Enhancing Moral Instructions in Tertiary Institutions in Northern Nigeria: The Islamic Perspective

By

Mohammed Tukur Aliyu, Ph.D
Department of Islamic Studies
Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State

Abstract

The aim and objective of teaching Islamic Studies in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions is not only to satisfy the educational requirements of the students, but also their moral requirement as well. The fulfillment of this moral requirement is so significant in the reformation of the students' character especially in the present millennium, the period when our society is corrupted by all sorts of social evils, like terrorism, fraud, theft and armed robbery, promiscuity, human trafficking, drunkenness, drug addiction, etc. Through Islamic Moral Education, the students are trained to be God- conscious, just, truthful, well disciplined, peaceful, tolerant, law- abiding and responsible citizens who value their nation and are ready to safeguard the interest of their society. Thus, Islamic Moral Education, if adequately studied and applied, has a significant role to play in social reform. In view of this therefore, the paper recommends the enhancement of moral instructions in tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria. While adopting the use of secondary sources in its analysis of research findings

Keywords: Islamic Studies, Enhance, Moral Education, Reformation, Society

Introduction

Islamic Moral Education in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions widens the scope of student's individual and collective life, his domestic associations in the educational, social, economic, political and spiritual realms. It covers his life from home to school, from immediate environment to the larger society. In fact, no sphere of life is exempted from the Islamic Moral Education.

The positive commitments of the Islamic Moral Education which need to be adequately fulfilled by both the teachers and the students on the one hand, include: tolerance, forgiveness, unity and brotherhood, truthfulness, trustworthiness, justice, etc. The negative behaviors on the other hand, which must be avoided include: drug addiction, consumption of alcohol, theft, adultery, students' riot, disobedience, etc. The application of these components of Islamic Moral Education will not only help in sustaining peace and stability in our Tertiary Institutions, but will also serve as instrument of societal

transformation and development. the paper examined the enhancement of moral instructions in tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria.

Conceptual clarification

Education, as a concept, has no specific and acceptable definition.

The reason, Jumare (2015) asserts, is that the term education varies in meaning and function from one society to the other. Thus what society „A" desires might not be what society „B" desires, in which case their definitions would certainly vary. Despite all these differences it is generally believed that the word education was derived from Latin words "Educi" and "cation" which signifies "lead" and "out" carrying the meaning as to lead out. It is also the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school (formal) or similar institutions and informal experiences. Different scholars of varying degrees of knowledge, using this standard, have defined education based on their understanding of the term. This is due to the fact that there are various definitions of education varying with educational philosophers; scholars and students.

Frankenna (2010), a well-known writer in philosophy of education, identifies four definitions of the term education. He harps that education is:

Firstly, the activity of educating the young.
Secondly, what goes on in the child, or the process of being educated
Thirdly, the result, or what the child acquires or has in the end; namely an education
Fourthly the discipline that studies, that is the discipline that studies (a), (b) and (c).

What can be simply inferred here is that the field that reflects on all the above to build up a body of knowledge is education.

Kaunda and Castle, according to Kolawole (2008), maintained basically that education is transmission of culture from older generations to the young. This concept is often expressed not only by educational historians but by sociologists and psychologists who study education. Callaway in his effort to address the term education holds the view that education is life, stressing that the process of education spans through a man"s life.

On his definition, Fafunwa (1996) asserts that education is: A process through which societies train the younger ones to acquire knowledge, skills, morals, beliefs and competencies with the view to taking their values to the next generation. While some scholars have coined it this way: Education is training in terms of vocation, intellectual and moral values on an individual to help himself and the society (in which) he lives.

Islamic Morality:

Morality as an English word denotes the principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad behaviors. But for the proper understanding of its concept, the word must be taken back to its origin. The Arabic equivalent of this word is ***Khuluq*** (pl. ***Akhlaq)*** which literally means innate disposition, character, behaviors, and nature e.t.c.

Technically it means the science of virtues and the way to acquire them, of vices, and how to guard against them. Islamic moralities are therefore divine in origin, human in nature, universal in approach and comprehensive in its scope. In Islam however, morality has five basic foundations upon which all other Islamic moral values are attached. These include:

- Patience, (*sabr)* which helps a Muslim to bear and conceal anger and all other undesirable attitudes,
- Temperance (*iffah)* which enables one to shun immoral behaviors in words and actions and makes him to be modest and prevents him from bad habits,
- Courage (*Shaja'ah)* which helps one to have self-esteem, uphold noble characters and properly control himself in love and anger,
- Justice (*„adl)* which puts one on golden means. This helps him to be generous- a quality between miserliness and extravagance-, it also helps him to acquire forbearance (*hilm)* – a quality between anger and self-disrespect. The aforementioned are the sources of all other moral qualities from which all the rest emanate.
- Wisdom (*al-hikmah)* which is the fifth foundation comes from sound faculty of knowledge. It helps one to have foresight enabling him to distinguish between true and false in statement, right and wrong in belief and between good and evil in actions.

Positive Commitments of the Islamic Moral Education

The positive commitments of the principles of Islamic Moral Education in our Tertiary Institutions aim at building in the student a sound mind, a peaceful soul, a strong personality and a healthy body so as to make him reliable, responsible, resourceful and peaceful member of his society. Within this section of Islamic Moral Education therefore, the paper shall discuss on the following sub-headings which if adequately studied and applied by all Muslims, our Tertiary Institutions will continue to produce Good-conscious, self-disciplined and law-abiding citizens who value their societies and are ready to safeguard the interest of their nation. They are:

The Concept of *Tawhid*

Within the concept of *Tawhid,* the students are taught to believe in One, Unique, incomparable Allah, who has no son, no partner, and that none has the right to be worshipped but him alone. They are also made to acknowledge that He is the true God, and every other deity is false. He has the most magnificent names and sublime perfect attributes. They also learn that no one shares His Divinity, nor His attribute. This is because in the Qur'an Allah describes Himself:

> Say; He is Allah (God), the one and only, Allah, the eternal, absolute, He begetteth not, nor is he begotten, and there is none like unto him. the noble (Qur'an: 1:4).

Within the concept of *Tawhid* therefore, the students are made to believe that no one has the right to be invoked, supplicated, prayed to, or shown any act of worship but Allah alone who is the Almighty, the Creator, the Sovereign and the Sustainer of everything in the whole Universe. Acknowledging this concept by the students easily enable them to follow Allah's injunctions. It is indeed the most important instrument of societal reform.

The Concept of *Taqwa* (Consciousness of Allah)

Taqwa is another significant concept of Islamic Moral Education which the students of Tertiary Institutions are taught to attain. They are made to recognize that Allah is their Creator and Islam is their religion. They are enjoined to be conscious of Allah who always see what they do, know what they say and what they keep in their mind. This make the students become alive to their responsibilities. They would grow up to become responsible citizens who benefit their immediate and remote environments. They will in turn attain the love from Allah because of their moral consciousness.

> *Allah says: Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. (Quran,* 49:13).

Unity and Brotherhood

This is also another significant topic learnt under Islamic Moral Education. The students learn how Islam enjoins the Muslims to unite and become brothers in faith. The basic foundation of this brotherhood is stressed in the following verses of the Qur'an: The believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers: And fear Allah that ye may receive Mercy. And hold fast all together by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves… The students are taught that in the sight of Allah all men are equal and

brothers of one another. They are made to believe in the unity of mankind with regard to the source of creation, the original parentage and the final destiny. The students are equally taught that the significance of unity and brotherhood is not only confined to the Muslims.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a very important quality that the students learn within the scope of Islamic Moral Education. They are taught that even though Islam allows one to freely retaliate when injustice and harm is done to him, yet, what is better and more rewarding in the sight of Allah is to forgive voluntarily.

The Qur'an states:

> *But if a person forgives and makes reconciliation His reward is due from Allah for (Allah) loves not those who do wrong. The students are also made to understand that forgiveness is very important in building up a sound moral personality and also in solving social conflicts and disorder. Forgiveness helps them to create atmosphere of love, respect and cordiality among them. While revenge even when just, create the opposite. Forgiveness helps bring them together, while harshness tend to make them hate each other. Forgiveness turns one's enemies his hearty friends. In fact, forgiveness is a strong instrument of peace, harmony, unity and stability among people. Hence, it is a strong instrument of social transformation.*

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is considered as one of the highest moral quality that is expected from every student of post primary school. To be trustworthy means to be honest, good, confident and reliable. Under this topic, students learn that Allah enjoins all Muslims to observe their trusts.

> *He says: Allah doth command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due; and when ye judge between man and man that ye judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which He gives you! For Allah is He who hears and sees all things.* (Quran [4] : 58).

Justice

Justice is yet another significant quality studied under Islamic Moral Education. To put everything in its due and right place is what is meant by justice. Students learn the fact that justice is an eternal quality of Allah. He describes himself with the attribute of justice in the following Qur'anic terms:

> *There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allah His angels and those endued with knowledge standing firm on justice. There is no god but He the Exalted in Power the Wise.* (QUR'AN 3:18).

Obedience

In the Islamic Moral Education, the significance of obedience cannot be over emphasized. No institution can sustain without obedience. The students are therefore taught about the necessity of obeying properly the constituted authority.

> *The Qur'an states: O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those charged with authority among you… The students learn that whoever is selected to be a leader in any affair, be it religious or mundane, he is entitled to the obedience of all persons even if their views differ from his. (QURAN [4]: 59).*

The Negative Behaviors

The negative behaviors that are studied under the principles of Islamic Moral Education include the following:

Shirk

Shirk is the greatest offence which the students of Tertiary Institutions are taught to avoid. It is an Arabic word meaning associating partners with Allah. There are many forms of *shirk*. These include; idol-worship, worship of human beings, polytheism, atheism, humanism, fortunetelling, oracles, magic and witchcraft, cults and pagan festivities, etc. Allah condemns all these forms of worship. Anybody that dies while associating a partner to Him will never be forgiven.

> *Allah says: Allah will not forgive those who associate partners with him; but He will forgive whom He pleases for other sins. He that associate other partners with Allah is guilty of a most heinous sin. (QURAN 4:48).*

Adultery and Fornication

Another negative behavior very near to the offence of shirk that the students are taught to avoid is adultery or fornication. Because of the unpleasant results of adultery and fornication, the Muslims are enjoined not even to move near such evils, let alone committing them.

> *Allah says: Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil opening the road (to other evils). (Qur'an 19:32)*

Theft and Highway Robbery

The students are made to understand that theft and highway robbery are serious crimes forbidden by Islam. To remove someone's property which he safely kept under lock and key by the use of force is what is called theft. Highway robbery on the other hand, is an exercise of a group of armed people or a single person who may attack travelers or wayfarers on the highway or any other place depriving them of their property through the use of force. Islam condemns these two evil practices and that is why Allah has prescribed stern punishment for the thief and the armed robber.

> *He says: As to the thief male or female cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example from Allah for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in Power. (Qur'an 5:38)*

Bribery and Corruption

Another negative behavior condemned by the *Shari'ah* is bribery and corruption. The Prophet (S.A.W.) curses the giver and the receiver of bribes. The students are taught that bribery and corruption lead to the social and moral bankruptcy of individuals and the whole society. Similarly, a nation that allows bribery and corruption is bound to find itself in problems of different kinds. Public service become badly, the economy gets shattered, price levels rise, the crime rate goes up, etc.

Intoxicants

The students learn that intoxicants cover all kinds of drinks and drugs, which cause drowsiness, and loss of self-control. They include all alcoholic drinks like beer, whisky, brandy, etc. They also include all narcotics that have intoxicating effects like Indian hemp, heroin, cocaine and marijuana. All intoxicating substance like alcohol, and hard drugs have many dangers for human beings. Too much loss of human life and corruption in society are mostly caused by intoxicants. Many motor accidents on roads are caused by drunken drivers or drug addicts. Wine drinking and drug addiction destroy a person making him a liability to his family. Islam prohibits all intoxicants.

> *Allah says: O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling (dedication of) stones and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork: eschew such (abomination) that ye may prosper. (Qur'an 5:90)*

Methodology

In studying or investigating issues relating to the enhancement of morality instructions in tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria, the study made reference to relevant chapters and

verses of the holy Qur'an to back the importance of morality by the Almighty Allah (God). The researcher did not only consult the holy Qur'an, but various studies by Babs Fafunwa (1996), Kolawole (2008),

Jumare (2015) and various literature. The various studies consulted and emphasized the importance of moral instruction in building our youth, who are the leaders of tomorrow, in tertiary institutions especially in northern Nigeria.

Findings

The study review the following findings:

That essence of morality has been emphasised by the Almighty Allah (God), in various chapters and verses in the holly Qur'an. In fact, this chapters of the holly Qur'an when further to highlight why human beings must practice good character or human behavior.

That morality is a necessary condition for people to live peacefully in an environment, organizations, institutions and various societies.

That moral instruction is the bedrock of qualitative education (Fafunwa 1996). This finding emphasises the role of parent, peer groups, schools and the environment on morality and education of every child, learner (student) and adults.

That tertiary institutions go a long way in shaping the behavior and quality of training the young ones as future leaders and managers of our society.

That moral instructions by tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria is necessary in reducing social vices like corruption, maladministration, theft, adultery, fornication, divorce, banditry, burglary, terrorism, religious fanaticism, communal conflict, witchcraft, cultism, smuggling, kidnapping, human trafficking etc.

3. Conclusion

From the beginning to the end of this paper, attempt was made to show the significance of Islamic Moral Education in the transformation of the post tertiary students' character of the Nigerian Muslims especially in this present period when our society is surrounded by different forms of social and moral bankruptcy. For our society to be fully reformed, the positive basic principles of the Islamic Moral Education (the examples of which were mentioned above) must be fulfilled.

Recommendations:

Based on this study the following recommendations where made, in other to achieve contentious moral education among our schools in northern Nigeria, especially tertiary institutions:

That parents must understand the Almighty Allah wish or command as stated in the holly Qur'an, which makes it incubate on them to bring up their children in the must acceptable Islamic way of life, which emphasises good behavior and morality.

Schools and training institutions especially tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria, in addition to Islamic studies, must insist on the overall moral instruction that will make education meaningful to the students and the society.

The activities of peer groups in various group schools and tertiary institutions in northern Nigeria must be constantly check by the teachers\lectures and general administration especially where boarding system exist and parent must check their wards for those that operate day-system.

School and tertiary institution curricula must constantly be reviewed in line with the Nigeria policy on education and ever changing demands of the society.

Curricula of schools and tertiary institutions should be design in a manner that moral instruction will be in synergy with the entrepreneur demands of our present society. This means graduates must have been thought one form of trade\craft upon completion of school, so that he can be self employed, instead of being unemployed and being then being vulnerable to social vices.

References

A.B. Fafunwa, "*History of Education in Nigeria"*, Lagos, Heinemann Press Limited, 1996, P. 4

Ibid, P. 7

A. A. Jekayinfa, and D.O. Kolawole, *"Conceptual Background to the History of Education in Nigeria"* in Prospectives on the History of Education in Nigeria, edited by J.O.O Abiri and A.A. Jekayinfa, P. 1, 2008 (Revised edition).

A'isha B. Lemu. *Islamic Studies For Senior Secondary Schools*, Book 2, I.E.T. (Publication Division), Minna, Niger State.

Al-Nisa'I, Ahmad bin Shu'aib, *Al-Sunan al-Kubura'*, Mu'asssasat al-Risalah, Beirut, Vol 5, 1st ed 2001/1421H, p102

A. M. Jumare, *An Introduction to Educational Management and Ethics,* Concept Designs and Prints, 2015, P. 1

Hammuda, Abd al-Ati. (n.d.) *Islam in Focus*, Islamic Publication Bureau, Lagos, Nigeria

Hamidullah, M. (n.d.) *Introduction to Islam*, Islamic Publication Bureau, Nigeria

http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/sunday/index.php/comment-debate/12514-education-problems-and-challenges-in-nigeria-what-to-be-done# retrieved on Friday, 11th 2016

Ibrahim, I. A. (1997) *A brief Historical Guide to Understanding Islam*,

Darussalam, Houston, Texas, USA.

Ibn Kathir. *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1984/1404.

L. O. Odia and S.I. Omofonmwan, "*Educational System in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects"* (nd), P. 1

Muhammad Sahrur, "*The Qur'an, Morality and Critical Reason",* (ed), Leiden, Boston, 2009, P. 21 Encarta Dictionary, 2008

Sahih, I. (1995) *Introducing Islam*, Abul Qasim publishing house, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.