

ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY ACTIVITIES OF QUR'ANIC INTEGRATED SCHOOLS IN NIGER STATE

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Abstract

The study assessed the implementation of literacy and numeracy activities in Niger State, Nigeria. The researcher used a descriptive approach to the study. The population for the study comprises of 964 respondents drawn from Teacher Development Team (TDT) Teacher Facilitators (TFs) and the facilitators across nine (9) Local Government Area picked from the three[3] senatorial districts areas of Niger State. The sample size of the study consisted of 245 using the 95% confidence level and 5.0% margin of error. The sample size TDTs, TFs and facilitators were proportionally chosen based on the cluster sampling technique. The instrument used in eliciting information was a self-structured questioner titled RANA/HASKE Questionnaire (RHPQ). The instrument was validated with reliability at 0.93. The researcher used four likert

points and a mean for decision of either accepting or rejecting the decision, and a mean of 2.50 was accepted, while item below 2.50 mean was not accepted. Three questionnaires with 15 items were generated for the study. The finding revealed that literacy and numeracy activities has fully been implemented in Niger state, while some challenges were also encountered such as non-budgetary allocation of fund for sustainability of the programme by Niger State Government, irregular payment of salary to facilitators among others. such as, The State Agency for Mass Education. Ministry of Education should put more effort in encouraging state government to support SAME for the sustainability of the programme through. The study recommended that adequate resources be allotted to ensure effective teaching and learning, payment of facilitators allowances be paid as at when due and there should be proper monitoring and supervision for effective teaching and learning.

Keywords: FHI360, Literacy, Numeracy, Integrated, Qur'anic Schools

Introduction

Literacy and numeracy has been described as the key to individual and societal development. It is the ability of individual to be able to read, write and compute simple sentence either in foreign or local language.

Literacy is a human right and essential ingredient for achieving equality, development and peace. Literacy is considered necessary for everybody to be able to function effectively and efficiently in society. Illiteracy is an impediment to National development of any country. Recent research indicate that, there are about 10.5 million out of school children in Nigeria and about 9 million are almajiri children dominated in Northern part of the country.

Aderinoye (2008) states that about 10million youths in Nigeria cannot read or write and that about 80% of primary school – leavers could not read a complete sentence (UNESCO, 2021). The statistics further revealed that majority of primary school leavers can neither read or write in Northern part of Nigeria, statistics stood; Yobe as 23%, Zamfara 19-16%, Katsina 10 – 36% Sokoto 15%, Bauchi 19 – 26%, Kebbi 20 – 51 and Niger 22 – 88% respectively and only Taraba has 72% literacy rate (UNICEF, 2020).

Northern state has the highest number of out of school children not only in Nigeria but in the entire world (UNICEF, 2021). While school enrolment for girls stood at 20 – 25% men against 75% in south west and south east (World Bank, 2020). Although this could be attributed to challenges facing education in the Northern parts of Nigeria such as insecurity, inadequate classroom, furniture, equipment, water, health and sanitation facilities among others in our schools. And that estimated 30million primary aged children among 34% of girls and 29% of boys are out of school. As a way of addressing the adverse effect of poor education, the global partnership for education last year announced a grant of 100million dollars to five states in Nigeria and Norway also donated 11.5million dollars to improve basic education.

According to the National Bureau of statistics in (Festus, 2020) states that Nigeria literacy level stood at 68% and by implication the country cannot contribute meaningfully towards national development and that only 14% of children in Northern region can read a complete sentence (Nigeria Education Data Survey 2020). With importance attached to literacy, UNICEF took it upon herself to provide six state in Northern Nigeria with component of reading and numeracy activities to both 40% of public primary schools and 20% integrated Qur'anic schools in Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Bauchi and Niger State between 2015-2020.

UNESCO (2020) states that illiteracy characterized Sub-sahara Africa more than other continent of the world but that situation varies from one country to the other. Nigeria is among E9 countries that account for more than 50% of the world population and have the highest number of illiterate (Omolewa, 2018).

Family Health International (FHI360), a non-profit development organization focused on locally driven solution for human development. This organization collaborate with Ministry of Education and State Agency for Mass Education (SAME) to train Master Development trainees, facilitators to implement literacy and numeracy activities in Six states in Northern Nigeria i.e Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto, Bauchi, and Niger inclusive between 2015 -2020.

Family Health International (FHI360) a nonprofit human development organization aimed to improve the quality of literacy and numeracy instruction for pupils in both modern and some selected Qur'anic integrated schools in Niger State, tsangaya (almajiri) schools who have never had the advantage of formal education or left school too early for the period of three years so that state Government would continue to sustain the programme in order to improve the modern literacy and abilities of learners to improve their skills, to acquire and apply the skills of reading, writing and computation so as to participate meaningfully and effectively in the politic, economic, social and cultural activities of their community in particular and the nation in general to also cultivate in learners a reading habit and acquire skills and positive attitude to effective use of the media within the context of lifelong learning.

Conceptual Definition of Terms

The Almajiris

Almajiri is a person who leaves his home to other place in search for Qur'anic knowledge. It is an Islamic concept referring to who migrate to acquire Islamic knowledge (education) as it believed that home is either inconvenient or insufficient. According Jimba (2021), the word "Almajiri" is derived from the Arabic word "Al-Muhājir," meaning a person who migrates from one place to another for a religious purpose. Similarly, Isiaka (2015) opined that almajiri emanated from Arabic word "Al-muhajirun" which came from prophet Muhammed to indicate those of his companions (Muhajirun) who migrate with him for sake of Islam from Mecca to Medina. To Joda (2021), "Almajiri" in Hausa languages means 'disciples' immigrant children in search of knowledge on Quranic education.

The almajiris exhibit psychological disorder, street begging, scavenging, living in uncompleted buildings, untidy clothes, and hawking. They are prone to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and this may lead them to mental health problems (Abdullateef, et al., 2017 in Jimaba, 2017). These Almajirai are mostly children who roam about the streets in search of food with no adequate shelter, toilets facilities and remained excluded from the formal school system (Muhammad, Abdullahi, & Isah, 2020).

To Dukku (2007) integration in this aspect refers to "the strengthening of the existing Qura'nic Schools to achieve their goals and accommodate the introduction of basic education elements of literacy, numeracy, life and vocational skills subject into Quranic curriculum".

The Need for Literacy Education for the Almajiris

In view of the crying, United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNICEF), a non-governmental organization takes a bold step to integrate reading and Numeracy activities (Haske/RANA) to Qur'anic curriculum.

Literacy has been described as an instrument, a key, a catalyst, an empowerment for individual and societal development of any nation. UNESCO (2020) defines literacy as ability to identify, understand, interpreted, create, communicate, compute and use printed materials associated with varying contexts and that a person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engaged in those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainments in reading and numeracy make it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and community's development. So if almajiris are able to read, write and communicate either in the language of the immediate environment or foreign language, it would motivate them to continue

their learning and able to contribute meaningfully to development of themselves, their community and society at large.

Also United Nation Literacy Decade (UNLD) states that literacy as crucial to the acquisition by every child, youth and adult essential life skills that enable learners' address challenges they may face in life and also represent an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the society and economic of the twenty first century (Aderinoye, 2018). He went further to provide importance of literacy as a prerequisite for most forms of learning, when almajiri learners acquire literacy and numeracy skills in language of their immediate environment, it would facilitate their understanding the world of life, being literate also adds value to a person's life and thereby able to contribute effectively to the development of themselves and their society.

A literate person “is that person who in a language that he speaks, can read and understand everything he would have understood, if it had been spoken to him; and can write so that it can be read anything he can say” (Gudscinsky, 1973 in Halilu, & Saleh, 2019).

For Almajeris to be literate in other language apart of Arabic will facilitate their communication with others thereby create a peaceful co-existence between them and other people they may meet anywhere in the world. Literacy and numeracy activities also serves as a means of building learners' knowledge, skills and competencies to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy and society development UNESCO in Aderinoye (2018). Research have revealed that children who have developed strong reading skills perform better in schools, have higher graduation grade and also enhanced their productivity in adult life.

In support of importance attached to literacy and numeracy for learners. Aderinoye, 2011, Halilu and Saleh 2015, Paiko 2019 hold the same opinions that literacy:

- I. Increase learner vocabulary
- ii. They tend to perform better academically
- iii. Are able to understand writings on our naira notes and on many public buildings, and also able to read road signs
- v. Provide almajiris learners opportunity to acquire certificates for living or mainstream to formal education to make them self-reliant
- v. Allow learners to fit into local and global economy
- vi. The literacy and numeracy would also widen their knowledge for more understand of written words and have fear of Allah.
- vii. Numeracy also gives learners opportunity to explore situation in solving problems related to counting, computing figures, shapes, measurement, time for prayers and various activities associated to Mathematics, designing among others.

Statement of the Problem

Despite all efforts by government and Non-governmental organisation to keep Nigerian children in formal Schools, Nigeria still remains one of the countries with higher number of out of schools children with 9 million almajiris without basic education. In an effort to ameliorate the problem of out of school children, United Nation children Education Fund (UNICEF) and UK non- profit FHI360 implement literacy and numeracy programme RANA (Light) for public school and (Haske) in Hausa for children in integrated Qur'anic schools. The programme has recorded certain successes. However, there seems to be gaps in the implementation and sustainability of the programme. These views have been expressed by several stakeholders. It is against this background that this study tries to appraise the implementation of RANA/HASKE programme in Niger State.

Objectives of the Study

- I. To find out the extent of implementation of literacy and numeracy activities (Haske among Qur'anic Integrated learners in Niger State.

- ii. To determine the commitment of Niger State government and various communities to the sustainability of Haske programme in Niger State
- iii. To identify the challenges facing the implementation of literacy and numeracy activities among integrate Quranic learners in Niger State.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent of implementation of literacy and numeracy activities (Haske among Qur'anic Integrated learners in Niger State?
- ii. How committed is the Niger State government and various communities to the sustainability of literacy and numeracy (Haske) in Niger State?
- iii. What are the challenges facing implementation of literacy and numeracy activities (Haske) in Niger State?

Methodology

The study employed survey research design. The choice of this design was because it permits the researcher to study small sample and later generalised the findings to the whole population Bichi in Baba 2022 and Nworgu (2006) were of the view that in survey research, small sample is studied and the findings are generalized to the entire population of the study.

The population of this study comprises all 28 Teacher Development Team, 56 Teachers facilitators and 880 facilitators making a total of 964 were involve in the training programme in Niger State.

The population spread across nine (9) Local Government Area of Niger State. These were Munya, Shiroro, Mariga, Kontagora, Mashegu, Agaie, Gbako and Edati respectively. The sample size for this study was 245. The sample size was determined using the 95% confidence level and 5.0% margin of error according to research Advisors sample size table. The researcher adopts cluster sampling technique to select the sample size. A local government was regarded as a cluster. From each cluster 11 respondents were selected among the TDTs, while 22 respondents were chosen among TF while 113 were finally selected among facilitators; making a total of 245 respondents based on their proportion. The use of cluster sampling technique was based on the view of Ekeh (2006) that, if the population is in groups, cluster is the most appropriate.

The instrument for data collection was designed by the researched named “RANA/HASKE appraisal Questionnaire”. The instrument comprised of two sections: Section A sought brief information on the personal data of respondents while section B was made up of 15 structured items aimed at eliciting opinion of the respondents on the variables of investigation using four likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), 4 point Agreed (A) 3point Disagreed 2 and Strongly Disagreed 1 point (SD). The instrument was face validated by two experts in Department of Educational foundation and Primary Education from Niger State College of Education, Minna. Their suggestions and comments were used to produce the final copy of the questionnaire.

In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on 20 respondents in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State which was outside the study area. The result was analyzed using crobach Alpha method. A positive co-efficient index of the instrument for all items range from 0.85 to 0.95 which implies that the instrument was reliable and was later adopted. The instrument was administered with the help of each of cluster local government center co-coordinator.

The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and respondents percentages for personal information of respondents while mean was used to answer the research questions.

Results Discussion

A total of 245 instruments were distributed and all the item were successfully retrieved and the researcher use 2.50 as the decision mean in the answer to the research question and accepted while any score agreed 2.50, 15 disagreed to the item.

Table 1: To what extent has literacy implemented in Niger State?

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Literacy and numeracy activities (Haske) has been fully implemented in Niger State .	3.16	Accepted
2.	There is community participation to the provision of voluntary facilitators, and learning materials for smooth running of the program	2.96	Accepted
3.	Haske programme has exposed facilitators to different literacy teaching methodologies	2.99	Accepted
4.	More parent are now happier to support learners in (Haske) porgramme.	2.87	Accepted
5.	The (Haske) programme has increased learners enrolment in Islamiyyah schools The[haske] literacy programme is still ongoing	3.67	Accepted

Table 2: How committed is the Niger State government and various communities to the sustainability of literacy and numeracy programma (Haske) in Niger State.

6.	The liter acy and numeracy activities (Haske) programme has been captured in the budget for State Agency for Mass Education (SAME)	1.42	Rejected
7.	Facilitators allowances are paid by the state government	1.95	Rejected
8.	There is constant supervision and moni tory for effective teaching and learning by various stakeholders	1.47	Rejected
9.	Communities have take ownership of the program by supporting UNICEF effort	3.05	Accepted
10.	Government have been providing enough teaching and materials to various centres	2.11	Rejected

Table 3: What are the challenges facing implementation of literacy and numeracy activities (Haske) in Niger State.

11.	Facilitators do not provide enough instructional materials for group work	3.10	Accepted
12.	Non-Hausa speaking facilitators have difficulty in delivering the lesson	3.10	Accepted
13.	The learning environment in the centres is not conducive	3.03	Accepted
14.	Facilitators do not use the guided lesson plan (Haske) manual effectively	2.71	Accepted
15.	Facilitators allowances are pay as at when due	1.95	Reject

Table 1 reveals the opinions on the implementation of literacy and numeracy activities (Haske) among Qur'anic integrated in Niger State. Item 1 stated that literacy and numeracy has fully implemented in Niger State, Nigeria (Hausa) boko to which as the mean of 3.16 respondents indicated that the statement was agreed upon item 2 stated that the programme has be fully

implemented as proposed by world bank through Niger state Basic Education Board. It has a mean of 2.96 which mean the statement was agreed by the opinion of the respondents. Item 3 states that Hausa programme has exposed facilitators to different teaching methodology and has a mean of 2.99. The statement was agreed upon. Item 4 stated that more parents are now happier to support learner programme and has the mean of 2.87. The respondents agreed to the statement. Item 5 states that Haske programme has increase learn enrolment in the Islamiyyah School has a mean of 3.67. The opinion of respondents is agreed upon.

Table 2 opinions of respondents on the commitment of Niger State government to the sustainability of Haske programme in Niger State. Item 6 states that, literacy and numeracy activities (Haske) programme has been captured in the budget of SAME has a mean 1.42 which indicates that, the statement is rejected. Item 7 states that facilitators are pay monthly by the state government has a mean of 1.95 which means that, the statement is rejected. Item 8 states, there is constant supervision and monitoring for effective teaching and learning has a mean of 1.47 which means, the statement is rejected. Item 9 states that facilitator had stop the teaching of literacy and numeracy has a means of 3.07 which means the accepted item 10 states that, government have been providing enough teaching and learning materials to various centres has a mean of 2.11 which indicates that the statement is rejected which is below the decision mean.

Table 3 opinion of respondents on the challenges facing implementation of literacy and numeracy activities among integrated Qur'anic school in Niger state.

Item 11 states that facilitators do not provide enough instructional materials for group work with a mean of 3.67 which means the opinions was agreed upon. Item 12 states that non-Hausa speaking facilitators have difficulty in delivery the Haske lesson has a mean of 3.10 which means the statement is accepted. Item 13 states that the learning environment in the centres is not conducive which has a mean 3.03 and indicated that, the opinion of the respondent is agreed upon. Item 14 states some facilitators do not use the guided less on plan Haske manual effectively, has a means of 2.71 and indicated the opinions of respondents was agreed up. Item 15 states that facilitator allowances are pay as at when due has a mean of 1.95 which means that the statement is disagreed upon.

Summary of Discussion

From the data presented above, the findings could be summarized as follow:

1. Literacy and numeracy (Haske) programme has impacted positively among integrated Qur'anic school learners.
2. The programmes has been facing some challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, un conducive learning, in security, non-pay of allowance as at when due etc.
3. Literacy and numeracy activities has not been captured in (SAME) Niger State budget by Niger State Government.

Discussion of Findings

The first discussion states that literacy and numeracy has imparted among Integrated Quranic, learners, all respondents agreed to the items. This is in line to the submission of Aderinoye (2018), Halilu & Saleh (2020), Paiko, 2014 UNESCO 2020 that literacy and numeracy skills enables learners to be able to perform effectively in his own community and society at large, they goes further that literacy facilitate learners communication with other thereby creates a peaceful co-existence between them and other people wherever they may meet, the world over. Second findings also revealed challenges facing literacy and numeracy. Data in table 2 clearly indicates that some statement was below the mean decision of 2.50 which means that the statement is rejected such challenges as lack of payment of allowance and salary to facilitators and difficult in delivery lesson by non-speaking facilitators. This submission is in line with submission of Osagie

and Osemwenge (2020), Yusuf 2012, Aderinoye 2018 which states that challenges facing Adult and Non-formal education is irregular payment of salary to the facilitator and un-conducive learning environment, and for effective teaching and learning to be achieve conducive learning must be provided and training and re-training of the facilitators must be enhanced, this is supported by (Okechinkwu, Oguchukwu and Nwaubani 2020).

Final findings on commitment and sustainability of Haske programme by Niger State government, the means score is rejected and indicated that, no any budget allocated by the state government for the sustainability of the programme. Also on the payment of salary and allowances are also not pay for facilitators are employed on voluntary basis and these has lead to non-commitment even by the facilitators and lead to ineffective supervision and monitory. These findings supported by Baba and Isah (2021) on the impact of UNICEF in leadership training in Niger State. Baba emphasized that supervision and monitory are effective tool in achieving effective teaching and learning. Ekuri, Beliarnag and Awdong (2020) also share the same opinions on poor budgetary allocation to adult education programme and in order to achieve equal educational opportunities for all and keep children in schools, government must be committed to provide at least 5% consulted budget to SAME.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study assessed the implementation of reading and numeracy (Haske/RANA) Program in integrated quranic schools in Niger state, Nigeria. The study revealed that RANA program has been fully implemented in integrated Qur'anic centres Although the program has been implemented but more effort is need for the sustainability of the program after UNICEF intervention In support of this ,following recommendations were proffer for effective implementation.

1. State Agency for Mass Education should collaborates with state Ministry of Education and submit a proposal to Niger State government on the sustainability of the programme in the state.
2. State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and State Agency for Mass Education (SAME) should strategies ways on how to improve the welfare of the facilitators, so that they can put in their best in teaching delivery.
3. Training and re-training of facilitators should be enhanced for greater productivity.
4. Government should provide conducive learning environment

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