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Islamic Perspectives on Western Education

ABSTRACT: *Islam has, from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. The important of education is repeatedly emphasized in the Al-Qur'an, whether such knowledge is Islamic or Western education. Meanwhile, many people believed that Islam against Western education, because a significant number of people who are non-literate in Western education bear Muslim names. This paper, therefore, looks at the Islamic concept of education, its aims and objectives, history of Islamic education, and the contributions of early Muslims to the development of education. In Islamic educational theory, knowledge is gained in order to actualize and perfect all dimensions of the human being. From an Islamic perspective, the highest and most useful model of perfection is the Prophet Muhammad SAW (peace be upon him). In this context, its ultimate goal in education is the abode of permanence and all education points to the permanent world of eternity. The paper also traces the advent of Christianity/Western education that was dangerous for the Islamic education. Historically speaking, the West has borrowed a great deal of intellectual property from Arabs and Muslims in general. It also showed that the main purpose behind establishing Western Missionary schools was to plant poisonous seeds of polytheism and disbelief in the hearts of the Muslim children and deprive them of Islam, so that they might not remain as Muslims, even though they don't embrace Christianity.*

KEY WORD: *Islamic Perspective on Education; Western Education; Muslim Contributions to West Civilization; History of Islamic Education.*

ABSTRAKSI: *"Perspektif Islam tentang Pendidikan Barat". Islam, sedari awal, menempatkan posisi yang tinggi pada pendidikan dan telah menikmati tradisi intelektual yang panjang dan kaya. Pentingnya pendidikan berulang kali ditekankan dalam Al-Qur'an, apakah pengetahuan tersebut berasal dari pendidikan Islam atau Barat. Sementara itu, banyak orang percaya bahwa Islam bertentangan dengan pendidikan Barat, karena sejumlah besar orang yang tidak terdidik secara Barat menanggung nama Muslim. Makalah ini, dengan demikian, melihat konsep Islam tentang pendidikan, maksud dan tujuannya, sejarah pendidikan Islam, dan kontribusi Muslim awal untuk pengembangan pendidikan. Dalam teori pendidikan Islam, pengetahuan yang diperoleh dalam rangka aktualisasi diri dan menyempurnakan semua dimensi kehidupan manusia. Dari perspektif Islam pula, model tertinggi dan paling berguna dalam kesempurnaan hidup adalah Nabi Muhammad SAW (Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam). Dalam konteks ini, tujuan utama dalam pendidikan adalah tempat tinggal permanen dan semua titik tuju pendidikan adalah dunia kehidupan yang abadi. Makalah ini juga menjejaki kedatangan agama Kristen/pendidikan Barat yang berbahaya bagi pendidikan Islam. Secara historis berbicara, Barat telah meminjam banyak dari kekayaan intelektual dari Arab dan umat Islam pada umumnya. Hal ini juga menunjukan bahwa tujuan utama di balik mendirikan sekolah Misionaris Barat adalah untuk menanam benih beracun tentang kemusyrikan dan kekafiran di hati anak-anak Muslim dan menghalangi mereka dari Islam, sehingga mereka mungkin tidak tetap sebagai Muslim, meskipun mereka tidak memeluk agama Kristen.*

KATA KUNCI: *Perspektif Islam tentang Pendidikan; Pendidikan Barat; Kontribusi Muslim terhadap Peradaban Barat; Sejarah Pendidikan Islam.*

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INTRODUCTION

Western education contributes immensely to the relevance of any individual and his fitness into the social strata in the society. It is, however, disheartening to note here that a significant number of people who are non-literate in Western education bear Muslim names. As many of those involve in white collar jobs are non-Muslims, a very large number of people found in the blue and pink-collar jobs are Muslims. This is noticeable in the various market places, motor parts, where majority of petty traders, hawkers, and commercial drivers answer to Muslim names.

Muslims are the majority in terms of population, but minority resource-wise. If Muslims in Nigeria are 60 percent, it follows that 60 percent of doctors in the country should be Muslims; but this is not the case, ninety percent of doctors in Nigeria today are Christians. About 90 percent of the lecturers in higher institutions are Christians, more that 70 percent of the people who find employment in this country today are Christians (Mājah, n.y.:81). But, one find higher population Muslims at the motor parks as drivers and bus conductors, as hawkers of sachet water, vulcanizers, people on the street generally.

This led many people, include Muslims and non-Muslims, to have negative perceptions about Islam in relation to intellectual discovery and the quest for knowledge albeit ignorantly. They believe that Islam is all about Glorious *Al-Qur'an* learning, where adherents of the faith sit and memorize texts of the holy book.

This paper, therefore, intends to study the Islamic perspectives on Western education so as to know the real position of Islam on Western education.

ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

The Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) preached that acquisition of knowledge is obligatory upon both Muslims male and female (Mājah, n.y.; Sidique, n.y.; and Khan, 1985). He also acknowledges the importance of traveling to far off place to enhance the experience acquire knowledge, even if you have to travel to China (Sidique, n.y.; and Khan, 1985).

Islamic philosophy of education envisages "righteous thinking and action" to make the individual aware about his/her purpose of creation and to identify him/herself and to have cognizance of Allah. Islamic concept of philosophy preaches that the purpose of life is achievement of pleasure of Allah (Iqbal, 2005; and Mehfooz, Javaid & Khalid, 2014).[1] About achievement of pleasure, one of the articles stated, as follows:

> This pleasure does not restrict the human activities to mere worships of Allah, but it educates the people to realize the system of rights of all the living creatures and also the non-living things, which are the requirements to establish an exemplary worth living society.[2]

The Glorious *Al-Qur'an*, chapter 96, is the very first chapter to be revealed of the Glorious *Al-Qur'an*. It starts with the word "read", it says read in the name of Allah as the Preserver, who created man from a clot of blood. Read and thy preserver is the greatest Benefactor: He taught through the pen. He taught man what he did not know (Mattson, 2012). However, the following

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[1]See also, for example, an article entitled "Living Values". Available online at: http://www.livingvalues.net/pdf/ lvoverview.pdf [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: April 20, 2016].

[2]As cited in an article entitled "Values of Education in Life". Available online at: http://pakphilosophy.blogspot.com.ng/ 20080801archive. html [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: April 20, 2016].

are some of the characteristics of Islamic concept on education:

Firstly, Islamic philosophy of education is unique and universal in nature, in comparison to the philosophies of education of other countries and as well as philosophy of idealism, realism, naturalism, and pragmatism (Kumar & Ahmad, 2008). This is the philosophy created by Allah for the guidance of human minds.

Secondly, according to the Islamic concept of education philosophy, Allah is the chief source and centre of knowledge (Iqbal, 2005). It is Allah who is like possessor of all the information of the universes; and He is the only source of authentic knowledge through His revelations, the Prophet has also been provided knowledge. According to Islam, acquiring of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim, and it is the modest desirable activity of human beings in the sight of Allah (Masum, 2016).

Thirdly, Islam supports to make knowledge purposeful; Islamic concept of education is not only theoretical or imaginary, but it almost adopts the shape of a regular and practical aspect (Ausef, 1979). Apart from acquiring pleasure of Allah by having education, man can get other benefits also which include: University of Education; Progress in Literature; Progress in Science; the Know How about Religious Education; the Know How of Ethical and Moral Principles; Feelings; Citizen's Right and Duties Leadership in Political Principles; and Use of Natural Resources.[3]

According to the Islamic philosophy,

the purpose of life and the purpose of knowledge are both same purpose. Hence, the purpose for which Allah has created the man is same as the purpose of acquiring knowledge as the creation of man is for acquiring the pleasure of Allah and this cannot be fulfilled by only worship. Islam does not allow man to lead the life of hermit (Abdullah, 1982; and Robinson, 2007).

Therefore, to ensure the pleasure of Allah along with all the prayers, the believers have to participate in social and political affairs of the society, which have been entrusted by Allah to all the Muslims. Also, Islam clearly makes its followers to understand the ascent of humanitarianism and provide complete opportunities to meet the needs of life (Masum, 2016).

According to the principles of Islamic education, the complete and versatile development of human being becomes possible. Equal attention is paid to spiritual, emotional, and moral growth on one hand; and to economical and social growth on the other hand.[4] As such none of the human needs escape from being encompassed by the Islamic concept of education.

Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education. The Arabic language has three terms for education, representing the various dimensions of the educational process as perceived by Islam. The most widely used word for education in a formal sense is *ta'lim*, from the root of *'alima* (to know, to be aware, to perceive, and to learn); which is used to denote knowledge being sought or imparted through instruction and teaching (Abdullah, 1982:23). *Tarbiyah,* from the root *raba* (to

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[3]See also an article entitled "Islamic Concept of Education". Available online at: http://pakphilosophy.blogspot.com.ng/2008/08/islamic-concept-of-education.html [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: April 20, 2016]; and an article entitled "Islamic Ideology and Education". Available online at: http://pakphilosophy.blogspot.com.ng/2008/08/islamic-ideology-and-education.html [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: April 20, 2016]..

[4]Article entitled "Islam: History of Islamic Education, Aims, and Objectives of Islamic Education". Available online at: http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2133/Islam.html [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: April 20, 2016].

increase, to grow, and to rear), implies a state of spiritual and ethical nurturing in accordance with the will of God (al-Attas, 1979:32). *Ta'dib*, from the root *aduba* (to be cultured, refined, and well-mannered), suggests a person's development of sound social behavior (al-Attas, 1979:34; and Abdullah, 1982:30).

Therefore, education in the context of Islam is regarded as a process that involves the complete person, including the rational, spiritual, and social dimensions. The comprehensive and integrated approach to education in Islam is, according to S.M.A. al-Attas (1985), directed toward:

> [...] the balanced growth of the total personality through training man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings, and bodily senses, such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality (al-Attas, 1985:12-13).

In Islamic educational theory, knowledge is gained in order to actualize and perfect all dimensions of the human being. From an Islamic perspective, the highest and most useful model of perfection is the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him), and the goal of Islamic education is that people be able to live as he lived. In this context, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1984) said that while education does prepare humankind for happiness in this life, its ultimate goal is the abode of permanence and all education points to the permanent world of eternity (Nasr, 1984). To ascertain truth by reason alone is restrictive, according to Islam, because spiritual and temporal realities are two sides of the same sphere.

Many Muslim educationists argue that favouring reason at the expense of spirituality interferes with balanced growth (Mwatamu, 2012). Exclusive training of the intellect, for example, is inadequate in developing and refining elements of love, kindness, compassion, and selflessness, which have an altogether spiritual ambiance and can be engaged only by processes of spiritual training.

Education in Islam is two folds: *acquiring intellectual knowledge* (through the application of reason and logic) and *developing spiritual knowledge* (derived from divine revelation and spiritual experience). The worldview of Islam, provision in education must be made equally for both (al-Zarnuji, 1947; and Husain & Ashraf, 1979). Acquiring knowledge in Islam is not intended as an end, but as a means to stimulate a more elevated moral and spiritual consciousness, leading to faith and righteous action (Nasr, 1984; and Mwatamu, 2012).

HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Islam has from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. Knowledge occupies a significant position within Islam, as evidenced by more than 800 references to it in the Glorious *Al-Qur'an*. The importance of education is repeatedly emphasized in the Glorious *Al-Qur'an* with frequent injunctions, such as "God will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge to high degrees" (*Al-Qur'an,* 58:11); "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge" (*Al-Qur'an,* 20:114); and "As God has taught him, so let him write" (*Al-Qur'an,* 2:282).

Such verses provide a forceful stimulus for the Islamic community to strive for education and learning. The advent of the Glorious *Al-Qur'an*, in the seventh century, was quite revolutionary for the

predominantly illiterate Arabian society (al-Alawni, 1991). The starting of Islamic education was *Al-Qur'an* recitation, and the first word was *iqra* that means *read*.

Arab society had enjoyed a rich oral tradition, but the Glorious *Al-Qur'an* was considered the word of God and needed to be organically interacted with by means of reading and reciting its words (Ali, 1987). Hence, reading and writing for the purpose of accessing the full blessings of the Glorious *Al-Qur'an* was an aspiration for most Muslims. Thus, education in Islam unequivocally derived its origins from a symbiotic relationship with religious instruction. Thus, in this way, Islamic education began.

Pious and learned Muslims, dedicated to making the teachings of the Glorious *Al-Qur'an,* more accessible to the Islamic community through Islamic school, taught the faithful in what came to be known as the *kuttab* (Talbani, 1996; and Cook, 1999). The *kuttab* could be located in a variety of venues mosques, private homes, shops, tents, or even out in the open. Historians are uncertain as to when the *katatib* were first established, but with the widespread desire of the faithful to study the Glorious *Al-Qur'an*, *katatib* could be found in virtually every part of the Islamic empire by the middle of the eighth century (Talbani, 1996).

The *kuttab* served a vital social function as the only vehicle for formal public instruction for primary-age children and continued, so until Western models of education was introduced in the modern period. During the golden age of the Islamic empire (usually defined as a period between the tenth and thirteenth centuries), when Western Europe was intellectually backward and stagnant,

Islamic scholarship flourished with an impressive openness to the rational sciences, art, and even literature (Talbani, 1996; and Cook, 1999). It was during this period that the Islamic world made most of its contributions to the scientific and artistic world.

Also throughout Islamic history, education was a point of pride and a field Muslims have always excelled in. Muslims built great libraries and learning centers in places, such as Baghdad in Iraq, Cordoba in Spain, and Cairo in Egypt (Talbani, 1996). They established the first primary schools for children and universities for continuing education. They advanced sciences by incredible leaps and bounds through such institution, leading up to today's modern world (Khaldūn, 1969).

Some schools, throughout the Muslim world, continue this tradition of informal education. At the three holiest sites of Islam: the *Haram* in Makkah, *Masjid al-Nabawi* in Madinah, and *Masjid al-Aqsa* in Jerusalem, scholars regularly sit and give lectures in the Mosque that are open to anyone, who would like to join and benefit from their knowledge (Khaldūn, 1969; and Iqbal, 2005).[5]

However, as time went on, Muslims began to build formal institutions dedicated to education. From primary to higher education dating back to at least the 900s, young students were educated in a Primary School called a *Maktab*. Commonly, *Maktabs* were attached to a mosque, where the resident scholars and *Imams* would hold classes for children (Laffer, 2004). These classes would cover topics, such as basic Arabic reading,

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[5]See also an article entitled "Lost of Islamic History". Available online at: http://lostislamichistory.com/ibn-khaldun-taxes/ [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: April 20, 2016].

writing, arithmetic, and Islamic laws.

Most of the local population was educated by such primary schools throughout their childhood. After completing the curriculum of the *Makatb*, students could go on to their adult life and find an occupation, or move on to higher education in a *Madrasa* (school). *Madrasas* were usually attached to a large Mosque. Examples include Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, founded in 970; and Al-Karaouine in Fes, Morocco, founded in 859 (Hellyer & Brown, 2015; and Hunter, 2015).

Later, numerous *Madrasa*s were established across the Muslim world by the great Seljuk vizier, Nizam al-Mulk (Lindsay, 2005). At a *Madrasa*, students would be educated further in religious sciences, Arabic, and secular studies, such as Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy, History, and Geography, among many other topics. In the 1100s, there were 75 *Madrasa*s in Cairo, 51 in Damascus, and 44 in Aleppo (Lindsay, 2005). There were hundreds more in Muslim Spain at this time as well (Hellyer & Brown, 2015; and Hunter, 2015).

These *Madrasa* can be considered the first modern Universities. They had separate faculties for different subjects, with resident scholars that had expertise in their fields. Students would pick a concentration of study and spend a number of years studying under numerous Professors.[6] In this context, Ibn Khaldūn (1969) notes that in Morocco, at his time, the *Madrasa* had a curriculum which spanned sixteen years. He argues that this is the shortest

(amount of time), in which a student can obtain the scientific habit he desires, or can realize that he will never be able to obtain (Khaldūn, 1969).

When a student completed their course of study, they would be granted an *Ijaza*, or a license certifying that they have completed that program and are qualified to teach it as well. *Ijazas* could be given by an individual teacher, who can personally attest to his/her student's knowledge, or by an institution such as a *madrasa,* in recognition of a student finishing their course of study (Morgan, 2007:34). *Ijazas* today can be most closely compared to diplomas granted from higher educational institutions.

The Contribution of Early Muslims.
Historically speaking, the West has borrowed a great of intellectual property from Arabs and Muslims in general. The numerical system 1, 2, and 3 is of Arab roots first developed by Persian and Arab Mathematicians based in India (al-Attas, 1979:32). Furthermore, in Mathematics, Algebra, in its most standard form, was created by a Muslim scholar by the name Muhammed ibn Musa al-Khawarizmi in Baghdad around 820 AD (*Anno Domini*), in his book *Hisab al-Jabr wal Muqabala* (al-Attas, 1979; and Ausef, 1979).

Algebra is actually "Al-Jabr" from the title of his book, which simply means the book on calculation by completion and balancing (Ausef, 1979). Similarly, Algorithm is a corruption of the learned man's name "Al-Khawarizmi", called as "Algoritmi". He was a well-known scholar in the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad among many other renowned scholars (Kasozi, 1990:20). In Spanish and Portuguese, this name is the word for digit i.e. *Guarismo*. Ibn Sina was known to have

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[6]See also, for example, an article entitled "Daily Life in the Medieval Islamic World: Daily Life through History". Available online at: http://www. amazon.com/Daily-Medieval-Islamic-Through-History/dp/0872209342 [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: April 20, 2016].

conducted the first successful colic surgery; and Ibn Nafis performed the first successful eye surgery (Lubowa, 1992:34).

Khaliph Harun al-Rashid was said to have founded a college and an academy of science in Baghdad. It was at this *Bayt al-Hikmah* (House of Philosophy), that most of the earliest studies and research by Muslim scholars were carried out (Ajijola, 1986:40). The contribution of the Muslims in the field of science and philosophy, then, is tremendous.

In the field of Astronomy, the works of Yahya bin Mansur, Sanad bin Ali, and Umar Khayyam were remarkable (Virk, 2010). The numerical systems now widely used all over the Western world owe their origin to Muslim scholars. Some scholars have pointed out the words, like *Alcohol, Alembic,* and *Alkali* are of Arabic origin and that these together with a number of chemicals, such as *Sulphuric Add, Nitric Acid, Postassium Ammonia Salt,* etc. are discoveries of Muslims scholars (Ahmad, 1987).

The works of Razi (notably the "container") and the well-known Ibn Sina or Avicenna (whose "Canon" is still a rich source of scientific lore) are considered advanced works, even by contemporary standards (Ahmad, 1987). Ibn Zohr of Muslim Andalusia (Spain) is said to have, in the 12th century AD (*Anno Domini*), introduced a method of scientific observation in medicine surgery and pharmacology (Makadisi, 1981:10-13).

Ibn Baytar is regarded as one of the foremost Botanists of the Muslim era of glory. He lived in Malaca (a city in Andalusia), where he wrote his two great works on *Bot-my*. As is generally conceded by Western scholars, it was through the writing of Muslim historians and travelers that much of the interior of Africa was known (cited in Ahmad, 1987; and Mattson, 2012:10). The foremost of them were Ibn Babel and Hassan bin Mohamed al-Wazza al-Zayyati, re-named Leo Africans by the Venicians (Ahmad, 1987).

The Advent of Colonial Masters, Christianity, and Western Education. The incursion of white men in Nigeria, as an example, can be attributed into two phases. The first phase was in fifteen century, in the wake of geographical discoveries and when the European explorers were set on the sea seeking the route the India. The Portuguese reached Benin in about 1477 (Shalaby, 1950:23).

According to Babs Fafunwa (2002), as early as 1472, Portuguese merchants reached Lagos and Benin (Fafunwa, 2002). In 1485, the merchants have engaged the people of Benin in pepper trading and Oba (King) of Benin sent an envoy to the Portuguese royal court. Perhaps, the Portuguese were initially concerned with the trade, but they conceived that Africans had to be civilized so as to become a good customer. He added that, to be civilized, according to them, is to be Christianized and have rudiment Western education (*cf* al-Attas, 2000:12-14; Fafunwa, 2002; and Ogunbado, 2012).

The missionary activities started in Benin, in 1515, by Catholics Missionaries and established a school for converted princes and children of notable Chiefs in King's palace. In the same year, Gasper, the Bishop of the Diocese of Sao tome, sent Augustinian monks to visit Warri. Consequently, a son of Olu of Warri was baptized with a given name of Sebastain (Muhammad & Salleh, 2008:21; Fafunwa, 2002; and Ogunbado, 2012). Afterward, Sebastian succeeded his father and gave Potuguese missionaries enormous support

and his son, Domingos, was sent to Portugal to be trained for Priesthood (Taleban, 1996). Despite all these, there were other obstacles that outweighed the favour and which led to the abandon of the project.

Second phase and the beginning of everlasting impacts began in September 1842, when the first British Christian mission landed at Badagry. The liberated slave from Sierra Loone had been engaged in trading with Yoruba region and spreading Christianity; and the first established church was dominated by those ex-slaves (al-Attas, 1979; Fafunwa, 2002; and Ogunbado, 2012).

The missionaries, however, were the custodian of education which was a tool for conversion, because education by then aimed at producing Christians, who can read Bible and perform services. In this context, S.M.N. al-Attas (1979) stated as follows:

> [...] it must be kept in mind that the church undertook the business of education not because it regarded education as good in itself, but because it found that it could not do its own proper work without giving its adherents, and especially its elergy, as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the scared writings and for the performance of their religious duties (al-Attas, 1979:22).

It can be deduced from this segment that the advent of colonial masters led to the introduction of new religion, Christianity, which is added to the two available religions: Yoruba traditional religion and Islam. Likewise, the Western type of education crept in through the coming of Christianity. Obviously and without exaggeration, all these had impacts positively or negatively on religions on the ground (Fafunwa, 2002; and Ogunbado, 2012).

The first standard school set-up by the colonial government is called CMS Grammar School, while CMS stand for "Christian Missionary School". These schools were built across the whole West Africa in the early 18th century, and still existing till present day (Uzima, 2003). The schools were heavily financed by colonial government through African blessed natural resources.

Meanwhile, the other religions are West African before the Christianity was neglected. When the colonialists came to Nigeria, in the 19th century, together with Christian missionaries, they discovered that Islam had firmly established itself in most parts of the North and in some parts of the West of the country (Ross, 2014).

The school is fully designed for African children, who are Christians or ready to change their religion into Christianity. Directly or indirectly, Christian missionaries control government through these systems and render many African children into Christianity religion. In some cases demand the conversion of beneficiaries of the system into Christianity (Fafunwa, 2002; Ogunbado, 2012; and Yasin & Shahjani, 2013).

Although they did not quite succeed in converting everybody, who went through the system into their own religion, the effect of their attempt left a lasting impact on the mentality of the Muslims. This is because Muslims were only able to resist conversion into the colonial religion, they were not able to resist the system of education. As a result, the colonial system of education, which is largely based on their culture and social values, remains behind (after their departure) to do what their religion would have done. Indeed, this action of colonial government promotes Christianity and

eradicates other religions among the Africans (Yasin & Shahjani, 2013).

As a result, some Muslims did not see anything good in Western education. They strongly maintained and always preached that it corrupts the youth. Children should have only the knowledge of the *Al-Qur'an* or Arabic and Islamic studies. They maintained that this alone can help Muslims in this world and in the hereafter. In schools and universities, children are exposed to Western civilization, they become nominal Muslims. If such should continue, they maintained, the future of Islam is doomed. This is why many Muslims refused to send their children to school.

The Dangerous After Math of Western Education on Islamic Education. This deplorable situation resulted in different kinds of dangerous problems, which are not hidden from the scrutiny of Muslims. They can be summarized as follows (*cf* Husain & Ashraf, 1979; Fafunwa, 2002; Ogunbado, 2012; and Ross, 2014):

First, when Muslim children go to those schools and obtain education according to their curriculum, they are deprived of faith belief and the respect of religion is taken away from their hearts. They stoop to the level that they start looking upon it as a useless thing.

Second, some of the religious-minded Muslims, who are impressed by such an education, have divided their religions and worldly affairs into two departments declaring religion and faith as a private matter in life, which is limited into *Madrasa* and Mosques, fasting, and praying. Consequently, they have become utterly liberal in their religious outlook, which is nothing but a stark Jewish and Christian ideology.

Third, many Muslims who are brought up under the environment of Western education fall prey to doubts and misconceptions with regard to fundamental beliefs and tenets of Islam. The gullible group amongst them suffering from inferiority complex, lead their lives, nurturing these doubts in their minds, while the liberals, having developed a broadminded outlook from their secular education, start to attack Islam and its pristine teachings as it is notice in the columns of many newspapers and magazines today.

Fourth, the concept of modesty, chastity, and purity have all, but disappeared from people's minds and lost their place in their hearts. On the other hand, immodesty and immorality are thought to be a fashion and demand of the hour and the people respecting the great moral values of Islam are branded orthodox, conservative, and traditionalist, ignorant of the modern trends.

Fifth, good manners civilized behaviour, humanity, and ethical values have been replaced by brutality, rudeness, and an uncivilized mode of life. It has become very common to ridicule good manners and noble human qualities preached by the religion of Islam. The modernist among Muslims urinate standing and consider it as part of enlightenment. If others urinate sitting, they stick on them the label of "orthodox". They take their meals standing, scattering their food all around them, and commit uncivilized deeds that go against the Holy *Al-Qur'an* and *Al-Sunnah*, and regard them as a great sign of enlightenment.

Sixth, since this type of education invites only to pleasure, luxury, material life, and complete enjoyment, every educated person

becomes a slave to his desires and becomes eager to amass more wealth by any means without distinguishing between *Halal* and *Haram,* and having compassion towards others among his brethren, the have-nots from the lower strata of economic society.

The doctors want to fill up their pockets without caring much for the treatment of the patients; in the same way, at the time of marriage, every educated Muslim who has earned a degree after seeking a secular education seeks a hefty "dowry", in cash from the guardians of the girls they intend to marry, because his parents have spent a lot of money in the way of his education. He wants to compensate here without burdening himself. He does not care whether Islam has sanctioned this practice or not.

Seventh, the inevitable result arising from this education is to seek after worldly comforts and pleasures, more wealth and self-indulgence, by hook or by crook. The Muslims educated on these lines develop in themselves a tendency to despise the poor and needy. This is the reason this class of Muslims makes a society of their own, and some among them feel it derogatory to their status to attend the congregational prayers at the mosque, because poor people usually come to the mosques to say their prayers.

In the same manner, this group of Muslims keeps away from the Islamic scholars and shuns attending their discourses and lecture gatherings, because the Islamic scholars are in most cases, poor, and simple in their life styles (Fafunwa, 2002; Ogunbado, 2012; and Ross, 2014). Also, they do not want them to attend their marriage ceremonies. Only the richest and well-to-do classes are invited on such occasions. They take it as an insult to invite

the lower class and the poor among the Muslims on such occasions.

Clearly, these are few major evils, which are nourished in the hearts of today's modern educated Muslims, some of them even can destroy one's faith, while some other practices are contrary to Islamic teachings and are considered as great sins in the teachings of Islam.

Western Education in Islamic Point of View. There is nothing intrinsic to Islam which forbids its adherents to acquire education of any sort whether art, science, technology or theology, the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of education be it Islamic education or Western education as an obligation on all Muslims, which they must learn from the cradle to the grave (Sidique, n.y.:37).

The first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad SAW enjoined believers to search for knowledge at all cost. This is evident in one of his tradition, where he says, "the search for knowledge is incumbent upon Muslim made or female" (cited in Khan, 1985:37). This does not specify what kind of education or which particular language. All that it says is that education is compulsory. The search for knowledge in Islam is not restricted to any particular field of knowledge to the extent that the Prophet encourages the Muslims to search for it, even if it is China and other countries (Sidique, n.y.; and Khan, 1985).

It is noteworthy to note that during that time Islam had not spread up to China, there were no Muslims who could teach Islamic studies and, that, China was also of the farthest part of the then known world with Mecca as the center. This injunction made many of the earliest Muslims travel

to various part of the world, in search of knowledge, and these men were to establish the foundation of the Muslims present day civilization.

This tradition, therefore, reflects the broad mindedness and far sightedness of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who asked his followers to acquire education from anyone, anywhere, whether a Muslim or non-Muslim. In yet another Tradition (*Al-Sunnah*), he says that "the ink of the pen of scholars is holier than the blood of the martyrs or *suhada*" (cited in Sidique, n.y.; and Khan, 1985).

To inculcate properly the value of education upon the minds of Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad SAW stressed this point in different ways that shows how liberal minded the Prophet was and how much he valued education. In yet another Tradition, the Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "He who leave his/her home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God" (cited in Sidique, n.y.; and Khan, 1985).

Furthermore, Islam enjoins the search for knowledge and learning irrespective of whether such knowledge is Islamic or Western education. It was through the adherence to this injunction of Islam that earlier Muslims were able to make impact and contributed significantly to all fields of knowledge and civilizations. It was reported that:

> Civilization's debt to Islam, because it was Islam at places like Al-Azhar University that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for European's Renaissance and Enlightenment. It was innovation in Muslim communities that developed the order of Algebra; magnetic compass and tools of navigation; mastery of pens and printing; understanding of how disease spreads and how it can be healed.
>
> Islamic culture has given men majestic arches and soaring spires; timeless poetry and cherished music; elegant calligraphy; and places of peaceful contemplation. And throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality (cited in Sidique, n.y.).

Can there be more truth than this? If earlier Muslims had not taken knowledge and learning as serious as enjoined by Islam and its Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him), how would they have been in the positions to have made such great contributions to world civilization as well as Western education? Is the condemnation of Western education and civilization justified in view of the said Muslims' contributions?

CONCLUSION

This paper reveals that Islam has, from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. Education occupies a significant position within Islam, as evidenced by the more than 800 references to it in the *Al-Qur'an*. The important of education is repeatedly emphasized in the *Al-Qur'an* with frequent injunctions, whether such knowledge is Islamic or Western education.

Historically speaking, the West has borrowed a great deal of intellectual property from Arabs and Muslims in general. It also shows that the main purpose behind establishing Western/Missionary schools was to plant poisonous seeds of polytheism and disbelief in the hearts of the Muslim children and deprives them of Islam, so that they might not remain as Muslims, even though they don't embrace Christianity.

It's recommended that Muslims should allow their children and wards to attend *Al-Qur'anic* schools regularly and punctually, so that it would fortify them against un-

Islamic doctrines they might come across in Western education.

Muslim should intensify their efforts at the establishment of more Muslim Primary and Secondary schools. This would assist in accommodating the increasing population of Muslim children of school age. Emphasis should also be laid on the establishment of Muslim Nursery and Primary Schools. This would open more opportunities to Muslim children to receive Islamic-oriented Western education from childhood.

Various Islamic religious organizations and individuals should endeavour to establish standard Arabic and Islamic schools to complements the few existing ones. Such schools should be children-friendly. The environment should be conducive and qualified teachers should be employed to teach in such schools.

The proprietors of such schools could solicit financial and material supports from Islamic countries through their embassies in Nigeria. They might liaise with the managements of some renowned Islamic institutions, like Al-Azhar Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ogidi, Ilorin in Kwara Sate. *Markaz Ta'alim al-Islamiyy*, Agege, Lagos, and many others, that had enjoyed such benefit in the past.

Government should encourage the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies in all public schools, as it is done for Christian religious knowledge. Qualified Islamic studies teachers should be employed to teach the subject. More opportunities should also be given to Arabic and Islamic studies materials, such as books and other instructional materials should be adequately provided in school libraries. Assistance of the PTA (Parents and Teachers Associations) of various schools is very necessary in this regard.

To check the continued conversion of Muslim youth to Christianity, youth organization should be promoted by parent bodies and Muslim philanthropists. This could be done by earmarking a certain percentage of their annual budgetary allocation to aid youth activities. In addition to this, parents should cultivate the attitude of attending the occasions organized by the youths and be ready to spend money on such occasions. This would go a long way to encourage the youths and to build confidence in them in their task of propagating Islam.[7]

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[7]**Statement:** Herewith, I declare that this paper is my own original work; it is not product of plagiarism and not yet also be reviewed as well as be published by other scholarly journals.

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