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Nigerian University's Islamic Studies Curriculum and Sustainable Development Goals: The Case of the University of Ilorin

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Abstract

The blueprint designed by the world to accomplish a robust sustainable future for all living creatures is referred to as sustainable development goals. The goals, which are seventeen in number, address challenges of the developed and developing countries and aim at improving human welfare and protecting the environment. However, there is no doubt that one of the key objectives of the University education is to integrate sustainability across all programmes for the attainment of the desired goals. Thus, this research examines the Islamic Studies curriculum of the University of Ilorin's academic programme with the objective of identifying its relevance to the actualisation of selected sustainable development goals. The paper adopted a combination of historical and descriptive methods for data collection and data analysis. The findings of the study reveal that the curriculum of Islamic Studies exposes students to the knowledge needed in shaping a sustainable future in the goals discussed and recommends expansion of the curriculum to cover other aspects such as climate change, industrialisation, and well-being.

Keywords: Curriculum, University, Islamic Studies, Sustainable Development, Goals.

Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of global education, the nexus between academic curricula and sustainable development has gained prominence as a subject of scholarly inquiry. This study embarks on a nuanced exploration, focusing specifically on the Islamic Studies curriculum within Nigerian universities and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The University of Ilorin serves as a focal point for this investigation, offering a microcosm through which to examine the intersection of Islamic education and sustainable development in the Nigerian context.

Nigerian universities stand as bastions of knowledge, molding the intellectual fabric of the nation. Amid this academic milieu, the Islamic Studies curriculum plays a distinctive role, rooted in cultural heritage and historical significance. The University of Ilorin, as a representative institution, encapsulates the broader narrative of Islamic education in Nigeria. This research endeavors to shed light on the nuanced relationship between the university's Islamic Studies curriculum and the SDGs.

Against the backdrop of a global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, understanding how Islamic Studies curricula contribute to or diverge from these goals becomes imperative. This research is not merely an academic exercise but holds profound implications for the role of education in fostering sustainable development within Nigeria. The findings may inform policy decisions, curriculum development, and broader educational strategies aimed at aligning with global sustainability imperatives.

This study is driven by the central question: To what extent does the Islamic Studies curriculum at the University of Ilorin align with the Sustainable Development Goals? To answer this question, the research has three primary objectives: (1) Examine the existing content and structure of the Islamic Studies curriculum, (2) Identify points of convergence or divergence with the SDGs, and (3) Propose recommendations for enhancing alignment with sustainable development objectives.

A comprehensive mixed-methods approach will be employed, involving both qualitative analysis of curriculum content and quantitative surveys targeting students, faculty, and relevant stakeholders. By triangulating these diverse data sources, a nuanced understanding of the relationship between the University of Ilorin's Islamic Studies curriculum and the SDGs will be garnered.

As this study unfolds, it aspires to contribute valuable insights into the intricate interplay between traditional academic disciplines, exemplified by Islamic Studies, and contemporary global aspirations for sustainable development. Through this examination, we anticipate offering practical recommendations for refining the Islamic Studies curriculum at the University of Ilorin and, by extension, influencing broader conversations about the role of higher education in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria.

A Glimpse at Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Sustainable development is a concept introduced into the mainstream policy circles with the publishing of the Brundtland report in 1987 and defined in many ways. The frequently quoted definition is from Brundtland Report which states that Sustainable Development is a development that aims to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹ It can be inferred from the definition that one of the key features considered in the formulation of SDG is the concept of conserving resources for future generations. This concept distinguishes it from traditional environmental policy which also seeks to internalize the externalities of environmental degradation.

On the other hand, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defined the term as: “improving the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems”.² However, this definition is broader than that of Brundtland report because the ‘improvement of the quality of life’ in this definition seems more ambitious than the ‘fulfillment of needs’ in the Brundtland definition. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a set of objectives propounded by all 193 member states of United Nations in 2015, for the period of 2016-2030, to put an end to poverty, protect all that makes the planet habitable, and ensure that human beings live peacefully, prosperously and sustainably, now and in the future. Thus, the overall goal of sustainable development (SD) is the long-term stability of economy and environment which can be achieved through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, environmental, and social concerns throughout the decision making process.³ The goals provide a well-structured framework that is scientifically robust, politically acceptable, and publicly intuitive.⁴

The sustainable development goals were conceived as a response to the failure of Millennium Development Goals set up as the first global plan that focused on fighting poverty. Having realized that MDGs could not record breakthrough in the elimination of poverty due to its guiding principle that

¹ United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* (Norway: United Nations General Assembly, Development and International Co-operation: Environment, 1987), p.43

² IUCN, UNEP, WWF, “*Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living*”, (1991), retrieved from <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/CFE-003.PDF> on 7/1/2023

³ Rachel E., *Brief for GSDR 2015-The Concept of Sustainable Development: Definition and Defining Principles* (USA: Florida International University, 2015), p.2.

⁴ [Stephen M.](#) et al, “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and their Implementation: A National Global Framework for Health, Development and Equity Needs a System Approach at every Level”, *British Medical Bulletin*, (Vol.124, No.1, 2017), p.81-90 <https://doi.org/10.1093/bmb/ldx031>

required northern countries to contribute to the development of southern states via Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows, the failure to reach these goals and the consolidation of a discourse of segregation between northern and southern countries gave room for absolute criticism of the Millennium Agenda. ⁵Thus, several calls were made for reformation of the system towards the end of the period of MDGs

As the SDGs are successors to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the seventeen (17) SDGs are a comprehensive set of policy goals that aim to fight poverty and hunger, address climate change and environmental protection, and ensure universality on the accessibility of healthcare, education and equality.⁶ Therefore, the importance of SDGs cannot be overemphasized because it works towards judicious use of available resources, maintenance of the ecological balance, prevention of environmental degradation and overexploitation of resources.

The seventeen SDGs are: elimination of poverty in all its forms, zero hunger, promotion of good health and wellbeing, good education, gender equality, clean water, affordable and clean energy, sustainable economic growth and decent work, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequality among countries, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life on below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institution and partnership for the goals.⁷ The underlined goals of SDGs can therefore address the obstacles of sustainable development that include poverty, debt, climate related disasters, war, population growth, environmental degradation and lack of specialized technology.⁸

The 2023 report of Sustainable Development has, however, rated Nigeria among the twenty least countries in the world to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development by 2023. The country was listed one hundred and forty six (146) out of one hundred and sixty six (166) countries with a score of 54.3 percent. Finland came top with a score of 85 percent and Sweden followed her with 85 percent. Other countries with the range are Denmark, Germany and Austria. The report also showed that Somalia, 48 percent, Yemen, 46.8 percent,

⁵ Sianes A., "Shedding Light on Policy Coherence for Development: A Conceptual Framework", *Journal of International Development* , (Vol.9, No. 1, 2013), p.137.

⁶ United Nations, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* , (2015), retrieved from www.sdgs.un.org/2030agenda on 7/12/2023.

⁷ UNESCO, *Education for Sustainable Development Goals*, (France: UNESCO, 2017) pp.12-44

⁸ Importance of Sustainable Development. Retrieved from www.geeksforgeeks.org on 20/01/2024

Chad, 45.3 percent, Central African Republic, 40.4 percent and South Sudan, 38.7 percent had the least SDG.⁹

Islam and the Sustainable Development Goals

Allah establishes that the Qur'ān leaves no stone unturned with respect to all that exist in the world (Q6:38) and that *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) plays a complementary role to it (Q16:44). The Book covers every aspect of life including spiritual, social, political and economic endeavours of man. On the spiritual and social realms, it stresses the need for constant communion between God and man and advocates interactions built on justice among human beings. Politically, it considers consultation as an important rudiment of good governance. Economically, Islam set up economic principles that are adequate and structured to regulate acquisition of wealth and its distribution in order to enhance sustainability. Underscoring the universality of Islamic law, Ibnu'l-Qayyim writes:

The bedrock of Islamic law is protection of the interests of mankind in the livelihood and hereafter. It is a fair and merciful law loaded with human interests and wisdom¹⁰

The above remark on the importance of Islamic law is an indication that the sustainable development goals, identified by the world leaders as viable tools needed to turn round the economy of the world, have a nod in Islam because of its emphasis on preference of human interests. In fact, Islam encourages exploration of the earth's surface to enhance productivity because of its position that everything on the earth is created for humanity (Q67:15). Yet, there is necessity of ensuring that human activities support environment and protection of people's rights, and needs, either now or in the future.¹¹ Thus, the concept is not alien to Islam in spite of its recent proposition by the world because the cardinal objective of Islamic law is facilitation of ease and removal of hardship for human beings. However, attainment of the goals requires concerted effort by combining spiritual and economic teachings of Islam because they direct transformation of cultural attitudes and behaviors through individual development and institutional reform supported by Islamic political structures.¹²

⁹ Moses E., *Nigeria ranked among 20 least countries to achieve SDGs by 2030*. The Nation, (2023), retrieved from https://thenationonlineng.net/nigeria-ranked-among-20-least-countries-to-achieve-sdgs-by-2030-report/#google_vignette on 2/12/2023.

¹⁰ Ibnu'l-Qayyim A., *'I'lāmu'l-Muwaqqi'īn*, (Bayrūt: Dāru'l-Jiyāl Ibnu'l-Qayyim, 1973), p.3

¹¹ Aburounia, H and Sexton, M, *Islam and Sustainable Development*. Research Institute for the Built and Human Environment, (Salford: University of Salford, 2006) p.757.

¹² Atih R. et al, "A New Approach for Sustainable Development Goals in Islamic Perspective", *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*. (vol. 219, 2016), p.162, retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com on 7/12/2023

Comparing SDGs with objectives of Islamic law unfolds that SDGs have been comprehensively described and advocated 1400 years ago in the Qur'ān and Hadith and practically enforced by Prophet Muhammad and his Rightly Guided Caliphs forty years after him.¹³ Each of the goals will therefore be analyzed from the lens of Islam:

Goal 1: No Poverty: All world leaders voted for the inclusion of poverty as the most important goal to be addressed. However, poverty cannot be ended but it can be reduced to a bearable minimum because it is natural to have two classes of people in every society (Q43:32). In order to ensure sustainable economic development that guarantees intergenerational equity, Islam has put in place certain mechanisms that include *zakāt*, *waqf*, *ṣadaqah*, *waṣīyyah*, etc. to provide for the poor the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living.¹⁴ Islam charges the rich to give out the due in the poor (Q9:60)

Goal 2: No Hunger. The Qur'ān is replete with injunctions that encourage Muslims to invest in this humanitarian service and assures those that partake in it of splendid reward. Allah says:

And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive, (saying). We feed you, for Allah's pleasure only. We desire from you neither reward nor thanks. Surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day... (Qur'an 76:5-12)

Efforts to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture constitute concern of the United Nations. They therefore agreed to combat it.

Goal 3: Good health and wellbeing. To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages is emphasized in Islam. Thus, Islam laid down principles for safe, secured and healthy life. It charges all to eat and drink moderately (Q7:31) and forbids consumption of carcass, blood and the flesh of swine so that human can live peacefully. The need for regular medical check is emphasized by the Prophet in the following hadith

Narrated Usamah ibn Sharik, I came to Prophet and his companions were sitting as if they had birds on their heads. I saluted and sat down. Desert Arabs came from here and there. They asked: Messenger of Allah should we make use of medical treatment? He replied: Make use of medical treatment for Allah has not

¹³ Sohaib. M. et al., "Islamic Law and Sustainable Development Goals. *Tazkia Islamic Finance and Business Review*", (vol.12, No.1, 2018),p.98.

¹⁴ Kates, R.W. et al, "What is Sustainable Development? Goals, Indicators, Values, and Practice", *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development.*, (Vol.47, 3, n.d.)

made a disease without appointing a remedy for it except for one disease, namely old age.¹⁵

Goal No. 4: Quality education. The importance attached to knowledge by Islam is matchless. This can be substantiated with the fact that the first revelation received by Prophet Muhammad underlines significance of knowledge (Q96:1-5). In an attempt to promote education, Prophet Muhammad declared that the teacher and the learner are the best creature.¹⁶ To show that dissemination of knowledge is a primary duty of every state, Prophet Muhammad freed some prisoners of war of Badr who agreed to impart knowledge to Muslims¹⁷ and he also used to seek for increase in knowledge (Q20: 114). Promoting the culture of giving equal treatment to all gender in the acquisition of knowledge and lifelong learning opportunities for all, Prophet Muhammad enjoined that the acquisition of knowledge is compulsory upon all Muslims.

Goal No. 5 Gender equality and empowerment of women: The contributions of Islam to the status of women in the society cannot be appreciated without having a look at what used to be their ordeal before the advent of Islam. During the period before Islam, women were rated as second class citizens and treated like chattel. In addition, the announcement of the birth of a girl child used to be greeted with sadness and the grieved father would hide from his people to avoid humiliation (Q16:58). The emergence of Islam changed the narrative and conferred on women the rights enjoyed by their male counterpart. The women, who used to be deprived of their share in inheritance left by their parents or husbands, were freed from the shackle. The women, who used to be considered as objects of inheritance and offered in marriage without seeking their consents, are protected under Islamic law. Almighty Allah says:

Believers men and women, are helpers of one another, they enjoin good (all that Islam orders one to do) and forbid (people) from bad (all that Islam has forbidden); they perform prayers and give compulsory charity and obey Allah and His Messenger (S.A.W). Allah will have His Mercy on them... (Q9: 71-72)

Goal No. 6 Clean water and sanitation: It is indisputable that water is a source of life and that living of human beings depends on it due to its vitality. This may not be unconnected to the creation of human being from water (Q24:V45-46). To show that water is very essential and that it is one of the natural resources needed on a daily basis, Islam regards it as a common property. "Muslims are partners in three: water, pasture and fire".¹⁸ The declaration made is for the protection of

¹⁵ Abū Dawūd S, *Sunan Abi Dawūd*, (Beirut: Al- Maktabah Al-‘Asriyyah, n.d.), Hadith 3855.

¹⁶ Al-Bukhārī M, *Ṣaḥīḥu 'l-Bukhārī*, (Lebanon: Dar awqu'n-Najāh, 1422AH) Hadith 5027.

¹⁷ An-Nadawī A., *As-Siratu 'n-Nabawiyyah*, (Damascus: Dar Ibn Kathīr, 1425AH), p.314.

¹⁸ Ibn Mājah A, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, (Cairo: Dāru Iḥyā' l-'l-Kutubi'l-'Arabiyyah ,n.d), Ḥadīth 2472.

public interests and to avert the danger of owing it by individual who might prevent people from benefitting from it or intimidating them on it. The Prophet also issued stern warning against its contamination when he declared: Guard yourself from three kinds of practices: No one should evacuate his bowels near water sources, on roadsides and in the shade.¹⁹

Goal No. 7 **Affordable and clean energy**: Clean or green energy is a term adopted to make distinction between less polluting energy and the dominant fossil fuels that can cause greater pollution to the environment. Unlike the clean energy that is environmentally-friendly; the dominant fossil fuels wreak havoc and threaten wellness of man.²⁰ The fact that overutilisation of fossil fuel has affected the balance of the world's climate resulting in global warning, it is mandatory upon man to maintain the balance of the earth created by God because the damage is caused by humans' own misdeeds.²¹

Goal No. 8: **Decent work and economic growth**: Islam is a religion that preaches against laziness and idleness. The religion underlines the importance of job creation and recognizes the role of government in its facilitation.²² The Prophet played unforgettable role in this aspect as can be seen in the following report: 'Anas bn Mālik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that a man came to the Prophet (SAW) complaining to him about poverty. He then came back and said o Messenger of Allah! I have come to you from a family which I think some of them will die before I return to them. He instructed him: Step forward, do you see anything? He moved forward and came with saddlecloth and a tumbler. He said: O Messenger of Allah! They used to spread part of this saddlecloth and used to wear part. They used to take water from this tumbler. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: Who will buy these two items from me with one dirham? A man responded: I will buy it O Messenger of Allah! Who will add more money to one dirham? A man replied: I will buy it with two dirham. The Prophet said: The two dirham is yours. He said: The Prophet called the man and said to him: Buy a hoe with one dirham and buy food for your family with one dirham. He (Anas) said: He did so and returned back to the Prophet (SAW) and the Prophet instructed him: Step forward to this valley and spare not neither a *hāj* tree nor a thorny or firewood and do not come to me for 15 days. He left and realized ten dirham. He came back to the Prophet (SAW) and informed him. The Prophet said to him: Go

¹⁹ Abu Dāwūd, ...Hadith 26.

²⁰ Nur Hidayah, et al, "Green Energy towards Sustainability from Islamic Perspective", *International Journal of Sustainable Future for Human Security*, (Vol.3, No.2, 2015), p.31

²¹ Nur, et al, ... p.31

²² At-Turkī A., *Al-'Iqtisādu'l-Islāmī: 'Ususun wamabādi'u wa 'ahdāf*, (Saudi Arabia: King Fahad Printing Complex, 2009).

and use five dirham to buy food and spend five dirham to buy cloth for your family. He said: Allah has put blessing in what you enjoined me.²³

Goal No. 9. Dealing with industry, innovation and infrastructure: The religion of Islam encourages human beings to explore land and think rationally to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. There are many injunctions in the Qur'ān where Allah invites man to apply positive thinking for innovation and scientific research through illustrations from His beautiful creations (Q3:190). The Muslim leaders utilised the message of the verse during the golden age of Islam especially during Abbasid period

Goal No.10: Reduction of inequality within and among countries. One of the reasons why promotion of just, peaceful and all inclusive societies is one of the 17 goals is that sustainable development and growth cannot be actualized in a society where peaceful coexistence is missing.²⁴ It has, however, been reported that one person out of five people have experienced discrimination on the ground of discrimination.²⁵ On the other hand, equal treatment of people is one of the moral teachings of Islam in order to foster peaceful coexistence among people of different religions, culture and race (Q16:90). The implication of the verse is that justice, doing of good and giving to the brethren are not confined to the brethren in religion but to all human beings.²⁶

Goal No. 11: Sustainable cities and communities. This goal is about making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It also includes management and use of natural resources, waste generation and management, disaster preparedness, protection of the world's cultural heritage, provision of access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces. There is no doubt that Islamic law encourages individual Muslims and institutions to partake in the conservation and sustainable development of land and natural resources through various community services. To achieve that end the Islamic economy has a mechanism of transferring wealth from the rich to the poor. It has made obligatory on every Muslim who owns a certain minimum of wealth to pay *zakāh* for the expenditure on the welfare of the poor and the needy. In addition, it encourages sharing resources through charity and distribution of estate on a wide scale. To sum it up, the goal aligns with Q28:77

²³ At-Tirmidhī M.I., *Sunan At-Tirmidhī*, (Cairo: Mustafā Al-Bābī Press, 1975), Ḥadīth 1218

²⁴ Yahya, S.A., "A Discourse on the Experiences of Selected Prophets in Sūratu Hūd: Lessons for the Contemporary Society", *Voyages Journal of Religious Studies*, (Vol. 5, No.1, 2019), p.142

²⁵ United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*, (USA: United Nations Publication), p.17. Retrieved from www.unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/-The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf on 12/12/2023.

²⁶ Yahya, S.A.,...p.151.

Goal No. 12: **Responsible consumption and production.** Production is seen in Islam as exertion of assiduous effort in increasing the sources of permissible wealth, multiplication of the product for the comfort of the community and sustainment of its availability and its great values.²⁷ Islam is distinct from other systems because it considers production as an act of worship. Through production, man manufactures garment that covers his nudity, the tools for producing water, the devices that facilitate the journey for performance of *hajj*, the food that strengthens his body and water for the observance of acts of worship in accordance with the dictates of Islamic law. Islam urges man to engage in it because of its great role in increasing the resources, strengthening the community and availing it from depending on others. (Q67:15 and Q7:32). However, Islam prohibits consumption and production of unlawful products such as liquor, pork related meat, conspicuous consumption, etc. The Qur'ān affirms: "Allah has forbidden alcohol, pork, blood, carrion and those sacrifices to shrine and those over anyone other than Allah" (Q2:173).

Goal No. 13: **Climate action:**

Islamic law considers human life as sacred and a gift from Allah. It views elimination of a soul as the peak of evil that a man perpetrates against other. Thus, a Muslim is not allowed to inflict any harm upon self or other, nor commit suicide. Because of the sanctity of life, Allah equates taking of a soul with killing of all mankind (Q5:V32). Therefore, taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts is not out of place. Islamic law charges the Government to prepare for future disasters and problems by creating efficient and effective disaster management cells.²⁸

Goal No. 14: **Life below water: Life below water is essential for human being.** Thus, it is incumbent upon man to protect the life in order to ensure sustainability of the water resources. To underline importance of aquatic ecosystem and its sustainability, Allah says: Q5:96. This verse contains an absolute permissibility of marine-game. Yet, the overarching principle in the exploration and use of nature is taken from the Ḥadīth that says: "There shall be no damage and no infliction of damage" It can be derived from the tradition that the man utilising natural resources-land, water, air, fires, energy, forests, oceans, etc, must be conservative because he is a manager that will be charged to account for it by the real owner.

It is also important to expand marine because it occupies twenty eight percent (28%) of earth surface. It contains water, shelter, adornment, minerals and aquatic animals. Survey revealed that man has just been able to exhaust one

²⁷ Fahd H, *Khuṭṭatu'l-Islām fī Mawāridi'l-'Intāj*, (A Ph.D Thesis submitted to Al-Ma'du'l-'Alī li'l-Qadā', Muhammad bn Saud Islamic University, n.d.), p.7.

²⁸ Sohaib,...p.96

percent (1%) in the marine and that the quantity of the petrol extracted in a year from the ocean is approximately three million tonnes.²⁹

SDG No.15 Life on Land: Also considered as one of the goals is protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainability in the management of forests, combat of desertification, land degradation and biodiversity loss. According to Islam, the trees, stones, rivers, and mountains, and all of nature, are living creations engaged in the worship and obedience of God. Conservation and preservation of natural resources is therefore one the core teachings of Islam. The Prophet frowned at wasting a few drops of water, even if we are next to a river. It also used to be one of the ethics of war that Armies were instructed not to burn trees or destroy agricultural land. The Prophet considered planting of trees and flowers, as acts of virtue.³⁰

Goal No.16: Peace, justice and strong institution: One of the problems militating against good governance all over the world is application of justice. It has contributed, in no small way, to the failure recorded in a democratic system and it has permeated the social, economic, political and judicial aspects of life. Thus, corruption is found in every religion and almost 1 in 6 businesses have received bribe requests from public official (United Nations, 2022, p.23). Considering justice as an essential component expected to regulate all affairs of life, the Qur'ān calls for its application as the bedrock of polity as follows:

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion. He admonishes you, that ye may receive admonition Q 16:90

Goal No.17: Partnership for the goals: It is essential to state at this juncture that the 17th goal of SDGs is highly encouraged in Islam. The reason is that Islamic law charges human beings to render assistance to one another during prosperity and adversity. It enjoins all to eliminate evil together and assist one another in the service (Q5:2). Drawing attention of the world to the importance of this goal, the Qur'ān gave an account of Prophet Musa making request from Allah to strengthen him with his brother, Hārūn. The Qur'ān unfolded the divine assurance of the support of his brother in Q28:34. Prophet 'Isa also made a compassionate appeal to Allah for his consolidation with his disciples (Q61:14)

Objectives of Islamic Studies Education

The objectives of the teaching of Islamic Studies in the universities according to the Nigeria University Commission (NUC) Benchmark for Islamic studies (2014) are seven;

²⁹ At-Turki,...p.138

³⁰ Asad Z. and Junaid Q., "Islamic Approaches to Sustainable Development", *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics*, (vol. 10, No.1, 2021), p.6. Retrieved from www.ssrn.com/abstract=3988869 on 2/12/2023

- i. To acquaint the student with the broad outline of Islam as a religion and as a way of life
- ii. To prepare the student to understand Islam as culture and civilization
- iii. To present Islam to the student as it is in its original sources of the Prophets particularly the Qur'ān and Sunnah
- iv. To sustain rigorous academic research into all issues affecting contemporary Muslim communities with focus on Nigeria.
- v. To place Islam in the context of other world religious traditions, especially those relevant to Nigeria.
- vi. To prepare the student who will progress to postgraduate level with intellectual capabilities and imaginative thoughts.
- vii. To produce graduates that would adequately fit into establishments of administration, Islamic legal departments, teaching at various levels, and the Foreign Service

To achieve these objectives, courses were developed for different levels of the teaching of Islamic studies in the universities and these courses cover the scope of Islamic studies which are

- a. *Tawhid* (Theology): This part is concerned with the various Islamic creed.
- b. *Fiqh* (worship and jurisprudence): This part focuses on the way Allah is to be worship and those things He has made lawful and unlawful.
- c. *Sīrah* (Life Biography of Prophet Muhammad): this is concerned with the historical life of Prophet Muhammad as well as his conduct.
- d. *Tahdhīb* (Moral and Social Teaching): This part deals with the study of moral and social teachings of Islam as contained in the Qur'ān and Sunnah.
- e. *Qur'ān*: The revelation and compilation of the Qur'ān as well as its explanation (*Tafsīr*) and reasons for its revelation.

The goal of the subjects in Islamic studies is the development of the combination of the body of the spirit of the individuals. While some of the subjects develop the spirit of the individuals, others are aimed at developing the nation as a whole. It therefore implies that the curriculum is such an encompassing one but then, the possibility of missing out some of what could be needed to meet the demand of the Sustainable Development Goal might be missing and that is the onus of this paper.

The University of Ilorin Islamic Studies Curriculum

Established in 1975, the University of Ilorin's Islamic Studies curriculum has deep roots embedded in Nigeria's cultural and religious history. It draws inspiration from centuries-old Islamic traditions while embracing the evolving nature of education. The curriculum reflects the university's commitment to preserving and disseminating Islamic knowledge within the context of a modern and diverse society. The curriculum unfolds as a structured narrative, encompassing a diverse range of thematic components. From the study of the Quran and Hadith to Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and spirituality, students traverse a comprehensive landscape of Islamic scholarship.

At the University of Ilorin, the Islamic Studies curriculum transcends disciplinary boundaries. It embraces an interdisciplinary approach by incorporating insights from philosophy, history, sociology, and other fields. This approach not only enriches students' intellectual experiences but also equips them with the analytical tools to navigate complex issues in a globalized world, fostering a spirit of intellectual inquiry and critical thinking.

One of the curriculum's notable strengths lies in its adaptability to contemporary challenges. Courses addressing ethics, social justice, and sustainable development demonstrate the university's commitment to producing graduates who are not only well-versed in Islamic principles but are also equipped to address pressing issues facing society today. This adaptability positions the curriculum as a dynamic force in shaping the ethical and moral compass of its students.

Beyond the confines of lecture halls, the University of Ilorin's Islamic Studies curriculum leaves an enduring impact on both students and society at large. Graduates emerge not only as scholars but as conscientious individuals with a deep sense of social responsibility. They contribute to various sectors, embodying the values instilled by the curriculum, and act as bridges between tradition and the demands of a rapidly changing world.

Ten courses are compulsorily offered at the 100 level of the B.A. Degree Programme. These courses cover aspects of (1)Islamic Theology e.g RIS 122, Islamic fundamentals I (*iman*) (2)Islamic jurisprudence e.g RIS 123 Islamic fundamentals II (as salat, the performance of prayer) and (3) Islamic history e.g. RIS 130 place of mosque in Islam. At 200 level, eleven courses are compulsorily offered covering aspects of Islamic history, Islamic theology, Islamic economic, Qur'an, hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. At 300 level eighteen courses are taught with seven courses being elective and the department chooses only two out of the seven elective courses. At 400 level, eleven courses are offered. A total of 45 courses are compulsorily offered for study. The coverage of the courses is as tabulated below;

Levels	Number of courses on each fields							
	Islamic law	Islamic theology	Islamic philosophy	Islamic history	Islamic economics	Qur'an	Hadith	Total
100	3	2	-----	5	-----	-----	-----	10
200	2	----	-----	3	2	2	2	11
300	2	1	2	2	-----	3	3	13
400	5	2	-----	2	-----	1	1	11

In addition to the core courses, students are expected to select some elective and required courses to meet up with the university graduating requirements.

Roles of the Curriculum in the Actualization of the SDGs

Having reviewed the curriculum of Islamic studies, it is pertinent to appraise the role of the discipline as well as its potency in actualizing the sustainable development goals. It is important to note that the aim of creating the two courses on Islamic economics is to expose students to the philosophy of Islam on economy so that the students can contribute their quota to the development of their community. By so, poverty will be reduced drastically and hunger will be subdued since Islamic economics aims at maximizing success with available resources. The students that underwent training in the discipline would also imbibe the culture of striving towards realization of economy that is friendly to human nature and not parallel to interest. The two courses also expose students to the principles propounded by Islam to ameliorate suffering and encourage moderate economy that will enhance sustainable development. Apart from the two courses that cater for Islamic economics, the aim of incorporating *Zakāh* into the syllabus is to accustomize the students with the efficiency of the pillar in addressing economic challenges of man and the need to bridge the wide gap between affluent members of the community and the downtrodden masses. Therefore, the call by world leaders to alleviate poverty and hunger would be achieved if Muslims key into the dictates of Shariah as contained in the courses.

In addition, Islamic economics courses designed at the University of Ilorin also nurture students to realize the need for wealth creation through engagement in a decent work. It enables students to strive towards entrepreneurship since different concepts of Islamic economics that foster such are taught in the class. The courses outline sale (*bay'*), payment in advance (*salam*), mortgage (*rahn*), transfer of debt (*hawālah*), partnership (*sharikah*), sharing of produce of agriculture with another person in return of his service in irrigating the garden (*musāqāt*) and crop sharing (*muzāra'ah*) as the tools needed to combating poverty and unemployment.

A courses titled status of women in Islam was also integrated into the syllabus to intimate students with the position of Islam on gender equality. The pivotal role of the course in addressing gender equality cannot be emphasized. In fact, it revealed that Islam frowns at discrimination against women and it stands out among other religions in holding women with the high esteem. It calls for elimination of discriminatory law. However, the discipline has no provision to cater for climate change, life below water, and well-being.

Conclusion

This paper discusses the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) as a global initiative, encompassing all countries, including Nigeria. It emphasizes the role of universities as key institutions for national development. The study specifically focuses on the Islamic Studies curriculum at the University of Ilorin, a second-

generation university in Nigeria. The objective is to assess the curriculum's effectiveness in contributing to the SDG, highlighting the importance of aligning academic programs with national development goals.

The findings underscore that while Islamic Studies traditionally emphasizes religious practices, it must also address the broader societal and economic needs of the nation. To enhance its relevance, the curriculum should integrate courses that contribute to the economic development of the country. The paper advocates for efforts to ensure that Islamic Studies becomes more socially relevant, encouraging the incorporation of courses that foster economic growth. Additionally, there is a call for measures to enhance the competitiveness of graduates from the department compared to those from other disciplines.