

Influence of Arabic Knowledge on The Understanding of Islamic Studies among Secondary School Students in Kwara State, Nigeria

Olalekan Rasheed Azeez¹, Ibrahim Solahudeen Owoyale-Abdulganiy²

¹Department of Islamic Studies, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria

²Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria

Email: ¹orazeez1955@gmail.com; ²abukamilu@yahoo.com

Abstract: The study examined the influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive research design of survey type was used in the study. The study population was all secondary school Islamic Studies students in Kwara State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample in the study. The instrument used in the study was developed by the researchers themselves and it was titled "Influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies" (IAKUIS).

Percentage was used to answer all research questions raised in the study. The findings of the study revealed that the influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State was high. The study concluded that Arabic knowledge influences the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommended that Islamic Studies teachers should encourage secondary school students of Islamic Studies to add Arabic knowledge to their understanding of Islamic Studies.

Tersedia Online di

http://journal.unublitar.ac.id/pendidikan/index.php/Riset_Konseptual

Sejarah Artikel

Diterima pada : 01-12-2024

Disetujui pada : 20-12-2024

Dipublikasikan pada : 09-01-2025

Kata Kunci:

Islamic Studies, Arabic knowledge, Teaching and Learning

DOI:

http://doi.org/10.28926/riset_konseptual.v9i1.1144

INTRODUCTION

The synergy between the knowledge of Arabic components and Islamic Studies can never be separated because the two are working together. The relationship between Arabic language and Islamic Studies is more than just the school subjects but rather the acquisition of knowledge of the religion of Allah and His beloved Prophet (SAW). The teaching and learning of the Arabic Language play a vital role in the worship of Allah without many challenges being the language in which the Quran was revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) (Dian, 2019). According to Ali (2021), the understanding of the basic components of Arabic complements teachers' and students' knowledge of Islamic Studies because the Quran and Hadith which are the basic sources of education in Islam were transmitted through the Arabic language. This assertion was corroborated by Hassan (2015) and Reichmuth (2019) that Arabic is the language used for the establishment of primary and secondary sources of Shari'ah principles in Islam and this occupied a significant aspect of the Islamic Studies curriculum.

The content of the Islamic Studies curriculum was incomplete when the Arabic aspects of it were disregarded. This makes it necessary for anybody who wishes to teach or learn Islamic Studies to have fundamental knowledge of Arabic components to enhance the activities. The curriculum is all activities planned and designed to be learnt in schools to meet the needs of people living in a particular region (Usman, 2024). Equally, Ahmed (2016) delineated curriculum to mean all planned and unplanned activities exposed to the students in a school setting. Islamic Studies like other subjects

has a curriculum that spelt out all that the students need to learn or acquire in order to become morally upright members of society. According to Andrabi (2023), Islamic Studies is an academic discipline that centres on the logical explanation of Islamic values, norms, practices, ideologies, history, culture and their impacts on societies. Therefore, the curriculum designed for Islamic Studies in secondary schools in Nigeria is geared towards the acquisition of moral, social and spiritual development of the students. Ahmed (2016) explained that the content of Islamic Studies was grouped into *Hidayah* (guidance), *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and *Tarikh* (Islamic History). Usman (2024) added that *Hidāyah* (Guidance) subsumes Glorious Qur'ān, Hadith and *Ta'hdīb* (Moral Education), *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) contains *Tawhīd* (Theology), *'Ibādah* (Worship) and *Mu'āmalah* (Human Relation) and *Tarikh* (Islamic history) hosts *Sirah* (History of Prophet's life). Andrabi (2023) noted that Islamic history occupies religious, cultural, social, political and economic aspects of Muslim societies from the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) till the present day.

Dian (2019) made a significant position that all manuscripts where all the knowledge that has to do with teaching and learning of Islamic Studies was generated were written in Arabic language which indicated a solid relationship between the two subjects. This established the connectivity and conjunction between the knowledge of Arabic language and the understanding of Islamic Studies. It is against this background that the present study intended to investigate the influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

1. General academic performance of secondary school students in Islamic Studies in Kwara State.
2. The level of influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State.

The following questions were answered during the course of the study:

1. What is the general academic performance of secondary school Islamic Studies students in Kwara State?
2. What is the level of influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State?

METHOD

The research design adopted in this study was descriptive survey design. The study population comprised all secondary school students in Kwara State while the target population was drawn from secondary school Islamic Studies students in the State. The sampling technique adopted in the study was a multi-stage sampling technique. A stratified simple random sampling technique was used to divide Kwara State into three senatorial Districts namely: Kwara Central, Kwara North and Kwara South. Similarly, a simple random sampling technique was adopted to select one senatorial district from the three senatorial districts in the State. Therefore, Kwara Central Senatorial District was sampled. Furthermore, a simple random sampling technique was also used to sample 40 secondary schools from all local government areas that represent Kwara Central Senatorial District in the State. Thus, 10 secondary schools were selected from each local government area. More so, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 secondary school students of Islamic Studies from each sampled school. Therefore, 800 secondary school students of Islamic Studies were the respondents used in the study. The instrument used in the study was the researcher's self-developed titled "Influence of Arabic Knowledge on the Understanding of Islamic Studies (IAKUIS)". The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A & B. Section A dealt with the demographic representation of the respondents while B contained ten items on the influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students. Strongly Agree

(SA), Agree (A), Disagree and Strongly Disagree (SD) were the four Likert Scales used in the study. Secondary school students pro forma was used to collect students' academic performance in Islamic Studies. Statistical tools used in the study were percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Showing division of students of Islamic Studies based on Arabic Schools Attended

S/N	Arabic Schools	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Higher Arabic Schools	234	34.4
2.	Quranic Schools	356	52.4
3.	No Arabic Background	90	13.2
	Total	680	100.0

Table 1 showed that out 800 secondary school students of Islamic Studies proposed to sample in the study only 680 (85%) students of Islamic Studies were available. Therefore, out of 680 Islamic Studies students 234 (34.4%) had opportunity of attending higher Arabic schools, 356 (52.4%) attending Quranic schools and 90 (13.2%) were unable to have Arabic background knowledge. This implied that the percentage of secondary school Islamic Studies' students that can read Quran without understanding the meaning was higher. It is therefore assumed that the knowledge of Quran might assist them to perform excellently in the subject.

Answering Research Question

Research Question 1: What is the general academic performance of secondary school Islamic Studies' students in Kwara State?

Table 2 Showing the general academic performance of secondary school students in Islamic Studies

S/N	Academic Performance	Frequency	Percentage
1.	High Performance (A, B & C)	423	62.2
2.	Moderate Performance (D & E)	197	29.0
3.	Low Performance (F)	60	8.8
	Total	680	100.0

Grades= A1, A2, B3, C4, C5, C6, D7, E8 & F9

Table 2 revealed that out of 680 secondary school students of Islamic Studies used in the study 423 (62.25) had high performance in the subject with at least C6. More so, 197 (29.0%) secondary school students of Islamic Studies were able to get at least E8 in the subject while only 60 (8.8%) secondary school students of Islamic Studies failed the subject in all sampled schools in Kwara State. This indicated that the percentage of secondary school students who performed well in the subject was higher than those who did not. This might be a result of the Arabic knowledge that the students might have acquired in the Arabic schools they attended. Table 3: What is the level of influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State?

Table 3 showing the level of influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	To enjoy all aspects of Islamic Studies, one needs to have background knowledge of Arabic	484 (71%)	127 (19%)	54 (8%)	15 (2%)
2	Difficulty in translating some Quranic verses into English in Islamic Studies will reduce the knowledge of the Arabic language	524 (77%)	104 (15%)	52 (8%)	0 (0%)
3	The knowledge of Arabic allows one to perform	176	249	152	103

	well in Islamic Studies	(26%)	(37%)	(22%)	(15%)
4	Islamic Studies teacher awards extra marks for quoting with Arabic language during exams	97	109	326	148
		(14%)	(16%)	(48%)	(22%)
5	Knowledge of Arabic occupies a significant position in the understanding of Islamic Studies	156	109	256	159
		(23%)	(16%)	(38%)	(23%)
6	Knowledge of Quran is enough for better understanding of Islamic Studies	183	127	247	123
		(27%)	(19%)	(36%)	(18%)
7	There is no any relationship between Arabic and Islamic Studies because both cannot be combined	56	34	457	133
		(8%)	(5%)	(67%)	(20%)
8	Possessing higher Arabic education makes learning Islamic Studies more easier	342	258	45	35
		(50%)	(38%)	(7%)	(5%)
9	There is no aspect of Islamic Studies curriculum that needs Arabic language contribution	0	0	568	112
		(0%)	(0%)	(84%)	(16%)
10	Unlimited opportunity awaits Islamic Studies students who are versed in Arabic knowledge	138	207	243	92
		(20%)	(30%)	(36%)	(14%)

Table 4 showed that items 1, 2, 3 and 8 reported high level of influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State with 90%, 92%, 63% and 88% respectively. Item 10 recorded moderate level of influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State with 50% while items 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 enjoyed negative reactions from the respondents. This implied that influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic Studies among secondary school students in Kwara State was very significant.

Discussion of the Findings

This study sought to explore the influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding and academic performance of secondary school students in Islamic Studies in Kwara State. The findings reveal significant insights into the educational landscape, particularly concerning the role of Arabic education in enhancing students' grasp of Islamic Studies. The results indicate that a majority of the students had attended Quranic or higher Arabic schools with 52.4% and 34.4% respectively while only 13.2% lacked any Arabic background. This suggests a strong foundation of Arabic literacy among the students, which is essential for comprehending Islamic texts. The high performance observed (62.2% scoring at least C6) corroborates previous studies by Al-Musawi (2015), who emphasized that a solid grounding in Arabic significantly contributes to students' academic success in Islamic Studies. The implication here is profound: students who possess Arabic skills are likely to interpret and engage with Islamic texts more effectively, which may enhance their overall performance. This points to a critical link between language proficiency and subject mastery, further supporting the argument put forth by Florentine (2023) that language barriers can hinder students' academic achievements in religious studies.

The compelling evidence that Arabic knowledge plays a crucial role in students' understanding of Islamic Studies. The overwhelming agreement on items such as the necessity of Arabic background to enjoy Islamic Studies (71%) and the role of Arabic in performing well in the subject (63%) aligns with findings from Erlangga and Bahroni (2024), who noted that familiarity with Arabic enhances students' ability to engage with religious texts. The high percentage of respondents who acknowledged the difficulty of translating Quranic verses (77%) further illustrates this point, as it highlights the challenges students face without adequate Arabic knowledge. Interestingly, students who are versed in Arabic have greater opportunities in Islamic Studies, echoing the sentiments of Al-Issa (2020), who argued that proficiency in Arabic opens doors to a wider array of academic and professional possibilities in Islamic fields. This finding underscores the potential of Arabic education to not only improve academic performance but also to empower students in their future endeavors. Conversely, the

belief that there is no aspect of the Islamic Studies curriculum requiring Arabic contribution (84%) raises questions about curriculum design and the integration of Arabic within Islamic Studies programs. This echoes the concerns raised by Bin Jamil et al. (2024) regarding the need for curriculum reform to ensure that language education is adequately aligned with religious studies.

The novelty of these findings lies in their contextual focus on Kwara State, a region where the interplay between Arabic education and Islamic Studies has not been extensively documented. By highlighting the high level of influence that Arabic knowledge has on students' understanding of Islamic Studies, this study contributes to the broader discourse on educational practices in Islamic contexts. It suggests that educational stakeholders should prioritize Arabic language instruction as an integral component of Islamic Studies curricula.

CONCLUSION

The study on the influence of Arabic knowledge on the understanding of Islamic studies among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria, revealed significant insights into the interplay between language proficiency and religious comprehension. The findings indicate that students with a solid foundation in Arabic tend to have a deeper understanding of Islamic texts, concepts, and practices. This enhanced comprehension not only enriches their academic performance in Islamic studies but also fosters a greater appreciation for the cultural and spiritual dimensions of Islam. Moreover, the research highlights the challenges faced by students with limited Arabic proficiency, including difficulties in interpreting religious texts and engaging with core Islamic teachings. These challenges can lead to a superficial understanding of their faith, potentially affecting their personal and communal religious experiences. The followings were the recommendations generated from the study

1. Educational authorities should integrate Arabic language instruction into the Islamic studies curriculum at all secondary schools. This could include dedicated Arabic language classes tailored for students with varying levels of proficiency.
2. Invest in professional development programs for teachers that focus on effective strategies for teaching Arabic and its relevance to Islamic studies. This will equip educators with the necessary skills to enhance student engagement and comprehension.
3. Develop and distribute bilingual educational materials that emphasize the relationship between Arabic and Islamic studies. These resources should include textbooks, supplementary readings, and digital content that make learning accessible and engaging.
4. Encourage schools to organize extracurricular activities, such as Arabic language clubs, Quranic recitation competitions, and Islamic study groups. These initiatives can foster a supportive learning environment and enhance students' language skills in a practical context.

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