

Assessment of the Implementation of Integrated Qur'anic Education in Niger State (2004 - 2019): Towards Addressing Nigeria's Development Challenges in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The study on assessment of the implementation of integrated Qur'anic education in Niger state (2004 - 2019) towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century was conducted to examine the level of implementation of Integrated Qur'anic Education programme and to identify the challenges facing the implementation of Integrated Qur'anic Education programme in Niger State (2004 - 2019). Two research questions guided the study. Survey design was adopted for the study. Questionnaire tagged Implementation of Integrated Qur'anic Education Questionnaire (IIQEQ) was used as a tool for collection of data. A total of 150 respondents formed the population of the study using simple random sampling technique, comprising 30 pupils, 30 teachers, 30 proprietors, 30 parents and 30 Ministry of Education (MOE) officials. The data collected was analyzed using frequencies and percentage for the demographic variables. The research questions were statistically analyzed using mean and standard deviation and valid judgments was made. Findings of the study revealed that; funding of the programme is inadequate, the learners (pupils) are not well fed on daily basis, the food given is not enough for them, it is not highly nutritive, supply and preparation of food to the learners is not regular, prompt and hygienic, infrastructural faculties like; medicines, uniforms, instructional materials for teaching Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among others which had influenced the successful implementation of the programme. Recommendations were made on the way forward towards the sustenance and success of IQE programme in Niger State and even beyond for Nigeria's development in the 21st century and beyond.

Keywords: *Integrated Qur'anic Education, Implementation, Tsangaya Education, State Universal Basic Education Board*

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Background to the Study

There is no doubt that education is instrumental to the overall development of the individual and the society. It is for this reason that various levels of government in Nigeria have continued to invest heavily in the education industry (Imam and Muḥammad, 2012). Therefore, there is the need for the industry to justify this immense investment. That is the reason for contemporary world today to focus attention on education as an instrument of launching nations into the world of science and technology. This is a hope of human capital advancement, in terms of living conditions and development of the environment (Hanushek, 2003). The concept of integration of Qur'ān education system and western education must be on Islamic concept. This concept relies on education which is defined as process of human development physically, mentally, socially and technologically to enable human being function effectively in any environment in which he may find himself (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

The Almajiri happens to be one of the persons covered by Act 15, which defines Universal Basic Education as "early childhood care and education, the nine years of formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programme and the education of special groups such as nomads and migrants, girl-child and women, Almajiri, street children and disabled groups" for the purpose of provision of basic education. Hence, in view of the importance of developing a comprehensive system of education that will cater for all Nigerian children of school age, the integration of Qur'ānic schools into the UBE programme becomes imperative towards the attainment of EFA and SDG goals (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2010).

The Nigeria nation building will do so well by integrating Qur'ānic education into UBE policy especially for the Nigerian Muslim populace. In this regard, Qur'ānic education is one of the education genres through which Islamic world builds her faith and devotion towards Allāh. Qur'ānic education is a conscious and well-planned effort to prepare the learners to recognize, understand, appreciate, and believe in the Islamic teachings (Paiko, 2010).

In the recent, it is understood that western education is also important due to social and cultural behavioural relationship with non-Muslims. In 1996, there was collaboration between Niger State Agency for mass education and United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) "C" field office Kaduna on base line data survey conducted in 1997, 2 IQE centres were established in each of the 25 local government areas in Niger state. In 2007 UBE in collaboration with NSUBEB conducted a comprehensive baseline data survey in the 25 LGAs of the state for (IQE) Tsangaya schools where 4,452 centres were identified, with 312,679 learners and 12,190 teachers out of which 10 pilot schools were selected across the state. A committee of ten spread across the state deploying NCE teachers to these centres for integration programme (NSUBEB, 2015).

In 2009, His Excellency (Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu) the then Governor of Niger state inaugurated state Islamiyya Qur'ānic and Tsangaya Education (IQTE) implementation committee headed by the Emir of Suleja (Alhaji Mohammad Awwal Ibrahim) who undertook another baseline data survey which identified 8,870 Qur'ānic centres from the 8 emirates councils of the 25 LGAs with 17,892 mallams having 689,736 learners in these centres (NSUBEB, 2017).

The Universal Integrated Qur'ānic Basic Education (UIQBE) bill in Niger state was signed into law by the governor on July 23rd 2014 (SUBEB, 2014). Gradually *Almajiri* schools where the proprietors accepted integration with western education officially took off on 10th March, 2015 in Niger state. The State Strategic Implementation of Qur'ānic Education Committee (SSIEC) headed by First Class Emir of Suleja Mallam Muḥammad Awwal Ibrahim randomly selected 11 Integrated Qur'ānic Education (IQE) schools which are: Pangamu in Suleja LGA, Kwanayi in Paiko LGA, Tunga in Minna Chanchaga LGA, Alagbado in Minna Chanchaga LGA, 123 Quarters in Minna Chanchaga LGA, Zarumai Quarters in Minna Chanchaga LGA, Aliyu Yarima in Bida LGA, Tanbihul Islam in Mokwa LGA, Model IQE in Kontagora LGA, Darul Qur'ān in Gulbinboka Mariga LGA and Kpakungu in Minna Chanchaga LGA (NSUBEB, 2015).

Integrated Qur'ānic Education (IQE)

The integrated education is an approach of learning in which several aspects of integrated inter-subject matters are intentionally correlated. With this method, the students will gain knowledge and skills as a whole so that the learning becomes more meaningful to the students, meaning that the students indirectly learn and understand the concepts they are learning through (Fowoyo, 2013).

Integrated Qur'ānic education involves teaching literacy to Qur'ānic school learners at the period agreed upon between the proprietor and the facilitator. There is no interference in the running of Qur'ānic education programme. The two forms of education are expected to be provided hand in hand in the same school. According to Dukku (2006), integration of Qur'ānic education in this respect refers to the strengthening of existing Qur'ānic and Islamiyya schools to achieve their goals and accommodate the introduction of basic education elements of literacy, numeracy, life and vocational skills subjects into their curriculum.

He further gave the following goals that such integration should aim at achieving: -

- a. the enhancement of the existential condition of the almajiris child and his Mallams for better performance;
- b. the improvement of the teaching-learning environment in the Qur'ānic schools and strengthens their capacity to deliver;
- c. the expansion of the curriculum of Qur'ānic and Islamiyya schools to accommodate modern subjects of literacy, numeracy, life and vocational skill;
- d. the provision of access to Basic education for Qur'ānic and Islamiyya school pupils in the spirit of the UBE and EFA/MDGs; and

- e. the production of citizens who are grounded in the Islamic knowledge and values as well as modern educational skills for the spiritual and material development of the individual and the nation (Dukku 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Educational programme implementation is the stage where the preparation made earlier, the plans, designs and analysis proposed are tested to see how real they are (Egonwan in Saidu, 2021). The above definition suggests that it is mainly action to translate the proceeding thought process into concrete reality. The activities directed towards putting a programme into effect. It is also the process of carrying out an objective of a plan. A well formulated policy or programme is useless if not properly implemented as its stated objectives will not be realized. As in many other developing countries, implementation is the bane of public policies and programmes in Nigeria.

Despite the laudability of the integrated Qur'ānic school programme in Niger state, it is becoming glaring that the implementation of the programme has to some extent become virtually ineffective. Considering the challenges of lack of fund, infrastructure, qualified resource persons etc. These problems have indeed bedevilled the programme in Niger state due to lack of availability and transparency on the part of the policy makers and those charged with the mandate to ensure the proper implementation of the programme in Niger state. This is what prompted the study on assessment of the implementation of integrated qur'anic education in Niger state (2004 - 2019) towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century.

Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted to assess the implementation of integrated qur'anic education in Niger state (2004 - 2019) towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century. The specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate the role of feeding the learners (pupils) for the effective implementation of Integrated Qur'ānic Education programme in Niger State from 2004 - 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century.
2. Assess the provision of infrastructure towards the implementation of Integrated Qur'ānic Education programme in Niger State from 2004 - 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. Are the learners (pupils) of the Integrated Qur'ānic Education in Niger State well fed from 2004 - 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century?
2. Are infrastructural facilities adequately provided for the implementation of Integrated Qur'ānic Education programme in Niger State from 2004 - 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised of pupils, teachers, proprietors, community (rulers/parents), and Ministry of Education (MOE) officials. Based on comprehensive baseline survey conducted by Niger state IQE implementation committee in collaboration with SUBEB in 2009 in the 25 LGAs of Niger State for IQE schools, there were 8,870 Qur'ānic centers with same number of proprietors, 698,736 learners (pupils), 17,892 teachers. There is no documented data by SUBEB of the parents. The sample size was drawn from the population using simple random sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tagged Assessment of Implementation and Impact of Integrated Qur'ānic Education Questionnaire (AIIIQEQ). Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used to rate respondent's opinion of each item of the questionnaire. The data collected were statistically analysed using mean and standard deviation and valid judgments was made. A mean threshold of 2.5 was set as acceptance or rejection level for the item statements.

Data Analysis and Result

Research Question 1: Are the learners (pupils) of the Integrated Qur'ānic Education in Niger State well fed from 2004 - 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century?

Table 1: Analysis of respondents on whether the learners (pupils) of the Integrated Qur'ānic Education in Niger State well fed from 2004 – 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century

ITEM STATEMENT	RESPONSE CATEGORY					Mean	SD
	Strongly Agree F (%)	Agree F (%)	Undecided F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Strongly Disagree F (%)		
The learners (pupils) are well fed on daily basis towards the implementation of IQE programme in Niger State.	84(38.2)	103(46.8)	15(6.8)	15(6.8)	8(3.6)	2.78	1.097
The food given to the learners (pupils) is enough for them towards the implementation of the programme in Niger State.	86(39.0)	94(42.7)	12(5.5)	17(7.7)	11(5)	2.80	1.207
The food given to the learners is highly nutritive towards the implementation of the IQE programme in Niger State.	82(37.2)	99(45)	10(4.5)	16(7.3)	13(5.9)	2.90	1.336
The supply and preparation of food to the learners towards the implementation of IQE programme in Niger State is regular and prompt.	85 (38.6)	50 (46.2)	3 (6.8)	7 (6.8)	5 (3.6)	2.73	1.467
Food given to the learners towards the implementation of IQE programme in Niger State is prepared in a hygienic way.	86(39.0)	60 (42.7)	1 (5.5)	1 (7.7)	2 (5)	2.63	1.353

Table 1 showed the opinion of respondents on whether the learners (pupils) of the Integrated Qur'ānic Education in Niger State are well fed from 2004 – 2019. From the responses, over over 95% of the respondents with average mean of 2.68 agreed that the learners (pupils) are not well fed on daily basis, the food given to the learners (pupils) is enough for them, the food given to the learners is not highly nutritive, supply and preparation of food to the learners towards the implementation of IQE programme in Niger State is not regular, prompt and hygienic towards the implementation of IQE programme in Niger State. This had influenced the implementation of the IQE programme in Niger State from 2004 – 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century.

Research Question 2: Are infrastructural facilities adequately provided for the implementation of Integrated Qur'ānic Education programme in Niger State from 2004 –

2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century?

Table 2: Analysis of respondents on whether infrastructural facilities adequately provided for the implementation of Integrated Qur'ānic Education programme in Niger State from 2004 – 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century

ITEM STATEMENT	RESPONSE CATEGORY					Mean	SD
	Strongly Agree F (%)	Agree F (%)	Undecided F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Strongly Disagree F (%)		
Medical facilities are provided to schools towards the implementation of IQE programme in Niger State.	84(38.2)	105(47.7)	10(4.5)	17(7.7)	4(1.8)	2.78	1.097
Uniforms and instructional materials are adequately provided to IQE schools towards the implementation of the programme in Niger State.	76(34.5)	104(47.3)	12(5.5)	17(7.7)	11(5)	2.80	1.207
Assessable water is adequately provided for schools towards the implementation of IQE programme in Niger State.	80(37.2)	99(45)	12(4.5)	16(7.3)	13(5.9)	2.90	1.336
ICT facilities towards the implementation IQE programme in Niger State.	86(39.0)	94(42.7)	12(5.5)	17(7.7)	11(5)	2.80	1.207
Sporting facilities towards the implementation IQE programme in Niger State.	82(37.2)	99(45)	10(4.5)	16(7.3)	13(5.9)	2.90	1.336

Table 2 showed the opinion of respondents on whether infrastructural facilities are adequately provided for the implementation of Integrated Qur'ānic Education programme in Niger State from 2004 – 2019. From the responses, over 95.9% with average mean of 2.78 agreed that, provision infrastructural facilities are grossly inadequate towards the successful implementation of IQE programme in Niger State. Inadequacy of the provision of ICT and sporting facilities, medical facilities, uniforms and instructional materials had influenced the implementation IQE programme in Niger State from 2004 – 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that, the learners (pupils) of the Integrated Qur'ānic Education in Niger State well fed and that infrastructural facilities are grossly inadequate towards the implementation IQE programme in Niger State from 2004 - 2019 towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century. This concurs with Sangweni (2003) who affirms that, nutrition and health have powerful influences on a child's learning performance in school. Children who lack certain nutrients in their diet (particularly iron and iodine) or who suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, hunger, parasitic infections or other diseases, are likely not to have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children do. This is because learners who are hungry have more difficulty in concentrating and performing complex tasks, even if otherwise well nourished.

Equally, the finding of the study revealed that infrastructural facilities was not adequately provided towards effective implementation of IQE programme in Niger state from 2004 - 2019. This is line with findings of Adesina in Saidu (2021) that the quality of education that our children receive has direct relevance to the availability or lack of physical facilities and overall atmosphere in which learning takes place.

Conclusion

The Integrated Qur'ānic Education (IQE) programme is a formal school curriculum expected to run alongside with the existing Qur'ānic study programme. That is Qur'ānic education will continue to operate as it is now without interference. The Mallams will continue to run their Qur'ānic education programmes as usual. The curriculum is expected to be in operation at weekends, which comprise of Thursdays and Fridays when the Amajiris are free. However, the learners must be well fed as nutrition and health have powerful influences on a child's learning performance in school. Hitherto, infrastructural facilities like oshtel block for pupils, hand-pump borehole and an electric power generator, VIP toilets, recitation hall for learning Qur'ān, language laboratory for Arabic lessons among others enhances the effective implementation of IQE programme in Niger state and the nation at large

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The UBEC in conjunction with the Niger SUBEB should ensure the learners in the IQE schools are well fed as enshrined in the operational guidelines for the implementation of almajiri education programme towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century.
2. The UBEC in conjunction with the Niger SUBEB should ensure adequate provision of infrastructural facilities the effective implementation of the IQE programme towards addressing Nigeria's development challenges in the 21st century.

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