



POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL ISLAMIC STUDIES CURRICULUM

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Abstract

The paper seeks to presents policy analysis of the Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum. Policy analysis requires assessing a curriculum in terms of its relevance or relationship to a broader set of social or educational policies. Policy analysis is after seeking whether the curriculum is in conformity or disarray with the known laid down social and educational policies. The paper concludes that the revised 2013 Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum is responding to the educational policies of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Lastly, the paper suggests among which the Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum should be revised, most relevant themes and sub themes, topics and sub topics should be incorporated in order to make the curriculum more adequate, rich and responsive to the ground goals and policies that it was made to respond to.

Keywords: policy analysis, senior secondary school, Islamic studies, curriculum, NEEDS, MDG's.

Introduction:

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014) indicates that Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) is the education children receive after a successful completion of ten years of Basic Education and passing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The importance of religious education towards achieving peaceful and prosperous society cannot be overlooked. For any nation or society to achieve social, political, educational and economic development, religious education is necessary for making the youths become sensitive and responsive towards the overall development of their respective societies. For these reasons, the NPE (2014) captured religious education among the subjects to be taught in both Basic and Post Basic Education. It is worth pursuing to analyze the curriculum to ascertain wether it is in conformity with the laid down policies and goals it is meant to serve.

Conceptual Framework:

Policy analysis requires assessing a curriculum in terms of its relevance or relationship to a broader set of social or educational policies. Here, a curriculum analyst is after seeking whether the curriculum is in conformity or disarray with the known laid down social and educational policies. For example in Nigeria, in general, we have the Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) and specifically in education; we have the National Policy on Education (2014) as the highest policy reference document. Beside the National Policy on Education (NPE), there are other national and international policies that influenced and pinned the review of the Senior Secondary School curricula (2013). These policies are: NEEDS Policy (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy) and MDGs (Millennium Developments Goals).

To have a focused direction for this discourse, first and foremost, there are certain fundamental questions that a curriculum analyst needs to ask to enable him successfully analyze a curriculum. These questions are:

- a. What policy goals is the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum responding to?
- b. To what extent do the goals of Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum articulate with those of Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, NPE, NEEDS and MDGs?
- c. Does the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies Curriculum specify clear and consistent learning outcomes (competencies) which its trainees could accomplish by the end of the programme?
- d. Does the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies Curriculum meet the standards reflected in similar Senior Secondary School curricula?
- e. Does the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies Curriculum adequately equip students to proceed to a higher level of education in formal or non-formal institutions?
- f. Does the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum meets the requirements to expose the students to the world of work?
- g. What need to be done to improve the curriculum?

To adequately answer these questions, it is indispensable to outline the macro and micro as well as internal and external policies that pinned the 2013 revised Senior Secondary Schools curricula.

1-Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (1999) has categorically outlined five main national and educational goals within which any educational policy and pursuit as well as curriculum in the country at any level must be planned, developed and reviewed towards achieving them. These national goals are:

- a. A free and democratic society;
- b. A just and egalitarian society;
- c. United, strong and self-reliant nation;
- d. A great and dynamic economy; and
- e. A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

Then, the five national educational goals are:

- a. Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- b. Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- c. Provision of the equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all level of education, within and outside the formal school system;
- d. Inculcation of national consciousness, values, and national unity; and
- e. Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individuals to live in and contribute positively to the society.

2-National Policy on Education

The National Policy on Education indicates that Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) is the education children receive after a successful completion of ten years of Basic Education and passing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The objectives of Post-Basic Education and career Development (PBECD) are to:

- a- Provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate and junior Arabic and Islamic Certificate with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- b- Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles;
- c- Provides manpower in applied sciences technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- d- Provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development;
- e- Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- f- Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
- g- Foster patriotism, national unity and security education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and
- h- Raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour.

3-National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy

NEEDS Plan: The acronym NEEDS stands for National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. NEEDS is Nigeria's plan for prosperity. The plan focuses on four key strategies. These are:

- a. Values reorientation;
- b. Reducing poverty;
- c. Wealth creation; and
- d. Employment generation.

Besides these four cardinal goals, NEEDS, also targeted priority diseases such as Malaria, Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and other health related education and issues.

In realizing the NEEDS goals, education is recognized as the vital transformational tool and formidable instrument for any socioeconomic empowerment. Policy frameworks for education were developed to meet, propel and sustain the NEEDS initiative. To realize this, NEEDS sets specific five policy thrust in education. These are:

- a. To provide unhindered access to compulsory universal education to all citizens as a bridge to the future socioeconomic transformation of Nigerian society;
- b. Established and maintain enhanced quality and standards through relevant, competency-based curricula and effective quality control at all levels;
- c. Enhance the efficiency, resourcefulness and competence of teachers and other educational personnel through training, capacity building and motivation;
- d. Strengthen Nigeria's technological and scientific base by revamping technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial education and making optimal use of information and communication technologies to meet the economy's manpower needs; and
- e. Provide an enabling environment and stimulate the active participation of the private sector, civil society organizations, communities, and development partners in the educational development.

4-Millennium Development Goals

MDGs is an international policy initiated by United Nation (UN) which is all about achieving the following targets:

- a. Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- b. Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education;
- c. Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women;
- d. Goal 4 Reduce child mortality;
- e. Goal 5 Improve maternal health;
- f. Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- g. Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability; and
- h. Develop a global partnership for development.

Going by the above, all curricula in Nigerian public schools right from Primary up to University level, their objectives, learning experiences, teaching methods, instructional materials, and evaluation techniques **must** be carefully and deliberately tailored towards achieving the aforementioned goals.

Goals of teaching Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies.

The 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum was prepared in such a way to reflect the education in Islamic sense with aims to producing cultured, well-behaved, considerate, reasonable, and God-fearing man and woman; in other words, a **disciplined person**. The revised curriculum accommodates fundamental themes needed by the youths and adding new concepts such as emerging issues like religious understanding and tolerance, environmental sanitation, healthy living, and avoidance of drug abuse as well as dignity for labour and self-reliance.

Just like the other Senior Secondary School curricula, equally, the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum was equally, deliberately and purposely revised to respond to the NPE, NEEDS and MDGs educational goals. The Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum has three major themes. These are: (a) The Qur'an and Hadith. (b) Tawhid and Fiqh. (c) Sirah and Tahdhib. The selected learning experiences that made up the three themes of the curriculum are fairly rich enough to achieve and respond to the target goals.

First and foremost, the five educational goals stipulated by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and are expressly reflected in the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum and that is the reason why the goals could find their ways in to the curriculum by easily aligning to one or two or even all of the three themes of the curriculum. Similarly, the objectives of Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) as postulated by the NPE were also reflected in the curriculum most specifically objective f, g and h. Furthermore, the NEEDS's goals of employment generation, poverty reduction and wealth creation could be addressed by some topics or concepts in the curriculum under "Dignity for labour and self-reliance"; and the fourth goal of the NEEDS, i.e., value reorientation will be adequately taken care of by numerous topics and concepts under the themes of "Qur'an, Hadith, Tauhid and Tahdhib". Priority diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other health related issues as targeted by NEEDS could also be treated under "Qur'an, Hadith, Tahdhib and fiqh". Subsequently, the MDGs goal 1, i.e. eradication of extreme poverty and hunger could be addressed by a topic and/or sub-topic under "Dignity for labour and self-reliance". Goal 6, is about combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases and could be treated under "Qur'an, Hadith, Tahdhib and Fiqh"; and goal 7 is relating to ensuring environmental sustainability and could be equally treated under "Tahdhib".

Challenges militating against achieving the target goals

Both the internal and external as well as micro and macro educational policy goals of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, NPE, NEEDS and MDGs suffered a lot of hindrance while very few were implemented, achieved and put to reality. The following are some of the factors that militate against the realization of the goals:

1. Lack of political will and commitment from part of the government and other relevant stakeholders;
2. Lack of adequate financial support from the government for the provision of adequate infrastructures for conducive learning, instructional materials etc.;
3. Lack of proper training, capacity building and motivation of teacher who are the implementers of the curriculum;
4. Lack of well trained, experienced and professional teachers to effectively and efficiently teach, inspire, guide, counsel and encourage the students in order to achieve the expected goals;
5. Use of traditional teaching methods that are teacher centered rendering the students to passive learner not actively participating in the making of the lesson.

In summation, to directly and precisely respond to the questions stated in page 1 and 2 above, refer to the following grids,

Questions	Answers
A-What policy goals is the 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum responding to?	The 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum is responding to educational policies of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, NPE, NEEDS and MDGs.
B(i)- To what extent do the goals of the 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum articulate with that of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?	The five educational goals of the Constitution are reflected in the content of the curriculum and are satisfactorily implemented and achieved.
B(ii)-To what extent do the goals of 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum articulate with that of National Policy on Education (NPE)?	The eight Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) objectives are clearly reflected in the content of the curriculum and are fairly implemented and achieved.
B(iii)-To what extent do the goals of 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum articulate with that of National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS)?	The four NEEDS educational goals and other targeted priority diseases such as HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and other health related education and issues are equally reflected in the content of the curriculum and are satisfactorily implemented and achieved.
B(iv)-To what extent do the goals of Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum articulate with that of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?	Goal 1 of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; goal 6 of combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases; and goal 7 of ensuring environmental sustainability are clearly

	reflected in the curriculum and are satisfactorily implemented and achieved.
C-Does the 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic studies Curriculum specify clear and consistent learning outcomes (competencies) which its trainees could accomplish by the end of the programme?	The 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum was prepared in such a way to reflect the education in Islamic sense with aims to producing cultured, well-behaved, considerate, reasonable, and God-fearing man and woman; in other words, a <i>disciplined person</i> .
D-Is the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum meet the standards reflected in similar Senior Secondary School curricula?	The 2013 revised Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum meet the standard reflected in similar Senior Secondary School curricula such as Social studies, Christian religion education, English language etc.
E-Does the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies curriculum adequately equip students to proceed to a higher level of education in formal or non-formal institutions?	Certainly, the curriculum adequately equips the students to proceed to a higher level of education in formal or informal institutions.
F-Is the Senior Secondary School Islamic studies Curriculum meets the requirements to expose the students to the world of work?	Grossly inadequately not like entrepreneurial and vocational subjects.
G-What need to be done to improve the curriculum to adequately respond to the needs of the policy goals?	i-Government officials and other relevant stakeholders should exhibit good political will and commitment to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum. ii-enough financial support for effective implementation of the curriculum at all levels. iii-Proper training, capacity building and motivation of teachers. iv-Trained teachers should be employed to properly translate the curriculum in to reality and mentor, preach and inspire the students to be self-reliant through skills acquisition and job creation. vi-Teachers should be employing learner-centered teaching methods/strategies. vii-Much more should be added on “Dignity for labor and self-reliance”; and students should be taking to field-trips and excursions to places of apprenticeships,

	workshops, and businesses to serve as practical application of the topic. viii-The curriculum should generally be enriched to reflect the other goals totally or partially neglected.
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Conclusions:

Islamic studies as a subject taught in both Basic and Post Basic Education is worth analyzing to ascertain the extent to which the Senior Secondary school Islamic Studies curriculum is responding to some ground goals and policies. Based on the above submission, this paper provided detail relevant questions to be asked during analyzing a curriculum and it is concluded that the revised 2013 Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum is responding to the educational policies of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), National Policy on Education (NPE), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Suggestions:

To enable Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum be effectively analyzed and fully responsive to the educational policies of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), National Policy on Education (NPE), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is concluded that:

1. Well qualified and experienced Islamic Studies teachers should be employed to effectively and efficiently teach and translate the curriculum.
2. The Senior Secondary School Islamic Studies curriculum should be revised, most relevant themes and sub themes, topics and sub topics should be incorporated in order to make the curriculum more responsive to the ground goals and policies that it was made to respond.
3. The curriculum should emphasize problem solving strategy in order to achieve the most desired educational goals and policies.
4. Government officials and other relevant stakeholders should exhibit good political will and commitment to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum.
5. Enough financial support for effective implementation of the curriculum at all levels.
6. Proper training, capacity building and motivation of the teachers.

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