

Scriptural Justification in the Quest for Knowledge in Islam: Biographical References in Nigeria and Pakistan

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Abstract

This research focused on the scriptural justification on the quest for knowledge (including modern education knowledge) in Islam. The study presented justifications from the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, corroborated with biographical references regarding the manifestations in Nigeria and Pakistan. Generally in Islam, Quran (Muslims' Holy Book) and Hadith (teachings of Prophet Mohammed, Peace Be Upon Him-PBUH) provide guidance and direction for the Muslims in their undertakings and lifestyles. Both scriptures enjoin all Muslims to be knowledgeable; since knowledge in itself is central to Islam. The study adopted historical research method on the argument for the positive disposition of Islam to the quest for knowledge, with evidences from the two scriptures. Early efforts of the Muslims in pioneering several fields of modern education (knowledge); delving into the areas of medicine, mathematics, chemistry, geography, history, astronomy, biology etc were portrayed. The biographic peculiarities and contributions of Muslim individuals internationally and as evidenced in the case of Nigeria and Pakistan formed parts of the findings discussed. The study therefore concluded that there is widespread misconception on the position of Islam and the negative perception of Muslims about seeking modern education or searching for knowledge, therefore dispelled the insinuation with facts and figures. Relevant recommendations were therefore made to all stakeholders, challenging them on redoubling their efforts to improve and sustain the feats already achieved which have launched Muslims in Nigeria and Pakistan to limelight as well educated professionals and experts in various fields of modern education endeavours.

Keywords: Quest for knowledge, Scriptural justification, Islam, Biographical references, Nigeria and Pakistan

Introduction

Almost everywhere in the world, the conception of the non-Muslim about education or knowledge is that Islam forbids quest for knowledge, especially secular knowledge. This may probably be because they have little or no knowledge about Islamic tenets and oblivious of history or their remark is deliberately calculated to enrage, malign and disparage the Muslims and their religion. It is not incorrect to say that the education traditional to the Muslims began with the learning of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic language. In view of this, Nigeria is not isolated, as education received by the Nigerian Muslims from the beginning was Arabic/Quranic and gradually grew into what is known as Islamic Education as explained in Abdulrahman (2014:78-79) that:

Quran is the Holy book of Muslim faithful and on which their entire life undertakings are hinged, therefore, education to the Muslim from the beginning was the learning of the Holy Qur'an and Arabic language, for which the Qur'an was revealed and written.

In other words, this system of education was called Arabic/Quranic education, traditionally characterised with rote learning. The story is not totally different in Pakistan from the beginning, as one of the sub-continent of India where Indian traditional learning elements such as Indian religion, Indian mathematics, Indian logic were available at early Hindu and Buddhist centres of learning in *Taxila* (modern day Pakistan), as learnt from the history of education in the Indian sub-continent; but which Islamic education became ingrained with the establishment of the Islamic empires during the middle age and before the coming of the Europeans who brought western education (Wikipedia, 2016).

However, Arabic/Quranic education is synonymous to the age long tradition of Islam, that wherever Muslims are found or settled; they organised themselves as a community (*ummah*), built mosques and established Quranic learning centres (*madrassahs*). In Pakistan since the advent of the Islam, each Muslim community was centred on the local mosque which was often accompanied by a Madrassah (UKEssays, 2015). The traditional Islamic/Quranic teacher known as *Mu'alim* (corrupted in Nigeria as *Mallam*), had the only complete manuscript, but dictated to the learners in piecemeal for memorisation (rote learning). So also in Pakistan, teacher-driven teaching methodologies and rote learning approaches were common during Islamic periods if not earlier. Ali & Farah (2007) maintain that even today, these approaches are common in classrooms, particularly at government schools and *madrassahs*. Writing in the traditional Quranic experience involved using a pen called *kalam/Qalam* with locally prepared ink, mostly called *tada'a* or *tadawa* in Nigeria and writing on a wooden slate known as *wala'a*. The places of learning (*madrassahs*) for traditional Quranic learning included the teacher's parlour, veranda, courtyard, house frontage, under tree shades or inside the mosque. Raffia mats or animal skins were provided as the sitting materials.

Originally Islamic education integrated both religious and worldly knowledge in Pakistan. However, over time the *madrassah* education system became more limited to religious matters (Ali & Farah, 2007). Progressively from the colonial Nigeria, a paradigm shift emerged when formal Western education began; *Islamic education* became a more appropriate nomenclature for education that is not only Quranic or Arabic language, but became integrative of other scriptures like the Hadith (sayings/traditions of the noble Prophet of Islam – may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) from where the *shari'ah* is derived; to broaden the horizon of the Muslim learners in terms of knowledge. Significantly, the scope of Islamic education became expanded and comprehensive with a much broader and deeper curriculum.

On the *madrassah* education in Nigeria, the contemporary *ibtida'i* stage where books like *asma'wy*, *al-hadory* and *qowahidul salat* are the major texts in use. What is considered in the contemporary Nigerian secondary school's classification as the junior secondary (*ida'di*) is characterised with learning of religious books like *muqodimatul insiyah*, *matnu ri'salah* and *muwata Malik* or *tanwirul khawaaliq*. At the stage that can be equated to the senior secondary level, that is, *thanawiy* or *tawjiy*, books such as the *Minhaj Muslim*, *Bulughul Marami* and *Kitabul Taohid* by Imam Bejuriy were used. With all of these, it is now much more than the Quranic education it was known and called.

Similarly, all the elements to attain full Islamic knowledge and professionalism, obtainable at the higher or advanced level (university) require the students to begin learning grammar, and what modern linguists according to Jimoh (2004) refers to as the "grammar method", is employed. At this level, courses offered include *As-Sarf* (grammatical inflexions), *An-Nahw* (syntax); *Al-Mantiq Histab* (arithmetic), *Al-Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), *Al-Aqaid* (Scholastic theology), *Al-Tafsir* (commentaries on the Qur'an); *Al-Ahadith* (the traditions of the Prophet and commentaries thereon). These and many more areas are regarded as different branches of learning in Islamic education.

Basically in Islam, knowledge is vigorously pursued, of course, Islamic education is a formal type of education characterised with the use of curriculum, compartmentalized and organised for professionalism, exposure to examination, certification and other formal elements. This type of education in most Muslim countries, including Pakistan is referred to it as *madrassah* education. Western education to some scholars, including this writer; has seized to be western, but modern. It is modern because all forms of knowledge, beyond western are learned in schools today; not excluding religious, cultural and other evolving contemporary contents, that are not only western.

Statement of the Problem

Prior to the current manifestation, Nigerian Muslims had a fear of getting their children converted to Christianity when seeking western education that *ab initio* was being provided by the Christian missionaries alone. As earlier stated, Islamic education in Pakistan originally integrated both religious and secular knowledge which along the line, the *Madrassah* education system was said to be more limited to religious matters; indicating that all was not well with the marriage of the two system. The obvious apathy in Nigeria has since then resulted in the Muslims' low enrollment at various modern educational levels, from nursery, primary, secondary to tertiary. Today, some Muslims still do not believe in modern education, especially and largely among the Muslim faithful of Northern Nigeria, manifesting in the existence of the *al-majiri's* system. This repugnance has often been noted by the writer, to have inevitably produced frustrated youths, aggrieved parents and poverty-ridden families who have no modern education qualifications or certificates to support their livelihood in the face of western education oriented opportunities.

Of recent is the issue of Boko Haram in Nigeria, that is, a sect which is purportedly opposed to formal education; probably as a reaction to the neglect and injustices suffered by those who have no modern education, leaving them therefore with no room for being part of meaningful living, but a life of impecuniosity and penury, characterized with no food, jobs and social belongingness. The misfortune believed to have been brought to them by their lack of modern education certificate. The unfolding situation in Pakistan makes it not much a problem, except for some levels of ignorance generally displayed by people about Muslim countries, that everything is Arabic and Islamic, including education. The colonial influence overshadowing originally in the then India, including the now Pakistan, the British administration took on the task of converting the 'traditional', 'Oriental' system of education into a 'modern', 'Western' one which Gupta (2007) further stated that the change included curricula and teacher training, as well as shaping the values and ideals held by the people of colonial India. The height of it was the declaration of English as the medium of instruction in all schools, introducing a new era of education in the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan), in the era of colonialism.

Significantly, any education which provides for Quranic system in a fully formalised mode and integrated into the modern educational structure is a contemporary education. Acceptance of this integrated modern practice is believed to ultimately provide the Muslims with opportunity to gain political relevance, be socially recognised and achieve economic prosperity, as already evident in the statuses of Muslims across the world. This worth chronicled, with special reference to Nigeria and Pakistan.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study revolve around:

- i. rendering a clear cut clarification on the concepts and interrelationship of Islam and Modern education.
- ii. establishing a positive disposition of Islam with scriptural justification on the quest for knowledge (education).
- iii. corroborating the justification with the efforts of the early Muslims in pioneering modern knowledge and
- iv. providing internationally available biographical references, particularly with regard to Nigerian and Pakistani Muslim recipients of modern education.

Research Questions

- i. What conceptual clarification and interrelationship are associated with Islam and Modern Education?
- ii. What are the dispositions of Islam and the established scriptural justification in the quest for knowledge (education)?
- iii. How can the justification be corroborated, considering the efforts of the early Muslims in pioneering modern knowledge?
- iv. Which biographical references are available at international scene, and among the Nigerian and Pakistani Muslim recipients of modern education?

Methodology

The method used in this study is purely historical with the data sourced from primary and more of secondary sources. The data were subjected to internal and external criticisms as done in historical research for validity and reliability, and to specifically ascertain the consistency of the data in terms of authenticity, genuineness and accuracy.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data was based on the research questions. Since data cannot speak for itself, the researcher analysed the data content with explanation, clarification and synthesis of the documentary evidences and other data. Hence, a content analysis was adopted.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion shall be based on answering those research questions that guided the research study, thus:

Research Question One: What conceptual clarification and interrelationship are associated with Islam and Modern Education?

Conceptual clarification and interrelationship associated with Islam and Modern Education

The term *islām* or *is'lām* (as pronounced in Arabic) means submission to God, and anyone who submits is a *Muslim* (Nigeria, 1991 and Columbia Encyclopedia, 2006). Islam is a world religion with Prophet Muhammad (*Sallahu Alaehim Wasalam* - Peace Be Upon Him) as its spiritual leader and messenger of Allah. Islam is the youngest of the three monotheistic world religions (with Judaism and Christianity) founded in the 7th century (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2006). It has been revealed that globally, Muslim population is fast increasing through birth rate, as well as the glaring high rate of conversions and particularly from Christianity. From the Cambridge University report, many parts of Europe, North America (<http://www.muslimpopulation.com/America/USA/americaBecome.php>). Christians are getting away from their religious belief. Consequent upon this, Islam is the fastest growing religion on the planet. Islam is a world religion, hence the Muslims are found world over. Muslims are found in large numbers in Asia, Africa, Europe, America (north and south), Antarctica and Australia. It is expected and has been projected that if the current rate of increase in Muslim population continues by 2030, it is likely that one out of three persons will be a Muslim.

As reliably surveyed, the current world Muslim population stands at 2.08 billion (www.religiouspopulation.com/News/News.27.php). This is far greater than the subjectively estimated 1.6 or 1.7 billion. Injection of bias was observed, as reported in several sources; Muslim population in India, China, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia and several other countries are presented with far less than their actual population. Table 1 below shows actual Muslim population figures, thus:

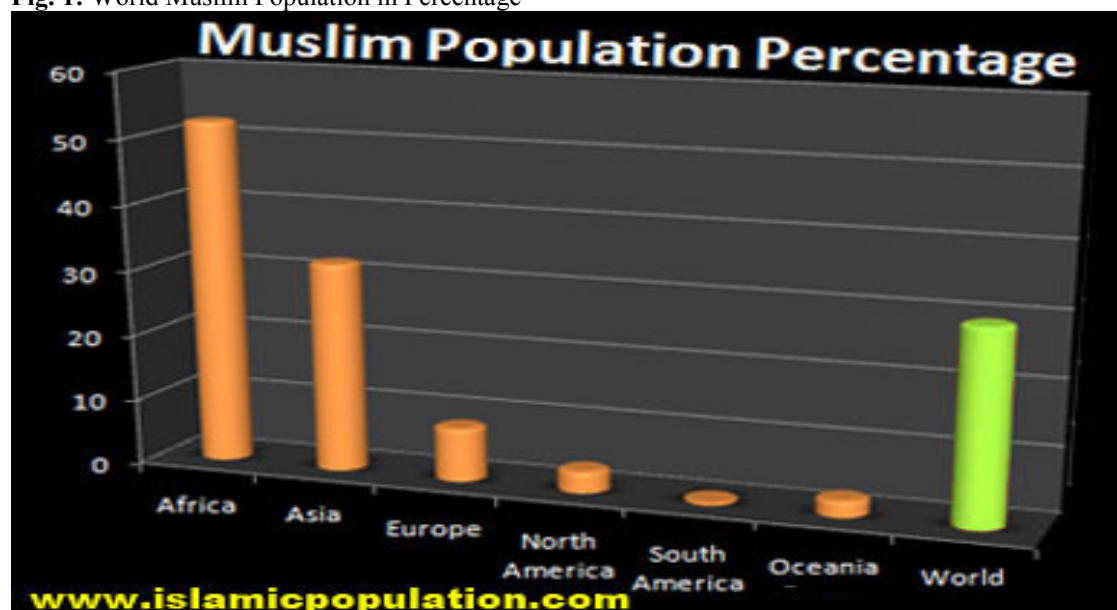
Table 1: World Muslim Population

Continent Population (in Million)	Total Population in 2014 (in Million)	Muslim Population – 2014 (in Million)	Muslim Population (in%)
Africa	1096.6	581.58	53.04%
Asia	4319.96	1389.5	32.16%
Europe	739.31	56.18	7.6%
N/America	469.1	8.04	1.8%
S/America	488.5	2.07	0.42%
Oceania	38.04	1.77	0.67%
Total	7151.51	2038.04	28.26

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnegie_Endowment_for_International_Peace

Muslim population, in line with the above, grows at 1.84%. The Muslim population in 2013 was 2.04 billion and in 2014 was 2.08 billion.

Fig. 1: World Muslim Population in Percentage



In a number of these countries, Islam is their principal religion. Table 1 and Figure 1 above confirm that in the continents of Africa and Asia which Nigeria and Pakistan respectively belong, Muslims predominate and Islam is widely practiced. In Nigeria, Muslims account for more than 70% of over 170,000,000 people in the country. In Pakistan, Islam as reported in Wikipedia (2016) is a state religion, practiced by about 95-98% of the 195, 543, 000 populace. The remaining 2-5% of the Pakistani population according to Wikipedia (2015) practice Christianity, Hinduism and other religions; not excluding Baha'i, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Kalash, Jainism, Buddhism and Judaism.

At the core of Islam is the *Qur'an*, believed to be the final revelation by a transcendent *Allah* (God) to Muhammad (SAW), the Prophet of Islam. This Holy Qur'an contained divine words of Allah and was revealed in Arabic, the language is therefore used in Islamic religious practices worldwide. There are established articles of faith in Islam that require Muslims to believe in the oneness of God and the messengership/prophethood of Muhammed (SAW) and in all other prophets of God. Also, believing in the angels, in the scriptures (revealed), in the fortune/destiny (of good or bad, as God's decree), in the day of resurrection for final judgement (for reward and punishment). Muslims submit to Allah through *Arkan-ad-Din*, the five basic requirements or "pillars" of Islam which Johnson (2006) regards as the cornerstones on which Islam is based. These five pillars are *Shahadah* (the affirmation or declaration that "there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God; *Salawat* or *salat*, (daily prayers: the five times ritual prayers that a Muslim must perform everyday - before dawn, at noon, at mid-afternoon, at sunset and at nightfall), its observance is permissible anywhere, but preferably in the *masjid* (mosque).

Others are *zakah* or *zakat* in Arabic, meaning alms-giving. This is known as a religious tax or prescribed charity, the rationale is to lessen resentment between the rich and the poor. *Sawm/Siyam* in Arabic and interpreted in English as fasting, it is the dawn to sunset fast expected to be observed by Muslims for 29 or 30 days once a year during the lunar month of Ramadan. In Islam, fasting at its appointed time calls for abstinence from smoking, drinking, eating, and sexual relationship; the last of the five pillars is *Hajj*, *Hajj*, which is the annual pilgrimage to *Mecca* and *Medina* for worship, its importance can hardly be overestimated, it is a great

annual pilgrimage uniting Islam and its believers from around the world and it is an act of worship that every Muslim is expected to perform at least once in a lifetime.

The concept 'Modern Education' as used in this work requires a careful clarification, as what is known to many is Western Education. Modern education is a concept that is yet to receive clarifying attention of scholars in education. Modern education is literarily and contextually more comprehensive than Western Education in scope and characteristics. Firstly, Modern education is eclectic; having the contents with various cultural and indigenous educational features, religious characteristics and all forms of contemporary knowledge with the peculiarities of different societies embedded in the overall curriculum of such societies to meet their needs. The integration of these diverse contents in the education theory and practice warranted the new thinking that Western education is no longer sufficient to describe the now Modern education

Modern education can therefore be taken as an educational concept of the 20th century having several characteristics that are globally manifesting; Boyd and King (1981:423) maintain that during the Twentieth Century, many changes have overtaken the formal institutions of education. Stating further, the most obvious of these are:

- i. The schools, for whose maintenance and staffing the state has become increasingly responsible.
- ii. The length of time during which children are schooled has extended considerably.
- iii. Not until after the First World War was compulsory schooling imposed in every State of the U.S.A., and not until after the Second World War in Quebec, Canada.

The aforementioned are some of the changes unique with the 20th Century as far as the theory and practice of education are concerned. Other developments of the Twentieth Century include the birth of the United Nations and its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, addressing educational matters from its Article 26, items 1, 2 and 3. Also, the establishment of UNESCO, with the mandate to promoting education in the world was an event of the 20th century. This is also the century in which imperialism and colonialism reached the peak and ended. Many of these colonised countries attained independence in the 20th Century. The emergent independent nations of the world began to focus on educational domestication, responding to their local needs i.e. (*adaptation of education*). Nationalism in education equally began in the 20th century. The 20th century is the century of polished modern Medicine and advancement in Science and Technology, including Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Secondly and significantly too, Modern Education could be rendered to mean an integrative and unique education that replicates the values of the Indigenous/Traditional, Islamic and including whatever that is considered Western Education in its application. Indigenous education and Islamic education have established values and some ethical standards with which 'Western education' is now being given and applied; in Arts, medicines, law, politics, science, technology etc. Islamic education curriculum in its current state is modern and cannot be called western education, as it is now formally given. Western and Islamic educational traditions are both foreign to several nations of the world, including the countries of study.

Education in the world today can no longer be termed 'western' with all the unfolded events, changes and characteristics. Several nations contributed to the development of knowledge in the world and whatever the form the knowledge was, from the beginning and now, its polished status and modernisation evolved from other nations. The contributions of the Arab world to pioneering modern knowledge in areas of medicine, science, geometry, astronomy, mathematics, history, geography etc. cannot go un-noticed or be neglected. Knowledge and language are two different things. Using English, French, German or other Western languages in pursuance of knowledge does not make education western. Most modern knowledge treatises and breakthroughs documentation by the Arabs, written in Arabic were later transcribed into other Languages for use.

Also, the roles of the Egyptians, Chinese and Sumerians from the very beginning of civilisations cannot be so easily forgotten. These views above can best validate the nomenclature 'Modern Education', going by all the various indices that make it 'modern' and no longer 'western'.

Research Question Two: What are the dispositions of Islam and the established scriptural justification on the quest for knowledge (education)?

The Positive Dispositions of Islam and the Established Scriptural Justification on the Quest for Knowledge (education)

On the examination of Islam's position towards seeking knowledge and its contribution to modern knowledge from the global scene, there are enough referential and scriptural proofs. As earlier insinuated, the Holy Qur'an is a source of Muslims' ways of life with which their behaviours, pattern of life and total existence are regulated. However, the provisions of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith (Prophetic traditions) remain the two sources from which the Muslims seek guidance and direction. So also, Winter (n.d) noted that the Muslims believe that Qur'an is the word of God (Allah), and Hadith, the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H.).

A number of these validating proofs are evident from the Holy Qur'an and Hadith which are apparent on Allah's commandment to seek knowledge. Lending his voice to this is Oladosu (2005) who affirms that intellectually, Islam promotes acts of meaningful reading and writing as well as effective listening and speaking.

It is therefore, not a sheer co-incidence that the first five verses ever revealed to the Prophet of Islam dwells on Allah's command to be knowledgeable.

The Qur'an chapter 96, verses 1-5 read thus:

1. "IQRA" *Read!* In the name of your Lord who has created all that exist.
2. He has created man from a clot (a piece of coagulated blood).
3. Read! And your lord is the most generous.
4. Who teaches by pen (*for writing*).
5. He has taught man that which he knew not" (quoted by Hasan, 1980:45; Dauda, 2002 and Galandaci, 2003:2).

Abdulrahman (2010) in his analysis, maintains that the verses above emphasize reading and writing which amount to what is literarily called education. Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) was an unlettered Arab who could neither read nor write, but was commanded to read and he read. God declared that He teaches man that which he knew not, as was the case in the experience of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.). This can be succinctly explained that what Allah commanded Prophet Mohammad by '*Iqra*' (to read) was an open ended command, not being specified but anything that constitutes knowledge – secular or religious. Also, God declares that He teaches by pen i.e. for writing, be it the writing in physics, law, journalism, medicine, engineering, Arabic, chemistry etc. This entire episode of *Iqra* happened in order to make the Prophet value knowledge. Basically, these verses attest to the importance God attaches to seeking knowledge (education) in Islam.

From the hadith, the importance of knowledge according to the messenger of Allah, Mohammed (May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said:

"if someone enters a path with the desire to earn knowledge, Allah places that person on one of the pathways to jan'nah (paradise). Since the angels are pleased with what he does, they stretch their wings over him. Everything in the heavens and earth, even the fish under the water ask for forgiveness for the scholar. The superiority of scholars to worshippers is the superiority of the full moon to all the other stars. Scholars are inheritors of prophets. Prophets do not bequeath gold and silver; they bequeath knowledge. Whoever takes this inheritance ends up taking a great bounty." (Variously related by: Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi and Bukhari)

Similarly, in some other prophetic traditions (*Hadith*) of the prophet (S.A.W.), Abdulrahman (2010) highlighted a number of submissions which confirm the positive dispositions of Islam to seeking knowledge (education). These include among others:

- The quest for knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim. Verily, the men of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets. Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave (Shalaby, 1954:62; Shallwani, 2014). This researcher holds beyond the submission of Shalaby and Shallwani about knowledge seeking, because the belief that there is life after death means that learning goes beyond the grave, so long there would be interaction in the hereafter - learning continues.
- Also, in one of his sayings, Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.) enjoined the Muslims to seek knowledge, even as far as going to China. China, at that time was considered the farthest place of the world and with this command, it is clear that Islam had not spread beyond the Arabia, let alone reaching China. It portends that the kind of knowledge the Prophet was referring to was not Islamic or religious knowledge, but secular as a complement to Islamic knowledge.
- Ability of any slave/prisoner of war to read and write, and teaching same to ten (10) or more others during the lifetime of prophet was acknowledged as ransom for such slave's or prisoner's liberty (freedom).

In view of the above, some scholars of educational history have remarked objectively and contextually about Islam and modern knowledge. Specifically, Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite (1995) assert that "education is a fundamental aspect of Islamic culture. Indeed, education has been accorded a pride of place in Islam". Commenting further, the duo submits that:

The democratic character of Islam is in the conception that education constitutes the main pre-occupation that reveals the holy duty of every Muslim, and the fact that quality of life of a Muslim is based on this, makes education a basic ingredient of the Islamic way of life (Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite, 1995:11).

Other Qur'anic evidences which historically manifest the importance of education in Islam could be drawn from the story of Prophet Adam - *Allayhi Salatul-Wasalam (ASW)*, one of the prophets of Islam when he was created; Allah taught him the names of all things. Dauda (2002:9) also submitted that prophet Noah (ASW) was divinely taught the art of ship making. Dauda further mentioned that prophet Dauda (David) (*ASW*) equally taught the world the manipulation of iron to fabricate military vests. All these are enough to justify the importance that Islam attaches to knowledge.

From several other portions of the Qur'an, there are injunctions requesting man to observe nature, study natural phenomena, and see how God has created certain things in pairs; negative and positive, think about the alternation of days and nights as a result of the movement of the sun and the moon. These teach man to be scientifically endowed. Still on the acquisition of knowledge in Islam, the Holy Qur'an says that "Allah will raise knowledgeable people to a high status". Significantly too, Qur'an admonishes Muslims to regularly recite the prayer '*robi sidni ilma*' meaning, Oh Lord! Increase me in knowledge (Qur'an 20 vs 114). As wisdom is called *Hikmah* – "whosoever is given wisdom has everything".

Importantly, knowledge is the path through which man distinguishes between good and bad. It is also the path towards building of nations and the resurgence of a society. The imperativeness of education or quest for knowledge prompted Allah's inquiry in the Holy Qur'an - chapter 36 verse 9, asking rhetorically "Are those who know (learned) on the same echelon with those who do not (ignorant)? Obviously the answer to this is NO! The desired knowledge is that of both transcendental and worldly affairs (Mustapha, n.d). The minaret of Islamic civilization was not raised in the world until when Muslims began competing for the acquisition of knowledge.

The Holy Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W.) in one of his traditions, related by *Ibn Majah* and Ahmad says that "Nobody would leave his house to seek knowledge except that the angels would lower their wings as a sign of pleasure over his action". Therefore, it portends that a Muslim must reach the highest peak of knowledge and achievements, and thus building himself/herself on the pillar of knowledge and *Iman* (faith). It is equally suggested that a Muslim should also build his society by observing the dominion of heavens and earth. Bukhari also related a prophet's saying that – "the best of you is one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it" Learning as a way of seeking knowledge has been variedly emphasized.

For anyone who feels or thinks that Islam does not support quest for knowledge may be passionate about fallacy, if they can not reflect and be retrospective about the contributions of Muslim world to the various fields of knowledge as pioneers. This is why Ozigi (1981:2) felt obliged to say that "those who hold the notion that Islam does not encourage education are sadly ignorant of the facts of history.

Research Question Three: How can the justification be corroborated, considering the efforts of the early Muslims in pioneering modern knowledge?

Corroborating the Justification with the Efforts of the Early Muslims in Pioneering Modern knowledge?

Going through the memory lane, Muslims had pioneered several fields of modern knowledge. In this regard, Fafunwa (1974) wrote that "it was Islam that revived the human pursuit of science and it was through the Arabs and not the Romans that the modern world achieved light and power through science". The compilation of great lexicons and development of philological learning in Islam, all were the efforts of Muslims in the 9th and 10th centuries. The Mohammed V University in Morocco today has a valuable collection of some of these early works. In medicine, the likes of *Shaykh Abubakar Mohammed ibn Zakariyah Al-Razi* (Rhazes), *Abu'l Waleed Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Rushd*, known as Averroes, *Abu Ali al-Hussain Ibn Abdallah Ibn Sina* (Avicenna), *Ibn Zubair* (Avensoor) and the father of surgeons - *Abul Qasim Khalaf ibn al-Abbas al-Zahrawi* (known in the West as Abulcasis) are all prominent in pioneering medical sciences (Glatzer, 2008; Grant, 2008; Encarta, 2008).

The fields of chemistry, mathematics and astronomy had many pioneer and renowned chemists, mathematicians and astronomers. In chemistry was the like of *Abu Musa Jabir Ibn Hayyan*, popularly called Geber. In the field of Mathematics, the name *Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Musa Al-Khwārizmī* is still notable as "The Founder of Algebra" (Encarta, 2008). Astronomy had the likes of *Ali al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham* (Alhazen), *Abu Abass Ahmad Al-Farghani*, *Muhammed bin Ibrahim Al-Fazari* etc. Other fields like biology had *Amr bin Bahr* popularly called *Al-Jahizi* (goggled eyes), because of his protrudent eyes; geography had *Yaqub bin Ishaq Al-Kindir* and *Abu al-Hassan Ali Mas'udi* etc. as the pioneers of geography in the world. In history were people like *Abu Zayd Abd-Ar-Rahman Ibn Khaldun*, *Hassan Ibn Muhammad al Wassan al-Sayyati*, a Moor, who was taken away into captivity by the venetians and re-named Leo Africanus and *Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Battūtah*.

With the initial efforts of all the aforementioned in pioneering modern knowledge, this is no doubt a response to the Islamic call on quest for and developing knowledge. Several other Muslims in the world have acknowledged the importance of knowledge, consequently giving the Muslims all over, the enthusiasm to be seeking secular knowledge, to promote the status of the religion, enhance the personality of Muslims, development and contribute to societal progress. However, caution has to be observed on some secular knowledge that can negative influence the Muslims faith and ways of life.

Research Question Four: Which biographical references are available at international scene, and among the Nigerian and Pakistani Muslim recipients of modern education?

Biographical References with Renowned International, Nigerian and Pakistani Muslim recipients of modern education?

Renowned International Muslim Recipients of Modern Education

Internationally, the promotion of Islam as a religion of God is now an effort that is undertaken by the Muslims

who had been products of modern education themselves, such as Late *Shaykh Ahmed Deedat* of South Africa who was a strong Muslim faithful, but also responder to Allah's call for seeking knowledge. A number of these international Muslims were professionals, specialists and technocrats in various field of knowledge. They were successful beneficiary of modern education, but never allowed this to tamper with their faith. The world renowned orator of Islam and comparative religion, an Indian - *Dr. Zakir Abdulkarim Naik* is now an Islamic evangelist, but trained and certified a medical doctor. Others who are by virtue of their modern education knowledge and skills now accurately and universally propagate Islam include the likes of *Yassir Fazaga*, (United Kingdom); *Salem Al-Aamry*, an IT Coordinator of an oil company in United Arab Emirate (UAE); *Yusuf Estes* (USA), *Yusuf Chambers* (USA), *Esa Washington* (USA), *Musa Cerantonio* (Australia), *Hussayn Yee*, a Chinese based in Malaysia; *Hasim Al-Hakim* (Saudi Arabia).

Dr Mokhtar Maghroui has a doctorate degree in Physics from Syracuse University and based in New York; *Areeb Islam*, A South African; *Abu Usaamah At Thahabi*, United Kingdom; *Abdur Raheem McCarthy*, an Irish-American; *Riaz Ansary*, Afghan/American born; *Dr Laurence Brown*, ophthalmologist and formerly in the U.S. Airforce; now involved in propagating Islam and residing in the holy city of Madinah in Saudi Arabia, where he continues his work as a medical director and subspecialist in cornea, cataract, glaucoma and refractive surgery. Making the list are also those Muslim scholars and professionals, even with Doctorate degree in their various fields of endeavours. They are *Dr. Yasir Qadhi* (USA), *Dr. Abdullah Hakim Quick*, a South African, based in Canada; *Dr. Israr Ahmed*, an Indian Medical Doctor turned Islamic preacher; *Dr. Mandouh Mohammed*, an Egyptian Electrical Engineer; *Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips*, Canada; *Dr. Abdulraheem Green*, United Kingdom; *Mutahir Abdullahi Sabree*, USA; *Dr. Jafar Idris*, Sudan; *Anwar Ibrahim*, Malaysia, *Abdulbariu Yahaya*, Malaysia; *Ather Khan*, India; and several others.

Those in this consideration are internationally renowned scholars who excelled in their various field of knowledge in the modern education, not limited to religious or Arabic knowledge, but in medicine, engineering, banking and finance, information technology, physics, social sciences, arts/humanities and so on. All of this points to the fact that Islam does not forbid Muslim from seeking knowledge and education, but encourages it to the fullest of the individuals' capacities.

Biographical Highlights of the Muslim Recipients of Modern Education in Nigeria.

As revealed in the above review from the international scene, the compliance with Allah's command on seeking knowledge among the Nigerian Muslims and the obedience to Allah's command has produced many Muslims who pursued knowledge in the modern education to attain the peak of their academic careers, becoming professors and holders of doctorate (Ph.D) degree. Also, there are magnates, technocrats or professionals of repute in their various fields of industrial, business and other endeavours which are not limited to the fields of Arabic and Islamic Studies, but they are found in various fields like medicine, engineering, law, science, arts/humanities, education, journalism etc, as testimonies to Quranic injunctions and the provisions from the Hadith.

The examples of Muslims who on record, responded to Allah's call to be knowledgeable (including in the modern education) are the likes of Alhaji L.A.K. Jimoh, a renowned historian from Ilorin, a public servant and one time Pro-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt. Also, Professor Aliu Babatunde Fafunwa of blessed memory, a renowned educational historian and former Minister of Education; Emeritus Professor of medicine, Sheu Umar; Prof of Science Education, Tajudeen Balogun; A highly respected Prof. of Islamic Studies, Prof. Daud Noibi. Very important to mention here is also Prof. Abdul-Rasheed Adewumi Aderinoye, a professor of Adult Education with bias for literacy education (Islamic Adult Education and Principles & Practice of Adult Education) one of such modern educationists that never allowed pursuance of modern knowledge elude him and helping others to advance in modern knowledge with their faith (Islamic) remaining impervious.

Others are Prof. Gidado Tahir, Nomadic education expert; Prof. A. Muyibi, a Nigerian specialist in public health/environmental engineering at the Islamic University of Malaysia; Attahir Mohammed Jega, a professor of Political Science and former Nigeria's INEC Chairman; former Nigeria's Education Minister, Prof. (Mrs.) Rukayyat Ahmed Rufa'i; Prof. of English and immediate past Chairman of the Federal Character Commission, Shuaib Oba Abdulraheem; Prof. A.G.A.S. Oladosu, Imam and former Director of the University of Ilorin Institute of Education; Prof. Ishaq Oloyede, former Vice Chancellor of University of Ilorin, now JAMB Registrar and Secretary General – Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs; Prof. Abdulganiy Ambali, Ex-Vice Chancellor, University of Ilorin; the Late Professor of Educational Measurement & Evaluation, Sheu Jimoh; Former JAMB Registrar, Prof. Dibu Ojerinde; Prof. Ango Abdullahi, former Vice-Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University; Incumbent Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Prof. Rasheed. Prof. Abdulrazzaq Kilani, Professor of Religion at the University of Port Harcourt; Professor Mudathir Yusuf, Professor of Educational Media & Technology, University of Ilorin.

Also in the endless list are Prince Jabarudeen Bola Ajibola, former Justice of International Court of Justices and founder, Crescent University Abeokuta; Prof. T.G.O. Gbadamosi, Prof. A.F.B. Mabadeje, Prof. Bidmos, a renowned professor of education, University of Lagos; Late Prof. Ali Ajetunmbi, former Provost of Kwara

State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies; Prof. (Mrs.) Saidat Mabadeje; Late Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Abdul-Ganiy Fawehinmi; Shaykh Ahmed Lemu and Hajia Aisha Lemu, educationists and reformists; Adedayo Yusuf Abdulkareem, Professor of Educational Management and a Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Ilorin; Prof. Yaqub Mahmud, former TETFund boss and now the Nigeria's Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) Chairman; Prof. Engr. Y. Abdulkareem, Late Dr. Tijani Adekilekun, former Imam, University of Ibadan; Prof. Aliyu Dauda, an educationist at Bayero University, Kano; Alhaji Yusuf Adepoju, ACADIP Lead preacher and expert in comparative religion, Prof. Amuda-Kannike, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria; other Senior Advocates of Nigeria are Lateef Fagbemi, Yusuf Ola-Olu Ali and host of others; have all become the pride of Muslims in Nigeria, talking about their modern educational accomplishments, even promoting the image and aiding the growth of Islam..

Biographic Highlights of Muslim Pakistani Recipients of Modern Knowledge

Modern education is not abhorred or despised in Pakistan, even as deep as the people are in Islam and their overwhelming Muslim population. Islamically, education is considered to be a universal right, even very many Islamic rulers according to Gupta (2007), encouraged healthy dialogue and interaction between Hindu and Islamic cultures. Islamic monarchs such as Raziya Sultana, and Mughal emperors such as Humayun, Akbar, and Jehangir, encouraged the establishment of many village schools, colleges/universities, and libraries. In fact, Ali & Farah (2007) concluded that education in Islam is not just considered to be a right, but a religious duty, across gender, age, and social class.

From the stories about Pakistan, contained in various sources, what is common in the description is that the country is the sixth most populous nation in the world (Wikipedia, 2017; Bin Ali, 2013; **Khan, 2014**). Pakistan does not just have the population of about 95-98% Muslims, but characterised with endless list of famous people who are well educated and celebrated in the world, such as *Muhammad Ali Jinnah* and a school pupil - Malala Yousafzai who is an education and women's rights activist from the town of Mingora in the Swat District of KPK province. As a Muslim dominated country, most Pakistanis of note are Muslims, listed in Khan (2014) to include Shahid Afridi, Irfa Kareem, Wasim Akram, Madam Noor Jahan, Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. These celebrated Pakistani Muslims are recipients of Modern education with which they have been projected into limelight. At various times and from different documentations, many successful and renowned Pakistanis are listed either in 10, 26, 50 or 100 most popular or influential Pakistanis; in politics, law/jurisprudence, engineering, academics, journalism, medical, telecommunication, business, sports etc. Among the most featured Pakistani in the listings according to Wikipedia (2017) are the likes of *Late Mazhar Ali Khan*, a socialist intellectual and a veteran journalist of Pakistan, editor of Pakistan Times newspaper in the 1950s, when it was considered a 'progressive' newspaper. Also, *Dr. Shahid Masood Khan*, a journalist, physician, and a political analyst who anchors a live talk-show on News One.

Very important here for consideration is *Late Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi* who was an Urdu and English language Pakistani poet, journalist, literary critic, dramatist and a short story author with 50 books to his credit. Also, *Hammad Siddiqi* is a US based Pakistani economist, banker and social commentator; the only son of former Pakistani politician Shahid Aziz Siddiqi and educationist and social worker Shabana Siddiqi. *Late Abdul Razzak Yaqoob* is another Pakistani a Pakistani media mogul, industrialist, philanthropist, and the businessman who owned ARY Group of Companies, popularly addressed with his name initials – *A.R.Y.* Good to mention in this paper is *Abdul Quayyum Khan Kundi*, a businessman, political activist, writer, philosopher, author, columnist; educated at NED university of Engineering and Technology, as well as the Institute of Business Administration; elected in 2010 as the president of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce, USA. *Maulana Tariq Jamil* is one of most respected personality in Pakistan, having millions of fans all across Pakistan and is considered an authority in Islam.

In his 26 amazing Pakistanis, Bin Ali (2013) listed among others; *Dr Umar Saif*, an Associate Professor of Science and Engineering at the Lahore University of Management Science (LUMS). Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has named him one of the top 35 innovators of the world (TR35). *Professor Asim Khawaja*, the first Pakistani professor hired by the prestigious Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and whose research has received coverage from numerous media outlets including *The Economist* of the New York Times, *Washington Post*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Aljazeera*, *CNN* and *BBC*. Women are not left out of the list, as *Ayesha Farooq* remains the first ever female war-ready fighter pilot, one of the 19 women who have achieved the ranks of pilots in the Pakistan Air Force over the last decade. Another woman, *Maryam Nawaz Sharif* is a Pakistani politician and daughter of former Prime minister of Pakistan - Nawaz Sharif, she is reported to have schooled at Convent of Jesus and Mary, Lahore; King Edward Medical University, as well as the University of Punjab for her Masters and Ph.D in English Literature and Political Science respectively.

Ali Moeen Nawazish is also most notably famous for setting a record of acing 23 subjects in the Cambridge O-Level examinations. He is also the recipient of Pride of Performance award and his contributions to the field of education are immense. *Ali Rehan* is the co-founder and CEO of Eyedeus Labs; a tech start-up by Pakistani students that developed a mobile application, so innovative that it was even featured on *CNN* and other global

media. Also notable is a scientist and academic, Dr *Naweed I Syed* who is a globally acclaimed scientist of Pakistani origin and head of the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy at the University of Calgary's Hotchkiss Brain Institute in Canada, the first scientist to 'connect brain cells to a silicon chip'. In Khan (2014), *Abdul Sattar Edhi* or Maulana Edhi was rated as the sixth most popular of the 10 Pakistanis. Maulana Edhi is a prominent philanthropist, social activist and a public figure who received the 1986 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service and many others, including a degree of Doctor of Social Service Management, *honoris causa* (Institute of Business Administration Pakistan); honorary degree of Doctorate by the University of Bedfordshire. Dr. *Abdul Qadeer Khan* is a nuclear scientist and a metallurgical engineer, colloquially regarded as the founder of HEU based Gas-centrifuge uranium enrichment program for Pakistan's integrated atomic bomb project. Dr. A. Q. Khan was often referred to as Mohsin-e-Pakistan. *Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif* (known as "Lion of the Punjab" or "Tiger of Pakistan") was a Prime Minister in Pakistan for two non-consecutive terms, now the president of Pakistan Muslim League.

General *Rizwan Akhtar*, a Director General of the most powerful agency in Pakistan - The Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and one of the key men in fighting external and internal threats to Pakistan's existence. *Shaykh-ul-Islam Dr Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri* has authored one thousand books in Urdu, English and Arabic languages. About 507 of these books have been printed and published while 493 books are in the pipeline, undergoing various processes of publication. Some of these books have also been translated in many other languages of the world. A scholar and philanthropist, *Allama Tahir-ul-Qadri* despite not having contested elections commands a very keen following. He has written many books and is considered an authority on Islam by many. Retired Justice *Anwar Zaheer Jamali* had his Bachelor's Degree in Commerce from the University of Sindh in 1971 and a Bachelor's Degree in law in 1973 from the same University, nominated as Chief Justice of Pakistan by Ministry of Law and appointed as such by President *Mamnoon Hussain*.

Conclusion

Islam does not hate knowledge, including modern education or prevent Muslims in any way from searching for knowledge. This wrong perception is what the study dispels, scripturally and positively justifying the disposition of Islam with biographical references from Nigeria and Pakistan. These two countries share some common characteristics in terms of population and number of Muslim, colonial history, religious and educational manifestations; all pointing towards their comparability for this study. Seeking knowledge is strongly advocated in Islam because knowledge was from the beginning what God cherished, when He taught Prophet Adam the names of all things. This had been demonstrated by the early Muslims and still being valued by Muslims of today; Very many Muslims across the world and particularly in Nigeria and Pakistan are modern education beneficiaries and participants. Muslims have taken the bull by the horns, availing themselves the opportunities to be educated and become Muslim figures and personalities of substance; forging fast and ahead in various fields and professions. Today in the two countries, the referential biographies indicate that Islam never barred or prevented any Muslims from seeking modern education to any level of choice. There are Professors, holders of doctorate degrees, technocrats, experts and geniuses in virtually all disciplines of human endeavours.

Professionally, Muslims are found in the military as Generals; pilots and captains in the aviation; veterans in journalism; medical doctors and surgeons; matrons in nursing practice, construction engineers, even in the oil and gas, aeronautics; reputable architects; celebrated personalities in the teaching of mathematics, history, chemistry, geography, physics, biology, economics etc; also in the banking, manufacturing and telecommunications industry, Muslims are Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and gurus. Also in the legal arenas, Muslims are Senior Advocate and courts' judges/justices; moguls in entrepreneurship/business ventures, spiritual leaders and teachers of religion; renowned athletes, boxers, footballers, cricketers and in many other sports etc. These feats are achievable through modern education which Islam does not abhor, but strongly advocated for..

Muslim countries have been emphasizing a great deal significance of the role of education and the importance of mastering Western science and technology (Ashraf and Abdul-Mabud (1988). The case of Nigeria and Pakistan is not different, Muslim individuals and organisations have also played and still playing remarkable roles in the promotion of knowledge and the development of modern education in Nigeria through series of educational activities, like the establishment of schools, not only for Arabic learning or studies in Islam, but modern education. Others are in the provision of educational supports (scholarships, monetary and material donations), as well as educational engagements like adult literacy classes and enlightenment programmes. In Pakistan today, parents and teachers alike generally place great emphasis on children receiving at least basic education (Shallwani, 2014). All these are done to engender human capacity building of the Muslims and the consequent societal development.

Recommendations

From the findings, the followings are recommended to promoting the Muslims' participation and promotion of modern education, as well as sustaining the tempo and the feats already achieved:

1. Both the Muslim individuals and organizations should redouble their efforts to making sure that the Muslim *ummah* sees the need to accept modern education, through which Islam can even be developed or well propagated and to be more relevant as Muslims, in this age of modern education dominated societies.
2. Muslims should not relent in doing everything humanly possible, in competing favourably with people of other faiths in various aspects of modern educational engagements. Iran is now a typical example or a model for the Muslim world in their adoption and perfection of Western science and technology to fortify their people and protect their religion from being oppressed, intimidated and rendered to the background.
3. Knowledge is power and capable of liberating the mind from ignorance and feebleness. Nigerian and Pakistani Muslims should also see sufficient and diversified knowledge of modern education as a major instrument for excellence and not violence. With modern education, Muslims are in a better frame of mind to be peaceful, practice their religion and advance their educational pursuits.

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