

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies

Volume 4

Issue 1

2021



International Islamic University Malaysia

IUM JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND CIVILISATIONAL STUDIES
(E-ISSN: 2637-112X)

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E-ISSN: 2637-112X

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Rebranding Islamic Studies in Universities in South-Western Nigeria: Islamic Finance to the Rescue

Saheed Afolabi Ashafa¹

Abstract: Islamic Studies, as an academic discipline, has been scorned over the years with very low patronage as a course of study in higher institutions in South-western Nigeria. This situation has prompted experts in this area of study to publish motivating research in order to arouse the interest of prospective students. Although previous studies have identified some factors besetting Islamic studies as an academic discipline, the most pronounced has been its wavering prospect. The focus of this paper is to address the question of the uncertain prospect of Islamic studies by proposing an introduction of Islamic finance as a sub-study in its curriculum at the university level. This will make the discipline more functional and produce self-reliant graduates of Islamic studies from universities in South-western Nigeria. The universities selected for this study are Lagos State University, Olabisi Onabanjo University and Osun State University. This study is both descriptive and exploratory in its qualitative approach. It is hoped that a more functional discipline will evolve when fully integrated as projected.

Keywords: Islamic finance, Islamic studies, rebranding, South-western Nigeria, university, education.

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Introduction

Education is a core concern of Islam since the inception of the religion, especially with the advent of Prophet Muhammad. This fact is well pronounced with the first revelation as encountered by the Prophet in the Cave of Hira. Despite the fact that the Prophet was unlettered, the message compelled him to read repeatedly as if there would be no headway without reading (al-‘Alaq: 1-5). Sequel to this, the emphasis on reading and the acquisition of knowledge has since become a crux of the message of Islam. In this regard, advancement in human society has since been attained in proportion to the progress made in education. With this development, every society designs their wellbeing around the philosophy of their educational system. For instance, the National Policy on Education of Nigeria (2004) spells out the various objectives for different categories of learners as conceived by the leaders. The fourth edition of the Policy states that:

the goals of tertiary education shall be to: (a) contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; (b) develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; (c) develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment; (d) acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004, p. 36)

From the above stipulated goals, it is evident that higher education in Nigeria is meant to produce graduates who will be productive, self-sustaining and independent. In recognition of this philosophy, F.O. Olaleye (2010) reiterates that “educators and trainers need to derive programmes which are appropriate for preparing graduates for the outside world” (p. 32). He notes further that such consciousness becomes imperative because the wealth or poverty of nations depends on the quality of higher education. Consequently, it could be deduced that higher education, irrespective of the discipline, must produce graduates who have a positive impact on the economy of the nation and the society at large.

In relation to the above background, Islamic studies as a discipline has continuously been “diagnosed” with respect to its functionality in

the contemporary society. It is no doubt that Islamic studies is still one of the disciplines that admission seekers into universities hardly choose with enthusiasm. Imam (2007, p. 34) alludes to this fact when he states that despite its contributions, Islamic studies has suffered deprivation in the admission of students and recruitment of staff. Similarly, Owoyemi and Akanni (2017) re-echoes this fear: “Today few people take pride in choosing careers in Arabic and Islamic Studies. For one reason, the shaky nature of the job prospects in those disciplines” (p. 65). From the lamentation above, it is not out of place to conclude that Islamic studies is generally perceived as a discipline that renders its adherents redundant and unemployable.

Sequel to this worrisome state of the discipline, experts in this area of study have continuously reviewed and proffered solutions in respect to better prospective status for Islamic studies. For instance, Owoyemi and Akanni (2017) have identified some job opportunities for graduates of Islamic studies, such as Imamship, spiritual guide for corporate organisations, profession in exorcism, presenters of Islamic programmes in electronic media, authorship of textbooks and proprietorship of schools, among others. While all these are novel ideas, this paper advocates an enhanced capacity for graduates of Islamic studies through a curriculum content review gesture. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to propose a holistic review of the curriculum in which Islamic finance will be fused into the curriculum so as to produce more versatile graduates who can diversify within the scope of expertise acquired in the discipline.

Islamic Education in Nigeria

Islamic education entails Islam wherever it goes, and Nigeria is no exemption. This idea has been expressed by many scholars, including Sanni (2016, p. 354) and Adeyemi (2016, p. 2), quoting Davidson (1990, p. 61). Leveraging on this notion, some scholars opine that Islam and its education first reached the Kanem-Borno empire around seventh century C.E. (Doi, 1984, p. 309), while others hold the view that it was much later around 11th century C.E. (Martin, 1969, p. 16), albeit tremendous development of Islam in Hausaland that is said to have occurred in 14th century C.E. (Gada, 2010, p. 2). It is pertinent to note that Islamic education, as conceptualised in this line of thought,

is a wider scope than Islamic studies as a discipline. Doi (1984) notes that the first notable organised setting for Islamic education was the elementary Qur'anic school known as *Makarantaallo* in Hausa language and which Opeloye (2020) termed as *Ilekewuwala* (the tablet school). Gada (2010) claims that Islamic learning in Hausaland was influenced by the influx of Muslim scholars from North Africa, the majority of whom were graduates of the University of Azhar, and other scholars from Western Sudan. Prominent among them were the Wangara, Kumta, Fulani and Borno scholars. This assertion of Gada (2010) further affirms the view that Islamic education did not only arrive in the Northern region first but was equally well established, both informally and formally, in the region. To formalise the system of education in full Islamic ethos, Kazeem and Balogun (2013, p. 109) contend that the Ansarul-Islam society of Nigeria, a Northern-based organisation then, was the first to establish the equivalent of the conventional education setting in 1942.

While the aforementioned way of life has been the situation of the Northerners, their Southern counterparts had a delayed acclimatisation with Islamic culture. This, to date, is loudly pronounced in the ways and manners that both regions relate to in terms of socio-religious culture. It is pertinent to mention that the disparity enhanced the fortune of Western education more than Islamic education in the Southern region and vice versa in the Northern region. Bidmos (2003) notes that:

Down South, in contrast, where Islamic education had not yielded fruits and impact comparable to the Northern scenario, Western education was immediately embraced with its attendant emergence of a new crop of elitism. Within a short time, a gap was created between the North and the South in Western Education which has remained unbridged till date. (p. 169)

As for the southern part of the country, Islam is said to have found its way into the region (particularly the South-west region) in the second half of the 11th century through the effort of the *Murabitun* (Adebayo, 2005, p. 128). In Adam al-Iluri's view, Islam was introduced in Yorubaland during the reign of Mansa Musa of Mali, which was in the 14th century (Doi, 1984, p. 110). This view was buttressed with explanation that the Muslims in Yorubaland are called Imale, which is a

reference to the main religion in Mali. This point is further hinged on the fact that the Yoruba people came to know about Islam from the traders and ambassadors of Mali who were present in Yorubaland, especially in the then-capital city of old Oyo. While the event that occurred in the 14th century does not necessarily invalidate that which occurred in the 11th century, it suggests that Islam was more firmly entrenched among the people of the Southern region for an extended period (Ashafa, 2020, p. 78). By and large, Muslim scholars who championed the mission of spreading Islam were equally teaching new converts some parts of the Qur'an in Arabic. According to Adebayo (2005, p. 128), this effort resulted in the establishment of Qur'anic schools in the region. It is also on record that such teaching took place in mosques, residences of 'ulamā' (Arabic teachers) and under tree shades. We can reasonably infer that the rapid growth of Islamic education in the Western region occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries since it was during this era that mosques first began to spring up. Oyeweso and Amusa (2016, pp. 37-38) corroborated that the first mosque in Yorubaland, which was built around 1550, belonged to the Jama'ah (congregation) of one Baba Kewu in Old Oyo.

The education system at this stage had its curriculum, which was informal but consistent among the handlers. There was steady progression in the academic structure and reliable outcome observable in the learners. Balogun, as quoted by Adebayo (2005, p. 129), noted that the rate of development in the Southern region was slow compared to that of the Northern region because: (i) there was no direct trade link with the Arab world, and (ii) Muslim education in the Southern region did not enjoy royal patronage as it did in Hausaland, except on a few occasions. This trend continued until the 19th century when significant improvement was launched with the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodiyo. Adebayo affirmed that the period between the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodiyo and colonial period witnessed the proliferation of Qur'anic and Ilmi schools (*Ilekewuwala*), whereby towns such as Abeokuta, Epe, Iseyin, Iwo and Ibadan became important Islamic centres. Describing the mode of instruction in these schools, Opeloye (1996) quotes Ogunbiyi as follows:

The mode of instruction is the traditional parrot-like repetition and memorization method. The teacher copies Arabic alphabet on the pupils' wooden slates, then employs

the choral techniques to teach them. Each letter is taught by describing the shape as it appears on the slate. (p. 165)

This era preceded the development stage in which Sanni (2016) emphatically states that “the first modern centre of Arabic-Islamic studies was founded at Lagos in 1904 by Muhammad Mustafa al-Afandi, Syrian settler in the city” (p. 357).

The same 19th century witnessed the dawn of Western education in Nigeria, which could be said to have brought a setback for Islamic education in the country. Bidmos (2003) notes: “The Western education obstructed the prominence of Islamic Education as elitism was henceforth determined by proficiency in English” (p. 168). This situation hindered the progress of Islamic education while the proprietors of Islamic education who struggled to remain in vogue were compelled to modify their curriculum to reflect Western elements. Some of the Arabic schools in the South-western region introduced Islamic studies and English language as subjects in order to reflect compliance with the trend (Adebayo, 2005, p. 135).

At this juncture, it is apposite to acknowledge that prior to the arrival of the missionaries with Western education, Islamic education had enjoyed a functional status based on available evidence. The Islamic ethos, which was prominent in the scheme of things, had been well entrenched especially in the Northern region. Graduates of the available Islamic educational institutions were employed as administrators and technocrats (Bidmos, 2003, p. 166), this notwithstanding the fact that they were equally qualified as teachers as well as prospective proprietors in their own respect. It could therefore be said that Western education supplanted Islamic education in the dynamics of the contemporary societal demands, which further shattered its influence.

Islamic Studies as an Academic Discipline in Nigerian Universities

Being the first University in Nigeria established in 1948, the University College now known as University of Ibadan operated Arabic and Islamic Studies as an academic unit in the History Department of the University in 1961 (Sanni, 2016, p. 358). It was in 1963 that the first indigenous Vice Chancellor of the University, Kenneth Dike,

established an independent academic department for Arabic and Islamic Studies (Sanni, 2016, p. 358). Next to this was the Abdullahi Bayero College Kano, which was made an affiliate of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria to run diploma and degree programmes in the Arts, including Arabic, Islamic Studies and English in 1962 (Kaura, 2015, p. 37). With this, Islamic studies found its way among academic disciplines in the University from inception, serving as a precursor for subsequent universities to be established. Since this time, the discipline has been a familiar course of study in the country.

It is appropriate to acknowledge that while the Federal Government of Nigeria does not establish any educational institution on the basis of any religion, the religion perceived to be dominant in an area sometimes dictates the nature of disciplines offered in such universities (Adebayo, 2018, p. 49). Despite this assertion made by Adebayo as cited above, Islamic studies has been a popular course of study as a programme in many Nigerian universities. Apart from science and technology-based institutions, it is only a pocket of institutions that do not offer Islamic studies in the entire nation. It is important to clarify that universities in the South-south region of the country offer the course alongside other faiths (especially Christian Studies), which makes it submerged under the religious studies degree. As such, institutions such as University of Port-Harcourt, University of Benin, Akwa Ibom State University and Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, among others, all have it under Religious and Cultural Studies programme.

In consequence of the uniform model being adopted in the South-south and South-eastern regions, Islamic studies as a discipline is suffering a peculiar challenge that borders on a seeming ideological sentiment. In these regions, most universities do not employ Islamic experts to teach the sketchy content embedded in the religious studies curriculum. Where someone is employed, it is not more than one in most cases. To corroborate this stance, Kilani (2015) in his account narrates:

The University of Port Harcourt's Department of Religious and Cultural Studies which was established as Department of Religious Studies in 1982 is one of the leading departments with programmes in Religious Studies. At inception, few courses in Islam which include Islam in West Africa, Sirah of the Prophet and Early History of Islam and Modern

Development in Islam were taught. The courses were taught by Late Professor D. I. Ilega (d. 2008) a Christian of God's Kingdom Society (GKS) denomination until 1991 when NUC accreditation team insisted that an Islamic Scholar be recruited by the University to handle Islamic Studies component of the Degree programme. (p. 86)

The scenario is apparently not particular to the University cited above, but is a general practice in the region to date. It is even experienced in most universities using religious studies model as a course of study. This is the reason why Opeloye (2015) describes it as a model accommodating only a caricature of Islamic studies. Narrating his experience about Obafemi Awolowo University elsewhere, Opeloye (2020) notes:

the employment of the two [referring to himself and Dr Makinde] was in response to the many years of agitations to employ Muslim Islamists to teach Islam after so many years of mishandling the discipline by incompetent non-Muslim scholars from the inception of the Department in 1962. (p. 152)

Commendably, apart from the above, Islamic studies is taught and learnt at the tertiary institution as either a single, combined or teaching subject (Imam, 2007, p. 33). One can say that the fortune of being introduced at inception in Nigeria's first university has favoured the discipline in most public institutions to date. Most leading public universities in the country were established in the 1960s, such as Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) and University of Lagos (UNILAG) in this category. After this set were those established in the 1970s, such as University of Benin (UNIBEN), University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) and University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), among others, to cater to the educational needs of the host communities and manpower required to drive the country's economy. These institutions offer Islamic studies in one form or another, as noted above. In fact, it is also interesting to note that both Usmanu Danfodiyo University (UDU) and Bayero University Kano (BUK) have Islamic Studies as a faculty together with Arts (Bayero University Kano, 2021; Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2021). With this, both institutions have Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, which makes

it more favourable and attractive for enrolment. A practical example in this regard is Usmanu Danfodiyo University, as cited by Opeloye (2015, p. 114); in relation to the student enrolment of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies for the 2012/2013 academic session, Islamic Studies recorded the highest figure of 708 students among the seven Departments in the Faculty.

Unlike the situation of Islam in the Northern region where Islamic studies is massively studied, Islamic studies is less patronised in the Southern region. The case of poor enrolment is increasingly worrisome and has become a grim prospect in the academia in South-western Nigeria. Most of the universities in the region have a few students in the Department of Islamic Studies or as the case may be in terms of nomenclature. For instance, Opeloye (2015, p. 108) presents the enrolment data of Islamic studies students for these universities as follows: in the 2013/2014 academic session, the University of Ibadan had the highest figure of 85 students (from 100-400 Level), while Ekiti State University had 18 students (100-400 Level). In the 2019/2020 session, Osun State University, which introduced Islamic Studies as a degree programme recently, has eight students only in both 100 and 200 Levels. With a recent rebrand of the Religious Studies Department, Lagos State University is now experiencing a better enrolment status even though the review was on the nomenclature and not on the curriculum. With the current rate of global changes and the socio-economic reality emanating from various crisis, there is a need for urgent re-branding of Islamic studies. Such a rebrand is apposite with bias for Islamic finance, which is currently experiencing global acceptance by corporate bodies and government agencies.

Islamic Finance: A Correlate of Islamic Studies

Islamic finance is an offshoot of the Islamic economic system, which is a branch of study in Islamic thought. As its name implies, Islamic finance cannot be more appropriately incorporated but under the field of Islamic studies as a discipline even though it has not been so from what is obtainable so far. By way of definition, Islamic finance is a type of financing activities that must comply with Shari'ah (Islamic law). Nathie (n.d.) contends that Islamic finance is the application of faith-based norms and principles derived from the Shari'ah in dealing with

financial transactions and trade practices. It relies on text, prophetic rules and injunctions as well as *fiqh*, which is practice codes developed from Islamic jurisprudence. It is also defined as a way to manage money that keeps within the moral principles of Islam (Bank of England, 2021). Warde (2000, p. 20) posits that Islamic financial institutions are those that base their objectives and operations on Qur'anic principles. They are thus set apart from conventional institutions, which have no such preoccupations. From these definitions, it is crystal clear that Islamic finance is a concept that is developed from Islamic sources, which are the basis of Islamic studies as a field of study. Sequel to this, it becomes imperative to explore this branch of knowledge in order to strengthen the capacity of Islamic studies as a functional discipline.

To further advance a rationale for the incorporation of Islamic finance in Islamic studies for a functional and more productive field of academic endeavour, Ahmed (2010) hints that Islamic finance relies crucially on three sets of individuals with complementary skills. These are:

One, financial professionals who are familiar with conventional financial products, as well as the demand for “Islamic” analogues of those products within various Muslim communities around the world.

Two, Islamic jurists (*fuqahā'* or experts on classical jurisprudence developed mainly between the eight and fourteenth centuries), who help Islamic financial providers to find precedent financial procedures in classical writings, upon which contemporary analogues of conventional financial products can be built.

Three, lawyers who assist both groups in structuring Islamic analogue financial products, while ensuring their compliance with all applicable and relevant legal and regulatory constraints. (p. 309)

The above hint on the appropriate manpower to drive Islamic finance when critically examined suggests that the first skill requires that some courses are injected into the extant curriculum of Islamic studies while implementing the proposed review. Equally, inter-faculty collaboration with appropriate faculties or colleges will come to play

as this is not a strange practice in the system. The second skill identified is simply a familiar arena in Islamic studies albeit concentration now required more on the Sharia-based courses. The third skill is a required collaboration while in practice since the service of legal experts is usually required in most fields, especially when dealing with finance-related endeavours. In a nutshell, Islamic finance coming to strengthen Islamic studies for graduates to become experts and develop a career in finance profession as Islamic experts is just a round peg in a round hole.

University Regulation and Programme Review in Nigeria

National Universities Commission (NUC) is the regulatory body for universities in Nigeria, with one of its responsibilities being the approval of academic programmes of institutions. It is on record that this regulatory body is dynamic in relation to the review of existing programmes and implementation of desirable requests in the aspect of rebranding, which affect change of nomenclature and content of certain programmes or introduction of new ones. For instance, NUC, while explaining its rationale for review of previous curriculum, writes in its Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) (2014) that:

The curriculum review was necessitated by the fact that the frontiers of knowledge in all academic disciplines had been advancing with new information generated as a result of research. ... Other compelling reasons included the need to update the standard and relevance of university education in the country as well as to integrate entrepreneurial studies and peace and conflict studies as essential new platforms that will guarantee all graduates from Nigerian universities the knowledge and appropriate skills, competencies and dispositions that will make them globally competitive and capable of contributing meaningfully to Nigeria socio-economic development. (p. i)

Based on this submission, the review of academic programmes and necessary change of curriculum (including nomenclature) has been witnessed in various instances. The case of History as a programme initially and the emergence of a new hybrid such as History and International Studies introduced in Lagos State University is a good

example. Osun State University has not only borrowed this noble idea but equally adapted it to English Studies and French Language. The institution now has programmes such as English and International Studies as well as French and International Studies. With this type of creativity to enhance the prospect of the concerned programmes, it can be said that the NUC is a dynamic regulatory body that is open to any developmental initiative that is capable of advancing the course of scholarship and civilisation whenever it comes.

Making a Case for Curriculum Review in Islamic Studies: South-western Universities on Call

The low enrolment of students for Islamic studies has been a peculiar phenomenon to the South-western region from inception. This is why Sanni (2016) notes that “a principal objective behind the sub-degree programme (diploma) was to feed the first degree programmes, hitherto suffering from poor enrolment by students with qualified candidates” (p. 358). While Sanni’s affirmation is in relation to the diploma programme of the University of Ibadan in Arabic and Islamic studies, Adetona (2007, p. 65) earlier asserted that Lagos State University introduced the diploma in Arabic and Islamic Studies to boost the admission quotes of both disciplines at the undergraduate level. It is pertinent to note at this juncture that such a diploma programme is no more in existence due to the extant policy of relevant government agency on university administration. As such, the problem persists in the region without significant headway. While effort is not abated in finding a lasting solution to this issue, the relatively high fees charged by State Universities has done a more severe blow on the matter. It is now observed that the problem of low enrolment for Islamic studies in particular is being aggravated by the huge tuition and service fees being charged by the private and state-owned public universities. In fact, Adebayo and Jawondo (2018, p. 69) observe that some universities avoid mounting certain courses, including Islamic studies, because they see these courses as having low prospect of employability. Sequel to this observation, the perceived non-prospective Islamic studies now struggle to survive as an academic programme due to the paucity of students.

In view of the foregoing, there is no gain in saying that Islamic studies needs urgent rebranding and time cannot be delayed further if we must sustain the vibrancy of the discipline. The immediate required action is to review the curriculum to comply with current global trends. In agreement with this initiative, Abdulhamid (2017, p. 87) observes that the contents of most universities' curricula are static; they are not reviewed periodically to meet the yearning needs of our changing society. This, according to her, makes learning old fashioned and irrelevant. From this submission, one can note that a curriculum is meant to be reviewed at reasonable intervals so as to incorporate emerging realities but this rarely happens in Nigeria. Equally emphasising the need to repackage, Oyeweso (2010, p. 6603) argues that there is a need for the humanities to re-invent themselves in order to overcome the challenges of relevance that confront them. Considering the choice of words as used by Oyeweso, "re-invent" is not inappropriate but rather suggests that a modification to the appellation "Islamic Studies" may equally be warranted.

It is apposite at this juncture to glance at the curriculum of selected institutions in South-western Nigeria for this exploration. It should be stated that only state institutions are selected for this purpose due to the peculiarity of different tuition fee trends in contrary to federal institutions, among other factors.

Lagos State University (LASU)

Lagos State University was established in 1983, with Islamic Studies introduced as a foundation course in the Department of Religions, among others, in the Faculty of Arts (Opeloye, 2015, p. 105). Below is the presentation of tables showing the courses available for students according to semester from 100 to 400 Levels:

100 Level (First) Harmattan Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
GNS 101	Use of Library	2	C
ISS 101	Introduction to Islam	2	C
ISS 103	Introduction to Qur'an	2	C

ISS 105	Early History of Islam from <i>Jahilliyyah</i> to Death of the Prophet	2	C
ISS 107	Moral Teachings of Islam (<i>Tahdhib</i>)	2	E
CRS 101	Old Testament Background	2	C
CRS 103	New Testament Background	2	C
ATR 101	General Introduction to Religion	2	C
ALL 111	Arabic Conversation II (Subsidiary)	2	C

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

100 Level (Second) Rain Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
GNS 102	Use of English	2	C
ISS 102	<i>Al-Ibadat</i> (Rituals)	2	C
ISS 104	The Orthodox Caliphs in Islam	2	E
ISS 106	Introduction to the Study of Hadith	2	C
CRS 102	Critical Introduction to the Old Testament	2	C
CRS 104	Critical Introduction to the New Testament	2	C
ATR 102	Introduction to the Study of African Traditional Religion	2	C
ALL 112	Arabic Conversation IV (Subsidiary)	2	E
ALL 114	Arabic Grammar II (Subsidiary)	2	E

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

200 Level (First) Harmattan Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
GNS 201	Lagos and its Environs	2	C
ISS 201	Textual Study of the Qur'an	2	C
ISS 203	Textual Study of the Hadith I	2	C
ISS 205	Introduction to Islamic Mysticism	2	P
ISS 207	Introduction to <i>Tafsir</i>	2	P
CRS 201	The Formative Period of Israelite History	2	E
CRS 203	The Synoptic Gospels	2	E
ATR 203	African Concept of God	2	E
ALL 211	Arabic Conversation VI	2	E

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

200 Level (Second) Rain Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
GNS 202	African History and Culture	2	C
ISS 202	Introduction to Islamic Law	2	C
ISS 204	Introduction to Islamic Theology	2	C
ISS 206	Introduction to Islamic Philosophy	2	E
ISS 208	The 'Umayyad Period of Islam	2	E
CRS 204	Pauline Corpus	2	E
ATR 204	West African Pantheon	2	E
ALL 212	Arabic Reader III	2	E

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

300 Level (First) Harmattan Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
GNS 301	Logic and Philosophy	2	C
ISS 301	Textual Study of the Qur'an II	2	C
ISS 303	Textual Study of Hadith II	2	P
ISS 305	The Mutazillites and their Rationalism	2	C
ISS 307	The Sufi Orders in Islam	2	C
ISS 309	The 'Abbasid Period in Islam	2	E
ISS 311	The <i>Shi'ah</i> Muslims	2	E
ISS 313	<i>Tajwidu'l-Qur'an</i>	2	E
ISS 315	Islamic Law of <i>Mu'ammalat</i>	2	E
CRS 309	Introduction to Christian Theology	2	C
ALL 301	Arabic Phonetic and Phonology	2	E
ALL 317	Textual Analysis of Qur'an	2	E

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

300 Level (Second) Rain Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
GNS 302	Logic and Philosophy	2	C
ISS 302	Islamic Family Law for Non-Law Students	2	C
ISS 304	Islamic Law of Succession and Administration of Estate	2	E
ISS 306	<i>Al-'Ash'ariyyah</i> or Islamic Scholasticism	2	C
ISS 308	Philosophers in Islam	2	C
ISS 310	<i>Al-Mufasssirun</i> - Commentators of the Qur'an	2	E
ISS 312	The <i>Sirah</i> and <i>Maghazi</i> Literature	2	E

ISS 314	Revivalism and Revivalist Movement in Islam	2	E
ISS 316	Comparative Religious Studies	2	E
ISS 318	Research Methods in Islam	2	E
ISS 320	Islam and Modern Science	2	C
ISS 322	Islam in Spain	2	E
CRS 310	Christian Theology	2	C
ALL 302	Development of Arabic Grammatical Studies	2	E
ALL 312	Arabic Literature in Early Islam and Umayyad Spain	2	E

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

400 Level (First) Harmattan Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
ISS 401	Textual Study of the Qur'an III	2	E
ISS 403	Textual Study of the Hadith III	2	E
ISS 405	Islamic Criminal Law for Non-Law Students	2	E
ISS 407	The Mystics of Islam	2	E
ISS 409	Islamic Political Thought	2	C
ISS 411	The Fatimid Rule	2	E
ISS 413	Islamic Laws of <i>Wasiyyah</i> and <i>Waqf</i>	2	C
ISS 499	Research Project	4	C

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

400 Level (Second) Rain Semester

Code	Title	Unit	Status
ISS 402	Modern Development in Islamic Law	2	E
ISS 406	Textual Readings on Theology	2	E

ISS 408	Islamic Economic System	2	E
ISS 410	Islam in West Africa	2	E
ISS 412	Islam's Interpretation of History with Special Reference to Ibn Khaldun	2	E
ISS 414	Islam and the West	2	E
ISS 416	Special Qur'anic Text	2	E
ISS 418	Ottoman Period of Islam	2	E
ISS 420	Advanced Studies of the Qur'an	2	E
ISS 422	Islam in Yorubaland	2	E
ALL 404	Translation: Arabic/English/Arabic	2	E
ALL 418	Introduction to Modern Arabic Criticism	2	E

Source: Departmental Students' Handbook 2016-2020

Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ogun State

Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), formerly Ogun State University, was established in 1982. The University started with Religious Studies but created Islamic Studies and Christian Religious Studies in 1991 (Opeloye, 2015, p. 105). This institution, just as others in the South-western region, has been facing the challenge of low enrolment of students in Islamic Studies programme. For instance, according to the statistics supplied by Dr. Akanni Akeem (the current Head of Islamic Studies Unit) for the 2019/2020 academic session, there are 13 students in 100 Level, eight students in 200 Level, and eight and 11 students in 300 and 400 Levels respectively. In considering the courses available in the curriculum operated in this institution, it is important to point out that they are related with those of LASU presented above. Hence, for the reason of limited space, few courses that are not featured above will be outlined. Such courses include: Sources of Islam (ISS 117), Sources of Christianity (CRS 118), Introduction to Fiqh (ISS 125), Religions and Human Values (REL 213), Science of Islamic Jurisprudence (ISS 228), Introduction to Entrepreneurship Skills (GNS 204), Introduction to Entrepreneurship Studies (GNS 205), Introduction to the Sociology of

Religion (REL 313), Works of Al-Ghazali (ISS 331), Islam and Gender Questions (ISS 432) and Islam and Civil Society in the Globalizing World (ISS 438).

Osun State University (UNIOSUN)

Osun State University (UNIOSUN), according to the information available on its website (Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria, 2021), was established in 2007. It did not run Islamic Studies programme until recently when the course took off with the pioneer set of students in the 2018/2019 academic session. Now in the third year, this institution has only 15 students across the levels for Islamic Studies. The low enrolment may not be unconnected with the perceived high tuition fees being charged in the institution. This has been noted by Opeloye (2015, p. 113) when he identifies “new fees regime” as one of the reasons for the declining fortunes of Islamic studies in the South-western region. Curriculum wise, the Islamic Studies programme in UNIOSUN operates similar content with other institutions around, as noted above. Areas of departure from others may be noticed with courses such as Introduction to Economics (ECO 101), Mathematics for Islamic Studies (MTH 107), Introduction to Psychology (PSY 112), Basic French (GNS 211) and The Ikhwanu Safa (ISS 409). Other courses are contained in either institutions as listed above.

A painstaking examination of the curriculum, as currently operated in Islamic studies for these institutions, calls for a review to foster professional inclination in the output. On the one hand, the fees currently charged seem unappealing to prospective students of humanities in general and Islamic studies in particular. According to Opeloye (2015, p. 114), students of humanities often do not see a reason why they should pay any fees near the amount charged for professional courses. Going by this assertion and the current reality in relation to the number of students, one may not expect anything better so soon, unless something revolutionary is adopted.

On the other hand, it is in consonance with this that a hybrid of Islamic studies and Islamic finance as a course of study will be a better replacement or alternative to the situation at hand. In the view of Oyeweso (2010, p. 6604) by creating hybrid disciplines, the strengths

of the humanities are made available to the cognate discipline and vice versa. Consequently, the proposed hybrid of Islamic studies and Islamic finance will draw strength from management sciences while equally shedding strength to the latter. In addition, Opeloye (2020b, p. 408) recommends that the rebranding of Arabic studies and Islamic studies as disciplines should be considered so as to reflect contemporary global perspectives.

The novelty that will possibly be created from having a hybrid of this nature will in itself be a strength of patronage in the region. Despite the fact that correlation is clearly established between Islamic finance and Islamic studies, no institution in the South-western region has the courage to venture into this unique initiative. As noted by Adebayo (2018, p. 54), Bayero University has established the Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance in 2011, which has been running various postgraduate programmes for individuals who seek to upscale and update themselves for better prospects in the society. With this development, a similar gesture in the South-western region will definitely attract some beneficial interests to the region and set a competitive precedence in the country. To create a template for a take-off, such courses that could be injected in the proposal include but may not be limited to: Islamic Economic System, Introduction to Islamic Cooperatives, Risk Management and Takaful, Introduction to Islamic Jurisprudence and Public Finance in Islam, Islamic Capital Market, Islamic Financial System, History of Islamic Finance, Islamic Asset Management and Investment as well as Zakat and Waqf Management.

These courses, along with others as deemed relevant, are to be spread across the academic levels from simple to complex. Students can be introduced to the courses from the first year of the degree programme, with more advanced courses being slated for the penultimate and final-year classes for specialisation purpose. It is equally important to mention that graduates from this programme can proceed to acquire further certification with related professional bodies, such as the Institute of Islamic Finance Professionals. This is akin to what operates in other professional disciplines.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Islamic studies as a discipline in the university has been a foundation course of study from the inception of university education in Nigeria. The discipline emerged as a development from the various models of Islamic education that accompany the religion of Islam in every part of the country. Despite the longstanding posture it enjoys, a myriad of challenges continues to beset its fortune over the years. These perennial hitches range from ideological sentiment, low enrolment of students and wavering prospect to high tuition fees. In order to address these multiple challenges, there is a need to review the existing curriculum and introduce a revolutionary paradigm shift of a hybrid model with specific interest in Shari'ah-based finance. With this initiative, there can be a new orientation and unprecedented trend for traditional Islamic studies in South-western Nigeria. In relation to the foregoing presentation, this study therefore offers the following recommendations:

1. Universities in the South-western region should introduce the hybrid of Islamic studies and Islamic finance as an alternative or replacement to the conventional Islamic Studies programme in order to professionalise the discipline.
2. The existing curriculum used by universities in the South-western region should be reviewed in order to incorporate Islamic finance components, as proposed above.
3. There should be collaboration with cognate institutions and faculties in order to enhance the smooth transition and necessary exchange of machineries where required.
4. *Awqaf* (endowments) institutions should consider scholarship for Islamic studies students so as to subsidise educational expenses in the current era of new fee regime by various educational institutions.
5. National Universities Commission, as the regulatory body, should consider the merit of this argument in the view to adopt the proposal of introducing Islamic studies and Islamic finance as an academic programme in Nigerian universities.

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