A Study of Pragmatic Approach to Assessing Teacher Effectiveness in Islamic Studies: The Nigerian Experience

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Abstract

The paper scrutinizes approaches to assessing teacher effectiveness in Islamic studies. The paper highlights five major characteristic features of effectiveness relevant to Islamic studies, namely: lesson planning, practical activities, evaluation technique, personality traits and attitudes. The paper reveals, through the test of hypothesis, that final result of Junior Secondary School examination was not highly influenced by the Islamic studies teachers’ qualifications differentials. The paper notes that assessment of affective domain is grossly neglected which negates the principle of Islamic studies. The paper finally recommends an enabling environment in terms of conducive classrooms, well equipped library, mosques (permanent or temporary) and refresher courses for teachers on assessment of affective domain amongst others.

Introduction

The primary purpose of management in Education is to help teachers improve the quality of teaching and to improve their effectiveness as teachers. The term “effectiveness” here means the ability to produce desired results. Teacher effectiveness could also be viewed as the relationship between the characteristics of teachers, teaching acts and their effects on the educational outcome. The search for effectiveness in Islamic studies teaching at various levels of the educational system has been the focus of research in recent times. A general technique for evaluating teacher's effectiveness is the use of student's rating of their Islamic teacher’s instructions (Abdullah, 1999). It could also involve utilization of factor-analytic technique to uncover certain dimensions of Islamic studies teaching.

Course organization, difficulty level of courses, workload, teaching skills, knowledge of subject-matter, teaching methods, interaction between teacher and pupils, evaluation methods, interest and teachers’ attitudes.

Obioha, quoted in Abdullah (1999) in his study involving Nigerian teachers rated the following as the most important pre-requisites for effective teaching. These are: teaching skills, effective communication, knowledge of children, flexibility, objectivity, co-cooperativeness, integrity, mental alertness, self-confidence, leadership qualities, emotional stability, sense of humour and personal attractiveness.
Other studies on teacher effectiveness (Mc Neil & Popham, 1973; Mitzeel, 1980) distinguished between three criteria for effective teaching. The first is the product variable of what student learn (i.e how much and how well student achieve in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains). The second is the process variable. Here, judgements about teacher effectiveness are made in terms of observing what teachers and students do, and the interaction between them, while the third is the presage variables, whereby judgment of teacher effectiveness is based on his intellectual ability, his personal appearance and any other characteristics.

Generally, therefore, there is variety of factors influencing teacher effectiveness. The effectiveness of teachers depends on the extent of the variation in the relation among human resources, (teachers, students, parents, e.t.c.), facilities (classroom, laboratory, library, e.t.c.), materials (text books, films, e.t.c.) and activities (laboratory works, teaching, e.t.c.).

The model or framework adopted in this study is similar to that expressed in the literature (Ghorpade, 1977; Tobin and Traser, 1990) that a thorough study of the teacher, his class room environment and other factors that affect his performance in the classroom is necessary to enable us determine the teacher’s over all effectiveness. The model comprises nine teacher effectiveness dimensions grouped under the following sub scales: lesson planning, teaching techniques, use of questions, use of teaching/learning aids, use of practical activity, evaluation techniques, personality traits, attitudes and co-curricular activities. However, while this model generally applies to teacher effectiveness, Islamic Education experts have, with due consideration of the peculiar nature of Islamic education as a unique discipline, added other essential dimensions to the parameters for determining teacher effectiveness in the subject. According to Abdul-Gafar and Ghulam (1980), quoted in Abdullah (1999), the teacher has been assigned a pivotal position in Muslim society. His function is not confined merely to instructing and training Muslim youths in the prescribed subjects and skills but he has to act as a model and inculcate into students the norms of behavior and values prescribed in Islam. His role, therefore, transcends his social functions. He has a vital spiritual and moral involvement besides the social. His intellectual and professional attainments are essential to his task but his moral and spiritual standing and his conduct are of paramount importance for character building and the training of his pupils in Islam. It is in this context that Islam considers the teacher’s role as similar to that of the Prophet (p.b.o.h). The model adopted in this study is therefore, not centered only on the views expressed by experts in education, but more importantly, taken into cognizance, those views expressed by Islamic education experts in determining the parameters for assessing Islamic studies teacher effectiveness.

It is against this backdrop that the study examines the following teacher effectiveness model in relation to Islamic studies teaching: relevance of training to job performance, instructional activities, use of practical activity, evaluation techniques, personality traits, attitudes and interest in the job.

Methodology

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample used for this study consisted of thirty-four (34) secondary school Islamic studies teachers and ninety (90) Junior Secondary School (JSS 3) Islamic studies students, randomly selected from fifteen secondary schools in Lagos metropolis. The sample was drawn from Federal Government owned schools; Lagos State Government owned schools and privately owned schools, based on stratification.

Instruments

For data collection, the research made use of observation, questionnaire, interview methods, inspection of teacher’s lesson notes, students’ report sheets and principals’ report. The following were carefully and painstakingly observed in the various schools that constituted samples for the study: the learning environment, teaching materials used and their effectiveness, class management, method of instruction,
classroom interaction between teacher and students, organizational climate, evaluation technique and general attitudes.

**Questionnaire:** A questionnaire, “Teacher Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness Instrument (TATEI) was developed. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part one was devoted to demographic data, while part two contained seventy-seven (77) items which describe some of the activities which the Islamic studies teacher is expected to perform in his classroom encounter. Thirty-four copies of the questionnaires administered on secondary school teachers of Islamic studies were completed and returned representing 99 percent of the thirty-five copies of the questionnaires sent out. On the students, 100 copies of the questionnaires were administered and 90 returned, representing 90% return rate.

**Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

The questionnaire, Teacher Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness Instrument (TATEI) was moderated by five curriculum experts; two in Islamic studies, one in curriculum development and two in measurement and evaluation, all drawn from the University of Lagos for content and face validation. The TATEI adopted in this study had been used in Nigeria by Nwosu (1992). The instrument was modified to suit the focus of this study and the reliability co-efficient obtained, using the test – retest method was 0.72. This is a clear indication of the high reliability of the instrument used for the study.

**Data Analysis**

The mean scores, standard deviation of scores and percentages of Teacher Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness (TATEI) were computed. The Multiple Regression Analysis was computed to show the degree of relationship of a single dependent variable on the independent variables, while other dependent variables were controlled (Kerlinger, 1964).

The following parameters were used on TATEI for the purpose of meaningful data analysis and decision making:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1:</th>
<th>1.67</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>O</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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</table>

Criteria for the established rating order.
A mean score of 1.67 + 1.66 = 3.33 was used to denote a score of effective performance. Any variable or section/group with respondents’ mean score less than 3.33 was adjudged to be ineffective, while any
variable or dimension with a mean score of or greater than 3.33 was adjudged to be effective performance of secondary school Islamic studies teachers in the selected schools. The need to place a mean score of 1.67+1.66=3.33 was necessary because the respondents in the average range (i.e. undecided) could be swayed both ways.

**Results**

The respondents’ rating of their effectiveness as Islamic studies teachers on the relevance of their training to job performance, instructional activities, evaluation techniques, personality traits, attitudes and interest in the teaching job are presented in Table 2.

**TABLE 2:** Subject’s rating of their effectiveness as Islamic studies teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Remark on Teacher Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of training to job performance</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Activities</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Practical Activities</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Techniques</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Traits</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in the Teaching job</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results presented in table 2 above indicates that teacher respondents are of the opinion that they are actually effective in the performance of their teaching job, based on 3.33 mean rating already established as denoting effectiveness. (See Table 1).

However, it is noteworthy that while as high as 70% of Islamic studies students held a negative view about their teachers’ effectiveness in the selection of relevant evaluation techniques (particularly in the affective domain), the teachers opined that they used to prepare test items to assess students’ achievement in the affective domain. This indicates an exaggerated assessment of their own effectiveness in this regard.

**HYPOTHESES TESTING**

The only hypothesis that was generated states that: students’ performance in the final Junior Secondary School (JSS3) examination is independent of their Islamic teachers’ qualifications. The hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square statistical tool and the results obtained are presented in the table below:
TABLE 3
The relationship between students’ performance in the final JSS3 examination and their Islamic studies teachers’ qualification differentials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Teachers’ Qualifications</th>
<th>No. of Passes</th>
<th>No. of Failure</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Non-Degree holders</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree holders</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>0.032ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Non-Degree holders</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree holders</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>0.229ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, the 2x values for 2007 and 2008 are not significant since they are less than the table value which is 3.841, with degrees of freedom 1; significant at 0.05 level. Hence, there is no reasonable statistical ground for rejecting the null hypothesis. This means that students in this study were not really affected by their Islamic teachers’ qualification differentials in their final Junior Secondary School examination for the years 2007 and 2008.

Discussion of Results
The inspection of the Islamic studies teachers’ lesson notes revealed that fifty percent of them did not prepare their notes satisfactorily. Some vital information was left out particularly in the structural arrangement of the notes and the aspect of the content. Their expertise in the area of transliteration of Qur’anic texts was below average and in fact, majority of them could not write out the Qur’anic chapters in Arabic. Furthermore, about fifty percent of the Islamic studies teachers did not give their students take home assignment or even mark such works when given at all. This information was gathered from the principal’s report.

However, the ineffectiveness of the teachers was further manifested in their teacher-centered approach to teaching. Very few of them (i.e. about 25%) did allow for students’ participation in teaching and class discussion. Rarely did they employ the use of instructional materials. In a similar vein, the evaluation technique was predominantly cognitive oriented. Little or no attention was paid to students’ progress in the affective domain. Islamic studies students equally revealed that their teachers’ regularity and punctuality to class was fairly above average. Very few of them reported their Islamic teachers’ non-challant attitude to teaching and their lateness to class or absenteeism. Similarly, they rated their teachers highly in the extent to which they involve them in practical-oriented Islamic activities within and outside the school. However, some of the students (about 30%) expressed their disenchantment at the non-compliance of some Islamic teachers’ behaviour to Islamic injunctions. For instance, it was a common thing to see some female Islamic studies teachers have their hair uncovered and some male teachers wear necklaces and bracelets.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching of Islamic Studies
One of the main objectives of this study was to identify features of effective Islamic studies teaching. This section of the report, therefore, highlights the characteristics which have been identified to constitute effective Islamic studies teaching. For adequate presentation of the features, the five dimensions investigated in the study are used for description of teacher effectiveness.
1. Lesson Planning
Lesson planning in relation to effective Islamic studies teaching requires the teacher to:
   a. possess adequate knowledge of the subject-matter;
   b. be able to select and organize appropriate learning experiences;
   c. write clear notes of lessons with clearly stated instructional and behavioural objectives;
   d. improvise scarce and non-available instructional materials;
   e. select content and develop it from simple to complex; and
   f. consult other Islamic studies or Arabic teachers for clarification or guidance on any topic that is not clear.

2. Use of Practical Activity
Effective use of practical activity by Islamic studies teachers in this study requires that the teacher should:
   a. involve students in practical activities in all practical-oriented topics;
   b. group students for effective class control and management of each practical activity;
   c. encourage students to participate in Islamic activities in and outside the school;
   d. encourage students to observe salat (e.g. Zuhr prayer or Jumah service) in school;
   e. be a practical Muslim teacher who teaches by example rather than by precept;
   f. always perform the jum’ah service with students in the school or a nearby mosque;
   g. be punctual to class; and
   h. pay attention to students’ needs by relating the content of the lesson to students’ immediate environment and their daily life.

3. Evaluation Techniques
The need to employ different types of evaluation techniques to assess students’ understanding of the lesson taught has been given great emphasis in this study and in fact, identified as one of the indices of effective teaching. Notable among the techniques which the Islamic studies teacher should adopt include, among others, the followings:
   a. giving students class tests in order to assess their rate of understanding of topics treated in class; and
   b. preparing test items to assess students’ achievement in the affective domain such as:
      i. preparing test items to assess students’ attitude towards religious and moral disposition;
      ii. preparing test items to assess students’ attitude towards pre-marital sexual relationship;
      iii. giving take home assignments regularly to students in order to reinforce the understanding of lessons taught them;
      iv. prepare test items to assess students’ attitude towards such vices as cheating, telling lie, gambling, back-biting, truancy, dishonesty, hatred and so on;
      v. assess students’ moral behaviour towards peer group, mates, teachers and principal;
      vi. evaluate students’ participation in salat and other practical-oriented Islamic activities.

4. Personality Trait
If we accept that students are easily influenced by their teachers, then the type of personality traits exhibited by Islamic studies teachers will be crucial in determining the overall performance of students. Among the qualities which an Islamic studies teacher should possess include, among others,
undaunted faith accompanied by practical demonstration of such belief in daily life. In addition to this, he/she should:

a. be neat and tidy always;
b. be fluent and modest in speech;
c. dress according to the dictates of Islam;
d. be confident and demonstrate a high sense of erudity and versatility;
e. adopt suitable measures for dealing with offending students;
f. keep his/her class under perfect control; and
g. be cheerful, tolerant, humorous and cool-headed.

5. Attitudes
In this study therefore, an effective Islamic studies teacher is one who:

a. comes to school regularly and punctual to class;
b. considers the teaching job as a form of Jihad, (i. e. striving or effort, highly commendable in Islam);
c. shows concern and metes out necessary disciplinary action whenever his/her students come late to class;
d. encourages students to observe salat in its appropriate time;
e. encourages students to fast Ramadan, etc; and
f. encourages students to abide by the moral teachings of Islam.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The results of the sub-scales used for measuring Islamic studies teacher effectiveness have been stated in the paper. Also, the model adopted in this study has highlighted and discussed the teacher effectiveness dimensions under five major variables namely: lesson planning, use of practical and instructional activities, evaluation techniques, personality traits and attitudes.

Summarily, our evidence revealed that the teacher is the key man in determining teaching effectiveness of Islamic studies. This is because how well students understand the subject and put into practice what they have been taught depends largely on what their teacher knows, believes in and does in practical life. Although, students’ performance in the final Junior Secondary School examination was not highly influenced by their Islamic studies teachers’ qualifications differentials, there are research evidences to show that they were greatly influenced by their Islamic studies teachers’ personality traits (Abdullah 1999). This indicates that the teacher plays a crucial role in students’ affective achievement in Islamic studies. This, as a matter of fact, constitutes a major output factor.

One of the major implications of the findings of this study is that even though success in Islamic education cannot be adequately measured by students’ academic achievement only, but more importantly by moral probity and religious commitment as a model of Muslim personality, teachers hardly evaluate students in this regard. The persistent degeneration of some teachers of religion themselves can be partly attributed to this. To ameliorate this precarious condition therefore, there is need to place more emphasis on assessment of students’ affective achievement during pre-service and in-service education of Islamic studies teachers.

The findings of this study seem to suggest the need for teachers to be provided with the enabling environment in terms of good classrooms, well equipped and modern libraries, mosques, and modern instructional facilities that will go a long way to improve their teaching. Islamic studies teachers should also be exposed to regular refresher courses on contemporary methods of teaching, teaching aids and how they can be improvised and used. Such programmes are chiefly available both at home and abroad.
Regular attendance and/or sponsorship of teachers to organized workshops, seminars and conferences are among other strategies that could be exploited to enhance teachers’ quality related input for effective teaching of Islamic studies.

References