

The Challenges of Islamization of Knowledge in Nigerian Islamic Universities

Adebayo, Rafiu Ibrahim^a

ABSTRACT: A sort of revolution seems to have occurred in the education sector of the Muslim world consequent upon the First World Conference on Muslim Education held at Makkah in 1977, followed by others in different parts of the Muslim world. Part of the successes of these conferences was the establishment of international Islamic universities in some countries, as well as proliferation of intellectual institutions and organizations championing the course of Islamization of knowledge programme. In Nigeria, since 1999 at least four private Islamic universities have received licences of operation. Muslim owned universities tend to pursue the Islamization of knowledge programme rigorously. Nevertheless, certain stumbling blocks seem to have made this a mirage. This paper therefore intends to expose some of the stumbling blocks against the implementation of the Islamization of knowledge programme in Nigerian Islamic universities. To do justice to this, visitations were paid to the concerned institutions in Nigeria while libraries were consulted to have insight into the programme at international levels. Among the challenges encountered are: lack of a universally accepted model of Islamization; shortage of staff who are capable of doing Islamization; problems with funding the Islamization programme; many students not being interested in Islamization; and challenges related to the language of instruction. Based on our findings, some suggestions were made to facilitate effective implementation of the programme in the institutions that are believed to be fertile land for the development and execution of the Islamization of knowledge programme.

Keywords: Challenges, Islamization, Nigeria, Islamic universities

a PhD, and Associate Professor, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, Email: adrafglory@gmail.com.

Introduction

Prior to the 1977 World Conference on Muslim Education, there had been the feeling that the Muslim world was backward educationally and that the type of education it was exposed to was diametrically opposed to its worldview. Some Muslim reformers were very optimistic of the fact that the only way forward for the Muslims to overcome their social decadence and intellectual backwardness was to reform their education system. This is reflected in the writings of Muslim reformers like Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Syed Jamal-ad-Din Afghani (1838-1897), Rashid Rida (1865-1935), Maulana Abul-A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979), Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), and Sayyid Qutb (1906 – 1966), to mention but a few. The reform efforts of these personalities, though not mainly on education, realised that such reform efforts could hardly be attained without reforming education. This is because, in the word of al-Afghani, cited by Abdul Rahim (1997) “education, if it is good, produces perfection from imperfection and nobility from baseness.” However, some steps taken by these reformers to reform Muslim education could not be said to be flawless. For instance the reformation of the Islamic educational system adopted by Ahmad Khan has been considered as being a step at de-Islamizing and demoralising the Muslim community, which, rather than improving the quality of Islamic learning, only succeeded in imposing on it alien ideas and values, as well as propagating Western values among Muslims. Scholars like Jamal-ad-Din Afghani saw this strategy as Khan’s deliberate attempt to sell out the Muslim world to the West for his own selfish end (Safdar, 2013). That notwithstanding, they prepared the minds of the *ummah* to realise the need to be more committed to educational revolution in the Muslim land. For instance, soon after Pakistan came into existence in 1947, the *Islami Jami'at –e-Talaba* (Organization of Muslim Students in Pakistan) started a vigorous campaign for true Islamic education in the country (Sultan, 1997). Apart from this, as far back as the early 70’s, the Muslim Student Association of the USA and Canada started to undertake research in Islamization of education through some major professional associations like the Islamic Medical Association, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists and Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers. The effort at Islamizing education reached its zenith in 1977 when the first World Conference on Muslim Education was held. Ever since then, few others have been organised so far. They

were held in Islamabad (1980), Dhaka (1981), Jakarta (1982), Cairo (1987), Cape Town (1996) and Malaysia (2009 and 2015).

These world conferences were highly successful and fruitful, as they led to the emergence of many intellectual organizations to address the issues of Islamization of knowledge. The World Centre for Islamic Education now renamed the Centre for Research in Islamic Education, the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), the International Institute of Islamic Science and Technology (IIIST), the International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR), the Institute of Islamic Education and Research, the Islamic Academy, and Darul-Ihsan Trust are some of the intellectual bodies established for the purpose of seeing to the jihad of the Islamization of knowledge undertaking (Adebayo, 2008).

Another giant stride in the development of Islamic education consequent upon the world conferences was the establishment of some international Islamic universities in Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Niger and Uganda. The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) also established the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in the United States.

In Nigeria, Muslim individuals and organizations started establishing private universities in 2005 when three private Islamic universities were given licences of operation, and in 2007 Fountain University of the Nasrullahil-Fathi organization was added to it to make them four altogether. It is not an exaggeration to say that the main focus of these private universities is to pursue the Islamization of knowledge programme vigorously. This paper therefore intends to shed light on the extent these universities have gone on the Islamization programme, as well as identify those factors that do not work in favour of achieving their Islamization objectives.

The Development of Private Islamic Universities in Nigeria

The Olusegun Obasanjo civilian administration marked a new epoch in the history of university education in Nigeria in 1999 when three private universities were licensed to operate. The Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State, Babcock University Ilisan Remo, Ogun State and Madonna University Okija, Anambra State, thus, became the first set of approved

private universities in Nigeria. In 2001, Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State joined the list. The third batch of the approved private universities was released in 2002. They are Benson Idahosa University, Benin, Pan-African University, Lagos, and Covenant University, Ota. A year later the ABTI-American University, Yola, was added. In 2005, the National Universities Commission (NUC) approved fifteen private universities. In 2006, Joseph Ayo Babalola University was given approval. The following year (2007), ten other universities were granted licences to operate. Currently, the total number of private universities in Nigeria is sixty-one.

It is observed that most of the approved private universities are situated in the south-western part of the country. The reason for this could possibly be associated with Nigerian politics, the cumulative effects of the free education programme being run in the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) ruling states which gave opportunities for their citizens to have free access to primary and secondary education. It is also observed that out of the current sixty-one private universities in Nigeria, only five are prominently owned by Muslim individuals or organizations. Their involvement in the establishment of private universities commenced in 2005, whereas their Christian counterparts had commenced much earlier in 1999. Since 2007, none of the approved universities was established by any Muslim individual or organization. However, the initial claim that Adeleke University in Ede was established by a one-time Governor of Osun State, who is a Muslim, Alhaji Isiaka Adeleke, has been found to be inaccurate, as the university was founded by a Christian member of the former Governor's family (Adebayo, 2014). Also, Oduduwa University, which takes its name from the progenitor of the Yoruba race, seems to have hidden the identity of its founder, whereas the President and Pro-Chancellor of the University, Chief (Dr) R.A. Adedoyin, has a Muslim background. The table below shows the list of private Islamic universities in Nigeria to date.

Table 1 – List of Islamic Universities in Nigeria

S/N	Name of University	Date of Licensing	of Founder
1	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State	January, 2005	Abdur-Rahim Oladimeji Islamic Foundation
2	Al-Qalam University, Katsina, Katsina State	January, 2005	Katsina Islamic Foundation

3	Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun State	June, 2005	Islamic Movement for Africa of Prince Bola Ajibola
4	Fountain University, Osogbo, Osun State	May, 2007	Nasrul-Lahi-l-Fathi Society of Nigeria, (NASEFAT)
5.	Summit University, Offa, Kwara State	2015	Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria

Katsina Islamic Foundation could be regarded as the first Muslim community organization in Nigeria to establish a private community-based Islamic university. Their effort was boosted by the State government's assistance to the community by allocating a piece of land, covering 246 hectares (608 acres), for the body. Eventually, the Federal Government officially registered the University as Katsina University, admitting 400 candidates to the Colleges of Natural and Applied Sciences; Social and Management Sciences and Humanities (National Universities Commission, 2005). The University has recently changed its name to Al-Qalam University.

Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, was founded by Abdur-Rahim Oladimeji Islamic Foundation. The university was given licence to operate in January 2005, with initial intakes of 350 foundation undergraduate students, and a total population of 5,000 eventually. Colleges of Natural Sciences; Engineering and Technology; Humanities; and Management Sciences were the start-up faculties, as phase one of the University (National Universities Commission, 2005).

Crescent University Abeokuta is the first Islamic university in the south-western Nigeria and was established by Prince Bola Ajibola, consequent upon his establishment of the Islamic Movement for Africa (IMA) in 1996. The aim of the Islamic Movement for Africa is to reform the propagation of Islam and establish a citadel of learning which would combine Islamic moral education with western education to serve as a basis for moral re-awakening and rejuvenation in the society. The National Universities Commission (NUC) approved the establishment of the University in June 2005, and it commenced its academic programmes in December 2005, with three Colleges, namely, College of Information and Communication Technology; College of Natural and Applied Sciences, and College of Social and Management Sciences.

Fountain University, Osogbo, was established by a renowned Islamic prayer group – Nasrullahil-Fathi Society of Nigeria, popularly identified with the acronym NASFAT. At the initial stage, the body focused mainly on prayers, but later delved into establishing a nursery, primary and secondary schools in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Kaduna and Niger states. In January 2004, the National Executive Council of the association, the Board of Trustee and the Council of Elders constituted an Academic Brief Review Committee to work harmoniously with the University Project Committee led by a one-time Vice-Chancellor of University of Agriculture Abeokuta (UNAAB) and some notable academics across Nigerian universities. The outcome of the session was the decision to have a university and this was licensed by the Federal Government on May 17th 2007, with the name Fountain University established in Osogbo, the Osun State capital, under the first Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hussein, O.B. Oloyede. The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council was Professor Nurudeen O. Adedipe, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The University commenced operation with only two colleges, namely College of Applied and Natural Sciences and College of Social and Management Sciences.

It needs to be mentioned that the National Universities Commission (NUC) has issued a licence to operate to Summit University, Offa of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria in 2015. However, the university has not commenced operation.

The Concept of Islamization of knowledge in the Nigerian Context

Ever before the coming of the colonial masters to Nigeria, Islamic education had been seen as part and parcel of Islam, hence the development of Qur'anic schools and *Madrasah* in all the nooks and crannies of Muslim communities in Nigeria. The Sokoto caliphate, under the auspices of Shaykh Uthman ibn Fudi, saw Islamic education as a means of using education to change the entire life of the people for better; hence it took education as a serious business. However, the advent of the colonialists truncated this effort and substituted the hitherto flourishing Islamic education with the Western system of education, which the Muslims reluctantly accepted. The demonstration of the dissatisfaction of the Muslims to the type of education brought by the

colonialists, and subsequently the Christian missionaries, was evident in their refusal to enrol their wards in the more sophisticated Christian schools, despite the operationally crude and traditional nature of the Qur'anic schools. However, some Muslims who were able to acquire the Western education championed the cause of establishing Muslim societies like the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission, Ansar-Ud-Deen society, Ansarul-Islam Society, and Anwar-Ud-Deen society among others. Such Muslim organizations rose to the task of establishing schools where Muslim children could have both the Western and Islamic education. In this way, Muslim children would not have to sacrifice their religion in the name of acquiring the Western system of education. This method adopted by them seems to be a method of Islamizing knowledge at the primary school level before it later moved to the secondary stage of education. In essence, the introduction of Islamic Religious Knowledge to the curriculum of the Western school system came to be understood as Islamizing knowledge. This method was equally adopted by some public universities especially in the northern part of the country. Later, Islam-related courses were introduced into some departments other than the Department of Islamic Studies.

At the university level, the Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, introduced some Islam-related courses into their Department of Economics, Management Studies, Sociology, Political Science and the Faculty of Education; it went as far as recruiting lecturers from various disciplines to undergo programmes designed for developing scholarship in Islam and promoting the teaching of various branches of knowledge from the Islamic perspective. Bayero University also has some Islam-based courses introduced to the Faculties of Arts and Islamic Studies, Law, Education and Social and Management Sciences at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Adebayo, 2008).

Guided by the above understanding of the Islamization of knowledge, the concept is defined by Sulaiman (2000) as “an attempt through which those aspects of the body of knowledge and purpose of knowledge and of the process and methodologies of discovering, validating, imparting and applying it, which oppose Islam, are identified and made subservient to the Islamic worldview.” Another Nigerian educationist and an apostle of the Islamization of knowledge programme, Shehu (1998) sees it as

an attempt to reorient and recast knowledge to conform to the Islamic belief system and worldview. That notwithstanding, Lemu (1995) does not feel comfortable with the term Islamization of knowledge, as it gives the impression that knowledge was not itself Islamic and thus needed to be reframed and coloured to be made so. Lemu, therefore prefers the term ‘Conceptual Transformation of knowledge.’ Whatever the case may be, the term Islamization or Islamicization of knowledge has been adopted and accepted by most scholars in the field.

The major objective of the Islamization of knowledge programme is to ensure a balanced system of education through interaction between the belief system, the knowledge system and the value system which is lacking in the Muslim educational system as a result of their adoption of the Western system of education. According to Oloyede (2000), “the belief system incorporates the nature of man as an embodiment of matter, intellect and soul; the knowledge system recognises the highest source of knowledge as the Divine Source as expounded by the belief system; while the value system gives prominence to ethics of the belief system and the products of the knowledge system.” Apart from this, the programme of the Islamization of knowledge goes beyond restricting spiritual training or knowledge about God to “Islamic Studies” as a subject on the curriculum. Rather, all other disciplines should be tailored towards attaining spiritual development. The next subheading of the paper discusses some of the challenges facing the existing private Islamic universities in Nigeria.

Divergent strategies in the curriculum

It is observed that the strategies of the private Islamic universities, as far as Islamization of knowledge programme is concerned, differ. While some prefer having pure Islamic Studies Departments, some combine this with having Islamic related courses as general courses in the universities to be taken by all the students regardless of the program of study. This is true of the three Islamic Universities in the south-western Nigeria. Crescent University, Abeokuta, differs a bit. It has a Department of General and Islamic Religious Studies, and it offers courses leading to the B.Sc. in Islamic Studies with Banking and Finance and B.Sc. Islamic Studies with Actuarial Sciences. This combination to us is a right step in the right direction. This seems to satisfy the needs of some parents

who would not want to sponsor their children to pursue Islamic Studies, with exorbitant fees being paid in private universities. Apart from this, a combination of vocational courses with Islamic Studies would assist Islamic Studies graduates to be self-dependent and self-employed after their graduation. Recently, however, Crescent University established a Center for Islamic Studies Development (CISD). The Center offers the programmes listed in the table below:

Table 2: Programmes of the Crescent University's Center for Islamic Studies Development

S/N	Programme		Duration	Prospect
1.	Diploma Programme (DCP) in Islamic and Computer Studies	Certificate	2 semesters	Admission into the Degree Programme of the University.
2.	Intermediate Programme (ICP) in Islamic and Computer Studies	Certificate	2 semesters	Admission into the Diploma Programme of the University.
3.	Foundation Programme (FCP) in Islamic and Computer Studies	Certificate	2 semesters	It assists graduates from Islamic schools to gain admission into intermediate Certificate Programme of the University.
4.	Certificate in Islamic Banking and Finance (CIBF)		2 semesters	For professional bankers and other experts willing to acquire further skills based on Islamic banking principles

Source: www.crescentuniversity.edu.ng

Crescent University, Abeokuta, also has some General Courses that are Islam-based and which must be taken by all students of the University, regardless of their program of study. Specifically, the College of Social and Management Sciences of the University has some Islam-related

courses whereby a passing grade is mandatory. The Department of Accounting offers such Islam-based courses as BFN 210 – Introduction to Islamic Banking; BFN 309 – Islamic Financial System; BFN 304 – Regulatory Framework of Islamic Banking and Finance; and a one-unit Seminar in Islamic Banking. Furthermore, the Department of Economics and Actuarial Sciences of the University offers ECO 206 – Introduction to Islamic Economics and BFN 307 – Islamic Financial System. In the same vein, the Banking and Finance Programme of the University offers BFN 210 – Introduction to Islamic Banking; BFN 307 – Islamic Financial System and BFN 403 – Seminar in Islamic Banking (Crescent University Undergraduate Prospectus, 2005-2008). This is also true of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin.

Considering the general curriculum of the existing private Islamic universities in Nigeria, Adebayo (2010) observes that:

The curriculum of some of these universities is as secular as other contemporary universities. The most pathetic of it all is that for a period of four academic sessions, students from departments other than Islamic Studies Department, if any, may offer only four Islamic-related courses throughout their tenure in the university. In short, some of these universities will remain Islamic by virtue of their names, while their products will lack the much-cherished flavour of Islamic education. Another sad point is that some of these private Islamic universities do not mount Islamic Studies and Arabic as courses to be offered. Where there is any at all, few students offer it. This is because most parents are not ready to pay or that they cannot afford the exorbitant school fees charged by these institutions.

Lack of a model Islamized University education system

It needs to be stressed that despite the fact that many institutions are springing up for the purpose of Islamizing knowledge and despite the establishment of some Islamic universities for the implementation of the decisions reached in the various conferences on Islamic education, it is observed that most of the Muslim countries are yet to have a model curriculum based on the various conferences. For example, the Islamic University in Bangladesh was established with the objective of Islamizing modern knowledge, yet instead of doing this, it has the same

old courses in political science, commerce, Islamic history and some others (Naqi, 1987). This is also the situation in Pakistan where the problem of bifurcation of education still persists. The non-availability of a model Islamic institution on Islamization of knowledge has resulted in designing different curricula to suit individual environments. It has also created lack of vision and clarity about the concept of Islamic education. In some instances, instruction in the fundamentals of religion has been erroneously taken to mean Islamization of knowledge. This obstacle to Islamization of knowledge programme is observed by Al-Faruqi (1988) who laments:

It is most regrettable that the Muslim world is still devoid of a centre where thinking on this high level takes place. What is needed is a university, which acts as headquarters for Islamic thought, where the disciplines undergo Islamization and the process gets tested in the class and seminar rooms of the undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Until Islamic University of Islamabad entered into collaboration with the International Institute of Islamic Thought, not one educational institution in the Muslim world had moved a finger to Islamize knowledge, to produce Islamic textbooks for college use in the disciplines, or the tools of research necessary for the writing of these textbooks. And yet, everywhere in the Muslim world one hears of the need to Islamize education, its men and institutions, its curricula and textbooks. On the official level where the power to decide rests, one finds little more than lip-service, either made by the ignorant or designed otherwise to mislead the masses.

The multi-religious nature of Nigerian society however is perhaps highly responsible for the inability of its Islamic universities to uphold the Islamization project with all seriousness. This is not peculiar to Nigeria; even in Malaysia where Islam is declared the official religion, a sort of cautious Islamization is in operation, so as not to hurt the feeling of adherents of other religions. This forced the first Prime Minister of Malaysia to remark that “too much emphasis on religion will lead to misunderstanding, as Malaysia is a country of mixed population and mixed religions, and would not be congenial to the happy relationship that exist among the people today” (Wan Daud, 1989).

The above notwithstanding, the International Islamic University, Malaysia, has been making efforts at making the institution a model of

Islamic university to be emulated by others. Apart from having a distinct Kuliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, it has produced quite a good number of textbooks which discussed topical issues and concepts from the perspectives of Islam. The University has also hosted some international and national conferences on Islamization of Knowledge and other Islam-related issues.

The Challenge of Personnel

Generally speaking, many of the private universities in the country raked their staff from the existing public universities. Many of them have few full-time academic staff and rely only on part-time academic staff or rather visiting staff who are on sabbatical leave from their universities. Most of the staff in private universities are young graduates who are still pursuing their doctorate degrees and are ready to leave for public universities where the conditions of service are attractive. A proprietor of a university shared his experience with us that he was planning to send a staff abroad to carry out a research when that staff suddenly resigned his appointment from the university when he had a better offer in a federal university. The table below shows the strength of the teaching staff of Fountain University, Osogbo, indicating their religion and status.

Table 3: Fountain University Osogbo Lecturers' strength

Department	No. of lecturers	Muslims	Christians	Ph D holders	Professor
Accounting	7	6	1	1	-
Biological Sciences	8	8	-	3	1
Business Administration	5	2	3	3	-
Chemical Sciences	8	8	-	4	-
Economics	6	6	-	2	1
Political Science and Industrial Relations	4	3	1	1	1

Physics, Electronics and Earth Sciences	4	4	1	1	-
Psychology and Sociology	3	3	-	3	-

Source: www.fountain.edu.ng

The Challenge of Funding

Another major challenge of private universities is sourcing for fund by the proprietors of these institutions. Stressing this fact, Sijuwola (2010) highlights some of the expenditure profiles to which funds are devoted in a university. These include: remuneration, research, vehicles, staff quarters, hostels, electricity and water generation, sanitation and other maintenance. Others are public relations, capital projects, security, libraries and laboratories, pension contribution, environmental upgrading, insurance, conferences, staff training and development, committee services and games.

It needs to be mentioned that funds are mainly available to publicly-owned universities by the Government – state or federal. For instance, in addition to other financial commitments of the government to public universities, six public universities recently received a sum of N5.5 billion each from the Education Trust Fund’s special intervention fund. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Prof. Is-haq Oloyede recently disclosed that “the University has invested several millions of naira in availing staff hard and online library resources while a whopping sum over \$500 million in STEP-B is still available for researchers’ access” (Unilorin Bulletin, 2010).

At the international level, the universities in the United States outperformed their European counterparts by virtue of the huge amount the country spends on university education. While it spends an average of \$50,000 per student, Europe spends an average of \$12,000 (Ajadi, 2010). Thus, the quality and standard of a university could be enhanced through proper funding. Adequate funding paves the way for the provision of adequate facilities for teaching and research. It also plays an important role in attracting high quality academicians.

The big question then is how could private universities, which to a large extent, are run as business enterprises, pump such huge amounts of money into their institutions, or rather how could they source for

such huge amounts for the purpose of improving the standard of the institutions. With particular reference to Islamic universities, there is ample evidence to support the fact that they are grossly under-funded as they have limited sources of income. Most of them rely solely on whatever they are able to realise from their students as school fees. A comparative analysis of what obtains in their Christian counterparts, shows that where as much as half a million is charged as school fees, the Islamic ones go as low as N250,000 per session (approximately \$1,666). Even a university receives N50,000 (approximately \$ 333) per session from candidates offering Arabic and Islamic Studies as courses of study, though with the claim that an international body subsidises the balance.

The Challenge of students' enrolment

The population of most of the Islamic universities is not encouraging when compared to their Christian counterparts. This is accelerated by some Muslim parents' preference for Christian universities believing that such universities are of a higher standard, possibly because of the gigantic structures on the ground, or rather because of the wide disparity in the tuition fees, where the ranking of a university is measured by how exorbitant its charges are.

Furthermore, the Islamic background of students also constitutes another obstacle to the Islamization programme of these universities. Many of these candidates received their primary and secondary education from purely secular education backgrounds, where not a single iota of Islamization was offered. Some had never attended any Arabic or Islamic schools and so could only see Islamized courses in Islamic universities as mere academic courses only to be taken and passed.

The admission of non-Muslims into the Islamic universities further raises the issue of differences in the mode of dressing of the students. While Islam sees the whole body of a woman as "*aurah*" which must be totally covered, this might be considered as imposition by non-Muslims. An attempt to impose an Islamic mode of dressing on non-Muslim students poses a great challenge to private Islamic universities which could not compromise morality in the name of academic freedom. Although the case of non-Muslim students demanding for freedom of

worship on the university campus has not risen, as it happened in Bowen University in Iwo in Osun State, where Muslim students were denied the opportunity to worship on the campus, the Islamic universities must be ready to address such an issue in the nearest future.

The Challenge of Language of operation

Our previous work has identified the use of appropriate language in the Islamization programme as one of the major problems facing the programme in Nigeria. English has been the main language of communication in many parts of the world and through it such organizations and institutes like the International Institute of Islamic Thought, Pennsylvania; The Islamic Academy, Cambridge; the Islamic Institute of Advanced Studies, Washington; the Islamic Cultural Centre, London; the Islamic Foundation in Leicester and the Institute of Policy Studies in Islamabad, carry out their Islamization messages (Adebayo, 2004). On the other hand, Arabic is no doubt the original language of Islamization, being the language of the Qur'an and of the Prophet. There is however the question of the language to be adopted for teaching in Islamic private universities. This is particularly the case in Al-Hikmah University where some Arab-trained lecturers were soliciting for teaching some courses in Arabic, especially Islamic Studies. As laudable as this proposal is, its success is doubtful, as many of the students have never attended Arabic schools and so would find it extremely difficult to comprehend.

The issue of using either English or Arabic as the language of instruction for Islamic Studies has generated a lot of rancour among Muslim scholars especially between those trained in western universities and those from eastern universities. While those trained in Arab countries strongly uphold that no other language could be suitable for teaching Islamic Studies than its original language – Arabic, the western trained Muslim scholars emphasise competency in English as an essential prerequisite, in view of the fact that English is the official language of the nation. Shehu Sokoto (1991) identified some dangers in the use of the English language as a medium of instruction for Islamic Studies. These include difficulty in getting authentic translation from Arabic to English; misrepresentation of facts; excessive reliance on distorted, slanderous and blasphemous texts written by the orientalist

about Islam; and writings of half-baked Islamic scholars who could not even read the Qur'an in its original language.

While defending the use of English as the language of teaching and writing research findings in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University of Ibadan, Abdul Rahman (2010) sees no reason why English should not be the medium of teaching Islamic Studies, emphasising that it was possible for crusaders to manoeuvre their ways in Arab and Muslim lands during the crusade wars, because the orientalist who studied Arabic and Islam reported their findings on Arab and Muslim culture in their native tongues. He emphasises that the modern Arabic literature today is the product of the adoption and adaptation of western literary style into Arabic Literature. He rejects reference to the northern Nigerian Arabists as models by those in south-western Nigeria; as it is possible for Arab graduates in some parts of Nigeria to rise to the level of permanent secretary with little or no knowledge of English, whereas a South-west Arabist will have to go the extra mile to find his feet in civil or public service. He maintains that not many people appreciate that scholars of Arabic and Islamic Studies are daily digging out facts that could be helpful for the reconstruction of the Yoruba history and sociology because their reports and findings are communicated back to Arabs and not to their compatriots.

The Way out

The operation of private Islamic universities is a new development in Nigeria. The main objective of these universities is to provide a set of knowledge enriched with the Islamic worldview to students as packaged in the Islamization of knowledge programme. It could however be observed that the programme has not attained much acceptance in the universities due to some factors identified above. To assist these universities to pursue this programme to a level of appreciation, we suggest that the exploration of new markets for the Islamization of Knowledge projects through transnational education by the protagonists of the programme will help Islamic universities in Nigeria to appreciate the programme more. In this wise, rather than expecting international students coming down to the international Islamic universities, lecturers and professionals in the field should deem it fit to visit the universities in Nigeria for the purpose of taking them through the Islamization

curriculum. They would thus be relieved of wobbling amidst the western and Islamic curricula in the name of Islamization.

For Islamic universities to respond positively to the programme, they have to embrace internationalization as a means of grasping the proper concept of the Islamization programme, as well as collaborate with renowned universities in the field of the programme especially the international Islamic universities. This collaborative effort will help in pooling resources together for the purpose of upgrading and application of the programme in the universities. In short, Islamic universities in Nigeria could facilitate the much desired progress in the Islamization project if they maintain world-wide links with such reputable universities in the field.

Just as the Usmanu DanFodiyo University did when about to commence the Islamization programme in the university, the Islamic universities should recruit some lecturers from various disciplines to undergo a special programme designed for the purpose of developing scholarship in Islam, as well as promoting the teaching of various branches of knowledge from the Islamic perspective. Two methods were adopted for this exercise. Firstly, candidates were trained for the degrees of M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Islamic Economics, Islamic Sociology and the like, for students from the Department of Islamic Studies or Centre for Islamic Studies of the University, ably assisted and empowered by the International Islamic University, Malaysia, the Sains University, Malaysia, King Abdul-Aziz University and the International Islamic University, Islamabad. The second method is for students to undergo a degree programme in any conventional discipline after which they undertake additional training in Islamic Studies, Shari'ah and Arabic components to qualify them for the Islamization exercise. It is therefore our submission that each university should identify promising students for the purpose of sponsoring them to undertake any of the Islamized courses at postgraduate level. Such candidates will not only be knowledgeable in the traditional Islamic Studies, but also in at least, one other discipline, certified as authorities on the two disciplines. This however should be seen as a means to integrate the Western and Islamic education for the purpose of Islamizing the un-Islamic aspects of the former, knowing fully well that the Islamization of knowledge programme is premised upon extraction and development of concepts, theories and principles from the main sources of Islamic law.

To overcome the problem of funding, it will be better if these private universities could look inward for projects that could fetch them money. In the first instance, our universities should make themselves relevant to their immediate environment by conducting researches that will be useful for their immediate environment. Research is no doubt a key ingredient in the institutional identity of universities. Weakness in research of a university is a bad omen, as it risks intellectual erosion of its program of study, lose its critical ability to assess claims to knowledge, and become dependent on the outside supply of knowledge. Investment on relevant researches will attract to a university industries and factories which might be ready to sponsor such researches. Furthermore, our universities should delve into printing and publishing jobs by procuring relevant printing machines for the purpose. Apart from the fact that it will help to preserve the money which could have been spent to print the university documents outside the university, it will also attract writers to publish their works and consequently be a source of income for the university. Universities with vast land could also embark on planting of cash crops for them to generate funds in the nearest future.

For the purpose of sensitising Islamic universities with the programme of Islamization, we want to strongly recommend that the private Islamic universities should map out a strategy for organising annual conference on Islamization of knowledge with the main aim of rubbing minds together on how to forge ahead in the programme and as well as share experiences with other international Islamic universities on the programme. Annual conferences on such issues as Islamic Political Thought, Islamic Economic System, Islamic Management, Islamic Literature, Islam and Science, Islam and Democracy and issues of such nature will no doubt assist in bringing to limelight different views on them, while the proceedings of such conferences will be useful for the universities as references.

As for the language of operation, it is difficult to have a true understanding of Islam without a working knowledge of Arabic, while at the same time, the official language of the country could not be considered unimportant. As such, it is our suggestion that Islamic universities in Nigeria should go bilingual just like the International Islamic University, Pakistan. The acculturation process of the IIUM can also be adopted by ensuring that Arabic permeates the lifestyle and programmes of the university. Mere reference to a college as *Kuliyah*

speaks volumes to those who are not familiar with such before. By means of encouraging Arabic language in the Islamic universities in Nigeria, it should be made to enjoy the same treatment as the English language. This can be in the form of making those who are studying Arabic to have access to the linguistic and phonetic laboratories as enjoyed by students of English.

We equally wish to recommend that each university should encourage researches on different aspects of disciplines from the perspective of Islam. Research grants should be given to candidates whose research works comply with the Islamic paradigm. Also each university must set up a separate centre for Islamization of knowledge where issues related to the programme will be conducted. Not this alone, each university must design a work-plan for their Islamization programme. We want to submit that our Islamic universities should have a long term plan for the Islamization of knowledge programme. For instance, in the next 5 years, 25% of their courses must be Islam-based. By another 5 years, 35% of the courses must have been Islamized, etc.

Finally, various Muslim intellectual organizations like the IIIT and IET must not relent on their efforts at enlightening the existing Islamic universities on their Islamization responsibility via organization of seminars, conferences and workshops. Collaboration with these universities on aspects of Islamic perspectives on contemporary issues should also be encouraged. The universities should also organise international conferences on related issues from time to time. One needs to commend the Crescent University, Abeokuta, for recently organizing an international conference on Islamic Banking and Finance. It is hoped that the proceedings of the conference would be a rich source of information for researchers in the field. Also, the IIIT should take a proactive step at flooding the Islamic universities with relevant Islam-related textbooks on all fields of academic disciplines to facilitate their better understanding from the Islamic perspective. This is a veritable means of disseminating Islamized information to the world as enshrined in the Islamization work-plan of Al-Faruqi.

Conclusion

The summation of our efforts in the preceding pages is to underline the major responsibility of the Islamic universities springing up in contemporary Nigeria education sector, namely the Islamization of knowledge. Unless these universities are able to Islamize their curriculum in its entirety, they will continue to be a caricature of an Islamic university and mere extension of the conventional universities, and making no significant contribution to Islamic intellectualism. After all, some private universities in Nigeria established by Christian individuals are offering some Islam-related courses in some of their departments perhaps to attract Muslim candidates or for the sake of scholarship. What then is left for an Islamic university if it fails to Islamize its curriculum, which of course should be a distinctive measure which differentiates it from other conventional universities and not necessarily her Islamic name.

References

- Abdul Rahim, R. A (1997). "The Reformation of the Islamic Educational System: An Analysis of the Reformist's Point of View", *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 14 (3). 64.
- AbdulRahman, M.O. (2010). "The Future in our Footprints: A Case Study of Prof. I.A.B. Balogun". (A paper presented at the Third Ismail Balogun Memorial Lecture organised by Bodija Estates & Environs Muslim Community held on 15th August) 11-12.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2004). "Islamization of Knowledge: Its Inevitability and Problems of Practicability in Nigeria"; *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 21,(1 & 2).13.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2008). *Islamization of Knowledge: Global Developments, Individual Efforts and Institutional Contributions*. Kano: IIITN.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2010). "Prospects and Challenges of Private Universities in Nigeria: Focus on Islamic Missions' Universities" in Okojie, J., Oloyede, I. & Obanya, P. (eds), *50 years of University Education in Nigeria: Evolution, Achievements and Future Directions*. Ilorin: University of Ilorin & National Universities Commission.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2014), "Some Quality Control Indicators for the Nigerian Private Islamic Universities." *A Journal of Islamic Sciences and Muslim*

- Development*, Department of Islamic Studies, Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto. Series 10, 95-104.
- Ajadi, T.O. (2010). "Private Universities in Nigeria – The Challenges Ahead"; *American Journal of Scientific Research*, 7. 15-24.
- Alanamu, A.S. et.al, (2009). "Analysis of the Emergence and Development of Islamic Universities in Nigeria"; in Sanni, A.O & Muhibbu-Din M.A. (eds), *Transformation in Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria: Studies in Memory of Musa 'Ali Ajetunmobi*. NATAIS.
- Al-Faruqi, I.R. (1988) "Islamization of Knowledge: Problems, Principles and Prospective"; in *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge*, Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Lemu, B.A. (1995) "Conceptual Transformation of Knowledge: Meaning and Application". A paper presented at the Seminar on Private Model Islamic Schools organised by the Islamic Education Trust (IET), Minna, 19th and 23rd April.
- Naqi, S.A. (1987). "Implementation of the Recommendations of the World Conferences on Muslim Education in Bangladesh: Problems and Their Solutions"; *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 4(4). 44-51.
- National Universities Commission, (2005). *Presentation of Licences to New Private Universities*. Abuja, NUC.
- Obasi, I.N. (2006), "New Private Universities in Nigeria" *International Higher Education*, 45, Fall. www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/number45/p14_obasi.htm , visited on 19/05/2010.
- Oloyede, I.O (2000). "The Imperative for Reshaping and Re-Orientating the Modern Disciplines in the Islamic Perspective". (A paper presented at a Conference on Islamization of Knowledge held at Usmanu DanFodiyo University, Sokoto, May 2000) 7-14.
- Safdar, Ahmed (2013), *Reform and Modernity in Islam: The Philosophical, Cultural and Political Discourses Among Muslim Reformers*, London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.
- Salisu, T.M. (2002) "Muslims and the Challenges of Higher Education in Nigeria"; *Religious Forum Academia*; 2(2). 106-107.
- Sijuwola, A (2010) "Funding: A Vexed Issue in University Education"; in J. Okojie, I. Oloyede & P. Obanya (eds), *50 years of University Education in Nigeria: Evolution, Achievements and Future Directions*; Ilorin: University of Ilorin & National Universities Commission.
- Shehu, S. (1998), *Islamization of Knowledge: Conceptual Background, Vision and Tasks*, Kano, IIIT Nigeria Office.

- Sulaiman, S. (2000), *Islamization of Knowledge: Background, Models and the Way Forward*, Kano, IIIT Nigeria Office.
- Sultan, T. (1997). "The Role of Islamic Universities in the Islamization of Education", *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 14(3), 57.
- Sokoto, A.S. (1991). "Islamic Studies Teaching Through the Medium of English: A Critique" in Opeloye, M.O. (ed) *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigerian Schools: Challenges of the 6-3-3-4 Educational System*; NATAIS.
- University of Ilorin, (2010), *Unilorin Bulletin*, June 21.
- Wan Daud, W.M.N. (1989). *The Concept of Knowledge in Islam and Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country*; London: Mansell Publishing Ltd.