> curriculum is relevant to current issues in Nigeria.	52 (19.0%)	45 (16.4%)	43 (15.7%)	57 (20.8%)	77 (28.1%)	3.23
2 Islamic studies curriculum in the <i>madrasah</i> focuses on memorization	21 (7.7%)	38 (13.9%)	34 (12.4%)	34 (12.4%)	90 (33.2%)	3.70
3 Islamic studies promotes Islamic values among Students	33 (12.0%)	12 (4.4%)	11 (4.0%)	53 (19.3%)	165 (60.2%)	4.11
4 Islamic studies is a recognized subject in our society.	12 (4.4%)	31 (11.3%)	50 (18.2%)	91 (33.2%)	90 (32.8%)	3.79

5	Islamic studies develops practical competence for future challenge	16 (5.8%)	12 (4.4%)	28 (10.2%)	97 (35.4%)	121 (44.2%)	4.08
6	I learn Islamic studies in a private school in order to fulfil the desires of my parents.	36 (13.1%)	30 (10.9%)	23 (8.4%)	64 (23.4%)	121 (44.2%)	3.74
7	I am interested in Islamic studies in order to further my education in Nigeria.	59 (21.5%)	38 (13.9%)	34 (12.4%)	59 (21.5%)	84 (30.7%)	3.26
8	I learn Islamic studies because of financial constraints.	60 (21.9%)	60 (21.9%)	64 (23.4%)	49 (17.9%)	33 (12.0%)	2.76
9	I study Islamic studies to become a religious teacher.	26 (9.5%)	41 (15.0%)	42 (15.3%)	56 (20.4%)	109 (39.8%)	3.66
10	I study Islamic studies in order to be a good example to the society.	6 (2.2%)	8 (2.9%)	12 (4.4%)	48 (17.5%)	198 (72.3%)	4.56

Table 4.9 shows the relevance of the curriculum for Islamic studies to the society. The results show that 77 (28.1.0%) of the graduates agreed with the statement that “the course content of the Islamic studies curriculum is relevant to current issues” with a mean of 3.23. Similarly, 90 (33.2%) of the respondents agreed that “the Islamic studies curriculum focuses on memorization” with a mean of 3.70.

Moreover, 198 (72.3%) agreed with the statement that “I study Islamic studies in order to be a good example to the society”, with a mean of 4.56 while only 6 (2.2%) respondents disagreed with the statement, indicating the *madrasah* curriculum promotes exemplary conduct. However, 109 (39.8%) respondents agreed with the statement “I study Islamic studies to become a religious teacher” with a mean of 3.66 while 41 (15%) disagreed with the statement. 33 (12.0%) of the respondents agreed with the statement “I learn Islamic studies because of financial constrains”, with a mean of 2.76 while 60 (21.9%) disagreed with the statement. 121 (44.2%) agreed that “I learn Islamic studies in a private school in order to fulfill the desires of my parents” with a mean of 3.74. Lastly 59 (21.5%) of the respondents disagreed that “I am interested in Islamic studies in order to further my education in Nigeria” while 84 (30.7%) with the statement.

4.3 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

4.4 SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of this research are:

- (1) The students are highly committed to studying in *madrasah* schools in South-West Nigeria.
- (2) The students have a strong interest in pursuing *madrasah* education and it is one of key personality variables that influence career aspirations.
- (3) Students opt for *madrasah* education with the aim of obtaining Islamic education for religious purposes.
- (4) Students prefer Arabic and Islamic education over the other forms of education. This encourages them to assert greater effort and energy in their studies.
- (5) The students believe that pursuing *madrasah* education will beuseful to them as it is capable of achieving their ambitions in life.
- (6) Parents have significant influence over the choice to pursue *madrasah* education.

- (7) Certificate recognition limits career choice among students which is a major factor in deciding to pursue *madrasah* education. A significant number of graduates stagnate as they have little to no opportunities to further their education or to find employment with only their *Thanawiyah (secondary) qualification*.
- (8) Socioeconomic status has been identified as one of the factors that influence the choice to pursue *madrasah* education.
- (9) The inflexible nature of curriculum limits the chances of *madrasah* graduates to pursue other careers outside the scope of Arabic/Islamic education.
- (10) The *madrasah* curriculum is rich in content and serves the needs of the society; its only short coming is that it lacks the courses that are widely regarded as core subjects in the Nigerian school system.

4.5 SUMMARY OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES USED IN QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS IN THE ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

Table 4.10 summarizes the ideas highlighted concerning the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interview regarding the experience of graduates concerning the relevance of the *madrasah* curriculum toward the fulfillment of career ambitions.

4.6 SUMMARY

In conclusion, from the responses received regarding the experiences of graduates and their perceptions of the relevance of curriculum towards achieving their career ambitions, it can be asserted that despite the rigidity and redundancy of the *madrasah* system, various efforts have been made by principals of the *madrasahs* to ensure that the *madrasah* is relevant to the career ambitions of its graduate and to render graduates capable of responding to the real life challenges. The participants are concerned with the progress, development and enhancement of the *madrasah* and advocate the integration of so-called secular subjects into the *madrasah* curriculum.

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