

PARENTAL DISPOSITION TO CHILDREN'S CHOICE OF STUDYING ISLAMIC STUDIES IN SCHOOLS

BY

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Abstract

Islamic Studies learning in Nigeria recently has witnessed some drawbacks; many Muslim students who are supposed to register for the subject at the senior school level have turned it down in favour of other subjects. Earlier studies centred on teachers and students of Islamic Studies to address this problem. The researcher in this study took cognizance that there could be other elements contributive to this scenario. Hence, this study focused on parental disposition on children's choice of Islamic Studies in schools. The significant propelling force among the elements was job marketability which has influenced parents to advise their children to study other subjects which they felt would fetch them job after school. The researcher observed that for Islamic Studies to also meet this standard, the present curriculum across all educational levels should be reviewed to accommodate practical courses, Islamic financial theories, computer appreciation courses and the likes which would be taught along with the ideal Islamic principles.

Keywords: Parental disposition, subject selection, Islamic Studies.

Introduction

Islamic Studies has been described as the study of Islamic religion which covers ways of life and hence includes the teaching of other subjects like History, Philosophy, Theology, Mysticism, Law, Sciences, Arts, Literature, Architecture, Sociology, Comparative religion, Economics and Athletics. (Rahim 1992, Boyle 2004, Ramadan 2004, Bidmos 2004) It is a subject which caters for the religious and material aspects of a man's life tagged spiritual and secular. In the first instance (Al- Quran; Baqarat; 2: 101), says, "We have not created the jinns and men except to worship Me". This is to show that the primary purpose for the creation of man is to worship

Allah. In the second instance, man is to acquire learning, vocation or skills to be able to fend for himself in this world in a legal and lawful manner. This is also supported by (Al- Quran; Qasas; 28:50) which says “Do not forget your portion in the world, but do good to others as Allah has done good unto you”.

This subject is very essential in the schools because of its global importance. The school as an agency of training and change in the society is to be used to teach and promote better understanding of Islam in the world. The school is to serve as an ideal avenue for teaching Islamic principles in order not to confuse Islamic principles with terrorist activities and dealings. This teaching highlights the role of Muslims in the contemporary world to enable them contribute significantly to world development in this era of using technology for development and reducing human stress as well as in maintaining global peaceful co-existence.

Rammel (2007) is of the opinion that Islamic Studies should be taught in the national interest, to safeguard research and train graduates who would have right knowledge, attitude and skills to make significant contributions to societal and world development.

Background to this study

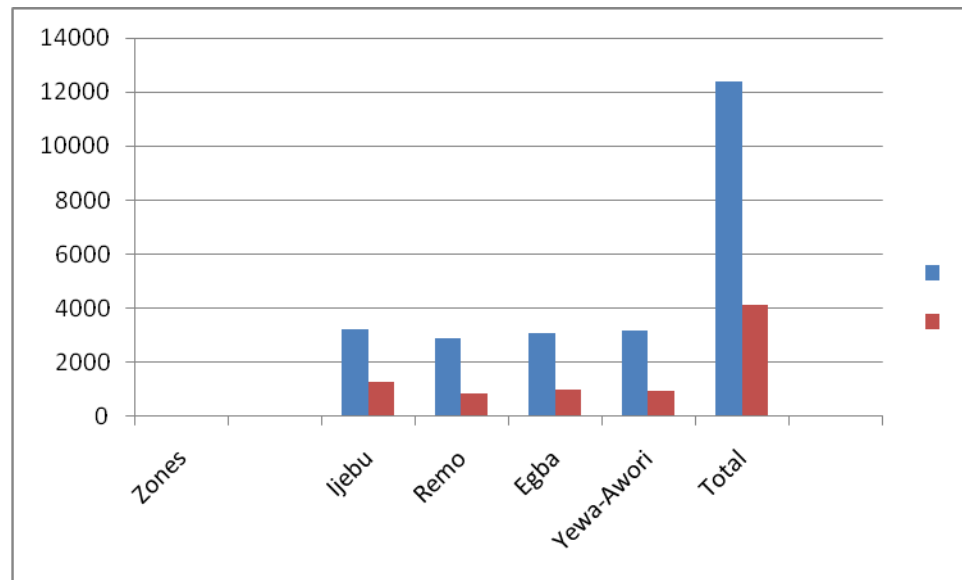
This study is aware of laudable contributions which the teaching of Islamic Studies in the schools could bring to the society among which are projecting the ideal Islamic studies curriculum which should combine spiritual and practical elements, teaching the ideal Islamic principles not based on sects and ideologies and promoting the teaching and use of dialogue and discussions in resolving religious matters rather than resorting to wars and violence in the name of religions as being experienced in different parts of the world.

The study noted that these contributions might be an illusion if the current situation of Islamic Studies was not looked into because it was observed that the teaching of the subject was moving towards extinction in some parts of Nigeria for the fact that not many students registered for it in the senior certificate examinations, and if they did not register for it in the final year secondary examination, it would be difficult to study it in the university. Equally, it would be difficult to get those to teach it at the lower levels of education.

Previous researchers (Lawal 2001, Bidmos 2004, Ahmad 2010, Azeez & Adeshina 2013) observed that the study of Islamic Studies was not well catered for by the Nigerian policy on education which identified some subjects as compulsory while others are elective. More so, earlier researches had focused mainly on Islamic Studies teachers and students offering the subject. The researcher of this study perceived that there could be other variables outside the school environment which could positively or negatively contribute to the problem under study apart from the national policy on education and teachers and students of Islamic Studies that had been the main targets for researchers. Hence, the present researcher tried to look at the parental disposition on the problem.

An overview of the data collected from the selected secondary schools of study represented graphically showed that the number of students in the senior secondary class had been decreasing compared to their number in the junior secondary schools.

Fig.1.1. Graphical Relationship of the Islamic Studies students' Junior and Senior Secondary Schools' Enrollment Figures in Ogun State, Nigeria between 2005 and 2011 in the four zones.



Blue colour represents the Islamic Studies students' junior schools' enrollment. (High)

Red colour represents the Islamic Studies students' senior schools' enrollment. (Low)

The junior schools' figure is about 301.1 percent (%) higher than the senior schools' enrollment

figure.

(Data gathered from the preliminary inquiries to the schools).

Objective of the Study

Objective of this study was to find out the parental disposition on the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in schools and ascertain what could be done in the opinion of the parents to address the situation because there was the feeling that parents have significant influence on the subjects which their children would study particularly where choices and options are allowed. To achieve this objective, the researcher prepared five research questions as follows:

1. What subjects do most students normally choose at the senior secondary school level?
2. What is the role of government policy in the selection of subjects by the senior secondary school students?
3. What is the role of the senior secondary examination bodies in the choice of subjects of senior secondary school students?

4. What is the influence of parents on the choice of subjects selected by students at the senior secondary school level?
5. What is the role of job marketability on the selection of subjects by senior secondary school students?

Research Methodology

Ogun State, Nigeria was used as the centre for this study. Forty two (42) secondary schools were selected for the study. Students of Islamic Studies and other Muslim students in senior secondary class 3 were chosen to give questionnaires to their parents to fill, average of 13 questionnaires to a school. The researcher used closed ended questions with multiple choice options from SD – Strongly Disagree to SA – Strongly Agree. A 5 – Likert scale was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The researcher adopted the five Likert scale because the use of odd scale as observed by Rensis Likert (1932) was said to be the most commonly used by researchers. It was observed that the use of 4-point Likert scale might exaggerate the answers arrived at. This could result in survey biases which tend to satisfy the researchers' opinions and views. (Coakes & Steed 2001; Pallant 2010)

Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

A total of 520 parents were involved in this study, these being parents or guardians of students who were given questionnaires in the schools. Four Hundred and eighty - one (481) out of the 520 questionnaires given to parents through their children were returned fully filled while 39 could not be recovered.

Parents' demographic information revealed that from the 481 questionnaires returned by the parents, 251 of them (52 %) were fathers, 188 (39 %) were mothers and 42 (9 %) of them were filled by their guardians. For the gender, 264 (55 %) were males and 217 (42 %) were females. Among the parents and guardians respondents, 124 (26 %) were civil servants and 357 (74 %) were into their personal businesses. This showed that a higher percentage of the respondents would be occupied more by their personal businesses than those who were in government jobs. This was because by the nature of government jobs, civil servants would have week-ends off which might not apply to those being engaged in personal business who would have to work all through the week making them pay less attention to their children at home and not having enough time to oversee their academic progress.

Concerning religion, 468 (97 %) of the parents and guardians involved in the study were Muslims while the remaining 12 (3 %) were Christians, and 1 (.2 %) chose others. This was an indication that the study concentrated on the right group of participants for the study. This was because this study was to identify the opinions of Muslim parents as regards their children offering Islamic Studies in the senior secondary schools. It would have been otherwise if the

majority were to be Christians because the Nigerian national policy on education did not expect that children would acquire any religious education different from the religion of their parents.

As per the educational qualification of parents and guardians, 208 (43 %) were below primary school and school certificate level. 84 (18 %) of them had NCE / Diploma certificates; 97 (20 %) had first degree certificates; 65 (14 %) had master's degree certificates while 27 (6 %) had MPhil / PhD certificates. The higher percentage (43 %) fell between school certificates and below. This corroborated why majority of the parents and guardians were into personal businesses because it would require having good certificates of first degree and above to be able to secure government appointments.

From this data, 104 (22 %) of the parents indicated that their children registered for Islamic Studies in SSS 3 class while 377 (78 %) stated otherwise. Comparing this figure with the students' responses in another research (Salako et al 2013) indicated that 108 (21 %) students registered for Islamic Studies in SSS class 3, there was a strong positive correlation between students and parents' data that the number of students who registered for Islamic Studies was low at the senior class level.

Reliability of Data

Cronbach's Alpha confirmed good internal consistencies of the items used in the instrument by showing the reliability coefficients of .93. This value was highly significant and reliable. Sum mean recorded was 2.80 while the standard deviation was 1.40. Cronbach's Alpha's ranged between .93 to .93 for the individual items on the questionnaire and the overall value was .93. This result thus satisfied the acceptable condition for Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis.

Construct and Content Validity

Component factor analysis was used for digesting manifest variables into their latent variables.

This was to ensure that the questions on the questionnaires were not misunderstood and misinterpreted to the parents by their children, more so, when the researcher did not have the opportunity of meeting directly with the parents. Students who were the children of the parents liaised between the researcher and their parents.

Principal Component Analysis was employed for data reduction and extraction helping to determine underlying factors of the constructed items or variables that were more prominent and were considered influential by the parents.

Running the analysis on IBM SPSS 21.0 version, the data recorded a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) of .94 with Bartlett's Test value of .001. The value was highly significant and thus reliable. The result is presented in table 1. 1. below:

Table 1. 1. Measure of Sampling Adequacy

Kaiser- Meyer -Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.937
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity df.	435
Sig.	.000

The values of the communalities ranged between .6 and .7 except for about six items whose values were below .6; anti-image ranged between .7 and .9 for all the items while the eigenvalue was above 1. This result satisfied all the acceptable conditions of KMO and BTS. These ranges are presented in table 1. 2. as follow:

Table 1. 2. Anti-image Correlation, Communalities and Eigenvalues of Parents' Data

S/N	Items.	Cronbach Reliab	Anti-image	Communality	Eigen values
1	My child is encouraged to choose Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.94	.58	10.71
2	My child has freedom to choose Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.92	.67	2.23
3	Islamic Studies is not necessary for my child in SSS 3.	.93	.78	.66	1.52
4	Islamic Studies is meant for teaching job.	.93	.85	.59	1.30
5	Future intention of my child requires Islamic Studies.	.93	.94	.59	1.13
6	I like my child to study Islamic Studies in the university.	.93	.95	.62	1.08
7	Government policy favours Islamic Studies in in SSS 3.	.93	.95	.56	.88
8	Islamic Studies is necessary for Science and Commercial students.	.93	.93	.59	.82
9	Schools register science and commercial students for Islamic Studies in WAEC exams.	.93	.91	.58	.72
10	Students have freedom to choose Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.94	.65	.71
11	Government policy promotes teaching of Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.90	.70	.66
12	There is adequate provision for Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.94	.65	.64
13	My child needs Islamic Studies in WAEC and NECO examinations.	.93	.95	.68	.61
14	I encourage my child to register for Islamic Studies in WAEC and NECO exams.	.93	.96	.64	.58
15	Science and commercial students need Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.93	.59	.58
16	All students are encouraged to register for Islamic Studies in	.93	.95	.50	.53

WAEC examinations.					
17	Islamic Studies is necessary for my child's university admission	.93	.96	.56	.51
18	Islamic Studies is well considered in WAEC and NECO guidelines.	.93	.96	.45	.49
19	I encourage my child to study Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.95	.67	.44
20	I provide necessary materials for my child in Islamic Studies.	.93	.97	.56	.44
21	I want my child to study Islamic Studies in the university.	.93	.96	.52	.42
22	I support the teaching of Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.93	.97	.59	.40
23	Choosing Islamic Studies in SSS 3 will deny my child choosing an important subject.	.93	.70	.70	.39
24	To me, Islamic Studies is not necessary in university admission.	.93	.70	.58	.36
25	Knowledge and skills acquired in Islamic Studies enhance job marketability.	.93	.93	.54	.35
26	Islamic Studies curriculum imparts knowledge and practical skills.	.93	.94	.59	.32
27	Islamic Studies curriculum content stresses too much of religion.	.93	.95	.52	.31
28	I encourage my child to study Islamic Studies for life shaping.	.93	.95	.62	.26
29	Available job opportunities nowadays favour Islamic Studies graduates.	.93	.95	.60	.23
30	Islamic Studies graduates are more suitable for teaching job.	.93	.94	.54	.22

The researcher retained items with factor loading of .50 and above in order to extract correctly factors which actually had high influence on the parental disposition on children studying Islamic Studies in schools. The Rotated matrix using varimax rotation resulted in 16 items being extracted from the pool of 30 items. This had anti-image range of between .5 and .9 among the items and the eigenvalue above 1. This appears in table 1. 3. below along with anti-image and eigenvalues:

Table 1. 3. Results of Rotated Component Matrix, Anti – image, Eigenvalues and Communalities of Parents’ Data

S/N	Items	Rotated Component Matrix.				Cronbach Alpha	Anti-image	Eigen values	Communalities
		Parents Market ability	Govt policy	Waec role	Subject choice				
3	Islamic Studies is not necessary for my child in SSS 3.				.85	.88	.64	5.88	.75
4	Islamic Studies is meant for teaching job.				.70	.88	.81	1.46	.62
9	Schools register science and commercial students for Islamic Studies in WAEC exams.		.53			.87	.90	1.27	.38
10	Students have freedom to choose Islamic Studies in SSS 3.		.74			.87	.91	1.08	.66
11	Government policy promotes teaching of Islamic Studies in SSS 3.		.82			.87	.85	.88	.72
12	There is adequate provision for Islamic Studies in SSS 3.		.59			.87	.90	.70	.57
13	My child needs Islamic Studies in WAEC and NECO examinations.			.57		.86	.91	.62	.63
15	Science and commercial students need Islamic Studies in SSS 3.			.78		.87	.85	.58	.64
16	All students are encouraged to register for Islamic Studies in WAEC examinations.			.67		.87	.91	.56	.59
17	Islamic Studies is necessary for my child's university admission			.57		.86	.95	.53	.57
19	I encourage my child to study Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.73				.86	.91	.46	.67
20	I provide necessary materials for my child in Islamic Studies.	.66				.86	.92	.43	.56
22	I support the teaching of Islamic Studies in SSS 3.	.69				.86	.94	.41	.59
26	Islamic Studies curriculum imparts knowledge and practical skills.	.66				.87	.92	.38	.53
28	I encourage my child to study Islamic Studies for life shaping.	.73				.86	.93	.37	.62
30	Islamic Studies graduates are	.69				.87	.91	.30	.52

The researcher employed the eigenvalue of 1 and above to retain the factor and used scree plot to cross-check the result. The process enhanced the readability of the data and made more meaningful the extracted factors. The data yielded good result with eigenvalue greater than 1 which accounted for 58.16 (%) percentage of proportion variance. Also, the degree of inter-correlation among items reached the acceptable level which ranged between 1.09 and 4.57. This result prompted the researcher to further proceed on confirmatory factor analysis.

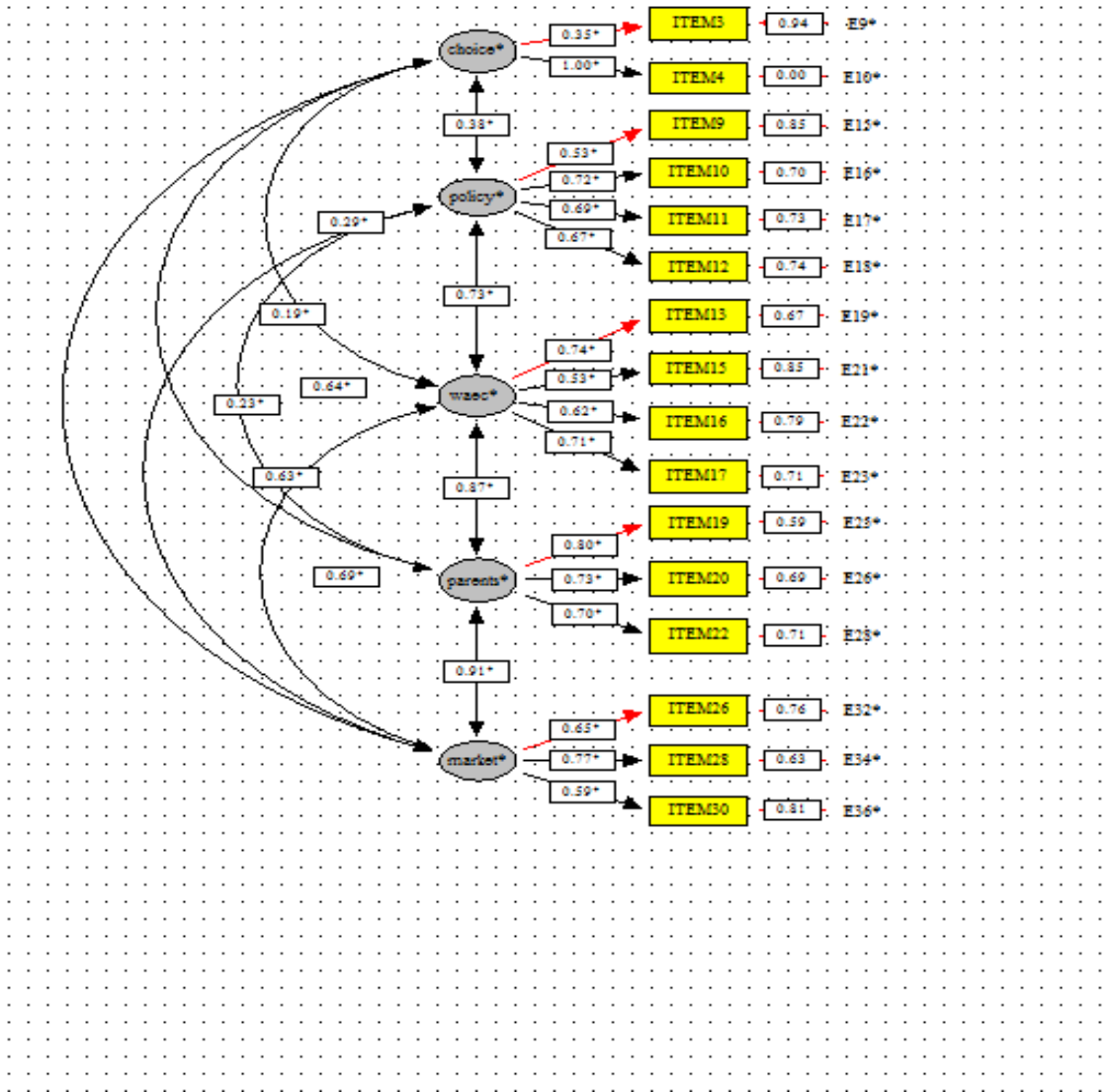
Confirmatory Factor Analysis

From the 30 items in the initial scale of measurement, 16 items were eventually extracted following the result of the factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis was further conducted to test the domains and variables observed. Resultantly, the Chi square recorded = 294.623 (94 df), P value = .000, GFI recorded = .929, AGFI gotten = .897, CFI recorded = .924, TLI recorded = .903, and RMSEA gotten = .067.

Initial five factors *subject choice, government policy, WAEC influence, parents' role and the influence of job marketability* assumed by the researcher were confirmed. There was high correlation of .92 between the *influence of job marketability and parents' role*. *Job marketability recorded a correlation of .69 with WAEC registration while it recorded a correlation of .63 with the role of government policy.*

Also, there was high correlation of .87 between the *role of parents and WAEC's registration*, while there was a correlation of .64 between the *parents and government policy*. *WAEC recorded a correlation of .73 with the government policy.* Diagrammatic analysis of the confirmatory factor analysis result is reflected below in figure 1. 2:

Figure 1. 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

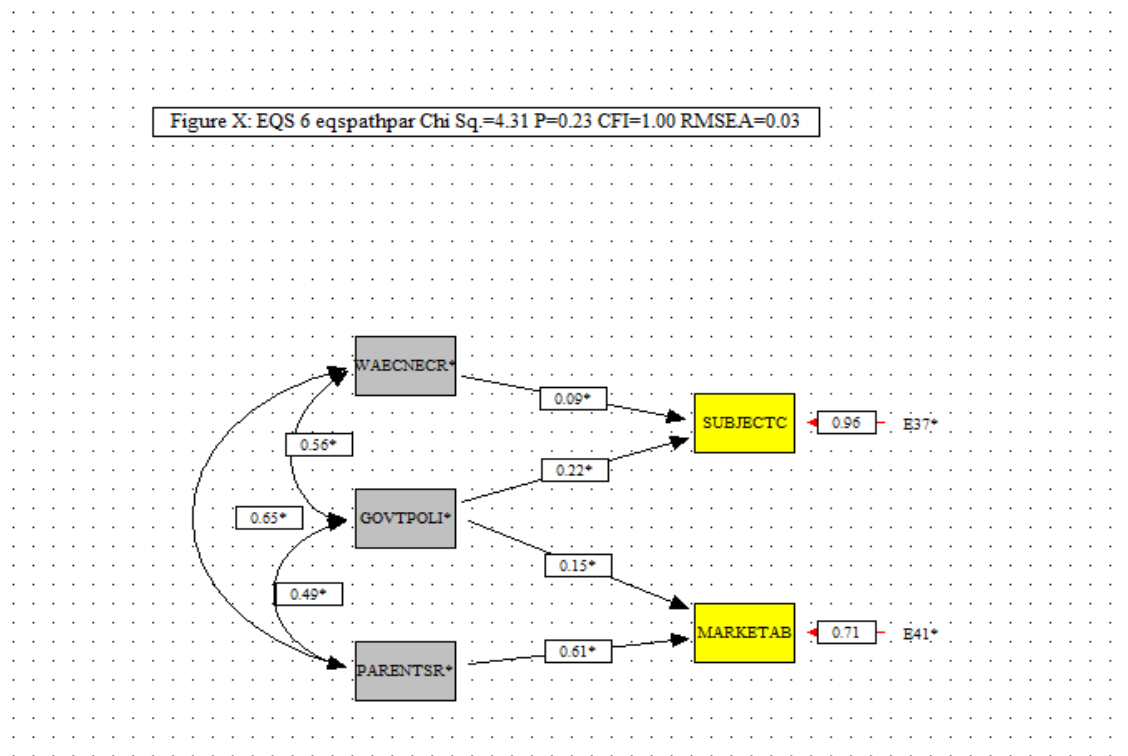


The data met all the acceptable criteria set by the researcher for confirmatory factor analysis and it further showed that parents played a very significant role in the choice of subject of their children. The analysis recorded the highest correlation between parents and job marketability which was an indication that parents would not want their children acquire any knowledge which they felt would not be able to guarantee their children getting jobs easily. Such subject in their perception is Islamic Studies and the more reason why majority of the parents would not be favourably disposed to their children studying Islamic Studies in the school. Further analysis was provided using EQS structural equation modeling with path analysis.

Path Analysis

Results of model test of fit indicated that the chi-square value = 4.243, P value = .000, NFI value score = 0.995, NNFI value = 0.995, IFI = 0.998, GFI = .996, AGFI = .982, CFI = .998, TLI = .995, and RMSEA = .030. The result met the acceptable criteria set by researchers for path analysis using EQS. The path model analysis is reflected below in figure 1. 3:

Figure 1.3. Path Model Analysis



The path analysis model also retained all the pre-assumed five factors which the researcher hypothesized to be affecting parental disposition of their children studying Islamic Studies in schools. It was interesting to note that *Waec / Neco registration, government policy and parents* were all correlated together. It was also interesting to observe that two dependent or endogenous variables emerged from this model. These were *subject choice and job marketability*.

Waec / Neco registration had direct influence on *choice of subject selection* on the one hand while *government policy and parents* had direct influence on *job marketability* on the other. However, *Waec / Neco registration, government policy and parents* had indirect influence on *subject choice and job marketability* at the same time.

Based on this model specification, *parental choice and government policy influenced marketability*, while *WAEC and government policy affected subject choice selection*. However, the analysis found that *subject choice selection and job marketability* were independent and not connected.

The study further found out that WAEC ($r = .09$, $p = .001$) and government policy ($r = .22$, $p = .001$) were statistically and positively correlated with choice of subject selection. On the other hand, parental influence ($r = .51$, $p = .001$) and government policy were also statistically and positively correlated with job marketability.

This analysis then suggested that with the position of job marketability in this model, marketability played a highly significant role in the parental disposition to children's study of Islamic Studies particularly at the senior secondary school level because this was the determinant level at which students would decide what their future would be in terms of the subjects they would choose which would lead them to promising job opportunities and future incomes to sustain their living and take care of the family members. It was observed that parents were not favourably disposed to their children studying Islamic Studies based on future job marketability which did not favour the choice of Islamic Studies as a subject. Although *subject choice* was the dependent variable, it was interesting to note that *job marketability* also emerged as another dependent variable as well. This analysis further led to answering of the research questions.

Research Question 1

What subjects do most students normally choose at the senior secondary school level?

The Nigerian educational policy provides 60% quota for the science and technological education while 40 % quota is earmarked for the humanities and social sciences. (NPE 2004) The policy also categorized the subjects into compulsory and elective statuses at the senior secondary school level. This development made the parents to be favourably disposed to core subjects and become indisposed to the others among which is Islamic Studies. Hence parents were not favourably disposed to their children studying Islamic Studies which the government policy has tagged elective. Students too aspire to choose subjects in the sciences and commercial areas. Consequently, students normally prefer to choose subjects in the sciences and those labeled compulsory while running away from those not under compulsory status.

Research Question 2

What is the role of government policy in the selection of subjects by senior secondary school students?

The analysis showed that government policy had either direct or indirect influence on the choice of subjects as depicted by the analysis model. More recognition has been given to sciences and commercial subjects in lieu of arts subjects. Islamic Studies is not favoured by the Nigerian government policy and does not suit the choice of parents, hence this made parents dissuade their children from studying it at whatever level of education where they had the option. Parents wanted their children to choose subjects labeled as core subjects. This development has negative effect on the parental disposition of children studying Islamic Studies in schools.

Research Question 3

What is the role of senior secondary examinations bodies on the selection of subjects by senior secondary school students?

The recognized senior secondary school examinations bodies in Nigeria are the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO). The role played by these examinations bodies on the parental disposition of children's choice of subject was highly significant. The significance of WAEC / NECO registration was felt in the path model analysis which reflected that this element had direct relationship with parental disposition on their children studying Islamic Studies. Hence parents were more disposed to children writing and passing other subjects apart from Islamic Studies upon which the bodies would issue certificates which could be used to secure admissions into the university.

Research Question 4

What is the influence of parents on the choice of subject selection by students at the senior secondary school level?

Reflections from path analysis indicted that parents played a significant role on the choice of subjects chosen by their children in the senior secondary school examinations. The analysis also reflected that parents had direct influence on job marketability and an indirect influence on subject choice selection. Government policy and job marketability had direct influence on the parents which was an indication that parents would consider the future of their children before advising them on the subjects to choose at the senior secondary school level. Parents were the financiers of their children's education, hence would influence the choice of subjects their wards would choose to satisfy them in meeting future prosperity which they thought Islamic Studies would not be able to meet as corroborated by Maududi (nd), Rosnani (2007) and Nordin (2012).

Research Question 5

What is the role of job marketability on the selection of subjects by senior secondary school students?

All that the parents wanted was what would give their children job after schooling. Hence their disposition to teaching any subject was aimed at provision of job marketability. To them, any subject that could not do this was not worth studying. Islamic Studies is among the subjects which parents felt would not be able to do this. (Anour 1981, Dean 2005, Rosnani 2007, Azra 2011, Lik 2011). The fear of the future and the hope of securing good employments was a propelling force for determining the choice of subjects parents would guide their children to choose at the senior secondary school level, because this is the level which would determine the future as far as they were concerned.

Conclusion

The analysis presented job marketability as co - elements at the same level with subject choice. This equally indicated that parents were more favourably disposed to job marketability upon which they would guide their children on the choice of subject. The study further confirmed that Islamic Studies was not considered among the lucrative subjects, so, no parent would want his child to register for it at the senior class level, this being the more reason why parents have negative disposition to their children studying it in schools. Parents were more favourably disposed to subjects that would guarantee their children *job marketability*. This is what Islamic Studies would not be able to do for now because of the curriculum content which emphasized spirituality at the expense of practicality. To make Islamic Studies up to the task to enhance job marketability, the present curriculum would have to be reviewed to accommodate practical oriented courses, Islamic financial theories and computer appreciation courses which would be taught along with Islamic principles as consented to by researchers like Dean (2005), Rosnani (2007), Azra (2011), Lik (2011), Nordin (2012) and others. This study has identified the role of job marketability as a key element propelling parental disposition to subjects that they would want their children to study and why the choice of Islamic Studies was not favoured by parents because it was assumed that it could not guarantee this at the moment.

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