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# AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE

# ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN JORDAN

by

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis expansively discusses the development of Islamic education and its curriculum in Jordan from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives, hitherto an under-researched area. However, it places special emphasis on most recent attitudes, approaches and policies surrounding the Islamic education curriculum in Jordanian schools. This is done by reviewing the most relevant literature available on the subject as well as by analysing the data collected during an extensive field work.

The significance of this study is not only contained within its final results, but it also lies in the manner in which this study has been structured. It begins by discussing, at length, education in general and Islamic education in particular, including their aims and objectives. Then, it deals with the history of education in general and of Islamic education in particular in Jordan and traces the evolution of Islamic education in line with the development of public policies in education. Then, an extensive literature review is presented, which analyses the available literature focusing solely on specific studies that have been categorised into different areas on the basis of their focus. Some of these categories are, for example, Islamic education curricula, the Islamic education textbooks, including content evaluation, etc. This is followed by a discussion of technical and ethical considerations that are employed in the development of the curriculum. The study also seeks to set the standard against which the development of the Islamic education curriculum must be judged. In order to facilitate this examination, the study discusses its findings as a result of the extensive field work carried out. Prior to this, a comprehensive methodology statement is presented enabling the reader to appreciate the actual scope of the study and to correctly comprehend the final results placed immediately after it.

It is stressed that although the study employs qualitative approach to contextualise the research, it largely relies on quantitative methods consisting of field work and interviews. Subsequently the final results demonstrate many positives in the process of the development in the curriculum of Islamic education. In addition, it suggests that much has been done in this regard since the beginning of the formal establishment of the education system in Jordan in early eighties. However, it admits that there is much to be done in terms of elevating the standard of the Islamic education curriculum. It suggests that there is a need for a constant drive to improve the content of the curriculum to bring Islamic education at par with the secular education. Finally, it recommends that the future development of the content of the Islamic education curriculum should indeed take place in view of the modern Jordanian context, but this process of development must not compromise the spiritual element that lay at the core of Islamic education.

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work firstly to Almighty Allah, whose enormous benevolence and compassion made this journey possible.

I owe this to my parents whose love and prayers have kept me going.

This is to my fiancée Tamara Momani as well; whose timely arrival in my life towards the end of this thesis has made all the difference.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

The provision of an adequate high quality education is a major issue, which receives attention of governments all over the world. It is the centre of political debate and a constant source of controversy, as it is the case in Jordan. Like most governments, the government of Jordan aims to present a comprehensive educational system able to tackle the roots of ignorance, produce future managers, doctors, teachers and other contributors of society with the necessary professional skills. In order to achieve that the government aims to improve teaching methods in Jordanian schools to live up to current technological and scientific developments. At the same time, the government promotes a faith-based educational system through which it aims to provide its people with essential knowledge and training pertinent to Islam, the official religion of the country. Jordan, like many other Muslim countries, pay much attention to developing the curriculum of Islamic education in a manner that it is most suited to the modern times despite being spiritual in its essence. For this reason, the government of Jordan constantly strives to develop the curriculum of Islamic education by making full use of the modern teaching methods.

Generally speaking, technicalities pertinent to the curriculum development and teaching methods as part of the teaching process are of great importance in education because they are supposed to make learning process more beneficial. Such technicalities with regard to Islamic education and the development of its curriculum, however, as a subject has attracted special kind of attention of many agencies and departments in different countries. The discussion has focused on various methodological as well as ethical issues.

To state the problem more specifically, Islamic education must be studied as a discipline that posses a great deal of historicity within the folds of its development. More importantly, it has

to be perceived as both a philosophy as well as a practical phenomenon. What is observed mostly is that discussions on Islamic education often focus on one of the above aspects in isolation with the other, particularly in the Jordanian context.[1] This neither presents a realistic framework of Islamic education nor sheds lights on its applicative scope. As a result of which, such academic discussions are not necessarily disseminated.

The present study aims to address these discussions while keeping the focus on the development of the Islamic education curriculum and its current state in Jordan by engaging in an extensive empirical study. The following account seeks to introduce the concepts that are at the centre of the present thesis, and also to briefly discuss the framework that was developed in the form of methodology on which vast and pertinent literature was studied as well as accumulated to draw conclusions and present the author's recommendations on the area of research.

As for the significance of this study, it will not be too ambitious to anticipate that this study will open a new avenue in how Islamic education in Jordan is discussed. As stated above, the developmental nature of this study that comes across in both the diachronic and synchronic[2] manner accompanies a comprehensive discussion on relevant practicalities. Moreover, it is hoped that the findings of this study may be dispersed in the Jordanian in a useful manner.

Education is a core component in the mental, psychological, emotional and physical development of an individual. As a matter of fact, from the Islamic philosophical perspective education is the essence of human gnosis. Education is supposed to be a tool that leads human intellect to appreciate the divine. Classical Islamic viewpoint, therefore, categorised education

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[1] See my discussion in CHAPTER TWO, pp. 41-53.
[2] These terms are widely used in social sciences, especially in Linguistics. Diachronic refers to the study of the development of a phenomenon through time. Synchronic denotes the study of a phenomenon at a given time. See, Hamid, Ghuleili, *How to Approach Islamic Texts?*, Delhi: Kitab Ghar, 2004, pp. 32-35.

initially into two, basic knowledge and beneficial knowledge. The former satisfies the human instinctual inclination to the divine, and the latter helps this purpose.[3] One may appreciate fully this Islamic philosophical stance on education through the works of some prominent classical Islamic scholars. Ibn Khaldun, for instance, categorises education as a phenomenon in between of rationale and revelation. He asserts that the latter is the core and the former is auxiliary to it. This is the reason why the most essential aim of education, according to Ibn Khaldun, is to approach the divine.[4] Similarly, al-Ghazzali thought of education in various philosophical categories. The most crucial of these categories is what he calls elementary level. The basic level refers to identifying the Creator.[5]

In the conventional, nevertheless, Education influences the manner in which the habits and attitude of the individual are formed and thereby moulds the overall personality of the individual too. Owing to this, education as a process of human development has a very big and serious responsibility in a societal context.[6] Therefore, for education to be purposeful, strategized in terms of its aims and objectives and vast content aligned to these aims and objectives. There is considerable research into what goes into developing an education, its systems and contents that make the purpose of the education relevant.[7]

This significance is, on one hand in terms of what it enables a student to do and become while and after education is complete and on the other hand, in terms of how it is fitted in the current social, economic, political, legal and environmental context of the period of time

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[3] See, Alavi, Ziauddin, *Muslim Educational Thought in the Middle Ages*, Atlantic Publishers, 1988, pp. 50-52.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 51.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 51-53.
[6] Scimecca, Joseph, *Education and Society*, London: Winston, 1980, pp. 5-9.

[7] Langford, Glen, *Education, Persons and Society: A Philosophical enquiry*, London: Macmillan, 1985, pp. 25-28.

during which it is prevalent. Therefore, education is an area that requires constant research, evolution and updating.

There is no clear structure or principle upon which the relevance of education is based, but has several theories, systems and methods that are adopted all over the world. The framework too, upon which the developed education content and structure is varied.[8] The mainstream framework is the formal structure of education that, through its variants operates dominantly in the world. Besides this formal educational system, however, there is another well-known system of education, that runs parallel to the formal system of education and that is based on spiritual goals and subsequent content; i.e. religious education.[9]

Aside from the technical factors every education system, including religious education is based on and draws influence from many external influences like history, traditions, learning, cultural practices and beliefs of the country or region where it belongs to. The focus of this research is Islamic education and the development of its curriculum in Jordan in the context of the above-mentioned influences.

The main purpose of this study is to ask important questions as to how the curriculum of Islamic education has developed and evolved in Jordan. Instead of keeping this thesis restricted to assessing a time-specific development, the researcher is also interested in looking at the present situation with regard to the Islamic education curriculum. In doing that, the researcher reviews old a new literature and data available, particularly that of covering the

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[8] Copley, Terence, *Teaching Religion: Fifty Years of Religious Education in England and Wales*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997, pp. 1-4. See also, O'Donnel, Alan. *Education and Society*, London: Longman, 1975.

[9] Badawi, M.A.Z, "Traditional Islamic education: its Aims and Objectives in The Present Day" in al-Attas, S.M.N, (Ed.) *Aims and Objectives of Islamic education*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979, pp. 104-117.

period between late nineties to present. However, extra emphasis is placed on the most recent data. Moreover, the interviews conducted reflect mainly the present or more recent period.

Speaking more specifically, this study seeks to explore the following questions which represent the core of this endeavour:

1. What are the measures adopted in selecting the Islamic education books content in the primary level in Jordan?

2. What are the adopted measures that have led to the variation in selecting contents of Islamic education branches and its distribution in primary level books in Jordan?

3. What are the measures approved in selecting a specific subjects amongst different themes of one branch in the content of Islamic education books?

Before initiating a discussion on Islamic education, it is important to touch upon religious education. As opposed to popular belief, religious education and its practitioners and developers do not seek to undermine or reject the non religious systems of education. On the contrary, they seek to synergise the two to so that the education provided to students is not biased, yet at the same time it is grounded in the teachings of the religion that it is concerned with. Islamic education lays great stress upon education and acknowledges the role of education in empowering an individual, nurturing the individual physically, mentally and spiritually and also helping the individual become efficient and civilised.[10]

Jordan is one of the countries situated in the region that is collectively called the Middle East and has been adversely affected, both politically and economically by the conflict among the

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[10] See Hobson, Peter R, and John, S, *Religious Education in a Pluralist Society*. London: Woburn Press, 1999, p. 17-18.

Middle East countries. Culturally, Jordan draws its way of life and practices from all cultures present in the region, even as the Western influence is also visible in the Jordanian society. From among the cultures in the Middle East, Jordan is influenced by the pre-Islamic Arabic culture and Islamic Arab culture. Arabic continues to be the medium of instruction in several Universities in Jordan. On the other hand, the Western cultural influences are seen to be prevalent among the urban Jordanian life and apparent in its contemporary art, lifestyle, shopping areas, clubs and other social places.

From the point of view of religion, Jordan is a Muslim country. The Jordanian population follows strong adherence to the Islamic laws and religious doctrines that is also represented in the educational system of Jordan. Education has evolved and developed in the country from the 1980s and was focussed on developing a system of education that was comprehensive and relevant.[11] Subsequently, there was a lot of work done in the areas of educational policies, content development, introduction of various disciplines for education, including humanities, literature and others. This is also the time when the Jordanian education moved to secular education and brought in studies in English language, arts, and sociology. This was also the time when the education system of Jordan was struggling against the brain-drain, manifested in a shortage of teaching staff.

The policy of education in Jordan was similar to the policy of education in Europe, with the Jordanian government providing free and compulsory education in the country. The focus of curriculum developers was to come up with content and courses, which were relevant to the prevalent market conditions to ensure that students did not have to face unemployment.[12]

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[11] See Chapter One.
[12] See, for a detailed discussion, Chapter One.

The government of Jordan also paid attention to Islamic education in the country. It was, largely, political influences that initially guided the development of Islamic education in Jordan. Islam in its religious teachings and doctrines, stresses on education and makes it a religious obligation for its followers to comply with. Islamic education is based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. However, the focus also has been on aligning the curriculum of Islamic education in a way that is complementary to other curricula and subjects of study. Islamic education is geared to be dependent on texts and literature only as teaching aids but gives equal importance to other tools such as audio-visuals, graphic representations in the form of maps, photographs and others. While the focus of the non religious education in Jordan is orientated towards employment and market condition, the focus of Islamic education in Jordan is based on developing strong morals and positive attitudes towards the self, the family, the society and the country.

Given the discussion that shows how religious or even non-religious education is influenced by actors such as culture, traditions, political orientation, public opinion, mass-media and others. These factors are unique to each region and country. This is true in the case of religious education since the religious practices, beliefs and adherence to religious doctrines and texts are different from region to region, even for the same religion or faith. Therefore, to conduct a truly relevant and insightful research, it was important to focus on one country and then study the present form of Islamic education in the country, understand how Islamic education evolved over time to arrive at this present form and to dwell on how the various external factors together moulded and shaped this present form of Islamic education.

The curriculum and content of Islamic education in Jordan has been studied across several parameters. These include perceptual cognitive knowledge, which is concerned with facts, concepts, terms, vocabulary and structures, principles, ideas, rules and theories. Another

parameter is the emotional scope that is basically comprised of three elements, namely orientation, which involves either driving an individual towards a particular thing or taking the individual away from it, values and finally attitudes. The psychometric or performance scope is another parameter that has been studied and entails the abilities of the student to comprehend and practice the learning accurately and quickly.[13]

The understanding of the complex of external factors discussed earlier on the Islamic education in the specific context of Jordan has been undertaken to get an in-depth knowledge into how the factors create interplay among their influence to mould and continually modify existing knowledge and learning in an environment that is constantly changing and evolving.

Research into any subject is undertaken to clarify certain areas of focus within that subject. However, given that analysis of data is subject to limitations and interpretation, it is essential to minimise incidents of unreliable data collection and analysis-manipulation. In order to prevent research from being misguided and from going off-track, and also to prevent misinterpretation of statistical data, suitable research methodology is essential. By drafting the research methodology, the researcher gets a framework within which the study is conducted.

As a whole, this thesis employs both diachronic and synchronic approaches; however, the synchronic nature of this thesis is indeed more prominent. This is due to the fact that the researcher mainly stresses the current and contemporary discussions pertinent to Islamic education and its curriculum in Jordan.

Although the present research makes use of qualitative analysis of the literature, especially for the purpose of contextualising, it is largely based on descriptive methodology, wherein individuals closely associated with, and holding varying extents of expertise into the research

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[13] See Chapter Two for a literature based analysis of the subject.

topic were surveyed for their thoughts on the subject of the research. These individuals were members of the national team for Islamic education who prepared curriculum and its lesson scopes, members of the National team for Islamic education who supervised and followed up authoring process, members of the Curriculum & Islamic Education Books Administration at the Curriculums & School Books Directorate at the Ministry of Education in Jordan, Islamic education book authors, four instructors for methods of instructions and teaching techniques at education colleges in the Jordanian universities, educational supervisors for the Islamic Directorate of first Albalqa area of education for school years 2008/2009 and finally male and female teachers of the Islamic education in the Education Department at first Albalqa area of education for school year 2007/2009. Te total sample size was 71. In order to effectively collect data and generate findings, the researcher has undertaken open interviews with the sample to explore and discuss various aspects of Islamic education that fall within the scope of the present research. The interviews were conducted during the course of several sessions and on a one on one basis so that the data was gathered in a cohesive manner that gradually progressed so as to keep the interview on track and aligned to the objectives of the study and also to provide time to address and rectify any misunderstandings by the respondents over the area of research and its required discussions.

The major significance of this study is that it is dealing with a subject which is largely under-researched. As it will become more evident subsequently when the researcher deals with the available literature, the Islamic education curriculum is hitherto an undiscovered territory. This is not to say that no academic research has been done on the subject, but it is to emphasise that apart from scattered and largely incomprehensive reports and research papers, the researcher has not yet discovered a coherent and sufficient account such as a published

work or a PhD thesis etc on the development of the Islamic education curriculum in Jordan. Hence, the researcher takes this opportunity to fill this gap.

The quality of every academic work lies in the structure in which it is presented. As for the structure of this study, it consists of six chapters each of them distinctly compliments to the main theme of the thesis. The following is a brief outline for the chapters in order to let the reader appreciate the structure of this study.

The first chapter entails a detailed statement of the methodology. Since the essence of this thesis lies in the results of the empirical/field study carried out, it was apt for the methodology to be stated at the very outset. Although, the methodology statement briefly touches on the approaches employed in presenting all the previous chapters, its main emphasis is to outline a comprehensive account on the tools and methods carried out to perform the field study and the interviews. It, therefore, discusses how data was collected and processed to derive results.

The second chapter sets the tone for the rest of the chapters by contextualising the subject. It reviews general theories pertinent to education and more particularly Islamic education by explaining their most significant characteristics as well as objectives. In addition, it defines key terms significant to comprehend this study and explain most significant issues. It then studies the history of education, in general, and Islamic education, in particular, in the Jordanian context and lets the reader to have a general understanding of the development of the Islamic education curriculum and teaching methods pertinent to that. In other words, this chapter presents discussions on education and its aims and objectives and on Islamic education, including its aims, objectives and how it is different from religious education. And it also deals with the history of education in general and of Islamic education in particular in

the country of Jordan and traces the evolution of Islamic education in line with the evolution and development in state and education policies of the country.

The third chapter surveys the existing published literature to present this study in a comprehensive manner. To draw from past research into the subject-area of this research, i.e. Islamic education in the specific context of Jordan, extensive literature, including text-books, reports, papers, studies, newspaper and magazine articles and other printed literature was studied. Previous studies on the curricula and tools engaged in classroom-teaching of Islamic education were also extensively studied since they are relevant and fall under the scope of the study. This chapter focuses solely on specific studies that have been categorised into different areas on the basis of the focus of these studies. These categories are related to Islamic education curricula, the Islamic education textbooks, including content evaluation, development of the content and selection and organisation of the content of Islamic education textbooks; Islamic education and its standards in general, standards of selecting Qur'anic verses and standards of selecting the Prophetic Hadith.

The fourth chapter initiates a discussion of contents that are concerned with Islamic education, with special focus on textbook-content. This is to demonstrate the ideal scenario in terms of the employment of technical considerations in the development of the curriculum. This chapter indicates as to how this ideal scenario is relevant to the development of content of the Islamic education curriculum. It looks at different aspects of the content development and aims to view these aspects at work in the Jordanian context.

The fifth chapter continues the discussion initiated in Chapter Three by expanding it further. It specifically discusses textbooks, their nature, objective as well as their role in the

educational institutions. The significance of this chapter lies in the fact that it assesses how textbooks pertinent to Islamic education are developed and received in the Jordanian context.

In short, the third and the fourth chapters together basically set the standard against which the subsequent findings of the study, presented in Chapter Six, can be examined.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to the discussion of the results of the field study and the interviews. It extensively discusses all the details that emerged from the data and emphasises their significance by presenting them in a comprehensive manner.

Eventually all the above chapter leads to the final part of the thesis, which is conclusion. This section not only summarises key issues discussed throughout the thesis but also, although in a subtle manner, puts forth certain recommendations and indicates to further research possibilities in the subject.

# CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the methods and procedures used in collecting and analysing data in the research. Being more specific, this chapter elaborates on the population and the sample chosen, the conception and administration of the study instruments, data collection and analysis.

## 1.1 Study Approach

This study essentially seeks to address some crucial issues pertinent to the contents of the Islamic education curriculum in the contemporary Jordan. It aims to discuss the development of the content of Islamic education from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. However, it places special prominence to the synchronic analysis in order to emphasise the current issues and policies governing Islamic education and its curriculum in the Jordanian context. In addition, this study attempts to assess the underlying factors for the current state of the content of Islamic education in Jordan by making use of various research tools.

In order to achieve the above, the study begins with a qualitative analysis of the social, historical and political context of Jordan. This is to put the study into a context. This assessment is done from a qualitative perspective by specifically engaging with literature available on social history of Jordan, especially that of post-modern period. Although this kind of assessment is indeed not the core of the thesis, it stands as an essential part of this study.

Once done with this first section i.e. the contextualisation, this study turns mostly quantitative and engages mainly with field work consisting of data collections from the governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as from the interviews.

This second section, not only due to its rather technical nature, but also due to its essentiality for this study requires further explanation. Hence, the following is a detailed statement of the methodology employed in conducting the field work for this study.

In order to answer the above-mentioned three core questions, this study depends upon descriptive methodology describing available and existing measures, a subjective description through surveying thoughts of personnel associated with the study.

Descriptive methodology, also known as statistical research, describes data and characteristics of the population or the subject being studied. Descriptive methodology answers the questions: why, what, where, when and who. Descriptive methodology describes the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of particular phenomena.[14]

Despite the data being factual, systematic and accurate, the research cannot describe the causes of a situation. Therefore, descriptive research cannot be used to bring a new causal relationship whereby variables are interdependent or affecting each other.

Through analysis of the approved documents content, all data and information have been collected, chapters analysed, explained, compared, and results and recommendations were attained.

**1.2 Study Population**

Initially it was important to identify the targeted population in order to select a representative sample. Experts explain that one of the most difficult aspects of research design is deciding

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[14] Travers, Robert, *An Introduction to Educational research*, New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1978, pp. 5-12.

from whom you will collect your data[15]. Borg defines population as "the group to which the researcher plans to generalise his research results"[16].

The data of this study was collected from schools in Jordan, especially from the region of Albalqa, one of the governorates of Jordan. The choice of this region within Jordan emanated from the following reasons:

- Albalqa, the native region of the researcher, is amongst the largest regions of Jordan. The population is diverse and falls into three residential categories: rural, urban and Bedouin. Therefore, the region presented an ideal field for a cross-section of Jordanian school with a pertinent representative sample.

- The researcher originated from Albalqa and lived there since childhood until he moved to the UK for higher studies. The researcher also taught in two schools in Albalqa consequently, access to data and population was not an issue. Scholars have explained the physical and personal access as the next stage of research is gaining access.[17] By this we mean not only gaining physical access to the research setting, but also the issue of building trust and developing relationships there, which is so crucial in qualitative research"[18]. Equally, the quality of the data and the research ameliorates when the researcher establishes a sustainable relationship accompanied with trust and cooperation with people in the field.[19]

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[15] Oliver, P, *Writing your Thesis*, London: SAGE, 2004, p. 27.
[16] Borg, W.R, *Applying Educational Research: a Practical Guide for Teachers*. London: longman, 1981, pp. 7-11.
[17] Travers, *Educational*, p. 35.
[18] Fraenkel, J. and Wallen, N, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1990, pp. 5-13.
[19] *Ibid*, p. 32.

**1.2.1 Population Associated with Interview**

The research has benefited from the input of different individuals and organisations directly involved in developing, implementing and delivering the Islamic education Curriculum in Jordan, and the region of Albalqa. This consists of the following:

- Committee members responsible for preparing Islamic education text books for primary education phase in Jordan.

- National team members for Islamic education who prepared curriculum and its lesson scopes. There are ten members.

- National team members for Islamic education who supervised and followed up authoring the process. There are ten members.

- Members of the curriculum & Islamic education text books administration at the curricula & school text books directorate at Ministry of Education. There are ten members.

- Supervisory committee related to Islamic education & researches society. There are nine members; three of them are members of the national team. They developed the curriculum and its wide lesson scopes.

- Eighteen different authors of the Islamic education text books used in delivering the national curriculum.

- Four teacher training tutors at School of Education in the Jordanian universities. Some of them took part in the Islamic education curriculum preparation and some others

conducted studies and researches in Islamic education, analysing its topics and had responsibilities for teaching these subjects.

- Educational supervisors for the Islamic directorate in the region of Albalqa for the academic year 2008/2009. There are also four leaders, whose responsibilities included the supervision of teaching Islamic education curriculum in the area. They were also responsible for making sure objectives previously set out are met.

- 498 teachers (323 Male teachers & 175 female teachers) of the Islamic education teaching in different schools in Albalqa during the academic year 2008/2009. All 498 teachers are qualified and have some kind of teaching and learning responsibilities. it was possible to interview most of the participants in person except for 8 of them. The latter were sent the set of questions used in the one to one interviews, and thankfully they responded.

**1.2.2 Documents Used in Research and Analysis:**

This consists of the following documents:

- Primary national curriculum scopes determined by the council of education in 1988.

- Islamic education curriculum and its wide scopes in the primary phase as determined by the council of education in (year 1989).

- Islamic education text books introductions planned for primary phase for grades (1-10) in school year 2008/2009.

- Records, official documents and illustrating printouts obtained from the Ministry of Education (Curriculums & School Books Administration), such as:

- ➢ Guide for the curriculum designer and school books author.

- ➢ Guide for school book author.

- ➢ Attachments guide for authors.

- • Book of "Role of the Islamic studies & researches society in authoring Islamic education books for Ministry of Education".  This society has won prize for authoring Islamic education books for primary phase according to the terms and specifications published by Ministry of Education.[20]

## 1.3 Sample of Study

The nature of the information sought-after prescribes that the research is qualitative rather than quantitative. While the latter allows generalisations to be made about large populations on the basis of smaller representative samples, and allow other researchers to validate the original results by independently replicating the analysis, qualitative approaches suffer from the fact that a small number of individuals or groups is studied, which makes the drawing of conclusive generalisations about the wider population unrealistic and a problematic; moreover it is difficult to replicate, and thus independently verify the results. "The difficulty associated with qualitative methods relate primarily to the concept of reliability and the degree to which an in-depth account or view from a restricted number of individuals can be used as the basis for more generalised and representative decisions"[21].

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[20] Al-Ozaizy, M, *The Role of the Society of Islamic Studies and Researches in Authoring Islamic education Books in the Education Secretary in Jordan 1996-1989*, Amman: The International Institute of Islamic Thoughts, 1999, pp. 11-55.
[21] Mullen, P. and Spurgeon, P, *Priority Setting and the public*. Oxford: Radcliffe Medical Press, 2000, 72.

**1.3.1 Interview Sample**

Comprehensive interviews were designed to planned sample. They are illustrated as demonstrated in *table 1* below:

Table 1: *Distribution of population of individuals & its Sample*

| No of personnel | National Team | | | | | | | Distinguished Instructors | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Setting up curriculum | Authoring follow up | Supervision committee | Books authors | University professors | Curriculum administration | Educational supervisors | Male instructors | Female instructors | |
| population | 10 | 10 | 09 | 18 | 04 | 02 | 04 | 60 | 55 | 172 |
| Sample | 08 | 08 | 08 | 14 | 04 | 02 | 04 | 12 | 11 | 71 |

- Members of committees participated in the preparation of the Islamic education text books for primary phase in  Jordan either in the national team category for the Islamic education subject who set up the curriculum and lesson scopes (five people) or those who supervised authoring (five people).

- Members in the Islamic education administration in the curriculum & school text books directorate in the Ministry of Education (two members).

- Supervisors of the Islamic studies & researches society (8 people).

- Authors of the Islamic education text books for the primary phase in Jordan (14 people).

- Professors & instructors of the Islamic education curriculums & methods of instruction techniques in the education colleges of Jordanian universities (14 people).

It is worth mentioning that some individuals have taken part in all committees and that some others have taken part in two committees or more; and they have participated more than once. For the sake of scientific accuracy, there have been some obstacles to communicating with some participants in the interview. The member of the national team who designed the curriculum and its wide scopes, a member of the supervisory committee, and a participant in authoring books were unable to participate. It was very difficult to reach another member of the national team despite persistent attempts. Two members of the national team, who were working on authoring, were out of the country during the interviews.

Regarding educational supervisors, the selection was intentional and interviews were carried out in normal circumstances. It is also true for the Islamic education classroom teachers of both genders. The number of people was identified through the records of education department at Albalqa educational province. As demonstrated in table 1, there are 60 male teachers and 55 female teachers, totalling to 115 teachers of both genders. The number of interviewees reached 23 teachers, or 20% of the population.

During the sampling process the following characteristics were sought after on each individual:

- Bachelor's degree in Islamic Religion;

- Educational qualification and/or high diploma in education (Methods of Instruction);

- At least five years teaching experience;

- "Excellent" grade for three consecutive years and above of inspection.

- Must have taught or currently teaching the curriculum of the primary phase of the Islamic education curricula approved after the educational development conference.

**1.3.2 Documents' Content Analysis (Secondary Sources)**

A mass of pertinent information about the population studied by social researches is contained in statistical reports, historical documents, official publications and records of institutions.[22] This type of information is called secondary sources. This has been defined by Black and Champion as "any information originally collected for a purpose other than its present scientific one" [23]. However, the researcher must consider the consistency of the information, its suitability to the research, validity, and accuracy.[24]

The advantages and disadvantages of using secondary sources are present in a variety of literature. Black and Champion[25] and Abramson and Abramson[26] stated some of the advantages and disadvantages of using secondary sources:

Advantages:

1. Some documents may constitute the only source for a particular topic or aspect of the research

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[22] Moser, C. and Kalton, G, Survey Methods in Social Investigation. Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1971, p. 217.

[23] Black, J. and Champion, D, Methods and Issues in Social Research. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976, p. 401.

[24] *Ibid*, p. 413.

[25] *Ibid*, p. 410.

[26] Abramson, J and Abramson, Z, *Survey Methods in Community Medicine.* London: Churchill Livingstone, 1999, p. 265.

2. Secondary sources can be used to verify results obtained by during interviews and questionnaires (primary source).

3. Cost effective, time saving and an easy-to-obtain resource available in lieu of obtaining new data.

4. Incorporating the work of others broadens the base from which generalisations can be made, especially when data and research from several cultural setting are being examined.

Disadvantages:

1. Sometimes it is not possible to understand the process of gathering the data since the reasons why they were collected are not explicitly addressed and the aspects affecting decisions are not usually outlined.

2. Data may be out dated and therefore results related to the investigated field may not be accurate.

3. Original data may contain some errors which could slip the secondary research's detection. In addition, data may be subject to confidentiality which presents a problematic and inconvenience for the researcher.

The researcher made all necessary analysis of all parts of the documents related to the primary education phase, in the Islamic education curriculum, the official records and documents, and illustrative publications provided by the Ministry of Education.

## 1.4   Instruments of Study

This study depended upon collecting data through engaging with participants and through obtaining documents related to the topic. In order to answer all study questions and achieve its objectives, this research adopted two major instruments in collecting necessary information:

### 1.4.1 Unstructured Interview

Unstructured Interview is a type of interviews where questions can be changed or adapted to meet the respondent intelligence and answers. Unlike structured interviews, they do not offer a set of multiple answers or sentences to choose from. Social interaction between the researcher and the interviewee to obtain information. Unstructured interview is defined as interviews in which neither the question nor the answer categories are preset.[27] Punch described unstructured interviews as an approach to assimilate people's behaviour complexity without imposing any prior classification which might restrict the field of research.[28] Patton regarded unstructured interview a natural lead of respondent observation.[29] He defined that the unstructured interview relies completely upon the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of a communication, typically an interview that occurs as part of ongoing respondent observation fieldwork.

In order to obtain measures in light of which the Islamic education book contents may be selected, the researcher has interviewed his sample by giving respondents the time and opportunities to express their opinion and elaborate as much as they want. He also adopted the

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[27] Minichiello, V., Aroni, R, Timewell, E, & Alexander, L, *In-depth Interviewing: Researching People*. Hong Kong: Longman Cheshire, 1990, p. 14.
[28] Punch, K. F, Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches, London: SAGE, 1998, pp. 9-11.
[29] Patton, M. Q, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. London: SAGE, 1990, p. 12-20.

main study questions and results of the responses to raise questions for this sample during the interview.

### 1.4.2 Content Analysis

Neuendorf offers a six-part definition of content analysis: "Content analysis is a summarising, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity, inter-subjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, general nature, reliability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented"[30].

According to Krippendorff, six questions must be addressed in every content analysis:[31]

Which data are analysed?

How are they defined?

What is the population from which they are drawn?

What is the context relative to which the data are analysed?

What are the boundaries of the analysis?

What is the target of the inferences?

The researcher did carry out a content analysis of topic related documents in order to investigate different measures used to select Islamic education books content. In order to do so, an instrument has been designed for content analysis:

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[30] Neuendorf, K.A, *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, SAGE, 2000, 10.
[31] Krippendorff, K, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, SAGE, 2004, p. 27.

a) Studying the concept of content analysis as one of the scientific research techniques employed in texts analysis, seeking an objective and methodological description,

b) Determination of types of Analysis. These are viewed in two categories:

**1.4.3 Content Choice Standards**

This category addresses a selection of the content of Islamic education books for primary phase where all the following subcategories are included: references, credibility, importance, nature of learners and the subject, nature of society, usefulness or benefit, inclusion, balance, reasonability, globalisation and originality. Each scope of the above elements underwent analysis.

**1.4.4 Content Organisation Measures Category**

This category addresses content form organisation of the Islamic education books in the primary level and the method of presenting the scientific content where the following organisation scopes are listed: Sequence or series, complementarities, units, logic of subject, psychological characteristics, balance, presentation, and evaluation design. Each scope of these includes a group of analysis elements.

**1.4.4.1 Analysis Unit Identity**

In light of the content analysis concept and its categories, the researcher has selected 'the theme' indicating measures of selecting and organising of the Islamic education book content at the primary level so that it is adequate with the research objective.

**1.4.4.2 Building Up and Developing Analysis Instruments**

The researcher has designed a form to collect information and to control repetition of categories of analysis classes in materials and documents analyzed, and consequently deriving

its percentage. In building and developing such instruments, the researcher followed the following steps:

He derived standards out of the theoretical frame of such study from previous studies, theoretical literature related to Islamic education books content, standards' sources of content choice & organisation, learners nature and the characteristics of Jordanian society. The number of standards for content choice within its initial scopes reached thirteen different scopes, which include fifty nine elements (analysis measures), while the major content organisation measures reached eight with thirty elements.

**1.5 Validity**

Validity in general means the extent to which approaches used measure what it is supposed to measure. Robson outlined that "validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about" and he further explains reliability as the "the consistency or stability of a measure; for example, if it were to be repeated, would the same result be obtained?"[32]

Taking the validity aspect into account, the logical validity methodology was adopted. Such methodology includes the following issues:

 ➢ Procedural identification of analysis unit, types of sentences & thoughts involved.

 ➢ The precise observation of repetition of analysis categories (sentences and thoughts) which provide information or demonstrate measures either explicitly or tacitly using the form analysis.

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[32] Robson. C, *Real World Research*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, p. 93.

> The analysis instrument was proposed, in its initial formula, to a selection of eighteen competent experts (names, addresses, positions have been stated in annexe 2) in order to give their comments and suggestions regarding validity and serviceability of content analysis instrument, to extract and find out choice and organisation measures, and to make sure that types of analysis represent all fields and scopes subject of study and research. Ideas have been addressed via taking the opinion of the majority, set to at least 40% for one single idea. The purpose was to maintain a high level of credibility. If this rate was lower, then its use would have depended upon its reasonability. Then the form was set in its final format. There were twelve (12) studied fields regarding content choice, which included fifty seven (57) measures for analysis, while there are eight (8) content organisation fields which included forty (40) measures for analysis as illustrated in annexe 3.

## 1.6 Analysis Reliability

Content analysis reliability was identified through repeating the analysis process on a small sample of documents subject of analysis in the study. Two education specialists, involved in the study, analysed a small sample of each document. They were provided with the procedural definition of content analysis and trained in how to implement it through employing the same steps and actions of analysis, and applying the same classifications and units.

The researcher made sure that there is a complete harmony between his analysis and other cooperating researchers. Expressions and sentences were restricted to ninety-five; topics were also restricted to forty four out of the available fifty five. In application of Holsti formula[33],

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[33] Holsti, O.R, *Content Analysis for Communication*. New York: Macmillan, 1967, p 43.

document analysis form consistency was confirmed where consistency coefficient reached 0.80. Such coefficient was considered sufficient to serve such study.

**1.7 Study Action**

The researcher answered the study question by taking the following procedures:

**1.7.1 Open Interview**

Open interviews were carried out with each individual of the sample using the following steps:

**1.7.1.1 Collection of Interview Information:**

Such process is united and complementary whereunto actions are simultaneously completed. We were not able to consider steps separately. In fact they were overlapping. After the main planning phase, study problematic, location, and sample have been identified. Planning included:

➢ Interview Preface:

In preparation of the interview, the researcher proceeded to do the following:

➢ Referring to the Islamic education curriculum and its wide scopes, and to the Islamic education books in the primary education level. There are ten (10) members of the national team who prepared and developed the curriculum and lessons' scopes; and there are ten (10) people who supervised and took care of authoring. The supervision committee's members related to the Islamic studies & research studies society have also been identified and specified on the page preceded by the address page. Such facts have been confirmed by many.

Additionally, authors of Islamic education books have been identified via consulting such books.[34]

### 1.7.2 Interview Implementation (Data Collection):

Researcher, during this phase, has performed the following:

### a. Start Collecting Information:

This phase started in the first days of field work. In order to build up confidence, trust, and mutual relation between the researcher and interviewees, the researcher started a dialogue with the interview sample separately. He started by briefing them on interview objectives and its themes and aiming to identify skills included, as well as assigning the interview time and date, and finally to secure minimum level of respondents cooperation. After the respondent is completely ready for cooperation, then he starts carrying out the interview.

### b. Collection of Main Data

This period is directly and closely associated with study data whereunto the researcher raised major questions of the study in order to depict any misunderstanding. Sometimes rephrasing the question was important to secure a full understanding and therefore an accurate response. Then, the researcher raised fringe questions generated from the general question or additional questions created through the dialogue and discussion with the interviewee. Then, using his/her own words, the respondents wrote down the answers.

### c. Suspension of Data Collection

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[34] Al-Ozaizy, *Curriculum*, p. 18.

There was no previous planned date and time for suspending data collection. Repetitive answers and the interviewee's explicit wish to terminate the interview were a giving-in sign to stop the interview. Collecting information was stopped and the last interview was cancelled whenever information was repeated and/or interviewee stopped elaborating on the answer.

### 1.7.3 Interview Data Analysis and Conclusions

As far as the interviews data Analysis and conclusions are concerned, the researcher used to, after finishing each interview, derive its data, divide and break them down into the form of general ideas, each of which shall bear a certain major measure. Then he went ahead to organise and classify them based on the branch study questions as per their topics, their thoughts, then he proceeded towards making comparison between similar related topics in order to find out associated categories and measures, and then got to conclusions which will identify the criteria of selecting and organising Islamic education textbooks content.

The same happened after conducting every single, taking in to account the organisation and classification of previous interviews.

Data has been divided, within its general frame and topics, into two basic categories: the first is related to measures of selecting Islamic education textbooks content, while the second one is related to measures of its organisation. Then a set of measures were derived belonging to each category classified on the basis of study questions.

### 1.7.3.1 Credibility

It is also important to point out that every effort has been made to ensure a great degree of credibility of interviews' data and the degree of having common meaning of explanations and concepts between the researcher and participants. During the presentation and explanation of conclusions, participants' wording, extracted from their answers, was used.

**1.7.4. Ethical Considerations**

Research ethics were preserved throughout this research. Official approvals were obtained whenever it was necessary. In addition, teachers and schools, encouraged to participate, were clearly told that their participation is purely voluntary and no individual or organisation would be identified. Also, the researcher stresses that a refusal to take part would not affect the school or the person in any way. Moreover, the researcher committed himself to the confidentiality and anonymity, and that none of the participants were nor misled or pressurised to participate nor they were faced with situations causing anxiety or stress.

The researcher maintained interviews' records, which indicate people and positions' detailed description, date and time of the interview, places and people involved in the interview. In addition, the researcher was under the obligation of research ethics, and aware of not jeopardising his personality, to keep away from prejudices that may influence the meanings' composition.

**1.8 Expanding Results:**

In quantitative researches, generalisation is done starting from the sample to the population, whereas expanding results in a qualitative research is done by a transition from a particular case to another. This research has been allotted a complete sufficient description of elements and components of its design, designating researcher's role, the relation with participants, and accurately describing data collection and analysis strategies.

Following development of documents content analysis form, confirming its credibility and consistency came next. The following actions have been taken:

1. Two education specialists were selected to consult them about the manner planned for analysis by using the approved analysis form (annexe 8) in accordance with the study

objectives. The researcher has shown to the cooperating members the document analysis sample. He showed them the meanings of unit analysis that is: the notion indicating one measure or more of such content selection measures. That was completely discussed and a final formula analysis was consented.

2. Analysis process was done by researcher's reading of each notion of units involved in the document sample in the presence of cooperating researchers followed by a discussion finalised through answering the following question: Does this notion refer or indicate to any of the measure categories or not? If the answer is no, then the notion should be deleted. If yes then the discussion will be focused on identifying the scope of which this measure will belong. Then the measure will be identified and the researcher can depict repetitions of each measure and the scope where it belongs in the developed research instrument for that purpose.

3. The researcher has arranged repetitions of the detected measures, calculated the total of each measure and each field, calculated the percentage, and arranged them in special tables to study and extract results.

The number of repetitions amounted to four (4) or less, and therefore it was an indicator of its low level. However, measures with no repetitions indicated that they cannot be approved by all means.

**1.9 Limitations**

As any other academic endeavour this study also suffers from certain limitations, self-imposed and otherwise. One of these limitations is that the researcher was unable to select the time-specific data. In other words, the researcher did not set a strict time period for the study such as from 2004 to 2007 or from 2007 to 2009 etc. This is mainly due to the nature in which

the data was made available to the researcher. The documentations and records in both the governmental and non-governmental agencies suffer from grave discrepancies with regard to dates. In order to overcome this problem, the researcher eventually resorted to study the most recent state of the Islamic education in Jordan. This does not mean, however, that the researcher ignored the old data. Contrary to that, all the previous data was utilised to appreciate and analyse the most recent data available. One can, therefore, see that the researcher very frequently refers to data of a wider time period ranging from late nineties to the most recent one. Although, due to this limitation the study apparently suffers from somewhat generality, it proves to be a better indicator of both the diachronic as well as synchronic state of the Islamic education curriculum in Jordan.

Another major setback for this study was the time it consumed. Initially it was aimed that it would not take more than a year to conduct the field work, so that the total time expected for this research was around three years. However, due to some problems, mainly the financial ones, this study has taken much longer than expected.

Another noteworthy limitation that this study suffers from is the fact that the researcher cannot attach the documents collected during the field work or the original scripts of the interviews conducted with the thesis. This is not only to protect the decorum or aesthetics of the bound hard-copy of the thesis, but also to save on huge additional costs. In fact, the documents and the interview scripts put together count more than the entire thesis. Hence, the researcher has made use of Chapter Six to present the results of the field work and interviews in as much detail as possible, instead of providing the original scripts in the appendix of the thesis.

Another limitation that the researcher has imposed on this study is that he has not transliterated the few Arabic terms that he employed in his writing. This was done deliberately and with total consistency in order to give the thesis a more mainstream appearance and also to allow the non-Arabic reader to benefit from this study without any complications.

The researcher would like to emphasise that wherever these few Arabic terms have appeared in the thesis, they have been duly translated and then the translation was given the preference subsequently throughout the thesis.

This chapter has set out the theoretical framework upon which this study is based. It is now logical to discuss the contextual considerations that I deem indispensible. Hence, the following chapter sheds light in some detail on the socio-political background of Jordan.

# CHAPTER TWO: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE JORDANIAN CONTEXT

As stated by many philosophers, education is indispensable and a genuine human concern through which mental and social elements are obtained. Undoubtedly, education is what distinguishes one man from another.[35] Education plays an important role in deciding the habit of a person and its effect remains on his character and personality for life. Because of this, it can be easily concluded that it is a life constituent and acts as a nucleus of personal excellence as it develops and matures individuals.[36] As education is one of the most important aims of human life and huge social responsibility, experts have spent lots of effort explaining these aims and responsibilities. Until now, they have had different opinions regarding the question of framing these responsibilities. Different experts have devised their own ways of working around them; some opted for the spiritual way while some others chose the material way. However, the former has been the spirit of religious education.[37]

For example, the Islamic educational philosophy is based upon believers' well being lying in submission to the Creator, and therefore they should have knowledge of their duties towards

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[35] Scimecca, *Education*, pp. 5-9.
[36] Langford, *Education,* pp. 25-28.
[37] Copley, *Teaching*, pp. 1-4.

the commands that instigated from the Creator. As per Islamic scholars like al-Tamimi[38] and al-Buti[39], the primary objective of Islamic education is to present the believer with an in-depth knowledge, which will help them further in carrying out their duties towards the Creator, hence, the great emphasis on education; the first verse in the Qur'an is about reading, learning and obtaining knowledge. Thus, Islamic education has a significant role to play within the Muslim population and it also conserves the fundamental configuration of the society.[40] However, contrary to what might be believed generally, Islamic education does not form a part of the school curriculum in most of the Muslim countries, including Jordan. In Jordan, for example, it has been affected not only by its own history, but also by its atypical national character, the position of Islam, the beliefs of its early leaders and the attitudes of the citizens towards the religion and other factors.[41] To sum it up, Islamic education in Jordan prevails in relation to the entire process of education and the life and customs of the society in which it operates.

The present study was undertaken to study the major factors that helped the development of the Islamic education in Jordan and comprised an educational curriculum compatible to Islamic learning. Before doing so, however, this chapter aims to set the theme for the rest of the chapters firstly by discussing at some length key terms pertinent to this study such as 'education', 'religious education', 'Islamic education' etc. Secondly, this chapter moves on to highlight history of Jordan, which is the specific geographical context of this study, by

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[38] Al-Tamimi, Izz al-AlDin, *Nazarat fi al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyyah: Dirasat Tarbawiyyah*, Amman: Dar al-Bishr, 1985, pp. 15-48.
[39] See, Al-Buti, Mohammad Said Ramadan, *Tajribat al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyyah fi Mizan al-Bahth*, Damascus: al-Maktabat al-Umawaiyyah, 1961.
[40] Badawi, "Traditional", pp. 104-106.
[41] Al-Khwaldah, Nasir, *Tara`iq Tadrisal-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyyah Wa Asalibiha Wa Tatbiqatiha al-`Ilmiyyah*, *Bayrut*: Maktabat al-Falah, pp. 15-32.

referring to its geographical significance and political and economic contour followed by a description of the history of development of educational structure and institutions in Jordan.

As discussed earlier, education is an important and sensitive aspect of human life. Therefore a clear understanding of its aims and objectives should be regarded as the most significant essential, or perhaps, the core of the educational progress. In principle, it does not only support and enhance the relationship between pupils and the teacher, but when aims and objectives are clearly defined it also enhances the entire process of teaching as it helps teachers crafting course content, teaching strategies or processes, and appropriate evaluation methods. Comprehensible aims and objectives also help students significantly. By reading the goals, a student will have a clearer understanding of what he would have accomplished once he has effectively completed the course, subject or task. They also act as a hint to students of what they may be expected to articulate in coursework and examinations.

Aims and objectives of education mainly comprise of two vital parts (a) an action verb and (b) a topic content reference. Deciding worthy and accurate aims and objectives is not a simple task, it is made even more difficult by the imprecise definition of ambiguous differences between the two. Aims are broad statements of what learners are expected to learn and are often more fitting for courses than for subjects. An aim for a course may be that students should develop skills of logical reasoning, or that they should be able to think creatively and independently. To put it in a different way, the major aim of education is to enable students to first discover their primary mental and intellectual potential, and then develop it further to exploit it in the best possible way.

 Objectives are generally more unequivocal assertions of education, generally within a subject, lesson or task. Objectives are not statements of content or topics, nor are they

statements of what the teacher intends to teach; rather, they are statements of what a student is expected to *know* and be able to *do* upon completion of the learning exercise.

The above description of aims and objectives of education signifies that education in general aims at delivering sustainable, constructive and enjoyable knowledge that would make students keen on carrying on their formal learning in adult life. It also aims at encouraging pupils to be self-sufficient and independent to enable them to think with a clear mind and be eloquent and expressive. Therefore, it is the responsibility of teachers to motivate their students by making them understand how education can help them in attaining their broad goals in life. Kohlberg argues that education should make the minds of pupil develop further for the ethical concern, universal values of integrity and respect of human solemnity.[42]

Most importantly, education aims to instil respect for moral values, for other people, for oneself, and tolerance for other races, religions and cultures. Additionally education must enable students to take their rightful place as good citizens of the world.[43]

## 2.1 Aims and Objectives of Education

Generally speaking, it is the aims and objectives of education upon which the whole concept of education is based. As mentioned earlier, aims and objectives, in the truest sense of terms, consist of two important parts; an action verb and a subject content reference. This simple definition very strongly draws an outline that demonstrates that education is all about creating and materialising positive strength among its holders. However, deciding upon valuable and proper aims and objectives may not sound such a simple mission when looked at through the lenses of imprecise definition of the terms, i.e. aims and objectives, or vaguely assigned

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[42] Hartford, E, *Moral Values in Public Education*, Harper & Bros, 1958, pp. 283-285.
[43] Wright, Andrew, (ed.), *Learning to Teach Religious Education in the Secondary Schools, A Companion to School Experience*, London: Routledge, 2000, P. 9.

differences of the two. Therefore, it would be wise enough to briefly explain the two terms and the complexities attached to them in a little detail.

This can be easily appreciated that specific and concrete aims and objectives play very important part in the educational progress, supporting and illuminating the relationship between pupils and teachers. Thus, writing and structuring of aims and objectives also helps teachers in designing course contents, teaching strategies and assessment methods that are suitable. Furthermore, if aims and objectives are made significantly comprehensible, they can promote students in a number of ways, which will result in students being able to have a clearer understanding of what they will learn should they effectively complete the course, subject or task.

A question, nevertheless, arises that apart from the above mentioned positive outcomes, one may argue that the structured and domineering body of aims and objectives can restrict the scope of educational process and the creative ability of students to explore, innovate and experiment. However beneficial the given structure may be, limitations and restrictions within that could result in decreasing the benefits of learning rather than increasing them. Possibly, this is the reason why there is an emphasis on what students are expected to gain and express in coursework and examinations should not involve any form of force or imposition at all. It would certainly be better if aims and objectives are structured in a way such as to facilitate educational progress by putting forth its benefits and also to give sufficient freedom for further innovations and explorations.

Therefore, as it is desired that education should improve the knowledge of a person, we can say that educational process should aim at delivering knowledge in an interesting, useful and enjoyable form so that students are keen on carrying on their formal learning with the

required enthusiasm. It should also aim at encouraging pupils to be self-sufficient and to enable them build up thoughtful minds which also allow them to be expressive and eloquent. This can help receivers of education in attainment of their desired goals.

## 2.2 Religious Education

It appears that universal discussions on positive and productive aims and objectives of education seem to lack integrity in terms of its religious and moral orientation.[44] This is perhaps due to the fact that education with all its manifestations is considered as a mere scientific process as opposed to religion. However, theologians in almost every major religion have been quite conscious of this belief and paid much attention to this obvious concern, and as a result we seem to have a well established *religious* system of education that signifies its religious orientation. A careful observation of so called religious system of education proves to be rather a comprehensive compendium of secular education with some additional beliefs and religious values. In other words, as opposed to general beliefs, religious education attempts to integrate the *non religious* system of education into its structure rather than opposing the latter.[45] This is to say that all the positive outcomes of secular education are welcomed in the religious system of education, keeping in mind that the sole source of knowledge originates from Divine, and moreover, especially in case of Islam, it is a religious *duty* for one to be educated.[46]

A reading of the aforementioned and relevant books on the subject insinuates religious education as a manner of mind and heart and it is more than what the individual deems or does. It is what exists in the character of the persona, rather than in a set of dogmatic rules of

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[44] Holm, Jean, *Teaching Religion in School: A Practical Approach*, OUP, 1975, pp. 20-25.
[45] *Ibid*, pp. 23-25.
[46] See, al-Tamimi, *Nazarat*, pp. 15-17.

conduct that are believed or followed. Religious education consists of many ways of teaching which will further help students to decide and further enhance their own devotion.

However, it is also to be considered that changes, no matter how significant, should have a steady but progressive process. Very importantly, if the religious education to gain the respect it deserves, it will need to match the present and conventional criteria of education, and being resistant to corruptive factors that may oblige Islamic education to compromise its dignity and integrity.[47] Furthermore, if educational values are granted importance in teaching, it will be easier to discuss education in light of faith rather than those negative aspects which shame the ethereal values of religion. Derek, for example, says that education is very important in the pre-religious stage of a child so that he can have a practical approach towards life and balanced mind development. He also says that religious education is children's development towards positive relationships with their fellows and with God.[48]

Quite interestingly, this feature of education compliments our discussion on the aims and objectives of education, and eventually establishes that one of the most significant manifestation, if not the only one, of education is what Kohlberg, quite rightly, argues that education should make the minds of pupils go further than the ethical level of concern for universal values of integrity and respect of human solemnity[49]. In other words, he lays stress upon the moral orientation of the aims and objectives of education.

The above discussion is quite noteworthy for this study as indeed, it is the moral and religious orientation of education that we are talking about. It may, hence, be right to say that, in this context, the most important objective of education shall be described as inculcating respect of

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[47] Hobson, *Religious*, p. 17-18.
[48] D Bastide. *Good practice in Primary Religious Education 4-11*, London: The Falmer Press, 1992, p. 45.
[49] Hartford, E, *Moral*, pp. 283-285.

moral values, for other people and for oneself, and acceptance of other races, religion and ways of life.[50]

### 2.2.1 Islamic Education

Most of the Islamic scholars concur upon the three Arabic words that establish the meaning of education in the Islamic sense. Two of them elucidate and rationalise the purpose of education. The first term is *tarbiyah* which comes from the Arabic origin *Rabba* (to nurture and raise) and it is related to the growth of the individual and the process of nurturing and directing the child to a comprehensive state of maturity[51]. It is mentioned in the Qur'an: "And lower your unto them the wing of submission through mercy and say: my Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did nurture me when I was little[52]". The term specifies that Islamic education is there to raise and care for the child.

The second term for education used in the Qur'an is *ta'lim* which is derived from the root *'alima'* (to know). Qur'an states it as: 'He who taught you the use of the pen, taught man that which he knew not'[53]. Here this term indicates that one of the purposes of Islamic education is to transmit knowledge. The third term is *Ta'dib* which has been derived from the root *aduba* to be cultured, competent and civilised. It also refers to the growth of the character and calls learning a sound basis for moral and social behaviour within the society[54].

On many occasions, the term education has been stressed upon in the Prophetic tradition or Hadith. The Prophet himself called education to be tough call for individuals when he stated what has been described in a Hadith: "the quest of knowledge is incumbent upon every

[50] Wright, Andrew, (ed.) *Learning*, P. 9.
[51] Al-attas, S. M. N, *The Concept of Education in Islam: a frame work for an Islamic philosophy of education*, Jeddah, Hodder & Stoughton, 1979, pp. 2-4.
[52] Al-Qur'an: 31:24
[53] Al Qur'an, 96: 4-5.
[54] Alattas, *The Concept*, pp 2-4.

Muslim man and woman[55]".  This is evident from the above Hadith that knowledge is essential and obligatory upon all Muslims whether it's male or female. In another Hadith, the Prophet has been reported to mention the importance of education in every stage of the life: 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave' and Indeed, the people of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets[56]'

On the basis of such textual evidences, many scholars such as al-Sharifi argue that Islamic education should train the sensibility of students and should prepare them not only to satisfy an intellectual curiosity or just for mundane matters such as earning livelihood but it should be more holistic in approach and target their rational good-being, moral and material welfare of their people.

Hence views such as of al-Sharifi's directs us to the general opinion held among Muslim scholars that Islamic education like money cannot be accumulated for its own sake, but to be used for the help of its possessor. Rather, the suitable use of knowledge is to help Muslims get close to their Creator.[57]

### 2.2.2 Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education

Having established the potentially religious nature of education, now we begin with the concept of Islamic education and its aims and objectives *per se*.  Islam, not only as a religion but, supposedly, more as a rational way of life by means of submission to God gives much importance to education. [58] The entire concept of education has indeed enjoyed quite a

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[55] Al-Zarnuji, I, *Instruction of the Student: the Methods of Learning*, Chicago: IL, The Star Latch Press, 2002, p. 1.
[56] Alattas *The Concept*, p. 1.
[57] Murray, R, *Moral Development Theories-Secular and Religious: A Comparative Study*, Greenwood Press 1997. p. 194.
[58] Hulmes, E, "Education and Culture Diversity" in *The Curriculum Journal*, Vol.2, No.1, 19-31.

significant status in the view of Islamic theology, and thus has practically become a vital element of the Islamic society. Men, women and children have equal rights to be educated. At the face value of such an introduction to the notion of education in Islam, one may believe that an Islamic curriculum should be attached to the Islamic practices and instructions such as fasting in the month of Ramadan, pilgrimage to Mecca, giving alms etc. There remains however, much to discuss with regard to Islamic education as an independent philosophy.

It is, nevertheless, quite obvious from the Islamic theological stand that the Islamic theory of knowledge that all knowledge is of God in every sense, which seems to be addressed in several Qur'anic verses too. Moreover, verses like"*…O! my Lord, Increase me in knowledge*"[59] act as a strong indication to the fact that Muslims are even supposed to pray for obtaining knowledge. This corresponds with the Muslim belief that such knowledge is to be obtained in every possible way that acknowledges ethics and practice of Islam and moreover, the purest and most useful knowledge originates from God. Islamic theologians for a very long time have stressed the importance of education as a distinguishing factor between mankind and the rest of creation because by knowledge man can exhibit his true place on earth i.e. vice of Allah and hence superior over all other creatures. Modern Muslim thinkers such as Khurshid and al-Najjar therefore have based their arguments with regard to Muslim's right for leadership on this very notion. Ahmed, for example, advocates that knowledge is an indispensable quality for leadership and is one of those factors of prime importance which lead to rise and growth of civilisation[60].

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[59] Al-Qur'an, 20: 114.
[60] Khurshid, Ahmad, *Principles of Islamic education*, in Ansari,  Z, Islamic Perspective, Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1979, p. 34. See also, al-Najjar, Zaghloul, *Azamat al-Ta`lim al-Islami: Nazrah Islamiyyah*, Kuwait: Maktabat al-Falah, 1980.

As explained, Islam is not a local religion; it makes universal demands on the commitment of God's Creatures. For this reason the word Islam suggests several things which non-Muslims may find un-congenial. For example, Islam appears to make exclusive claims to be the one true religion for all humans that exist. It seems to accept no rivals and tolerates no other system of belief except in a subordinate way. Hence, in requiring obedience and submission Islam appears to limit speculation and critical inquiry upon itself.[61]

Apart from the above mentioned scriptural evidences that address the significance of education, the concept has also been outlined in the Hadith on many occasions. The Prophet himself stipulates the toughest call for individuals to educate themselves when he stated in the Hadith: "the quest of knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman[62]". The above traditions surely signify that knowledge is important and obligatory upon all Muslims males or females. In another Hadith, for example, the Prophet mentions the importance of education in every stage of the life by stating: 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave' and 'Indeed, the people of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets[63]'.

The hermeneutical interpretations and exegesis of these textual evidences addressing education, its significance and its objectives have paved the way for Muslim scholars to find principles and conceptual framework for Islamic education.[64] This is quite obvious in the writings of classical Muslim authors. For instance, al-Ghazali stresses that the student should be free from any impure habits and sinful matters, since knowledge is the devotion of heart and the prayer of the mind. He goes further to explain the aims of education as a primary object of knowledge, such as the goal in pursuing knowledge is to obtain God's blessings and

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[61] Khurshid, Ahmad, *Principles of Islamic education*, in Ansari, Z, Islamic Perspective, Leicester: Islamic
[62] Al-Attas, *The Concept*, p. 31.
[63] Al-Attas *Aims and Objectives*, p. 1.
[64] Bogle E, *Islam: Origin and belief*, University of Texas Press, 2001, p. 45.

happiness thereafter. He furthermore argues that education aims to help students to avoid falling into bad company. In educating students, the fundamental thing is to inculcate good values in them so that they become responsible and ethical citizens and stay away from any kind of negativity prevalent in the society.[65]

All these little details that al-Ghazali advocates are, in fact, the result of his interpretation of the Qur'an and the Hadith. This inclination has always been a part and parcel of early and medieval Muslim scholars' writings on Education. This is how education has evolved in Islamic sphere and has been granted a new structure and layout that now is known as Islamic education, and the hermeneutical interpretations of the textual authorities have taken care of even little details involved.

### 2.2.3 Difference between Islamic Education and Religious Education

This should clearly be noted that in the Islamic terminology the term 'Religious Education' can be used as an expression, however, some education specialists have tried to limit Islam to the place of devotion or to merely the subject matter of Islamic education which is taught in schools.[66] In light of what have been discussed earlier, this idea is far from reality. Muslims consider Islam as a comprehensive religion by nature and therefore it is very unfair and wrong to restrict it to one dimension of a Muslim's life. Since Islam deals with all aspects of life, whether it's economic, political, educational or social, it is a complete way of life and not merely a set of religious rituals and customs to be adhered to. This is the reason why Abdullah argues that, to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity it is appropriate to use the term 'Islamic

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[65] Alkanderi, Latefah H, *Exploring education in Islam: Al-Ghazali's model of the master-pupil relationship applied to educational relationships within the Islamic family*, The Pennsylvania State University Press 2001. pp. 225-228.
[66] Al-Nihlawi, A, *Roots and Methods of Islamic education in the Home, school and society*, Damascus: Dar Alfikr, 1999, pp. 111-118.

education' rather than 'Religious Education'. Muslim educators might interchange both the terms because of their own familiarity with the core concept, but it is important to be clear about which sense is being used in which particular context.[67]

## 2.2.4 Islamic Education in Curriculum

As mentioned earlier, religious education no matter, what form it has or whatever religion it belongs to, is an effort to incorporate the positive outcomes of non-religious education, and presents itself as a relatively comprehensive phenomenon. Therefore, particular Islamic education, as such, can co-exist easily with science and *sacred* texts. As a matter of fact, some religious scholars are completely against the idea of science and sacred text being two distinct entities.[68] What we are concerned with is the fundamental nature of this whole system of Islamic education that may be called generally as Islamic Studies, which is constituted mainly from Qur'an, Prophetic tradition, Ethics and Scholastics with the first two being the soul sources.

The aims and objectives of Islamic education are sizeable component of the curriculum and they should be based on clear and explicit theoretical principles. Forming the aims and objectives of Islamic education curriculum on a sound and unequivocal theoretical framework should take into account the relevant views of students, teachers and parents. Additionally, objectives should reflect students' lives, growth, needs and interests. The objectives of Islamic education should address today's problems, issues and demands as well. This would help students in relating religion to their lives and developing a better understanding of its

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[67] Abdullah, A, *Teachers' Acquisition of Evaluative Skills of Qur'anic Tilawah*, Yarmouk: Yarmouk Researches, 1991, pp. 114-117.
[68] See, for example, Muzaffar, Iqbal, *Islam and science*, Hampshire : Ashgate, 2002, pp. 3-15. See also, Bucaille Maurice, *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science*, American Trust Publication, 1979, Waheed, Khwaja Abdul, *Islam and the origins of modern science*, Lahore : Islamic Public Ltd, 1978.

teachings. The aims of Islamic education are, in its essence, not to make students fill their minds with facts by cramming them up but rather to train them for a life of purity, piety and sincerity. This complete commitment to character building based on the principles of Islamic ethics is the highest objective of Islamic education.[69]

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the core objects of Islamic education one has to see it with a significant structure. It is important that Muslim students should be exposed to the education that primarily teaches values such as obedience, care, forgiveness, respect and truthfulness.[70] Al-Sharifi, for example, quite strongly emphasises that Islamic education is supposed to be a tool for assisting the individual and make him realise his full potential. This, according to him, involves the "assimilation of Divine attributes"[71] that finally leads to a life that is based on the true freedom, truth, love and justice.

As a consequence of attaining the main objectives of Islamic education, one can appreciate that Islamic education aims at the logical development of the *total* character of the human being through the awareness created in him of his spirit, intellect, rational, self, feelings as well as his body senses.[72] Therefore, it can be concluded that it provides man with the growth in the truest sense of term, i.e. in the spheres of his spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific and linguistic calibre; both individually and collectively, and takes care of all aspects of his growth towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. Hence, the ultimate aim of Islamic education perhaps lies in the fact that it enables man to realise the complete submission to Allah at all levels and areas of his life.[73]

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[69] Al-Attas, *Aims*, pp. 104-6.
[70] See, Tibawi, *Islamic education*, London: Luzac and Company, 1979, 43-52.
[71] *Ibid*, p. 104.
[72] Khurshid, *Principles*, pp. 4-8.
[73] *Ibid*, pp. 5-11.

## 2.2.5 Teaching of Islamic Education

It is apparent that for such a sensitive sphere of learning there has to be a unique methodology for teaching. Teachers, therefore, play a very significant role in Islamic education by managing and protecting students from damaging influences. Islamic scholars argue that the teacher of Islamic education must have the ability and skill to build the character of the student in several dimensions.[74] In Islam it is said that the first teacher to be followed is the Prophet, therefore, the stature of teacher is the highest.

Al-Sharifi argues that since teachers of Islamic education are responsible for teaching Islam, they are to be a role model in everything to students. Students, knowingly or unknowingly will be imitating the teacher in every act he does, therefore the quality of education that the student obtains will depend upon the quality of teaching and the example of his teacher who is in front of him. The role of teacher thus assumes the highest weight in both the educational system and the society. Subsequently, Muslim scholars have emphasised on the character of the teacher to be open minded enough to accept ideas and methods from all sources and must have a sufficient understanding of Islam.[75] Teachers in early Islam taught for the sake of serving the Muslims and spreading the message of Allah and used to earn their livelihood from other professions and donations. Early teachers of Islam laid emphasis upon the teachers meeting some requirements such as being patient, with a constant desire to obtain and deliver Islamic Knowledge. They are also required to show a deep devotion to teaching as well as

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[74] Al-Kheelany, A, *The Degree of Practicing of Islamic Teachers for Teaching Competencies in Secondary Stage from the Teachers' Point of View in Amman Governorate*, MA Thesis, Al-al-Bayt University, Jordan, 1998, pp. 35-49.
[75] Al Sharifi, A, *A comparative Study of the Development of the Primary Stage of Islamic Religious Education in the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 1950 to 1990*, PhD Thesis University of Sheffield, 1995, pp. 13-27.

good manners, they are also supposed to continue performing prayers and other obligations of worship.[76]

## 2.3 Overview of Jordan and Islamic Education in its Context

Jordan has a rich historical past. According to historical reports, around 2000 B.C., Semitic Amorites decided to settle down around the Jordan River in the area called Canaan. The other successive invaders and settlers included Hittites, Egyptians, Israelites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arab Muslims, Christian Crusaders, Mamluks, Ottoman Turks, and, finally, the British. Geographically Jordan was placed such that it acted like a land bridge between Africa, Asia and Europe. Its neighbours, great civilisations of the ancient world, have invaded Jordan and establish their reign over its territory.

In addition, it is a universally known fact that though a small state, Jordan has continually found itself at the centre of conflict and crisis in modern Middle East. It has always played the role of a central protagonist in wars of the region. What follows is a comprehensive treatment of the mentioned aspects of Jordan.

In terms of socio-political conditions, generally speaking, Jordanian society has been influenced, inspired and affected by all the cultures found in the region, most importantly by the roots of pre-Islamic Arab culture, Islamic culture as well as Western culture. The effect of pre-Islamic Arabic culture and Islamic Arab culture manifests quite obviously in Jordanian customs and values.[77] The traces of that can also be seen in certain styles of literary prose and the way Arabic language has been applied as a medium of instruction in educational institutions. Also, the influence of Western culture is noteworthy in most aspects of Jordanian

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[76] Al-Hasheme, A, *Teaching Methods of Religious Education*, Beirut: Mossasah Arrissalah, 1993, p. 55.
[77] *Ibid*, pp. 85-87.

life, predominantly in modern forms of art such as music and fine arts, cultural and social clubs, in library activities and the operation of documentation centres.[78]

Talking about religious significance, Jordan has always occupied a significant place throughout the history of all three major Abrahamic religions namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Jordan had retained its identity as a Muslim state; nevertheless, in the 1980s there was a strong inclination towards Islamic customs and beliefs among majority of the population. This is a period when the Muslim communities all over the world were going through a crucial phase in terms of their religious environment. It naturally triggered the tide of 'return to the fundamentals' in Jordan and paved the way for Muslims to follow the Islamic norms.[79] As a result this brought a revolution in Jordan's educational system as well.

On the other hand, if the political dynamics of Jordan were looked at from a historical perspective, one would be able to see that with Jordan gaining its independence in 1946, it emerged a new and significant political climate. In 1953 King Hussein became the whole sole statesman. In addition to this, he appointed himself as the spokesman of the nation. Presently, it can be seen, at least for now, politically healthy and economical relations have been established between Jordan and other neighbouring states, including Israel.

However, Jordan retained and continues to maintain its Muslim identity. The landscape of the country, in actual sense, represents a considerable Muslim land adjacent to Israel. To illustrate this situation a map of what is known as Jordan in the conventional sense is provided[80]:

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[78] *Ibid.*
[79] Kramer, Martin Seth. *Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1996, 1-8.
[80] Curtis, Ryan, *Jordan in Transition: From Hussein to Abdullah*, NYU, 2002, p. x.

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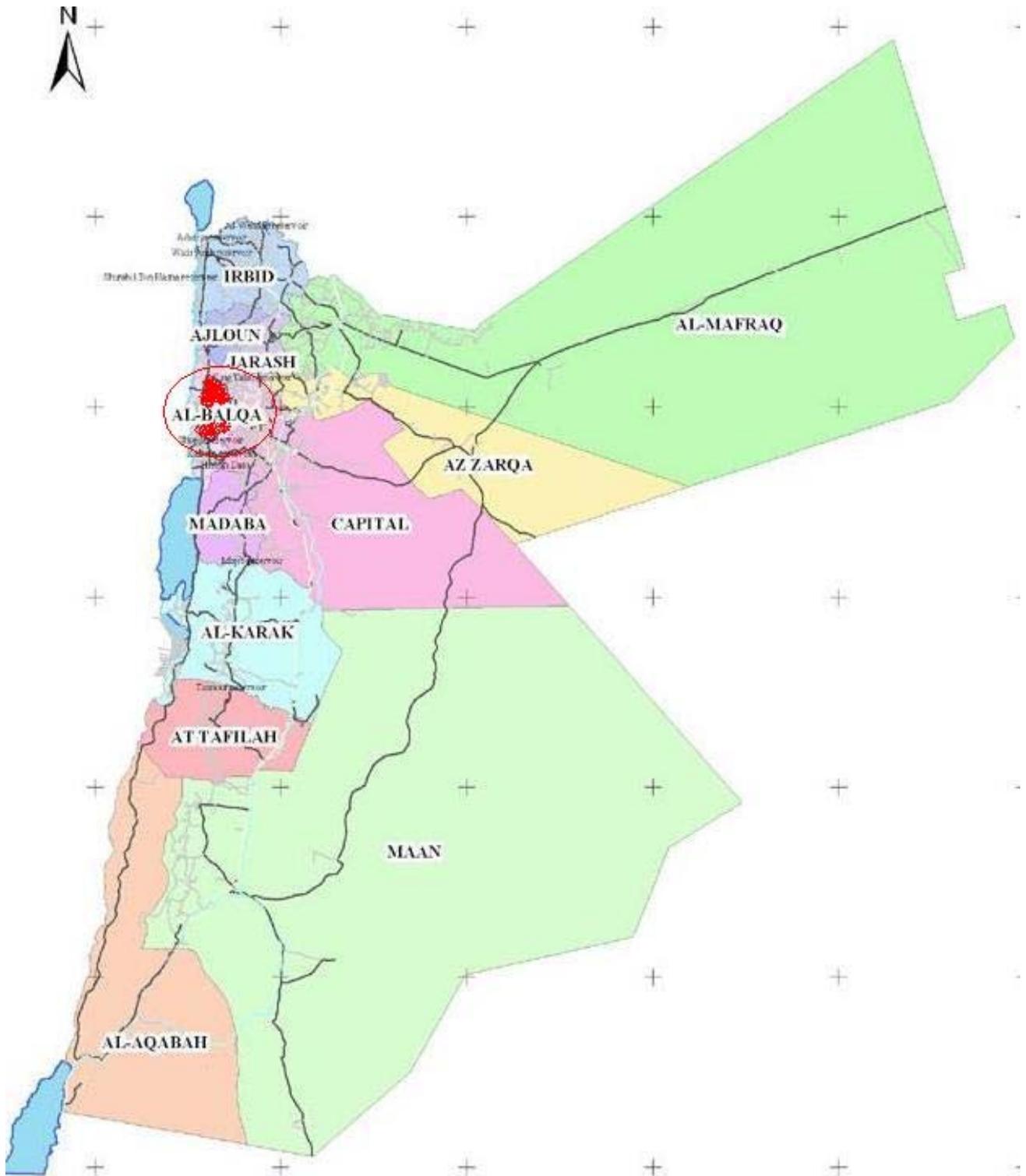
**2.3.1 Education and the Political History of Jordan**

The politics of the recent times in the Middle East and especially in Jordan consisted of an inconsistent and unstable social environment. However, the constant political turmoil in the Middle East had yet apparently spared Jordan in many ways. One of the areas where Jordan could act as a pioneer was the area of education including its Islamic syllabus[81].

In what follows, I attempt to demonstrate how Jordan managed to develop a structural association of Islamic education in the modern times, and to what extent were the political conditions of that time responsible for it.

**2.3.1.1 Educational Reforms and its Impact on Islamic Education**

Briefly speaking, before the establishment of Transjordan in 1921, the region was ruled by Ottoman Empire system. This system was introduced to Arab Countries in general and to the state of Jordan in particular by the west after the First World War. Broad policies were formed and executed in 1980's in Jordan to bring in comprehensive change in the educational standard of Jordan. The most important outcome of this effort of bringing change in the educational system was an evaluation of the process of education in Jordan. This began to develop in Jordan soon after the first ever international conference on Islamic education that took place in Makkah in April 1977[82]. The Makkah Conference focused on bringing the

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[81] Anderson, Lisa, "Remaking the Middle East: The Prospects for Democracy and Stability", *Ethics & International Affairs* 6:1, 1992, 163–178.
[82] See for the details on the conference, Hasan, Langgulung, "Islamic Religious Curriculum in Muslim Countries: The Experiences of Indonesia and Malaysia" in *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 30, 1, 2008, pp. 1-19.

Islamic education curriculum in line with societal needs. As a direct result of that, The National Conference for Educational Development was held in Jordan September 1987.[83]

Although the conference was not entirely concerned with the Islamic education curriculum, but a large part of it deal with the concerns raised in the abovementioned Makkah Conference.

In the National Conference, delegates were required to ponder over six issues laid down by the Ministry of Education under the patronage of the Executive Committee of the Conference. Educational policy was considered as the topmost priority and therefore was kept at the top of the agenda, which was followed by syllabus for humanities and literature, which further included Islamic education, sociology, Arabic language, English language, physical education and arts. Also included in the conference were syllabi for science and technology that included general sciences, mathematics, computer sciences and vocational education. Stress was laid down on the administration of educational institutions, which comprised of management at school level, activities in the school and supervision in the educational institutions. Educational standing of the country in comparison to other countries was also discussed in the conference and lastly the amenities that are provided at the school level were also talked about.[84]

The conference led to some recommendations as a result of dwelling on issues decided at the beginning of the conference. The primary suggestion made was regarding the restructuration of the whole of the Jordanian educational system in order to make it individual oriented. Also,

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[83] *History of Education in Jordan 1921-1970*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1980, pp. 16-23.

[84] Adel, T. Al-Bataineh, Mohamed A. Nur-Awaleh, *International Education Systems and Contemporary Education*, University Press of America 2005, pp. 37-45.

it was ensured that the educational system of Jordan should imbibe in itself the great democratic principles, which includes the respect for justice.[85] The recommendations were directed towards making the educational system of Jordan more globalised so that it can be at par with the whole world. Consequently, teachers were asked to change their attitude and teaching methodology and were asked to teach involving real life scientific methods instead of teaching with customary and conventional methods.[86]

Other recommendations of the conference were the development of the character of their students, by teaching students about the biographies of the companions of the Prophet for example and also by educating them about the realistic face of the religious conviction.

The first ever National conference for educational development condemned the existing pattern of teaching in Jordan because the system was aimless and without any direction. According to the conference, the existing educational system failed to change with modern times. The former system of education was not able to equip students with the practical knowledge, by which they could compete in the outside world. The firmness of the erstwhile educational system was taken with stiff hands as it did not allow students to choose subjects according to their attitudes, interests and desires[87].

To give solutions to the above mentioned difficulties, the conference outlined important features that educational system of Jordan should ideally have. These features included removing inequality among students, bringing about positive changes in the methodology of

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[85] *Risalat Al-Mu'allim*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1999, vol.10, no.1, pp. 32-37.

[86] *Ibid*, pp. 43-45.

[87] *Risalat Al-Mu'allim* , *The National Conference for Educational Development 1987*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1988, pp. 2-7.

teaching and assessment of learners. The educational conference also ruled that students should be given some practical training as well so that they can be compete with everyone else in the world.

Although the Educational Ministry in the conference came out with very novel ideas, which, if implemented, could bring radical change in the educational system, there are certain hindrances facing the Ministry which are mentioned by some experts. They point out that the resources with Ministry are very scarce, which can create obstacles in achieving the aim of the Ministry. As a result, there are insufficient schools in the country as Ministry of Education has failed to establish requisite number of schools in the country. Schools in the country are also facing scarcity of teachers due to the concept of 'brain drain'. These experts have clearly mentioned in their work that in Jordan vocational education is not given preference by students and this can easily be proven by only 2% of students opting for vocational courses or training.[88]

The Conference for Educational Development, 1987, has been one of the most ambitious projects of the Jordanian government. The conference decided that to improve the standard of teaching quality the quality of teachers needed to be improved. The conference tried to establish symbiotic relation between teachers and universities, so that the teachers can get the adequate training. Universities can play an important role in teacher training by finding out

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[88] Adel T. Al-Bataineh, Mohamed A. Nur-Awaleh *International Education Systems and Contemporary Education*, University Press of America 2005, pp. 96-106

the requirements of the teachers or by creating special programmes especially for teachers so that they are updated with the latest techniques of teaching[89].

## 2.4 Characteristic of Educational Reform in Jordan

The government is imparting complimentary and mandatory education in the country. The education is imparted keeping the demand in the market in view, so that students are not left without any jobs after finishing their education. This policy imitates the policy in Europe. Development occurs easily in a place where there is stimulating atmosphere and everyone is willing to learn, whether it's teachers or students, because only if teachers learn and develop professionally that the standard of education can improve. There are various ways through which this rise in the standard of education on Jordan can be assessed namely syllabus, teachers training programmes, special education, etc[90].

Many innovative steps have been taken in the implementation of the educational system of Jordan, like in the educational policy, which aims at catering the needs of individual and also society at large. The education policy of Jordan believes in democratic principles, in which both students and teachers play a crucial role. The policy places strong emphasis on teaching students Islamic principles, as well as creating scientific temperament.[91]

In 1991, the Ministry of Education established Educational Training Centre, which supervises or monitors the quality of teaching and also plays a significant role in enhancing the competence of teachers. The Education Training Centre has also started pivotal and

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[89] *Ibid*, p. 74.

[90] *Risalat Al-Mu'allim*, pp. 8-9.

[91] *Ibid*, pp. 12-30.

experimental training. It is the responsibility of pivotal training programme to raise the bar of teachers and other related professionals, established in 1992. ETC has been conducting various programmes like management and training programmes to develop the skills of its personnel. As a part of this training, teachers are encouraged to make use of latest gadgets and techniques while teaching in classroom. In 1993, another programme started called Experimental Training programme. It aims to improve the performance of teachers by giving them training in real life situations. This programme boosts the confidence of teachers and gives them a good reality check because they get regular feedback while training.[92]

Courses and training in IT for learning have existed since 1992 for the purpose of educational supervisors, head of institutions and other related staff members. The key aim of this programme is to equip people taking training to get the basic knowledge of computer, so that they can use it in the field and environment in which they work. The use of computer for teaching in educational institutions is encouraged in Jordan, so that students embrace technology at a very early stage. In the present world where knowledge of IT is essential, Jordanian people do not wish to be left behind. Jordan is progressing by leaps and bounds in this area and is witnessing a digital revolution; Jordan has made an important progress in the field of Information Technologies and has exceeded other developed nations in the production of computer related software and hardware. The emphasis is being laid upon using programmes related to Islamic culture and beliefs.[93]

Ministry of Education has paid special attention to the quality of teachers that currently exist and being recruited. According to Educational law no. 7 of 1988 it is a mandatory

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[92] Adel, T. *et al.*, *International*, pp. 79-86.
[93] *Ibid*, pp. 92-93.

qualification upon a teacher to have a university degree. For the head of institutions it is imperative to have Post-graduate degree. Programmes have been started with an aim to raise the qualification of current teachers who do not have a degree; this applies to teachers who started before the new law. Three universities in Jordan run these programmes. Pre-Service Teacher certification, which was started in three universities with nearly 916 trainees, is the first programme. The second programme comprises of upgrading community college diplomas to university level degrees. 5,578 from 30,000 target group have already been accommodated. The third programme is for the perfection of degrees of teachers who hold university degrees already. Nearly 11,000 teachers will be included in this programme.[94]

A significant transformation can be seen in Jordan's society from primitive to modern. Self-learning devices such as educational television programmes, libraries and computers have introduced technology in classrooms. Teaching has improved significantly and had opened many horizons. Teachers could expand and enhance their knowledge through television in years 1992-1994. .Students needs and preferences were met through publishing packages relating to DNA. Students were provided with libraries to help them expand their knowledge.

For the development of the educational system, Educational Resources Centre was set up to give teachers a platform to create innovative ideas. ERC is a tool that helps and supports teachers in training them and inflict self learning.[95]

Changes in the structure of courses in schools are made by The Ministry of Education according to general objectives and philosophy of education. The material which is to be imparted as knowledge through teaching is decided by The Board of Education. Jordan is

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[94] *The Development of Education in King Hussien's Era*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1996, pp. 21-23.

[95] *Ibid*, pp. 32-37.

governed by a single Board of Education which manages matters related to education in contrast to United States for example, where the authority of power to keep a check on the educational system is divided into many minor systems, thus creating confusion. Hence the Board of Education of Jordan is a unique singular check point. The chief of the Board of Education, who is also the Minister of Education, is appointed by the Prime Minister with approval of the King. The legislative branch also plays a part in the working of the Board of Education of Jordan. Eighteen members are selected from different backgrounds such as social, education and economics, which assist in revising the curriculum and adopting appropriate books, to make the educational system par excellence. Matters like budgeting, planning, legislation and policy issues are advised upon by these appointed members.[96]

Programmes for vocational education are arranged by Ministry of Education to make sure the overall development of its students. Ministry of Education has set up Directorate of vocations to give students real life training. The Directorate provides teachers with special training in order that they may apply it during imparting knowledge to the education. Enticements are given by the Directorate to make sure those students and teachers participate in maximum numbers. Many objectives have been formed by the Directorate. These objectives are enhancement of team spirit among students, maximising voluntary activities and enabling students to come up with innovative ideas through scientific bend of mind.

Vocational training has been very fruitful for its students. Agriculture, food industry, animal products, hotel industry and production of furniture are some of the fields that have benefited students. Vocational training for females is given special emphasis. Ceramics and sewing are taught to women as a part of vocational training

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[96] *Risalat al-Mu`allim*, pp. 49-52.

An analysis was conducted in Jordan during the period 1992-1994 so that significant changes could be made to the educational system. In order to enhance the educational system, extensive research was done on developing gifted and talented students, multi-grade classrooms, regular practices of principals in school, nutrient programmes and pilot schools were evaluated, along with issues such as cheating and fourth grade students vocational and practical skills.

The scientific and technical methods used in the education system in order to improve its quality and functioning is not available in Jordan compared to countries like United States and Europe. A scientific research is required in the educational system of Jordan to expand the educational horizon, as the country is still craving to forget the conservative colonial history. Increased numbers of students getting equipped with the use of computers are definitely going to help in the scientific educational research in Jordan.

Public education of Jordan is financed by the government. Allocation of capital is done to ensure smooth and better functioning of the educational system. 4.3% of the Gross National Product and 10.5% of the annual budget is spent on education in Jordan. On having a close look at the distribution of funds it is noted that the amount of finances being spent is increasing over the years. Private sector of Jordan provides education from pre-school to higher classes as it has taken the responsibility of providing education to the youth of the country. United Nations Relief and Work Agency provides education to the Palestinian Refugees. Weaker sections of the society such as disabled children and adults are provided with basic education and in some cases higher level of education by various other public and

private organisations. Private organisations have set up community colleges and universities in certain scenarios.[97]

After looking at all the details that have been submitted before, it can be said that the importance given to education by people in Jordan reflects on Jordan's education plan. The changes in the educational system of the country has led the system into a new functioning ,introducing changes such as: increase the age of children for compulsory education from seven to ten years, rewriting new text books up to the twelfth standard and also increasing teachers' qualification. Improvement in school provision, rejuvenation of school administration, and boost in the quality of research are all due to the changes in the educational system. The changes made in the educational system contribute and helps in further development of the nation.

The initiative taken in 1980's for the maturity of human potential can be regarded as the most exhaustive up to date. Evolvement of human resources was the crux of the entire plan so that products of the educational system contribute more efficiently and effectively in the growth of the nation.[98]

Keeping in mind all the previously mentioned submissions it can rightly be said that the education system has helped students to attain more fundamental knowledge by improving the age of compulsory education from seven to ten years. The introduction of the two-year comprehensive secondary level with unified core syllabus has given students a chance to select subjects suiting their professional ambition. Establishment of applied technology

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[97] *Ibid*, pp. 72-73.

[98] *Development*, pp. 53-54.

secondary system has helped expanding the technical knowledge. Introduction of grade system in exams has brought transparency.

A relationship has been installed between secondary and higher education, teaching methods have been modernised and enhanced and changes have been made in the course structure with an aim to develop intellectual skills. New books have been introduced, which have been made mandatory to meet the above mentioned standards. A positive increase can be seen in the qualification of the teachers, basic level of teachers increased from two to four years and secondary level teachers from four to five years. Teachers are getting trained so that they can teach in a more effective and competent way in the classroom, a certification programme has been started for the above mentioned reason. One of the important aspects that have helped revolutionise the education system is the development of various facilities in school such as, libraries, laboratories and audio-visual equipment.

Changes recommended by the National Conference on Education Development, 1987 have been duly made in the objectives, content and methods. The national plan covers the primary, secondary and post-secondary areas of education. Overall development of a student's personality is the main focus of the basic education. In order to prepare students for the real life challenges, the basic plan of education has now made ten years of schooling mandatory. Admission of children has reached around 92% which is a big achievement for schools of Jordan.[99]

In order to make the learning process more intense and deep, scientific methods are being used. The definition of the secondary level has been described as an educational phase in

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[99] *Ibid*, pp. 93-96.

which youth is taught independence and responsibility in life and ensure that individuals acquire the knowledge and skills which help them for lifelong education - as per Education Act No.27 of 1988. The Act also mentions the objectives of education, which are: a) Intellectual, moral, physical and social development of an individual in a harmonious and extensive manner b) Cultural, socioeconomic, scientific and technical development for Jordanian society.[100]

To keep up with the ever-advancing world, secondary education has been split into two parts. First part involves the study of core subjects and the second part consists of vocational training. Different methods are made to develop the skills of students. Extra-curricular activities and optional subjects have been added along with compulsory subjects. Involvement of students in learning process is given importance. A lot of measures are being taken in order to improve the quality of textbooks, computer software's and other study related material. The objective of these steps is to make Jordan self-sufficient in creating and producing quality teaching material.

In1980 all teacher training institutes were converted into two-year community colleges by the Jordanian Board of Education. The purpose of this step was to provide private sector with technical professionals which were in high demand. The reason for taking the above mentioned step by the board was to make the poorly managed and run institutions aware and sensible to the cause of the society. 52 community colleges have been given a license to run, which are governed by over 30 different agencies by the Ministry of Higher Education that controls all the institutions. Institutions now provide options of many subjects for specialisation like, aviation, cartography, computer science, health, etc.; this is besides

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[100] *Development*, pp. 110-112.

already offered teacher training. Agriculture, commerce, communication and transport, education, engineering, hotel management, paramedical technologies, journalism, law, library science and social work are nine such subjects to specialise in which are provided by community colleges.[101]

A wide selection of subjects is important to be offered by any educational system in order to match up to the requirements of the fast paced world with intense competition. People of Jordan strongly hope and believe that education will reach every door- step by the National Plan for Education Reform, and also hope that it will re-establish their belief that education will bring a huge change in their lives and also in the lives of other people including Palestinians.[102]

## 2.5 Islamic Education in Jordan

One has to look into the directives issued by the Jordanian government to understand the nature, as well as the structure, in which, the curriculum of Islamic education has been set. Hence, without getting into much theoretical framework, let us have a look at the central themes, on which, Islamic education in Jordan is to be practiced.

Realistic implementation, culture and the nature of the society are the basis of Islamic education. Ministry of Education has recommended the following aspects to be taken into account in order to design the Islamic education course structure:

  a)  The main root of the curriculum and books should be the Qur'an and Hadith.

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[101] *The Development of Education in King Hussein's,* pp. 210-217.

[102] *Remaking*, pp. 173-177.

b) Human science curriculum in particular and other curricula in general should be complimented by the Islamic education curriculum.

c) *Aqidah* (creed) and *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) are the core foundation of Islam that should be emphasised upon.

d) Positive images of the life of the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) companions, and of modern scientists and leaders should be available in textbooks so that students can be given good examples of the effect and influence of Islam on different human beings that has helped them spiritually.

e) Various teaching aids such as recordings, religious educational films, clippings, images and photos should be used of in learning activities.

f) A spiral design should be adopted, when structuring the curriculum and presenting its topics, starting with a light idea and then getting deeper and wider in latter stages.

g) A good set of Islamic educational knowledge and experiences should be chosen that would help the students to be nice responsible people, conscientious citizens with Islamic manners[103].

Essentially, the Islamic education imparted in Jordan intends to give students the appropriate message about Islam and to teach them Islamic law which connects to their lives, and to relate these teachings with their character. It also focuses on building of students' personalities corresponding with Islamic teachings to create students who believe in Islam and who

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[103] *Curriculum of Islamic education and it Guidelines for the Elementary Basic Stage*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1991, pp. 240-241.

practice that belief. Main objective of Islamic education is to improve morals and induce positive approach towards home, society and the world. [104]

## 2.6 Curriculum of Islamic Education in Jordan

Islamic education has been taught and learned in Jordan for a long period of time; formal schools have been present since Jordan was formed. This method of education was followed in the *Kuttab*. After that there was a big transition in the educational system. The policy of the Education system was officially controlled by the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, there are other establishments that play an important part in the Islamic education like the mosque, family and mass media. Textbooks are believed to be the heart of learning and teaching process. Therefore, Ministry of Education took the step of making available Islamic education books in all Jordanian private and public schools[105].

## 2.7 Conclusion

In Islamic education, the whole notion of education has been moulded into a religious form that let the religiosity prevail among the learners. It must be noted, however, that as per the subsequent discussion, the national curricula for Islamic education in Jordan did not spring from nowhere. It evolved over time as a reflection of the needs, perceptions and historical development for the societies concerned. Jordan's religious heritage seems to have interrelated with its national consciousness to produce a feeling or mood in the public mind,

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[104]Al-Tal, Ahmed, *The Development of Educational System in Jordan*, Amman: The Ministry of Culture, 1989, pp. 6-15. See also, Battah, A, (ed.) *Education in Jordan*, Amman: NCERD, 1992.

[105] Al Khawaldeh, N, and Eid E, *Teaching Methods of Islamic education and its Practice*, Amman: Dar Hunen, 2001, pp. 25-33.

supportive of religious schools in its school curriculum. This is obviously the case with every community while determining the extent of its interrelation with its national consciousness. Therefore, one would not expect religious education in Jordan and United States to be alike.

As indicated at the outset, the purpose of historical enquiry not only to give us an opportunity to value the historical and continuous development of the educational structure in Jordan, but it may also imply the main characteristics and mechanism involved in the process like the economical and political impression. In any sense, nevertheless, this background information has indeed paved the way for us to further indulge into the technicalities pertinent to this study.

# CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Once done with the contextualisation, in this chapter I describe previous studies conducted in the field of the curricula and methods of teaching Islamic education as they are related to the topic of this research. Various studies that are thought of being useful for this research have been collected, and are to be applied in a direct or indirect manner. These studies shall also be implemented in the theoretical framework, the study tools and procedures.

The selected studies consist of the following;

   a) - The Islamic education Curricula,

   b) - The Content of the Islamic education Textbooks and this includes; studies related to the evaluation of the content and studies related to the development of the content.

   c) - The Standards of Selecting and Organising the Content of Islamic education and this incorporates studies related to Islamic education and its standards in general, studies related to selecting the Qur'anic verses and studies related to selecting the Prophetic Hadith.

## 3.1 Studies Related to Islamic Education Curricula

 Major studies dealing with the curriculum of Islamic education have focused on specific issues pertinent to the topic. These studies are categorised in the following analysis based on their specific themes.

Some of these studies, for example, have focused on the educational standards that should be taken into consideration in devising a curriculum for the Islamic education. They stressed on

the way these standards can be utilised in order to develop this curriculum for the First Preparatory Grade. The most important results of these studies can be concluded as follows.

1. The fact that the content did not take care of introducing the students to some of the aspects of religious innovations in faith like hypocrisy, taking oaths by other than Allah's names, and vowing to other than Allah, and the fact that these things can be harmful for one's religious beliefs.

2. The fact that the content did not take care of introducing the students to the etiquettes of reciting the Qur'an, the rulings on adolescence and puberty, and some other social morals.

This study asserts the incomprehensiveness of the textbooks of Islamic education in relation to the topics that a First Prep. Student needs.[106]

Some other studies have dealt with the importance of Islamic education at school and its tasks; they also dealt with the degree of attention paid to Islamic education as a school curriculum and educational course as well as the concept of Islamic education from the point of view of the school curriculum. In short, such studies have dealt with the reality of teaching this curriculum, the problems it faces, and how it should be in the public educational system.

The results showed that the contents of the textbooks of Islamic education have been selected on a personal basis without paying attention to the proper standards for such content regarding its relation with the student's age; its correspondence with his/ her mental level and needs; the level of its difficulty, complexity, and/or abstractness; its relation with his/ her life and current problems; its level in relation to language and meaning; its relation with the nature and

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[106] Sarwar, G, "Islamic education: its meaning, problems and prospects" in
Sarwar et al. *Issues in Islamic Education*, London: The Muslim
Educational Trust, 1996, pp. 7-23. See, Sharif, *Islamic Education*, pp. 23-43, 74-85.

problems of this age etc. In addition, these studies have also dealt with the following points of criticism: the short number of classes per week for the course, the small amount of knowledge given to students, the irrelevance of what is taught in relation to the student's age, and the inconsistency of the Islamic education subdivisions.[107]

Hence, these studies have proved that the content of the Islamic education textbooks has been selected on a personal basis; it also has specified some standards that can be utilised to select the content.

There are some studies in the area, particularly that of a contemporary Saudi educationalist Sultan, that specifically aimed at introducing the points of strength and weakness in the Islamic education curriculum for those grades through conducting a questionnaire for the Islamic education teachers and their supervisors in order to know their opinions on the curriculum in those grades and build a basis for evaluating the curriculum regarding its content, organisation, language, means of teaching, production, and validity. One of the most interesting results for this study was that the content did not offer the general knowledge and experience related to the students' needs and problems. It was also poor in relation to organisation, full of wordiness, and paying little attention to the teaching aids and their diversity.[108] The most important contribution of such studies is that they pointed out some standards for selecting and organising the content such as: the students' needs and problems as well as the good organisation of the content.[109]

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[107] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 5-11-, 21-32, 57-59. See, also, Al-Attas, S. N, *Aims* pp. 12-39 & 42-48.

[108] Sultan, Talat, *Curriculum guide for Islamic studies*, Center for Research & Revival of Islamic education, Institute for Research & Revival of Islamic Heritage, Umm-al-Qura University, 1992, pp. 2-23-49-53. Interestingly, this study

[109] *Ibid*, pp. 83-84.

Some studies focused on specifying the religious needs for the students and whether they are satisfied in the Islamic education textbooks in the Secondary Stage. The most prominent of such studies is carried by al-Shafai, who has also included an analysis for the content of the textbooks in order to see whether those needs are satisfied or not.

The content analysis has revealed that some of those religious needs are satisfied in the textbooks as agreed upon by the referees such as the need for preserving the body health, establishing the sound beliefs, understanding the role of money in Islam, and establishing the proper concept of work in Islam. However, the analysis has revealed that other needs are ignored as agreed upon by the referees such as: the needs to accept the body changes, the proper sexual education, and the relation between religion and science. It also revealed some needs that are not mentioned in the list provided by the referees such as: the need to know some of the principles of the Qur'anic recitation, memorising a portion of the Qur'an, and knowing the attitude of Islam towards the other divine religions.[110]

Some other studies have emerged focusing on the analysis of the curriculum in those grades from an Islamic point of view. Their principal aim was to identify the level of conformity between the content and the students' age in line with the proposed stage of assigning the Islamic legal responsibilities to humans. As a secondary aim, these studies also focused on identifying the child's mental and imagining abilities so as to develop a comprehensive educational curriculum that is capable of offering a sound Islamic education for the children at this age, and appropriate in terms of the values and attitudes associated with this group age. For this purpose, Ahmed, a popular Egyptian educationalist, has used the statistical

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[110] Al-Shafai, A, Al Rutheri, R, and Al Khatem, A, *Curricula in a new profile,* Riyadh: Abekan Book shop, 1996, pp. esp. 53-72, Al-Shafai, A, *Islamic education Teaching Methods*, Kuwait: Al-Falah Bookshop, 1980, pp. 1-15, 25-28-32-47.

survey technique. He prepared two tools; the first one consists of 68 articles and used to review the objectives of the Islamic education curriculum for the four grades from the point of view of the teaching staff and supervisors at the college of Islamic Law. The second one consists of 39 articles and proposes a number of Islamic educational behavioural objectives that can be achieved among the children at this age. Ahmed has also used the analytical inductive technique through conducting a survey for the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic Hadith related to the assignment of Islamic legal responsibilities, and included an analysis of their contents.[111]

This study revealed that the Qur'anic verses mentioned in the curriculum do not correspond with the students' age except for some few cases. The researcher stressed the importance of paying much attention to the perceptional and practical aspects when preparing an educational content so that it corresponds with the child's mental characteristics at this age. He also emphasised the necessity for the integrity between the Islamic education curriculum and the other curricula so that all of them reinforce one another.[112]

One of the most thorough studies on the curriculum of Islamic education belongs to Madhkour. His study aimed at evaluating the Islamic education curricula in Jordan as it focused on the tenth grade curriculum and was applied to 22 schools in Amman. The study dealt with the main four elements in the curriculum: the objectives, the content, the teaching methods, and the evaluation process. The researcher used the following tools: questionnaires, interviews, observations, and the descriptive and quantitative data. The sample consisted of 1264 students and 92 male and female teachers of Islamic education. Interviews have been

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[111] Ahmed, M. (1989) *Novel Methods of Teaching Islamic education,* Cairo: The World of Books, 1989, pp. 6-23.
[112] *Ibid*, pp. 31-36.

done with 88 students, 22 teachers, and 12 supervisors. As for the observations, they have been taken in 22 Islamic education classes.

The results showed that the focus of the curriculum and the teaching and learning process is mainly on the content, the main concern of the teachers is to communicate information for the students, and the evaluation was mainly centred on measuring the cognitive side for the students. The researcher has recommended the utilisation of the best educational theories in order to improve and produce the curriculum, find an appropriate model for the Islamic education curriculum, and prepare the best basic on-job training programmes for the teachers of Islamic education.

Accordingly, the recommendation of this study in finding an appropriate model for the Islamic education curriculum stresses the importance of building a model according to which the content of the Islamic education textbooks is to be selected and organised; and this is what my study proposes.[113]

## 3.2 Studies Related to the Content of the Islamic Education Textbooks

Major studies in this area can be categorised under two themes. A review of both is presented in the following.

### 3.2.1 Studies Related to Content Evaluation:

Al-Qurashi presented a careful study on the content evaluation in the curriculum of Islamic education. His study aimed at evaluating the Islamic education textbook in the secondary stage and offering recommendations and suggestions that can be useful in improving the textbooks of this stage.

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[113] Madhkour, A, *Islamic education Curriculum; Basics and Exercises*, Kuwait: Al-Falaah Library, 1987.

Among the most interesting results that the study revealed are the following: there was no mention of the financial transactions such as selling, purchasing, gifts, and the like; the topics on transactions and acts of worship were superficial; there was no mention of the Islamic penalties or the legal portions and rulings of legacy; the content did not deal with some rulings regarding women such as the veil, the issue of mixing with the other sex, and the like; and, finally, it did not deal with the new contemporary social issues such as birth control, stock certificates, and the like.[114]

Some other studies in the area aimed at evaluating the Islamic education textbook for the grade in question in order to specify its level of satisfaction for the secondary stage students' needs as well as its correspondence with the objectives of the secondary stage in the Arab world.

These studies have revealed the following results:

The content did not deal with the contemporary issues in the society such as banks, the employment of foreign workers at the Muslim homes, the present types of entertainment, and so on; the disconnection between the Islamic values and the foreign, innovated values in the society; finally, the content did not deal with the most important issues of the youth such as the prohibited mixing with the other sex, the Zionist challenge for the Muslim nation, and the atheist philosophies.

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[114] Al-Qurashi, A, Mahmood, S, and Rajab, S, *Development of Curricula Measurement and Evaluation Techniques*, Kuwait: Ministry of Education, Kuwait, 1991.

The results of these studies have pointed out some standards that can be relied on in selecting the content like the contemporary issues, the students' problems, and the foreign values and our attitudes towards them.[115]

An interesting study in this area is carried out by al-Awami, a Yemenite scholar. The study has focused on evaluating the content of the aforementioned textbook in the light of a standard that has been derived from a theoretical study that dealt with a review of literature in the field, the nature of Islamic education, the nature of the primary student in Yemen, and the Yemeni society through its basic religious and social aspects.

The study showed that the content has focused on the aspects of beliefs and that it relied to a great extent on inference from the Qur'an and Sunnah; it also showed that the content has focused on expounding the Qur'anic verses and the Prophetic Hadith and ignored some contemporary issues that concern the sixth grade students. In addition, the content did not offer the *Shari'ah-related* rulings appropriately; it also did not observe the society's state of affairs and its problems and conditions.

The results of this study stressed some of the standards used to select the content of the Islamic education textbooks such as the contemporary issues and the nature of the society and its private problems; it also stressed the necessity of presenting the content in an appropriate way.[116]

Some similar studies have aimed at evaluating this textbook in the light of certain standards that are related to the principles of building the content of the *Shari'ah* textbooks and the way

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[115] See, for example, al-Zantani, A, *Islamic education Philosophy in Qur'an and Sunnah,* Cairo: Arab Book House, 1993, esp. pp. 12-17.
[116] Al-Awami, A, *Evaluation of the contents of Islamic education of sixth grade in the Republic of Yemen*, M.A. thesis, Al-Zgazege University, 1993, see pp. 42-54, 93-112.

they are finished; it also aimed at analyzing the content of these textbooks in the light of the aforementioned standards. The results showed that the content ignored some important topics for the students at this stage such as banks deposits, the compulsory charity for the investment companies, the stock certificates, the artificial fertilisation, the blood banks, the test-tube babies, the imported meats, and the religious excessiveness; it also showed that the content ignored the principles of building the curriculum represented by paying attention to the way the content is presented in accordance with the logical order of its chapters and topics.

The results identified some standards for building content such as paying attention to the logical order of its topics.[117]

A similar study by Abu Khudhayr, a Jordanian education specialist, aimed at identifying the suitability of the textbook as a teaching tool and revealing its points of strength and weakness. The researcher used a questionnaire consisted of 77 articles in order to measure the scopes of the textbook. The questionnaire was given to 45 male teachers and 66 female teachers who teach the textbook at schools in the aforementioned Directorate of Education in 1993-1994. The study revealed the following interesting results which in turn relate to my study: the content goes in conformity with the educational philosophy and its general objectives; it also corresponds with the Islamic education curriculum for this grade. The content follows a logical order and has sequenced and integrated concepts; it also satisfies the students' needs and attitudes, is modern and genuine, observes the individual differences, and fits the number

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[117] Al-Shafai, I, *So that the Islamic education Curriculum becomes more Effective*,
Research presented to the Kuwait Teachers' Society, The 10 the Education Week,
Kuwait, 1990.

of allotted classes. The researcher also found that the classes on beliefs correspond with the students' levels.[118]

The results that this study reached point out some of the standards that are used to select and organise the content of Islamic education textbooks such as: the general objectives, the students' needs and attitudes, the individual differences among the students, the balance between the modern and the genuine, and the logical sequence of the concepts.

The above study has been complemented by a later work that aimed at evaluating the aforementioned textbook in the Directorate of Education No. Two in Greater Amman in the academic year of 1993/1994 in order to identify the suitability of the textbook as a tool of teaching and figure out the points of strength and weakness. For this purpose, the researcher prepared a questionnaire that consisted of 60 articles; it included the textbook's finishing, language, way of presenting, content, objectives, shapes, illustrations, activities, and evaluation. It also observed the individual differences among the students, their mentality development, and the functional aspects of the content. The study sample consisted of all the 34 supervisors of Islamic education in Jordan and all the 115 Islamic education teachers for this grade in the directorate in question.

The results showed that the general framework of the textbook, its educational objectives, content, activities, and evaluation are in a good level. However, they showed a number of weakness points in the content, especially regarding the teaching aids as their level was low in relation to their sufficiency, diversity, clarity, and colours. It also showed that the educational

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[118] Abu Khudhayr, *Evaluating the Islamic education Textbook for the Fifth Grade in Jordan from the Point of View of the Male and Female Teachers Who Teach the Textbook in the Directorate of Education in Amman*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1994, pp. 90-120.

development issues which received the least attention were: thinking development, observing the differences among the individuals, and finally observing the functional aspects of the content.[119]

The results of the content evaluation highlight some standards according to which the content of the Islamic education textbooks can be selected and organised such as: the educational objectives, the individual differences, and the functional aspects of the content and its comprehensiveness to cover all the cognitive elements.

A different study in the area by al-Umari aimed at analysing and evaluating the Islamic education textbook for ninth grade in Jordan in order to identify its observance for the principles of educational development related to school textbooks and curricula. The researcher has prepared a questionnaire for the supervisors and teachers in relation to: the general shape of the textbook, its finishing, its content, its language, its ways of evaluation, its teaching aids, the individual differences, its activities, and its thinking development. He checked the validity of the tool by referring it to a number of specialists and by calculating its coefficient using Kronbach –Alpha equation. The sample consisted of 28 supervisors and 68 teachers who teach Islamic education in ninth grade in the Governorate of al-Balqa in the academic year of 1994/1995.

The study revealed that the expectations of the supervisors for the fields of the general shape of the textbook, its finishing, language, ways of evaluation, and content were high. It also revealed that their expectations were moderate for the fields of: activities, individual differences, teaching aids, and thinking development. As for the teachers, the results showed

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[119] See, Abu Samoor, *Evaluating the Islamic education Textbook for the Sixth Grade in Jordan from the Point of View of the Supervisors and Teachers of Islamic education in the light of Educational Development*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1995, pp. 15-32.

that their expectations were high for all of the fields. It also showed that the teachers and supervisors have all agreed on the following negative points such as the big size of the material compared to the number of allotted classes, the disconnection between the content and the student's needs and attitudes, the lack of attractiveness and suspense in the realia, and the unavailability of problem solving techniques in the content. In his recommendations, the researcher stressed the importance of avoiding the weakness points.[120]

Al-Umari carried out another study later that particularly aimed at evaluating this textbook from the point of view of the teachers who taught the textbook in the aforementioned area in 2001/2002. The researcher chose the sample according to the geographical teaching areas; it consisted from 77 male teachers and 84 female teachers. He prepared a 60-article questionnaire that covered all the textbook's aspects.

The results showed that the material does not correspond with the number of classes allotted for it; the textbook is very bulky; the content does not present the knowledge and the experiences related to the students' needs in a proper way; the content focuses on the theoretical side more than the practical one; the content lacks shapes and illustrations quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher pointed that one reason behind this weakness was the absence of the good textbook standards. He recommended with paying more attention for the scientific material of the textbook by making it more satisfactory for the learners'

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[120] Al-Umari, Muhammad, *An Analytical, Evaluative Study for the Textbook of Islamic education for the Ninth Grade in Jordan in the Light of the Plan of Educational Development*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 1995, pp. 76-84.

needs as well as the needs of the society, and by making it a means of enlightenment for the students in relation with the different issues that they face in their daily life.[121]

**3.2.2 Studies Related to the Development of Content:**

There are a number of remarkable studies dealing with the development of the content of Islamic education. The following is an account on some of these studies that specifically concern the Arab world.

An extensive study on the subject has been carried out by Hindi. The study focused on identifying the reality of the content of the Islamic education curriculum for the secondary stage; to what extent this reality corresponds with the principles of building the curriculum; the development of the content in accordance with those principles; and the application of one unit of the developed content in order to see its effects on the students grades and attitudes towards the Islamic education course. The most interesting results in the study were as follows: the content of the Islamic education curricula was unbalanced; there is a shortage in some aspects of the physical, mental, and social education as the content ignored many social issues and problems; the content does not make use of some modern attitudes in building the curricula and organising their contents such as the integrity principle; it is important to prepare a programme that overcomes the defects revealed by the content analysis of the current curriculum.[122]

The results of this study highlight the unbalance in presenting the topics of the content and its negligence of many social issues and problems; it also focuses on the importance of the

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[121] Al-Umari, Muhammad, *Evaluating the Islamic education Textbook for Tenth Grade from the Point of View of the Male and Female Teachers of Islamic education in the Governorate of Irbid*, Amman: Ministry of Education, 2002, pp. 43-56.
[122] Hindi, S, *Developing Islamic education Curriculum for the Secondary Education Stage in Jordan*, Ph.D. thesis, Ain Shams University, 1987.

application of the modern attitudes such as the principle of integrity in organising the content.[123]

One such study was carried out in Egypt in the early nineties which looked at the contents of Islamic education from a micro perspective. It was done by Faraj, a popular name in the field of education in Egypt. The study focused on identifying the educational principles required for building the content of *Shari'ah* and developing the content on this basis. It also focused on the nature and flexibility of the material as well as the contemporary *Shari'ah-related* issues as being an integral part in the social, political, and economic systems in the society.

The study revealed some *Shari'ah-related* issues such as: the financial transactions; other issues related to the family such as the artificial fertilisation; addicting to alcohol or drugs; some art-related issues such as photos, the theatre, and the cinema; some issues related to food such as preserved and imported meat; some medical issues such as transplantation, transfusion, and autopsy; and some issues related to excessiveness in the perception of one's religion in order to spread ignorance in the society, charging it with *Kufr*, and legitimising the Muslim blood and money in an oppressive way.[124]

The results of this study focused on the nature of the educational material and the contemporary issues as standards to select the content of the Islamic education textbooks; it also identified some topics that the content should cover.

Another study carried out in Indonesia focused on the content of this curriculum. The researcher used the descriptive method. Using the content analysis, he studied a number of principles in the light of which the content of the curriculum should be developed. After doing

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[123] *Ibid*, pp. 112-124, 193-230.
[124] Faraj, Muhammad, *Developing the Content of Shari'ah for the Secondary Students in al-Azhar*, Cairo: Ministry of Education, 1993, pp. 63-65.

the analysis, the study has come up with a proposed content for the Islamic education for the public preparatory stage in Indonesia.

The results have showed the unbalance in the content, where the categories of beliefs, acts of worship, and ethics got a big percent in its frequency, while the other categories like biography, the society's demands, and the physical and emotional development demands were neglected. The results have also showed that there is a kind of negligence in some secondary categories related to the acts of worship, ethics, society demands, and the physical development demands; they also pointed out that the content did not observe some modern standards in its organisation such as the activity principle, the use of related aids in explaining the material, and observing the different cognitive levels in the evaluation questions.[125]

## 3.3 Studies Related to the Selection and Organisation of the Content of Islamic Education Textbooks

### 3.3.1 Studies Related to the Islamic Education and Its Standards in General

A remarkable study by Wazzan takes on the issue extensively. The study aimed at identifying the required principles for building the Islamic education curricula at each educational stage in order to help these curricula to achieve their objectives. This task has been done through observing the previous studies and reviewing the studies and writings related to the nature of the Arab world and its problems, the characteristics of the Islamic religion, and the nature of the students' development and its relation with teaching Islamic education and the phases of teaching Islamic religion and its teaching techniques. The required principles have been derived by the previous procedures, and a questionnaire has been prepared on the basis of

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[125] Abdullah, Bashar, *Islamic education in Indonesia*, Jakarta: Mafruda, 2000, pp. 28-31.

those principles and was given to experts in teaching the Islamic Law. The questionnaire has also been referred to a number of referees in order to check its validity.

The study has set the general principles for building the Islamic education curricula and the specific ones for building the aforementioned curricula for each educational stage (i.e. the elementary, the intermediate, and the secondary stages) with reference to all the elements of the curriculum. The most important principles were as follows: the content should reflect the objectives; it should be offered in the form of units; it should relate to the needs of the learners and their attitudes; it should be put in simple language; and it should offer functional knowledge for the learner.[126]

Wazzan has advised the curricula planners to bear these principles in mind when selecting and organising the content for the Islamic education textbooks; he has also advised the curriculum executers to take the suitable principles into consideration in order to choose the learning techniques; and he recommended with abiding by the comprehensive principles for evaluation.[127]

One of the best researches is done by Abu Zahra who focused on identifying the strength and weakness points in the Islamic education textbooks for the secondary stage and providing with the scientific conditions for the preparation and evaluation of those textbooks in the light of a standard that covers a number of axes including: the objectives, the content, the material presentation, the language of the textbook, the teaching methods, the evaluative methods and activities, the references, the finishing, the aids, and the supplements.

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[126] Wazzan, S, *Evaluation of the Islamic education curricula of the intermediate stage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Ph.D. thesis, Ain Shams University, 1982, pp. esp. 212-234.
[127] *Ibid*, pp. 234-237.

After applying the standard to the textbooks in question, the results showed that: the textbooks do not mention the teaching objectives; the content neglects the current affairs and contemporary issues; there is no integrity between the topics; the topics are disconnected and unorganised; there is a shortage in using the realisation; the material lacks references and teachers guides; and the finishing of the textbooks is improper.[128]

### 3.3.2 Studies Related to the Standards of Selecting Qur'anic Verses

Al-Hattab, a Kuwaiti educationalist has attempted to identify the required principles for selecting the Qur'anic verses. For this purpose, the researcher has designed a questionnaire that he distributed among some experts; he has also conducted some interviews with some parents. Then, he has built a card for selecting the Qur'anic verses and analysed the curriculum on this basis.

The most interesting result for the study was that the Qur'anic verses were selected on the basis of the personal experience of the curriculum designers. It has also suggested a number of standards for selecting the verses as follows: the developmental level of the learner should be taken into consideration; the topic of the verses should be related to the life, problems, and needs of the learner; and, finally, the learner should be familiar with the terminology of the verses.

The study has also revealed a number of difficulties that the learners face in the curriculum of the Noble Qur'an such as: the length of the verses; the complexity of some terms; the big gap

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[128] Abu-Zahra, Muhammad, *Setting up criteria for preparation of books of Islamic religious education for the secondary education stage in the Arab Republic of Egypt*, M.A. thesis, Al-Monofeah University, Egypt, 1992. Sharif's findings on the issue are nevertheless similar if not identical. See, Sharif, *Islamic*, pp. 132-145.

between some verses and the lives of the learners; and the fact that there was no succession between the provided verses.[129]

A similar study aimed at identifying the scientific principles for selecting the Qur'anic verses. It has handled the problem of this study by reviewing the previous studies and dealing with the resources of deriving the principles such as: the nature of the Qur'an, the nature of the elementary stage and the nature of the learners development during it, the nature of the Saudi society, and the reality of teaching Qur'an at that stage. Then, she has come up with a list of principles that she derived from those resources and referred it to a committee of referees to check its validity and comprehensiveness. She advises the curriculum designers to select the Qur'anic verses and teaching experiences and evaluate the curriculum in the light of the list that she has proposed. She also advises with ensuring some integrity between the course of the Noble Qur'an and the other Islamic education topics. Finally, she suggested conducting a study to apply her list in the field and conducting similar studies for the other stages.

This study has revealed the scientific principles for selecting the verses through the derivation resources provided for this purpose.[130]

The above study, in addition, aimed at identifying the principles of selecting the verses for the Islamic education curricula and textbooks. The researcher has used the content analysis style in order to find out these principles. In order to organise the analysis, the researcher set the textbook chapter as the unit of analysis and the theme of the chapter as the category of analysis.

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[129] Al-Hattab, H, *Obstacles of Curricula Objections Realization.* Second General Conference of Curricula, Ministry of Education, Working Paper, Kuwait, 1993, pp. 13-16.
[130] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 73-92.

The study has concluded with a number of principles that the researcher put in a skilful educational way; they are as follows:

The verses should be diversified with reference to their topics; they should relate to the purposes of the Noble Qur'an; they should be selected to satisfy the learners' needs and observe the scientific as well as the practical sides in Islam; and they should use evidence.

The study has showed that the contemporary educational concepts agree with most of those conclusions; it also showed the comprehensiveness of the principles used by al-Ghazalee to select the Qur'anic verses over the majority of the principles mentioned in the contemporary studies.

The study also recommended with reviewing the principles of selecting the verses; making efforts in order to unveil the problems of the Islamic education textbooks and curricula and solve them; and increasing the efficiency of the Islamic education lessons.[131]

### 3.3.3 Studies Related to the Standards of Selecting the Prophetic Hadith

An interesting study in the area aimed at finding out a list of principles for selecting the Hadith for the Islamic education course for the Islamic education students. It applied the descriptive method in the preparation of the list on the basis of a number of principles and resources as follows: reviewing the related previous studies, looking at the nature of Islamic education and Hadith, looking at the demands of the learner's development during the mid and late childhood, observing the problems and demands of the Egyptian society.

After analysing the previous principles, the results set a list of the required principles to select the Hadith and showed that the selection of them in the current curricula in the first circle of

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[131] *Ibid*, pp. 82-90.

the primary stage was not on the basis of objective principles. Rather, the selection was done on the basis of the personal experience of the curricula designers.

The study has suggested a number of Hadith that combined all the principles in the list and distributed them to the classes; some of them have been already provided in the textbooks.[132]

A similar study has dealt with the curriculum of Hadith in schools in Makkah. The study aimed at identifying the principles of selecting the Hadith and topics on Islamic culture in the course of Hadith and Islamic Culture at the secondary stage for boys. The study has applied the descriptive analytical method and used the questionnaire as a tool for gathering data; it used the percentages, frequencies, averages, T test, and Alpha coefficient to treat the statistical data.

The results can be summed up as follows:

The study has set a list of 47 principles to select the Hadith. The researcher has derived this list on the basis of the nature of the course, the secondary stage, and the Saudi society. The results have proved the validity of the hypothesis as it confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences in the responses of the sample in relation to the scientific principles for selecting Hadith and Islamic culture topics for the course in question.

The most interesting recommendations of the study are as follows:

The Hadith and Islamic culture topics for the course in question should be selected in accordance with the list of principles reached in this study.

Accordingly, the previous studies have treated the Islamic education curriculum and the content of its textbooks in terms of their evaluation from Islamic perspective and principles,

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[132] Abdurrahman, Ahmad, *Reading Hadith in an Islamic School*, Delhi: Kitab, 2001, pp. 91-94.

and it tested their effect on the students, teachers, and supervisors. In their results, they have focused on what the content should have.[133]

**3.4 Conclusion**

The present study comes to identify the standards of selecting and organising the content of the Islamic education textbooks at the primary stage. What makes it distinctive is that it deals with all the Islamic education textbooks of the primary stage, which represents the foundation in the educational hierarchy and the cornerstone for the success of the other stages; this stage is also responsible for the education of all the community members as it is rare to find a family who has no children at the primary school. This study is also distinctive, because it relates to the Islamic education textbooks which are the result of the educational development and cover all the educational streams to see the standards used to select and organise their content and provide with a general view on those standards in order to suggest a scientific model to develop them.

With this literature review, it is valid to reinstate the fact the present study is different from other educational studies in terms of its dimensions, location, educational level, tools, sample, and topics. Accordingly, this study does not echo any previous studies conducted in Jordan, but it completes them; and it offers guidance for the authorities in the "administration of school textbooks and curricula" at the ministry of education in Jordan, textbook authors, and teachers and supervisors to apply the suggested standards and positive remarks and recommendations in order to improve the present curriculum.

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[133] Al-Kaltham, Muhammad, *The Principles of Selecting the Prophetic Hadith and the Islamic Culture Topics in the Course of Hadith and Islamic Culture at the Secondary Stage in the Area of Mecca*, Riyadh: Ministry of Education, 2001, pp. 11-20.

# CHAPTER FOUR: TECHNICALITIES PERTINENT TO CURRICULUM OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

The literature review has established that the curriculum that is used for Islamic education should be seen as a means of ensuring a sound upbringing. It must allow for those following it, at all levels, to access and develop their potential, their various talents and abilities so that they will be able to positively contribute to progress, particularly within their own community. In addition, it should make it possible for them to facilitate the desired changes in the directions taken by their own society and in the way that its beliefs are practiced, and it should also help with the provision of those leaders, scholars and other workers that will be needed in various areas within that society.[134]

It is with this understanding of Islamic education and its curriculum that the following discussion develops. This research is concerned specifically with Islamic education and this chapter with the components which go to make up this content together with the concepts involved and their significance. The criteria used to determine the content will be examined as well as the standards necessary for its organisation.

It will be discussed in the following that there are four main interlinked areas within the education curriculum which impact on each other, these being the objectives of the curriculum, the content through which these objectives will be achieved, the methods of delivery, and evaluation. The content of the curriculum is chosen as a pathway to the achievement of the desired objectives.

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[134] Bagheri, Khusrow, *Islamic education*, Tehran: Al-Hoda, 2001, pp. 6-11.

## 4.1 The Concept of Content

In whatever way a curriculum has been designed and whichever model has been used for its development, content is the primary element of any curriculum in its entirety. It is the aspect of the curriculum upon which the objectives impact. Past definitions of the content have defined it as the knowledge which is to be achieved through the channels of information, concepts, principles and ideas, which places the emphasis on the transmission of knowledge from those educating to those learning, this knowledge having been initially developed by others and organised into textbooks or other means of transmission.[135] However, the precise definition of content varies from one researcher to another with a group of specialists on curriculum defining it in terms of, "the information content which constitutes the substance of learning in the curriculum for the study of a specific class of a specific subject"[136]

The content of any curriculum has also been described as part of the curriculum that entails the experiences presented by educational curriculum prepared by the educational institutions in order to be available to those seeking to study.[137] In addition, the purpose of the content has been defined as a realistic interpretation of targets that have been drawn from human civilisation and which, as well as theoretical knowledge, includes practical skills and also values and religious beliefs, all of which can be used to adapt the students' behaviour so that it conforms to the desired pattern.[138]

In short, most of the concepts dealing with content focus on information and theoretical knowledge. It is, therefore, possible to arrive at a definition of content that perceives mental

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[135] See for a detailed discussion, Betts, George, *Social Principles of Education*, BiblioBazaar, LLC, 2009, pp. 247-252.
[136] Ornstein, Allan C. and Francis P. Hunkins, Curriculum Foundations, Principles *and Issues*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1988, p. 205.
[137] See, for example, Kelly, Vic, *The Curriculum: Theory and Practice*, Sage Publications, 2009, pp. 601-61.
[138] Ornstein, Allan C. and Francis P. Hunkins, *Curriculum*, pp. 13-23.

knowledge as well as skills, values and attitudes as attributes that have been developed by scientific and educational organisations and then organised into courses.[139] The purpose of which is to enable the progression of those studying these courses to a specified level in order for them to achieve the educational goal at which they are aiming.

### 4.1.1 The Significance of the Content

If a parallel is drawn between the goals at which a particular approach is aiming and the reasoning human mind, then a further parallel can be drawn between the content involved in the approach and the human body. While the workings of the mind may be considered to be intrinsically higher than that of the body, both mind and body are vital for a complete human being, just as goal and content together are vital to the curriculum. Therefore, content is a key element in the curriculum and has a special importance for the following reasons.

Content provides a valid process for the interpretation of targets as well as a means for working towards the achievements of those educational targets that have been arrived at as a result of the consideration of the chosen objectives, which are themselves reflected in the content. Through the content the educator is also provided with the means to modify student behaviour.[140]

Similarly, the content of any curriculum can be defined as that area that provides for the development of the student's mental powers along with skills, attitudes and values. The nature of the content and the topics that it is covering at any given point, as well as providing

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[139] *Ibid*, pp. 20-23.
[140]Walker, Decker, *Fundamentals of curriculum: passion and professionalism*, Routledge, 2003, pp. 9-16, 36-38.

for the development of these skills will also foster the student's taste and appreciation and also his psychomotor control.[141]

In fact, successful delivery of the content of the curriculum is dependent upon the effectiveness of the teacher's planning. It impacts on the quality of the learning process whether the particular area is concerned with the acquisition of learning for the short or for the long term. It is important that the teaching should address the particular objectives which it aims to meet, that the appropriate topics are identified and that sufficient time is allowed for the subjects to be covered and the targets met. This is the reason why content is crucial to the delivery of a curriculum and is part of an educational process which the concerned authorities have considered to be appropriate for students, since through the content the information that is necessary to that particular curriculum is disseminated.[142]

## 4.2 Components & Elements of the Content

It seems clear that the content is that part of the curriculum through which its goals will be met. The curriculum itself is made up of a set of elements that can be classified into three major areas,

### 4.2.1 Perceptual Cognitive Knowledge

The following constitute the components that make up the content in this area.

a) – Facts: a fact can be defined as any sentence or phrase or idea which is considered as correct, and not subject to debate and does not tolerate change or alteration.[143] So, for example, within an Islamic education a study would be made of the five

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[141] For an interesting discussion see Lofthouse, Brenda, *The Study of Primary Education: A Source Book: The Curriculum*, Routledge, 1990, pp. 1-9.
[142] Kelly, *The Curriculum*, pp. 34-39.
[143] Rabinowitz, Mitchell, *Cognitive science foundations of instruction*, Routledge, 1993, pp. 221-224.

foundations of Islam and the facts would be taught that fasting is one absolute foundation for these five pillars, however, the Islamic mission, beginning in Mecca and Medina  and moving outward into various parts of the world, is quite another.

Some educators believe that where too much factual content is used, particularly through the use of textbooks. It can have the negative effect of confusing students, particularly when the facts are presented to the students in an inconsistent way.[144]  It is important that facts should not be presented in isolation but that they should be linked with those mental process, attitudes and tendencies, that their use is aimed at developing. For instance it is taught that alcohol should be avoided and the acceptance of the fact that alcohol should be avoided will have more validity for the students if they are exposed to the facts of the abuse and damage that the use of alcohol causes.

b) –In Islamic terms  the notion of a concept refers to the conceptual meaning of specific directions which are derived from the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah, which themselves make up the building blocks of various fields of knowledge according to Islamic teachings.[145]

Learning concepts are of critical importance at different stages of education since they are the means by which an individual can elevate his thinking, through various sensory levels, up through the conceptual level and ultimately to an abstract level.[146] Concepts make, therefore, a vital contribution to ensuring that a curriculum is constructed in a way that is sequential and capable of integration into the various stages of the education process. This is to organise the learning experience of the students who are exposed to a wide range of information as well as

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[144] See, Boomer, Garth, *Negotiating the curriculum: educating for the 21st century*, Routledge, 1992, pp. 151-154.
[145] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 5-8.
[146] See Good, Thomas, *21st century education: a reference handbook*, Sage Publications, 2008, pp. 219-223.

expertise through the many indirect as well as direct experiences which they will find in the books and discussions that they encounter in the course of the learning.[147] This can, as a result, lead them on to the formation of concepts.

Clearly, the concepts that are encountered in the course of an Islamic education had a major impact on those Arabs who were living at the time when the teachings of Islam were first delivered. It is important to understand the ideas of Islam and its concept in the context of their relationship to concrete reality, together with the Shari'ah or the Islamic legislation and evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet which give both negative and positive examples and also identify the characteristics of a particular concept which differentiates it from others.[148]

Islamic concepts are divided into material realistic concepts which can be felt by the senses, such as prayer , Zakat or almsgiving , and Hajj or the pilgrimage, and concepts that have a sensible existence and are perceived by their impact, such as a knowledge of God through the manifestations of the many and varied creations delivered in the universe. There are also concepts relating to facts that are not accessible to the human senses because they are unseen, such as angels and devils, but they have their existence in metaphysics and within the minds of the faithful.[149]

c) – Terms: these refer to specific meanings agreed upon by competent specialists.[150] One such example is the word Sunnah, the basic meaning of which is the method, but which in Shari terminology has several meanings. For Hadith scholars it relates to what the Prophet states to be or describes as moral or ethical behaviour and whether

[147] *Ibid*, p. 219.
[148] Beghari, *Islamic education*, pp. 6-7.
[149] *Ibid*, pp. 11-17.
[150] Burden, Robert and Marrion Williams, *Thinking through the curriculum*, Routledge, 1998, pp. 173-175.

this occurred before or after the mission. For orthodox Muslims it refers to the actual deeds or words of the Prophet or what is reported in relation to this, which then provides a guide for the formation of legal rules. However, for the scholar, it means what was demonstrated by the Prophet but was not an imposition or duty.[151]

d) - Vocabulary and structures: keyword: the word that the learner has to indicate its linguistic meaning. Each word or structure may have a single meaning or may have several and it may be a term or a concept.[152] In the context of a curriculum of Islamic education, examples of the words as well as linguistic structures are to be mainly found in the Islamic literature, particularly the Qur'an and the Hadith.

e) – Principles: these are referred to in the educational books as the basics and fundamentals. Doctrine rests upon a thought or a principal act from which ideas may be developed.[153] For instance, Brotherhood in Islam constitutes a principle of Islamic education and from that other ideas flow, such as the fact that brotherhood is not influenced by colour, race or sex, but also the idea that there can be no love in the heart of the believer for atheists or communists.[154]

It becomes clear that the principles have a significant place within the content of the school curriculum. What they allow for is that through the teaching of the curriculum and its contents various attitudes can be taught and instilled in the student, so that the student is able to act appropriately and affectively within the environment that he meets because he has been given the means, through the teaching of principles, to understand and, indeed, predict human

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[151] Beghari, *Islamic education*, pp. 44-46.
[152] For a detailed discussion see, Nation, I.S.P, *Learning vocabulary in another language*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, chapt. 12.
[153] Ornstein, Allen, *An introduction to the foundations of education*, University of Michigan, 1977, pp. 512-514.
[154] See Dunohue, John and John Esposito, *Islam in transition: Muslim perspectives*, Oxford University Press: 2007, pp. 79-80.

behaviour. The relationship between the variables or concepts that have been already established can be seen as a circumstantial system, where it is possible to induce unknown principles from those principles that are known, providing a source of selectable hypotheses.

A group of principles attaches to every branch of knowledge and this means that it is possible for educators to know which specific essential principles should belong to each branch of Islamic education at every stage of a student's educational life so that the important principles can be emphasised rather than focusing on those that are less important. An example of a principle for an Islamic education would be that one that states that Jihad is the duty of the nation and the duty of the Muslim is to believe in all the Apostles.[155]

> f) – Ideas: these can be described as the element that enables a human being to gain an impression of things such as people or places, as well as incidents, accidents and attitudes. For this to be possible accurate and sufficient information is necessary so that it can be applied to the reality that it describes. The ideas that are used in Islamic education may be basic ideas or they may be ideas that branch out from those that are fundamental. The word Zakat means the worship of wealth but the ideas relating to the taking of interest are branch ideas. Prayer is a principal idea together with the belief that this payer should have a physical expression. However, the four kneels of noon prayer are a branch idea.[156]

> g) – Rules: these in educational terms refer to the perception of the stable relation between two meanings. In the thinking of the orthodox Muslim the legislator's edicts relate to acts that are within the believer's reasonable capabilities, whether they perform these acts because they are demanded of them or by their own choice.

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[155] Bagheri, *Islamic*, p. 23.
[156] *Ibid*, pp. 15-16.

However, so far as the Islamic scholar is concerned, whatever is demanded by the legislator must have an impact: action should ensue or there should be an application requesting some kind of conviction or the imposition of a duty such as praying or fasting, or else a request that is not binding such as a charitable supererogatory act and it should be stated that such acts as have resulted in the censure should not be committed in future. However, a firm request should be made where forbidden acts such as stealing or adultery have been committed, while a non firm request should be made for other acts that are disapproved of such as undertaking the prayer before sunset. A further option is available where the request for certain actions and quitting those actions are in balance, which allows that the person in such a position may choose, for instance, various types of food that he may require, and leave whatever he chooses to leave.[157]

h) Theories: these are structures of concepts and generalisations having internal connections. A structure exists when differing areas of knowledge are brought together and together form a meaningful entity and a relationship is constructed between two or more concepts.[158] Generally it is characterised by the representation of a theoretical and abstract imposition which provides a connection between various substantial groups of rules. Whether or not such a structure has validity is determined by its compliance with reality and its interpretation of this reality. It follows, therefore, that the main object of such a theory is to interpret phenomena and to bring understanding to the surrounding events.[159]

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[157] *Ibid*, pp. 31-38.
[158] Musgrave, Peter Williams, *Contemporary studies in the curriculum*, The University of Michigan, 1974, pp. 46-53.
[159] *Ibid*, pp. 47-48.

Theories are an important aspect of the educational curriculum since it is possible to apply them to certain aspects of the student's learning and they have the potential to help the student to act effectively within his environment through the clarification and prediction of human behaviour and by providing a summary of a substantial number of scientific and linguistic ideas. It is also possible for a theory to provide clarification of the relationship between the variables or concepts in order to form a system that is capable of separating out unknown knowledge from known knowledge and of testing hypotheses. Theory is concerned with the greatest degree of cognitive impartiality and is the area furthest removed from the information and data that foundation relies upon; it is connected to areas such as social and human sciences where it is difficult to investigate and collect data relating to human conduct. The fundamentals of Islamic education are not subject to such principles but they should have a part to play in the content of books to be used in Islamic education, thereby complying with Islamic legislation which states that any work should be useful and have meaning for the people or, at the least, the majority of them. It is not important that the theory does not provide opinion since what it does is provide a way that the concepts and ideas and practices can be understood, and leads to abstract rules for doctrinal fundamentalism, and demonstrates the importance of texts and brings together examples of the theories that are important in the area of Islamic education.[160]

## 4.2.2 The Emotional Scope

Content in this area is made up of three main elements:

a) – Orientation: this is the tendency that is present in every individual to be attracted to some areas of activity and to wish to avoid others and which can be expressed in

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[160] See, for example, Howson, Geoffrey , Christine Keitel and Jeremy Kilpatrick, *Curriculum Development in Mathematics*, Chicago University Press, 1982, pp. 113-115.

terms of love or hatred.[161] Orientation is that driving force within an individual that either drives him towards something or else impels him to remove himself from it. Within Islamic education there are certain orientations whose value is fixed and permanent such as the love of God and of his Messenger, together with love for goodness in all things, while at the same time having hatred for people who are unfaithful and hypocritical, and who indulge in the practice of fraud and other vices.[162]

b) – Values: these are standards within an Islamic education and are derived from the doctrine of Islam, which sets out the behaviour which should be followed by each individual and within the community in relation to persons, things and actions. It is required that all Muslims should commit to these values which are disseminated through an Islamic education and important that they should be followed, overriding both preferences and traditions. These are the values and the patterns for behaviour that have emerged from the ideology of Islam, and they are based upon a belief in all the elements of Islam and comprise a standard that must be adhered to and, furthermore, their development and adoption is the responsibility of all Islamic regimes.[163]

Three components come together to comprise the values of an Islamic education, the first being the mental element when the selection of values is made and an understanding of their meaning reached, together with a realisation of the moral element and a willingness to proclaim these values. The second element is the performance element which involves putting into practice the obligations that the values impose. Within an Islamic education classification

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[161] Musgrave, *Contemporary*, pp. 73-75.
[162] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 5-7.
[163] For a detailed discussion on the subject see, Tomlinson, Peter and Margret Quinton, *Values across the curriculum*, Taylor & Francis, 1986, pp. 20-35.

of the values is based on the Shari'ah rules, the classifications being  material values which are concerned with the material results that human beings achieve and human values that are concerned with relations with other human beings whatever their colour, race, sex, culture and religion.  The spiritual values relate to religious observances such as prayer and fasting; finally there are the ethical values which are concerned with those human traits which Islam wishes to see and the qualities which it advocates.[164]

> c) – Attitudes: an attitude can be defined as an acquired, stable tendency or else an emotional readiness acquired as a result of personal experiences and which determines a person's responses, feelings and behaviour towards other people and things and actions, as well as that person's thoughts or actions in such a way that judgement is involved. There are three elements that go to make up an attitude, firstly the mental element which involves information that is any available facts relating to any individual; an emotional element that is developed in connection with the relationship of the person with the subject; and a performance element which involves the taking of an action. An attitude may be impersonal and private, to do with an individual's life and circumstances.

An example might be an orientation towards the Shura (consultation) and trends might be made up of such elements as a tendency to love books, or either liking or disliking a particular colleague.  Individuals may be committed to the mosque to a greater or lesser extent with some being attracted to more fanatical groups.  An individual may be drawn to a particular idea or ideas such as family organisation or, on the other hand, individualism.  Trends may be essentially positive where people are drawn to cooperation and respect, or else negative when

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[164] *Ibid*, pp. 20-26.

isolationism and xenophobia become attractive to an individual. Some individuals will display tenacity and gain strength from their experiences so that they can continue in an endeavour for a lengthy period, while others will be relatively weak and at an early setback will be discouraged and try to hide their weakness from the public gaze.[165]

### 4.2.3 Psychomotor (performance) Scope

The attribute that is necessary for this scope is that of skill:

Skill means the ability to understand, perceive, and practice the thing with accuracy and fastness. It is exemplified through a performance that is sound and precise and that is based upon understanding and good judgement. The skills will vary in accordance with the goals that are sought. We all acquire a connection of skills as a result of our daily experiences. These are such skills as the acquisition and use of language, the capacity to deal with people, to take food and drink for sustenance, and to go about our business, whatever it may be. These skills are included in an earlier scope and all students will be expected to acquire them.[166] A number of skills are of importance in an Islamic education and the Islamic student is urged to develop them. These are such skills as the reading and recitation of the Qur'an and also reading the Prophet's Hadith. Elements of worship such as praying, fasting and undertaking the Hajj are included, together with other duties that are assigned, all to be carried out to the highest possible standard.

It can therefore be seen that good content for this area is comprised of various practical skills which the student is directed to learn and perform.

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[165] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 13-17.
[166] See, Sowell, Evelyn, *Curriculum: an Integrative Introduction*, University of Virginia Press, 2004, pp. 76-82.

## 4.3 Standards of Selecting Content

In order to make a good selection for the content there must be sound planning since the content stands at the heart of the school curriculum and directs which subjects must be learned out of the vast amount of accumulated knowledge that is available in each syllabus. According to Sharif Khan, where a selection is made of the cognitive content in order to determine what the learner shall study, three elements must be taken into account.

1. The specific goals that are aimed for must be considered and therefore the content must be selected in order that the goals can be met in accordance with the aims of those who are the experts in the particular area of the curriculum.

2. The educational material that is to be used must be selected with reference to the demands that are to be met and must make the knowledge available to the learner by organising it in a way that is logical and which progresses sequentially. What this element makes clear is that the development of knowledge that has been specifically selected must be a priority.

3. The content for an Islamic education must be selected and delivered in such a way that the needs of the students are met and their problems confronted as well as equipping them with the knowledge and skills that they will need for their lives and their work, and which will help them to achieve self-fulfilment in accordance with God's commands to them.[167]

The increase in the volume of the knowledge that is available, together with rapid changes in communities and within society in general, set against the relatively short time that any

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[167] Khan, Sharif, *Islamic education*, New Delhi: Ashish Publication House, 1986, chapt. 7.

student spends in education and the great range of ability that there is within the student population, make clear the impossibility for schools of the task of including such elements as facts, knowledge and information as well as instilling attitudes, devising activities and presenting issues that will interest those learning, all within the content of a textbook.  It is therefore of crucial importance that those who create the curriculum  do so in accordance with criteria that are objective so that they are able to select the most appropriate content. This content must have the following elements.[168]

## 4.3.1 Validity

 This means that what is presented in the content must be accurate and correct, it must be confirmed information supported by evidence that is indubitably true. The Islamic education curriculum must be honest and when it deals with scientific issues it must contain accurate information which is not misleading and is not incompatible with either religion, factual accuracy or common sense.  That this standard should be maintained is of critical importance especially in a time when there is such rapid scientific progress across a number of areas, with new discoveries being made virtually daily and new facts and theories replacing those which have previously been in place. The integrity of the content of Islamic education is dependent on the accuracy of the information that it contains which means, in turn, that the rights of those studying it are not being compromised, all of which has its inspiration in the true revelation of God Almighty.[169]

It is a given that the content of the verses of the Qur'an is always true because it comes from God. Similarly, the content of the Hadith must be seen as always being true with the proviso that it is the genuine Hadith and is free of corrupted teachings.  The content of the ideology is

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[168] *Ibid*, pp. 54-59.
[169] Baghri, *Islamic*, pp. 11-32.

true when it implants the concept of monotheism into the hearts of the students and deflects them from doctrines that are old and/or corrupt, such as the Bahai, the Marxism of the present day and such ideas as socialism, capitalism, nationalism and secularism. Content is valid when material relating to the life and teachings of the Prophet have been taken from unadulterated Islamic sources. Any content that denies the Prophet's miracles and that contains inadequate explanation, or else attributes miracles to the prophet that happened after his death and that are not mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunna, do not have validity. The content of the Shari'ah will be legitimate if those who are well educated have a profound knowledge of the permissible and of those things that are prohibited.[170]

All places offering education have the duty laid on them to provide for those learning through a proper selection for inclusion in the curriculum and by ensuring that all the information contained in it is valid and has integrity. From time to time those responsible for the curriculum must undertake reviews of its content in order to refine the content and to exclude from it any information that is found to be inaccurate.

**4.3.2 Aims**

This section deals with the goals that the curriculum sets out to achieve through the choice of appropriate educational material. The content is made up of a range of learning experiences and is constructed in order that the student can achieve growth that is both integrated and comprehensive and allows the student to reach the required educational goals. Therefore, so far as educational research is concerned, the content of textbooks must be analysed in relation to the desired aims and be linked to the goals so that it is part of a general educational policy leading to the ultimate goal of allowing students to understand their earthly existence and,

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[170] *Ibid*, pp. 30-32.

indeed, their place in the universe as a whole, through the worship of one God and no other. This is part of both the general and specific educational goals, and it includes all types and levels of education and is suitable for them and for helping the highest number of students to achieve the educational goals at which they are aiming.[171]

### 4.3.3 Significance:

This refers to the value of the content for the learner, and society and its place in the knowledge structure to be planned as well as other developments in its approach. The content is considered to be relevant and important where it provides the key for access to the knowledge and the subjects within it focus on ideas that relate to the key concepts and the fields of thinking which give order and meaning to events. If the content is focused on details which are essentially secondary and marginal and which emphasise only one aspect of the knowledge content or if it provides a narrative of facts without providing an understanding of their importance, then it lacks significance. Significance is dependent upon providing a balance between a narrative of facts and ways of interpreting those facts and also on providing an overlap between systems of knowledge.[172]

Everyone who has an interest in the design of the curriculum understands the importance of significant content but there are differences in the degree to which particular aspects of content are considered to be significant. When a subject area is designed, the greater the impact of the content on the main ideas and the concepts within any given subject and on the knowledge that it is disseminating to the students and the attitudes that it is seeking to instil, then the greater the importance of that specific content. In other words content that aims to provide the students with a more meaningful experience, is of greater significance, and where

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[171] Ornstein, *et al*, *Curriculum*, pp. 14-17.
[172] *Ibid*, pp. 23-24.

its design is aimed at addressing socio-economic problems, its significance relates to the range of methods that it can bring to bear to help to solve such problems.

It should be emphasised that the significance of all the content of the subjects in the curriculum should be considered when selecting the content for the curriculum and when reviewing and modifying it, and there should be a focus on all components, especially at the present time when scientific developments are so rapid; it must be  made possible for all such developments to be covered.[173]

## 4.3.4 Nature of a Subject

The nature and cognitive structure of the subject are responsible for its characteristic features, with each subject having its own logic, its own method of dealing with and considering issues and of organising its facts and each will impact differently upon the student's mind.[174]

The phrase 'subject nature' refers to the range of aspects and characteristics that go to make up the attributes of a particular subject. An Islamic education rests on the religion of Islam with its range of sources, rules, regulations and Shari'ah, among other things. It follows, therefore, that the central core of any subject is the Islamic religion, so that as well as consideration being made of principles relating to scientific and educational matters when the curriculum content is drawn up, there must also be a focus on the religious principles laid down by Islam when decisions are being made as to what should constitute an education for Muslims. Bagheri, lays emphasis on the fundamental principles of reading the Qur'an and gaining an understanding of its verses as well as a profound understanding of the ideology, Shari'ahh and the rules and regulations that Islam enjoins on people; it is also of  great

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[173] *Ibid*, pp. 41-43.
[174] Scott, David, *Curriculum Studies: Curriculum knowledge*, Taylor & Francis, 2003, pp. 89-92.

importance to educate students to enable them to acquire that knowledge which consists of information built up through interaction with people and with the environment. The subjects covered in the curriculum should contain nothing that is prohibited by Islam.[175]

It is important to consider at every stage of the educational process when choices are made of the content for an Islamic education, the cognitive structure and resources that will derive from the main and secondary elements so that the content is in accordance with the religion of Islam.

### 4.3.5 Learners Nature

It is important that the choices that are made of the content for an Islamic education are such that they will impel the students to study in a vigorous and active manner which, in turn, will have an impact on a student's education in its later stages. The following elements should be taken into consideration when the content of the curriculum is being selected.

a. The students' interests: this is the leaning that any student may have towards a particular subject as a result of which the student will be inclined to expend more time and effort to acquire a good knowledge of the subject, meaning that there is self-motivation to learn in this area without there being feelings of being coerced or bored.[176]

The students' interests are an important area that must be taken into consideration when school books are being chosen since if an appropriate choice is not made then an important incentive to learning may be jeopardised or lost. It is also important that those planning the curriculum should take note of the areas which are of importance to the

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[175] Bagheri, *Islamic*, p. 42.
[176] See, James, Etim, *Curriculum integration K-12: theory and practice*, University Press of America, 2005, pp. 52-53.

community in general in order that the student will be encouraged to be an active member of society in the future; in order to satisfy the range of concerns that the student may have, there should be a corresponding diversity in the content for the curriculum.

b) – The students' needs: one aspect of a 'need' is a perception of something that is missing which a person may seek to provide for himself in order to satisfy the need, whether the nature of the need is biological, psychological or social. Many educators have asked for the learners' criteria in relation to the content of the curriculum to be taken into consideration so the students' particular needs can be satisfied, since a curriculum which has as one of its purposes satisfying the needs of the students will enable those students to more fully develop their skills and capacities. In this way the boundary between school life and their lives outside school does not impose itself; the students will become enthusiastic and eager to learn because they will be learning what they have chosen themselves and the problems with which they will be concerned when learning are their own problems.[177] It is therefore important that those constructing the curriculum should identify the needs of the students as well as those areas where they are vulnerable, and involve them in the selection of the content for the textbooks so that they are able to make a positive and significant contribution.

c) - Learning ability: this relates to the content of the curriculum. No content should be presented to students which is beyond their capacity to understand and learn. The difficulty of a subject is likely to stem from a number of facts one of which will be the intrinsic difficulty of the subject itself.[178]

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[177] Scott, *Curriculum Studies*, pp. 56-72.
[178] *Ibid*, pp. 58-59.

## 4.4 Social Consistency

What is important here is to understand that consistency in the content is associated with a consistent system of values relating to social and cultural spheres. If the curriculum is to be useful in relation to a specific learner, it should be appropriate in its content to both cultural and social realities and requirements at the same times as addressing the more general demands that life makes. If this is not the case it will be anomalous, while at the same time providing the opportunity for social institutions of all kinds functioning in a number of areas to reject it or in other ways resist it and prevent its implementation.[179] The content of books which deliver an Islamic education must be relevant to social considerations while at the same time being in conformity with the faith of Islam; it must meet the needs and aspirations of society as well as being attuned to the social and economic conditions so that it can help with the development of good habits and enable students to adapt to those positive elements within any community as well as taking an interest in society's problems and making a contribution to finding solutions for those problems. It is important that the student is provided with the means to develop a range of skills to enable participation in both collective action and leadership, for instance within a management group, as well as being able to take into account the way that society will develop and what needs will have to be met; overall the learner will be enabled to find opportunities to apply what has been learned and put it to practical effect in areas such as employment and in the development of a range of aspects of society.[180]

Therefore, those who plan the standard curriculum must do so with a full awareness of the culture of the community while, at the same time, providing a curriculum that relates to the realities of the social world so that the students can identify the various aspects of culture and

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[179] *Ideas educational*, Kent State University School, 1970, 9, 1, pp. 31-32.
[180] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 73-76.

society because they have been given a realistic analysis of their culture and society and have been guided by the relevant content to an identification and clarification of a number of problems through having been provided with textbooks the content of which is responsive to needs in society as they currently exist.

**4.5 Utility**

Utility is a measure of the interest and benefit that the content of the curriculum can impart; it relates directly to the lives that the students actually live and it is of vital importance since it is able to help the student to adapt to the realities of his life, both as it is in the present and as it may be in the future.  The value of this part of the curriculum is equal to but different from the academic element since it provides an education in the 'school of life' and has direct, practical use. It is widely acknowledged that the relationship between the content of the curriculum and various aspects of life must be strong so that the students will be able to benefit from these links in their attempts to face problems that are present in their lives or that may occur in the future.[181]

The benefits resulting from a well-designed curriculum are those where the subjects covered will be of value to the learner in any later public activities that he undertakes as an adult, and where the design of the curriculum is focused on the learner, the benefit will manifest itself in helping him to develop an appropriate perception of that content and in helping him with the achievements that he desires in his life, with Mona and to focus on the problems which he will meet.  The extent to which the content prepares the students in these areas as well as preparing them  to have a close understanding of social and political issues, is a measure of the benefits that it has conferred and therefore of its success. It is important to be aware of the

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[181] Ornstein, *et al*, *Curriculum*, pp. 14-17.

benefits as well as any limitation to the damage that accrues from simply being part of present day society that can flow from the selection of the content of the curriculum. So far as the learning process is connected with the requirements of the Islamic religion, there are inevitably benefits, but it is important to consider these issues in relation to the teaching of science and in the choices that are made for the content in this area in order that the teaching of science can bring a direct benefit to both individual Muslims and to Islamic groupings.[182] It is, in effect, necessary to ensure that what is learnt as part of an Islamic education will bring permanent benefits while, at the same time, containing nothing that could be injurious.

## 4.6 Comprehensiveness

Within education, the word comprehensive means a diversity of experience which results in a learner who is integrated, and which avoids education becoming burdensome to the student. The content of the curriculum can itself be seen to be comprehensive, including a range of elements making up the various components of knowledge in each area without omitting any of them, because it is each one of these elements that provides the value to be found in education in the lives of individuals and of communities. The targets which the curriculum aims to hit should determine those elements that are chosen according to their suitability for use in accordance with the aims for the curriculum.[183] For instance, if one aim of the school is to develop an Islamic spirit of cooperation between the students, the content must be chosen for its suitability in furthering that aim. These elements must also meet the purpose, if they are to be included in the curriculum, of being useful in the lives of the students and in the life of the community in general. These targets should include elements that will be of value to an individual, when he takes his place as a mature member of the community by, for instance,

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[182] Scot, *Curriculum Studies*, 56-74.
[183] Klein, Frances, *The Politics of curriculum decision-making: issues in centralising the curriculum*, SUNY Press, 1991, pp. 216-220.

covering aspects of a particular local environment that sets it apart and differentiates it from other environments within society.

## 4.7 Balance

In order for there to be balance no aspect of the content must be omitted and care must also be taken that one aspect is not focused on to the detriment of others. Different aspects and areas of the content must be considered if balance is to be achieved and all must be given the attention that they merit; within Islamic textbooks the content must demonstrate balance between the various aspects that are involved, including the following:

a) breadth and depth: This refers to the breadth of content as it covers the wide range of material that is required and it is concerned with the content itself which must be of sufficient depth with clear meaning so that each of the areas and topics that it is necessary to cover, is dealt with thoroughly and in depth. In the event of the content for some areas being presented in a superficial manner, or if one area is covered in greater detail than another, it is possible that the balance that should exist between depth and breadth will have been compromised.[184]

b) It is important that the process of education influences behaviour through the practical application of the basic educational content contained in the curriculum, since information that only exists in the realm of theory loses its impact when it is not accompanied by a practical application. When the theory is applied in practice, learning and understanding are both enhanced through the knowledge that is gained from the practical application.[185] There is limited value for the student who simply

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[184] See, Print, Murray, *Curriculum development and design*, Allen & Unwin, 1993, pp. 154-156.
[185] *Ibid*, p. 154.

learns the ablution steps or the prayer steps if this knowledge is not then applied in accordance with the Shariʿah, rather than simply being written out in an examination paper.

Muslim educators and intellectuals have emphasised the importance of the principal of balance between theory and practice as a fundamental educational necessity and this emphasis has been reiterated by contemporary educators. As a result, those developing faculties and courses are enjoined to ensure that the theoretical and practical aspects of a Muslim education exist side by side. However, it is not easy to be specific about the percentage of any curriculum or content that should be either theoretical or practical, for example advocating an equal division of 50% to each, or whether the theoretical side should be given greater emphasis than the practical; the precise division will be dependent on what is being studied but, whatever the percentage, it is vital that there is not concentration on one aspect to the detriment of the other.[186]

## 4.8 Feasibility

This is concerned with the extent to which content is realistic in the light of the criteria involved.  The content must be appropriate in relation to the existing circumstances and possibilities and it must be taken into account that both politics and economics will have an impact. It is important, therefore, that the material that is selected for the content should take account of any constraints and of the reality of the situation in which it is being configured and applied within the school curriculum, while ensuring that the content is suitable.

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[186] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 68-72.

a)  Account must be taken of the time that is available and allocated for the curriculum within an academic week so that it is possible to accommodate the curriculum and teach it in such a way that the desired goals will be attainable.

b) The preparation of students within the classroom must be adequately considered.

c)  The level of ability possessed by the teacher together with the teacher's training and education must be assessed in relation to the syllabus and more training made available where needed.

d) Overall, an efficient method of education must be aimed at.

e) Note must be taken of the facilities that each school is able to offer, such as the availability of various teaching aids and laboratories.

f) All educational establishments must be cognizant of the various laws relating to the processes of teaching and learning as well as of the political atmosphere in general.

g) The finances that are available must be taken into account.[187]

## 4.9 Originality and Contemporaneousness

Originality refers to the linking of human lives to principles and values according to the fundamental creed, culture and civilisation of Islam and consists of an association between experience and rules emanating from the origins of Islamic society.  It is concerned with the opening up of contemporary human experiences within the society of today and interaction with them so that there can be a new birth of individual development and of the development of society in general; in particular it is concerned with those areas that have evolved with the

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[187] Khan, *Islamic*, pp. 57-82.

developments of science and technology. The terms original and contemporary make reference to the links that must occur between the old and the new and of the relationships that this encompasses. Contemporary developments confirm the flexibility, breadth and comprehensiveness that are aspects of Islam, so that the way is open to consider issues that arise in the contemporary world in a way that is legitimate.[188]

Set against the importance of this criterion, the aim of the content is to both revive and augment the original values together with the ways of thinking and the skills to be utilised on a day to day basis which that implies, while at the same time remaining aware of the demands of the current day and the necessity to progress. The knowledge and the information and theories that derive from the civilisation that existed in the nation's past must be preserved and the spiritual values, together with its moral and humanitarian values and techniques which must be fully acknowledged while, at the same time, remaining open to contemporary cultures and civilisations so that students may undertake their studies with an awareness of the times in which they live and the demands that modern civilisation places upon them.

If it were to be the case that the content focused only on ideas and theories from the past, while rejecting everything that is contemporary, it would lead to lack of development and to stagnation and would not have validity in contemporary circumstances.[189] If, on the other hand, the content included all modern viewpoints while rejecting that which is inherently Islamic, it could not be appropriate or acceptable. There is a sense in which certain aspects of the content are insignificant compared with the importance of maintaining that which is intrinsically important, and even where it is not overtly stated it must remain inherent so that

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[188] See, Craft, Anna, *Creativity Across the Primary Curriculum: Framing and Developing Practice*, Routledge, 1999, pp. 4-5.
[189] *Ibid*, pp. 4-6.

its survival is ensured. A sound Islamic education should ensure that full advantage is taken of both the civilisations of the past and of contemporary developments so that what contemporary civilisation has to offer is made available without there being any betrayal or compromise of deep cultural roots and long-standing human values which are maintained and strengthened with the Islamic faith.[190] It is important for each individual to adhere to the contents of the books that are central to the Islamic faith as well as strengthening cultural roots in a way that is consistent with the Islamic faith and values, since the individual must nurture his/her own individual faith rather than blindly relying on precepts handed down from earlier generations.

It is, therefore, difficult to determine precisely what the ratio of traditional to contemporary content should be in any curriculum. In some instances content stemming from traditional material and beliefs may predominate, while in other cases the opposite may be true. However, whatever the relative proportions, they must comply with legal frameworks and standards and the compliance of each individual part of the content must be viewed against the background of the other criteria that come into play for the selection of content. The crucial consideration is that, taking guidance from the opinions of experts, the standards are used as bases for constructing the curriculum so that the curriculum provides what is considered to be of fundamental importance.

The phrase organisation of the content refers to the presentation of those components of the content that have been chosen in accordance with the laws and the rules of scientific and educational practices, which have been constructed in such a way that they comply with trusted educational and psychological theories, in order that they will enable students to meet

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[190] Khan, *Islamic*, pp. 53-70.

the required objectives as well as allowing them to deal with and understand the content without inappropriate difficulty. Life teaches individuals many things, but the process of learning may be too protracted and much of it will be forgotten even where it is not intrinsically difficult to understand. In any case, while someone may understand something at one point, at another that understanding may have been lost. This failure to retain information or to be able to understand it in one context but not in another arises because the experiences of life do not present themselves in an orderly way.[191] Learning undertaken within a specifically educational environment is fundamentally different in that it is learning undertaken in an organised context, and the quality of the curriculum on offer within an educational establishment directly impacts on the effectiveness of the learning experience. Without this regulation and organisation learning becomes much more difficult and many failures in education do not arise necessarily from a lack of effort nor from the content of the educational material that is available, but because there is a failure in organisation.

According to the literature on education, content can be seen as having two types of structure or methods of organisation.

> 1 - Logical organisation: This corresponds closely to the nature and characteristics of the subject being taught, and is not dependent on the quality of the students studying the specific subject.[192] Those who prefer this kind of organisation are looking for action-subjects design, that is a structure which is based on logic in order to deal with such areas as a conceptual map covering the teaching of concepts and principles as well as dealing with theories of instruction;

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[191] Scot, *Curriculum*, pp. 24-43.
[192] Print, *Curriculum*, pp. 64-66.

those areas which lie at the centre of the educational effort such as the most important ideas and concepts, the problems encountered in life, as well as natural phenomena and their relevance to human beings and to various processes; issues to do with the environment, natural and social areas, and economic and political ones; various aspects of the environment both at a local and a state level, leading on to its consideration at the national level and across the world in general; all previous requirements so far dealt with together with the learning requirements of a specific subject; mathematical logic in relation to the Muslim faith and also to cover mathematical assumptions together with the relevant theories and proofs; the value of knowledge of the human condition, of man existing here on earth and in his own environment and of the way that human beings interact with the world around them; the extent to which the general philosophy should be adhered to, balancing the ideas that on the one hand knowledge should be general and available to all, but also that in some circumstances it must be specialised and aimed at a specific group.[193]

> 2- Psychological Organisation: This covers which subjects should be covered and how they should be covered in relation to the varying capabilities and aptitudes of pupils and how to adapt to the needs of different types of pupils so that what is taught can be of value to them. In this area the way that the content is organised should have its primary focus on the student.[194] The particular characteristic of each learner is central to this method of organisation, and the content should be arranged taking into account the following psychological structure in accordance with five principles. This area covers the teaching from the known to the unknown, from what is easily apparent to the abstract, from the easy to the difficult and from the simple to the complex.

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[193] See, *Ibid*, pp. 65-67.
[194] *Ibid*, pp. 64-65.

The progression of a person through the stages of growth, beginning with childhood and through adolescence and adulthood and also through  physical growth and other aspects of development, that is mental, emotional and social development, dictates what is chosen from the basic information, what examples and concepts are chosen and how this material is arranged.[195]

Arrangements are also put in place in relation to the various outcomes of learning, covering cognitive and mental outcomes, emotional development, physical abilities and social development.

There is frequent use of chronological organisation in the way that subjects are presented and the content of the curriculum is prepared according to this, so that information is presented sequentially according to the order in which events occurred so that it is quite clear how an event may have had an impact on those events that follow. This provides a logical basis on which to proceed since earlier events enlighten later ones and makes it easier for these to be understood.  This system is particularly useful when studying the life of the Prophet, enabling pupils to see how events and facts evolved through time.[196]  It is a system of organisation that can also be used in other areas of Islamic organisation relating it, for instance, to the time at which the pilgrimage occurs.  It is, however, not always appropriate for use in other areas of the curriculum and therefore, before it is applied in all instances, it should be examined thoroughly so that its workings in any particular area are fully understood. According to the educational literature, there are certain criteria that must be followed, whatever type of structure, whether logical or psychological, is chosen for the organisation of the content.

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[195] *Ibid*, pp. 64-65. See also, Rajan, Sundra, *Teaching Of Social Studies*, Anmol Publications, 2000, pp. 42-45.
[196] Scot, *Curriculum*, pp. 12-36.

There are a number of basic criteria to adhere to which educators emphasise as being necessary if an effective system is to be formulated. These are as follows.

a) Continuity: This is a vital element when the content is being regulated. It refers to the vertical relationship between the various components or elements of the most important content of the curriculum and the assessment of that relationship as it occurs in the organisation. In the first and most basic grade the student may learn prayers and this may be the case for the sixth grade primary pupil also. Expertise found in various aspects of education is not fundamentally different and separate; experience does not grow out of a vacuum, nor does it cease at a certain point but, rather, it continues to grow and it leads on to new experiences. A positive experience which has been based on earlier experience and on expertise provides the continuing expertise to make possible the assimilation of new and also amended experience and at the same time it puts emphasis on the relationship that exits between the various parts that there are of a particular topic or specific decision or area occurring in the course of years of consecutive study.[197]

The process of continually testing the relationship between the various constituents and elements of the content results in improvement to skills and gives a greater breadth of information. If the content remains static and there is little or no continuity then the experience that the student gains from the content will lack coherence and be fragmented and the information will be of limited use and will not be valuable for further study nor later in the area of public life.

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[197] *Ibid*, pp. 64-68.

b) Sequence: This deals with the way that the content is organised vertically and its purpose is to develop earlier experiences with full awareness of the need to provide for subsequent expansion at even greater depth. It is, therefore, a means of emphasising the depth of the knowledge to be acquired and its expansion over time, when it may be studied at a higher level or more broadly, so that it provides a more profound as well as a more comprehensive experience being able to provide expansion to the details of the information provided for the students from year to year in accordance with the pupil's own skill and ability. So, for instance, in the third grade there could be lesson dealing with Mecca and with the Islamic call, depending on the mental capacity of the students, but when the pupil has reached the sixth grade, this material should be expanded so that it covers the subjects in greater depth and is more wide-reaching.[198]

The order of the content is responsible for the sequence in which knowledge is presented and assimilated and also the priorities that are attached to the status of the various topics. The student is then able to become cognizant of both the basic and the more important areas for study before dealing with material for a more specific study so that, when he does confront it, he is able to understand the material and issues that the new area presents.

This sequential ordering of the content is crucial if students are to fully understand the terminology and the concepts of rule, making it much easier for the student to understand and assimilate what the teacher is teaching. If this principle for conveying knowledge is not adhered to, difficulties are likely to ensue since it will be much more difficult to understand the issues concerned if they are presented at a later point or if certain topics have not been

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[198] See, Schiro, Michael, *Curriculum for better schools: the great ideological debate*, Education Technology, 1978, pp. 123-125.

covered. For example, in a book for Islamic education the subjects of prayer and ablution must be presented to the student in the right order.

The content of the curriculum will vary in accordance with certain principles which have been advocated by some educators, as described below.[199]

- The content for any area should be presented in chronological order with the facts that are covered being presented in accordance with the movement from past to present, or vice versa.

- The presentation of content in accordance with a logical sequence can take a number of forms, for instance a movement from dealing with parts to dealing with the whole or vice versa, dealing with the details of the year, moving from the physical to abstract moral concepts, from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, which in itself encapsulates a number of these transitions, and from short to long.

- There must be focus on the earlier requirements for learning in order for there to be a smooth transition to the learning that is to follow, and this is of vital importance for those subjects where laws and principles must be made clear, a process which is dependent on what has been taught previously.[200]

## 4.10 Conclusion

It seems clear that as anticipated certain areas of knowledge as well as the way that they are formulated should be presented in accordance with specific provisions, so-called logic as presented here and, or science which, in Islamic education, must be taught in a particular way so that the teaching of the faith of Islam precedes the teaching of both worship and social

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[199] See, *Ibid*, p. 73.
[200] *Ibid*, pp. 72-74.

communication, for instance the teaching of ablution etc should come before the presentation and the teaching of prayer so that acts of worship may be undertaken and transactions on the faith and the prayers for chastity so that, even if some reason a presentation is made before the prayer and the teaching of chastity, rejecting the logic of the ruling, this may be acceptable because sometimes there is contradiction between the logic of the ruling and psychological considerations and these considerations may make acceptable the rejection of a certain ruling. It is the opinion of some authors that this contradiction does not in fact exist at the present or, if it does, it is very rare particularly within the context of Islamic education. It is the case that the logic of the article and the principles of organisations have the same fundamental purpose, which is to facilitate a student's understanding through the logic of science which means that certain areas can be studied before the student arrives at college education.[201] Ultimately, it is directed at smoothing the progress of the examination of what has been assimilated as a result of studying, the organisation existing to help with the process of study and being in no way opposed to it.

This chapter naturally leads us to our next discussion on the dynamics of textbooks used in Jordan for the Islamic education curriculum. It would be beneficial, therefore, to appreciate the following discussion in the light of this chapter.

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[201] Bagheri, *Islamic*, pp. 63-69.

# CHAPTER FIVE: ISLAMIC EDUCATION SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS IN JORDAN

School textbooks are very significant for accomplishing the curriculum goals.[202] Educational preparations depend on textbooks; thus any failure of learning and teaching process may be due to the absence of good quality textbooks.[203] However, the school textbook should be designed in a proper context; it has a philosophical basis which will contribute to explaining the significance of society, a psychological basis which helps to ensure that it covers effectively student's needs, a social basis which shed light on the values and culture of that society, and a cognitive basis which represents the content of the textbook. In order to attain the best outcomes from the school textbook, it should be integrated with the nature of the community, its demographics and its development.[204] Islamic education textbooks are distinctive because of the type of content they present. The content of Islamic education curriculum comprises what students are expected to gain in terms of knowledge, facts, events, proficiency, manners and Islamic values.[205]

The production of a good school textbook must depend on the quality of the curriculum and those who write and design them. Therefore they should always be subjected to examination and revision so they can be improved in response to teachers' and students' opinions.[206]

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[202] Jallad, M, *The Role of Educational Supervisors in the Improvement of Islamic education Teachers' Performance in Jordan*, Yarmouk Researches, Jordan, 2004, pp. 1577-1606.

[203] Jaradat, A, *The Realities of the Seminar of Educational Research and Development*, Irbid: Yrmouk University,1984, pp. 18-19.

[204] Hendi, S and Musleh A, *Planning and Developing Curricula*, Amman: Dar Al-Fikr 1990, pp. 5-9.

[205] Al-Omari, M, *Evaluation of the Tenth Grade of Islamic education Textbook From the Point of View of Islamic education Teachers in Irbid Governorate*, MA Thesis Al albayt University, Jordan, 1995, pp. 86-89.

[206] Al-Attas, *Islamic*, p. 109.

Textbooks are also one of the most important sources of knowledge for both teachers and students[207]. Therefore, school textbooks need regular revision in order to be suitable for students and their needs. Hence this study is interested in the evaluation of Islamic education textbooks, by examining to what degree they are suitable as tools for learning and teaching process from the teacher's point of view, because they are the first to encounter school textbooks. This position is further supported by Crossley and Murby, who argue that:

"If the qualitative impact of textbooks is to be fully realised, increased attention should be given to the planning and co-ordination of the multiplicity of issues relating to textbook development and utilisation"[208].

## 5.1 Objectives of textbooks

Teaching aims of Islamic education in Jordan are derived from Islam, so it aims to provide pupils with basic knowledge and Islamic law, and teach them how to implement it personally during their daily lives.[209]

The Ministry of Education or the MoE specifies general educational aims, and special educational aims related to Islamic education. It is important for each educational subject to have its own aims, because as al-Qassimi adds that clarifying educational aims and objectives are fundamentals for the success of the educational process[210]. Additionally, educational aims and objectives should be clear because they guide teachers in implementing teaching and guiding process. At the same time, clarifying textbooks aims and objectives depends on

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[207] Al-Kelany, M, *Falsafat Al-Tarbiyah Al-Islämiyyah. Lebanon: Al-Rayyän Li Al-Nashr*. 1998, p. 6.
[208] Crossley, M and M . Murby, *Textbook Provision and the Quality of the School Curriculum in Developing Countries: Issues and Policy Options*, New York: Comp. Educ, 1994.
[209] Mustafeh, I, *Islam in the curriculum in Jordan and England: A comparative study*, University of Exeter: PhD thesis (unpublished), 2002, pp. 15-32.
[210] Al-Qassimi, A, Islamic education in the UAE: an Evaluative Study, University of Exeter: PhD thesis (unpublished), 1995, pp. 46-48.

clarifying general educational aims; in this regards experts argue that the aims of Islamic education will not be clear to teachers if they do not understand the framework of objectives of the teaching material. If the aims and objectives of Islamic education are not clear in teachers' minds, how can they teach in a way that builds pupils' characters and accomplishes these aims at different stages of education?[211]

Some experts believe that vagueness of educational aims and objectives leads to vagueness in the minds of teachers; therefore they cannot accomplish these objectives or explain them to their pupils. This is reflected in pupils' behaviour and their relationships with their families, school and community[212]. Therefore it is important to connect the objectives of educational textbooks with the cultural, environmental and social reality of pupils, in order to make them open-minded about human civilisation and keen to participate in human progress[213].

**5.2 Textbook Content**

The content of textbooks plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process in Jordanian schools and affects other elements[214]. For example, materials used, teaching methods, activities, assignments and homework are all derived from the content of the textbook. Therefore, this content is considered the main element of the curriculum. As a result, teachers have to finish their textbooks by the end of the academic year. Thus, teachers rely heavily and exclusively on the school textbook to plan and deliver their lessons.

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[211] *Ibid*, pp. 73-74.

[212] Shehata, H., Hamdan, M, *School Curricula between the Theory and Application*, Al-Dar al-Arabiyyah lil-Kitab, Cairo, 1991, pp. 62-76.

[213] Damaa, M. and Morsi, M, *Extent of Suitability of Textbook for Teaching and learning in Elementary School*, Tunis: Arabic Organisation for Education and Sciences, 1982, pp. 12-43.

[214] Al-Barakat, M, "The contribution of School Textbooks in the Early Grades of Education in Preparing Young Children to become Effective Citizens: Teachers' Perspective", *Journal of Early Childhood Research June* 2005 3: pp. 169-191.

Indeed taking care in developing the content of Islamic education textbooks is one of the significant issues facing educator, especially in light of the decline in traditional values.[215]

## 5.3 Definition of School Textbook

To begin with the history of the school textbook, scholars refer to examples from Greece dating back more than two thousand years and covering geometry and poetry, while some experts underline the importance of standardised textbooks in early schools, providing the elements of a curriculum and advice on when and how to deliver it.[216]

It can be argued that since the early twentieth century, textbooks have been studied and designed by educational researches as linguistic and psychological phenomena with features and characteristics that are conducive to particular instructional approaches and outcomes.[217]

With respect to the definition of a school textbook, it is believed that it as instructional materials, written for the teaching and learning process, which cover individual, class and social dimensions in order to attain a required level of achievement[218]. It may be said that a school textbook as a group of cognitive units, based upon certain standards, which are suitable for pupils and can satisfy their needs, giving the pupils in each grade the appropriate information for a specific topic and helping them simultaneously to deal physically, mentally, psychologically and socially with the material. Besides this, school textbook is the fundamental basis upon which research depend to prepare their lessons[219].

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[215] *Ibid*, pp. 31-32.
[216] *Ibid*, p. 32.
[217] Chall, J. S., and J. R. Squire. "The Publishing Industry and Textbooks." In *Handbook of Reading Research*, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, and P. D. Pearson, New York: Longman, 1991, vol. 2, pp. 120-146,
[218] Hamdan, M.Z, *Evaluation of school Textbook*, Damascus: A-Tarbyiah Al-Haditha, 2001, pp. 23-41.
[219] Omar, A. A, *School Textbook: Authoring and Publishing*, Riyadh: Dar Al-Marekh, 1980, pp. 20-23.

## 5.4 Importance of the School Textbook

A dramatic increase in the need for textbooks as education has expanded throughout the world. In general, school textbook is perceived to be largely responsible for the teaching and learning process; indeed, Denny considers it the single most important teaching tool. He argues that in spite of the cognitive revolution and the many types of information channel (films, video- tapes, etc), the school textbook still occupies first place in the teaching and learning process, because of its influence on pupils themselves in leading them to recognise their role in the present and future, he also indicates that the importance of school textbook stems not only form its educational purposes but from its role in cultural transmission[220].

Some experts stress that the provision of high- quality textbooks and others educational materials can improve the quality of education in developing countries. In the twentieth century, a large body of evidence showed that the school textbook is one of the most powerful factors in shaping what teachers teach and what pupils learn[221].

Ismail points out that the significance of the school textbook is presented by the fact that it provides pupils with information and knowledge in and organised manner that helps them to comprehend it and understand connections among its components, giving each pupil an opportunity for self-learning in a way that corresponds to their circumstances, whether at school or at home. A school textbook helps pupils to evaluate what they have learned through the questions and exercises it contains. Ideally, it can be a motivation for learning when it presents academic content in an attractive way[222].

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[220] Altbach, P.G, "Key Issues in Textbook Provision in the Third World", *Prospects* 13, 3: 1983, 315-325.
[221] *Ibid*, pp. 316-319.
[222] Ismail, S, *Islamic education Principles*. Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1993, pp. 27-40.

Furthermore, some educational researchers set out the importance of a school textbook through the following points:

- It helps the teacher to prepare lessons.

- It introduces a reference for both teacher and student.

- It gives the teacher ideas about evaluation and activities.

- It can be easily used compared with other educational materials.

- It includes illustrations (pictures, graph, etc.) that may facilitate the teaching and the learning process.

- It is the best way to achieve cognitive, affective and psychomotor aims.

- It supplies the teacher with questions to ask the pupils on the one hand and. supplies pupils with the content to read in order to pass the exam on the other hand.[223]

## 5.5 Importance of Islamic Education Textbooks

It has been argued that textbooks of Islamic education are among the most significant that pupils may have. The reason is that those textbooks seek to find an integrated way to educate pupils spiritually, physically, mentally and socially, while endeavouring to develop pupils' inclination and meet their needs so that they will be qualified and ready to implement Allah's laws and contribute to building a coherent society. However, textbooks are the cornerstones in teaching and learning Islamic education and so if they are built on sound basis in terms of content, illustration and readability, they will help to strengthen bonds between pupils and subject matter.

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[223] *Ibid*, pp. 23-27.

In the same line, some argue that the Islamic education textbook has a special status because it contains fundamental knowledge for pupils, which can achieve Islam's aims to bring up the student according to its principals and creeds[224].

Based on the forgoing discussion, one can argue that the Islamic education textbook remains one of the most significant instructional materials of teaching and the learning process. As a result, its quality is a key to progress in education at all stages, especially in the field of behaviour and morals.

Despite its significance, however, the reality of Islamic education textbooks in many Arab countries is thought by many observers to fall far below the required level in terms of content, methods, presentation and motivation. These textbooks are incapable of actualising and meeting the objectives of Islamic education. This is clearly evident in the behaviour of the new generation at the Arabic and Islamic level. Such negative assessments have over a number of years motivated scholars interested in Islamic education to hold educational conferences and seminars at the local, Arab and international levels.[225]

## 5.6 Criticisms of Traditional Textbooks

Altbach remarks that even primary school textbooks cannot be seen only in a local perspective, for "it is clear that there is an important international dimension to the textbook equation in the Third World"[226].

According to many experts Islamic education textbooks have the following shortcomings with regard to their design:

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[224] Shehata, H. and Al-Kindari, A, *Teaching Islamic education in the Arab World*. Kuwait: Al-Falah, 1993, pp. 112-115.
[225] *Ibid*, p. 120.
[226] Altbach, "*Key Issues*", p. 323.

• Much of the content does not relate to pupils' real lives.

• They do not address pupils' or discuss their problems.

• They do not emphasise values and behaviour; they just present information.

• Most of the time, pupils are left with no answer to their questions.

• Developing new curricula and textbooks usually means reducing the number of    Islamic education periods per week.

•Curricula and textbooks of Islamic education do not give opportunities to religious activities such as visits to holy places, performing plays or working with magazines.

• Authors of Islamic education textbooks are often not well qualified for their task.[227]

## 5.7 Design Requirements of Ideal School Textbooks

Some scholars argue that a good school textbook is one that is well planned, developed, funded, tested and distributed, while Omar argues that it is a vital resource on which parents and teachers rely, whose authority and success rest on the reliability and accuracy of the material and the way in which it is presented.[228]

In order to explore the characteristics of 'ideal 'textbooks, it is important first to identify the elements of the school textbook in general. Researchers have considered the textbook to represent and reflect the curriculum, so that elements of the school textbook are the same as those of the curriculum: aims, content, activities and questions[229].

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[227] See, Islamil, S, *Islamic education*,  pp. 23-26.
[228] Omar, *School Textbook*, pp. 84-85.
[229] See *Ibid*, p. 39.

It is argued that readers should be reminded of the importance of first impressions, specifying items such as title, author's name and list of contents that should appear on the first few pages of any textbook.[230] Other authors state that school textbooks play an important role in transmitting knowledge, skills and experiences to pupils either at school or at home. School textbooks also have a certain impact on pupils' attitudes, values and personalities; therefore they must be of high quality in all their aspect, i.e. content, illustrations, evaluation, activities, language and format. The followings are some of the considerations that these authors believe should be taken into account in the design of 'ideal' school textbooks:

**a) - Content:**

• The content of a textbook should be based on the need to achieve the aims and objectives of the curriculum.

• Within this context, the designer should use a combination of the three aspects of knowledge: cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

• The content should be accurate, up-to date and related to pupils' interests, prior knowledge, attitudes, levels and needs on one hand and society's needs on the other hand. Thus, it should be relevant to pupils' experience and related to their daily lives, by including sufficient exercise and taking into account their diverse abilities and talents.

• The material should be quantitatively appropriate to the timetable requirements and should be graded qualitatively from easy to difficult, from theory to practice and from concrete to abstract.

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[230] Séguin, R. *L'élaboration des manuels scolaires: guide méthodologique.* Paris: Unesco, 1990, pp. 120-123.

•The textbook should contain sufficient practical examples and exercises to explain the content, while avoiding repetition, extension and redundancy.

**b) - Illustrations**

• A good textbook will have suitable and diverse illustrations (pictures, maps, tables, etc.) to ease the learning of content and help teachers and pupils to focus on the most important concepts.

• The illustration should be clear, attractive, colourful, and suitably placed within the text.

**c) - Evaluation**

• The textbook should contain many different kinds of questions and other exercise to evaluate pupils' achievement at the end of each lesson.

• These should be written in clear and simple words and should concentrate on the basic concepts.

**d) - Activities**

• Homework and other suggested activities should take into account individual differences of pupils.

• They should be coherent with the content and should provide a balance between activities inside and outside the classroom, to help pupils to apply in their daily lives what they have learned in school.

**e) - Language**

• The language of the textbook should be clear and easy for pupils to follow.

• It should be appropriate for the pupils' ages and linguistic abilities.

**f) - Format**

• The textbook format should be designed to present the content ant activities in an attractive way to enable pupils to think systematically, critically, rationally and objectively.

• The textbook should be of a suitable size, printed accurately and clearly in a font of a size appropriate for pupils' age, on durable paper, with a robust and attractive cover.

• It should not be too academic in appearance, but should nevertheless contain references where relevant.[231]

## 5.8 Standards of Islamic Education Textbook Design

The foregoing section has set out the basic design requirements of school textbook in general; this section now turns to the literature concerning the design of Islamic education textbooks in particular, beginning with the principles outlined by some Arab scholars:

• The Islamic education textbook should be designed in a way that helps teachers to   present its content and achieve Islamic aims.

• It should be oriented towards connecting Islamic education to pupils' reality, needs and present lives, dealing with their personal issues and those of society. In other words, the textbook should express both religion and modern times.

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[231] See, for example, Abu Alfotoh et al. *School Textbook: its Philosophy, History, Basis, Evaluation and Use*, Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Publications, 1962, pp. 41-52, Damaa, M. and Morsi, M, *Extent of Suitability of Textbook for Teaching and learning in Elementary School*, Tunis: Arabic Organisation for Education and Sciences, 1982, pp. 12-20, Langgulung, H, "Curriculum Development and Textbook Production in Lower and Upper Secondary School", *Muslim Education Quarterly*,10: 3, 1983, 23-32, Al-Barakat, A, *Primary Science Textbooks as a Teaching and Learning Recourse in the UK and Jordan*. Huddersfield University: PhD thesis (unpublished), 2001, pp. 221-235.

• It should be stimulating and attractive to pupils. This element can be satisfied through quality of paper, clarity of printing and colourful pictures that may encourage pupils to read the textbook. Books should also take into account pupils' level of vocabulary

• They should be designed in a way that helps teachers to use a variety of teaching methods. [232]

Some scholars additionally provide the following additional specifications:

• The Qur'an and the Hadith must be the main sources for the Islamic education textbook.

• The author should be good at quoting from the Qur'an and Hadith and should provide appropriate evidences related to the lesson.

• Verses of the Qur'an should be documented by referring to the title of the chapters and the number of verse; those of the Hadith by the title of the book, the part, section and page.

• Methods of presenting the material should be coherent with the topic on one hand and pupils' mentality and psychology on the other, by using several methods, such as narration, dialogue and story-telling.

• The Qur'anic verses should be written in its conventional script, the original style of writing, as it was revealed to the Prophet.

• Selected words and sentences must be suitable for the pupils' level. [233]

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[232] See Mujawir, M, *Tadris Al-Tarbiyah Al-Islamiyyah*. Kuwait: Dar Al-Qalam. 1976, pp. 73-92.
[233] Ahmed, S. *Preparation of Integrated Units of Islamic education for Third Class of Basic Education and Studying its Effectiveness and the Use of Feedback in Teaching it on the Achievement of Students*, Asyoot University Egypt: PhD thesis (unpolished), 1990, chapt. 4.

**5.9 The Role of the Textbook in the Teaching and Learning Process**

Some scholars consider the school textbook to be not only a tool to help pupils to learn but also the essential foundation for learning. This is because it sets pupils' boundaries of knowledge, limiting what they have to study, and it can be used as a tool for self-learning if pupils have acquired the skills of reading. Moreover, it helps teachers to plan their lesson, as it contains elements of the curriculum.[234] It is such an easy tool to use. Pupils can have access to their school textbooks whenever and wherever they want; thus, they can easily refer to them when they need or wish to do so. In addition, using a school textbook does not necessitate great effort or special training, as is the case with educational TV or computer. Richaudeau describes textbooks as having a structure and design fitting a particular educative programme, as they are basis of teaching and learning as well as acting as works of reference and memory aids for students[235].

In fact, School education means social conduct that aims to prepare pupils for civilised social life, which requires interaction among human, educational and material resources such as teachers, pupils, textbooks, school and their administrations. These relationships are below.

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[234] Bamshmus , A, *Educational Evaluation*, Riyadh: Dar Okaz Press, 1985, pp. 23.34.
[235] Richaudeau,F.  Conception et production des manuels scolaires.Guide pratique. Paris. 1986

Figure 1: Teaching and learning process
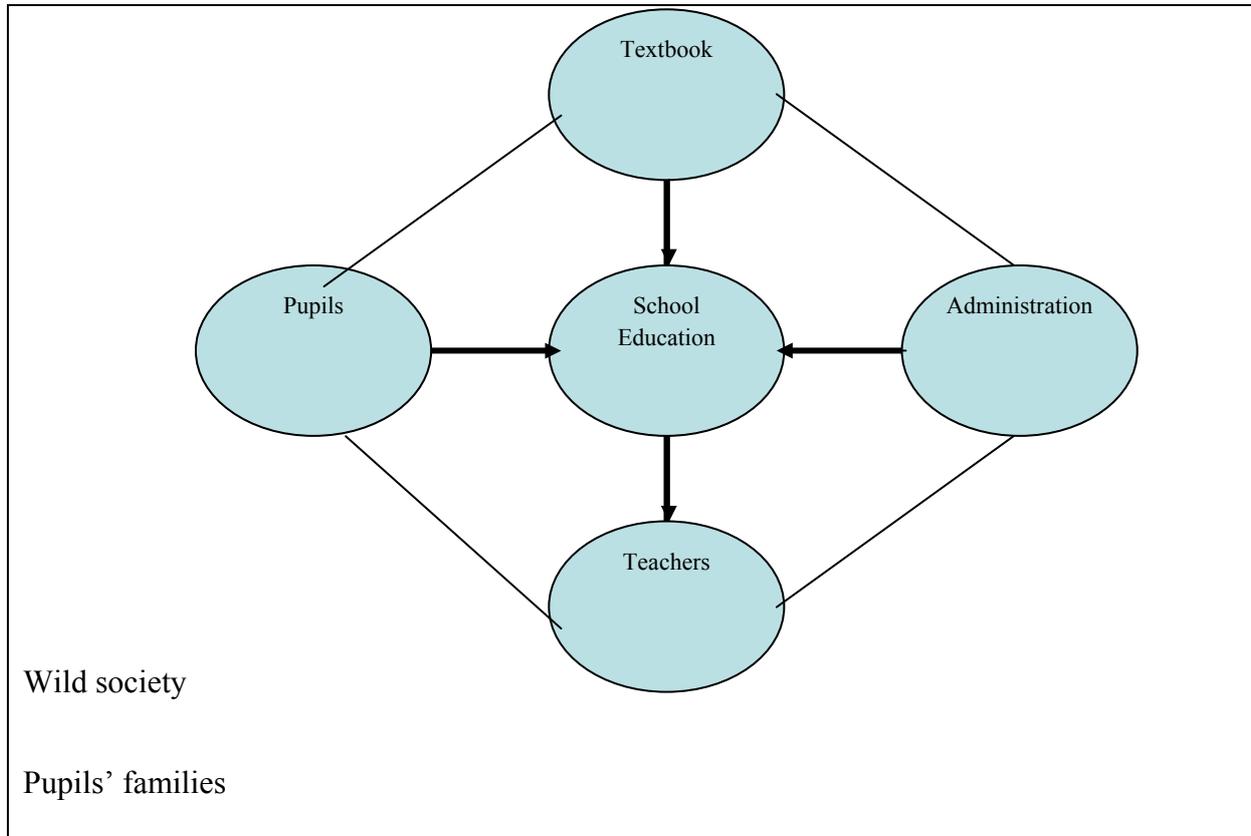


*Adapted from:* Hamdan. 2001:12

Many authors have addressed national and global differences and similarities in the role of textbooks. Apple (1986) argues that the school textbook "…establishes much of the material conditions for teaching and learning in classrooms in many countries throughout the world"[236]. According to some others, the role of textbooks in the teaching and learning process in Malaysia is accepted by all; they transmit essential knowledge to classes and individual students, assisting the teacher by reflecting the aims and content of the curriculum[237].

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[236] Apple, M.W, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*, New York: Routledge & Kegan, 1986, p. 81.
[237] See Langgulung, *Curriculum*, p. 21.

Some other experts argue that in developing countries, the school textbook often plays a central role in the quality of education, being the major-if not the only-definition of the curriculum.[238] Westbury writes: "the textbook has long served not only to support instruction but also to symbolise that instruction, in other words, the textbook defines the curriculum"[239]. In this context, Woodwad argues that the teachers need textbooks to classify and plan their day-to-day instruction.[240]

One of the most important issues to arise from this discussion of school textbook role is its intimate relationship with the design and realisation of the curriculum, to which the next section now turns.

## 5.10 The Relationship between the Textbook and the Curriculum

There are many scholars that suggest that educational objectives and aims depend on the school textbook as a guide to the curriculum. As indicate by Bamshmus, school textbook in most Arabic countries is likely to continue to have a special significance that can be attributed to a particular type of education, which can be termed the 'separate subjects curriculum design'. Under such a regime, a number of subjects are taught independently from each other at each grade; thus, history is taught independently from geography, social studies and so on. The nature of this method makes it imperative to design a separate school textbook which covers all components of the specific content that is officially adopted, which pupils have to study and which their examinations are related.[241]

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[238] Lockheed, M.E & Verspoor, A, *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries World Bank*, OUP, 1991 p.46.
[239] Westbury, I, "Textbooks, Textbook Publishers, and the Quality of Schooling in D. L. Elliot & A. Woodward, (eds.), *Textbooks and Schooling in the United States*, University of Chicago Press. 1990, pp. 1-22.
[240] Woodward, A, "Taking teaching out of teaching and reading out of learning to read: A historical study of reading textbook teachers' guides, 1920-1980, Book Research Quarterly **2:**1, 1986, 53-73.
[241] *Ibid*, pp. 55-57,

For this type of curriculum design, the school textbook is the basic tool for implementing the curriculum in school. As a result, pupils cannot do without this tool in learning these independent subjects if they want to proceed to higher grades; nor can teachers ignore it in implementing the curriculum. The school textbook is a 'translation' of the curriculum components and for this reason it is one of the aim tools that expresses and reflects the curriculum and its objectives. If it is a significant educational tool that affects both teacher and pupil, then great care and attention should be given to its design and development so that it will have elements of continuity, integration and sequence. Moreover, it should be appropriate to the level of all pupils and encourage close bonding between the school and society.[242]

Suwelim mentions that despite the rapid development of educational technology, school textbook remains the most significant educational tool that is available for accomplishing the national curriculum's aims.[243] This is supported by the League of Arab States met in 1965, which points out that developing school textbooks, which translate the curriculum into appropriate instructional material, has been the target on which most money and effort has been spent by the relevant authorities. For Jaradat, the textbook in Arabic school is equivalent to the curriculum and many actually use it as the sole source of information[244].

Some scholars take the school textbook as a basic tool for the teacher's work in achieving the aims and objectives of the curriculum, because it represents the content of the curriculum and a comprehensive framework for the teaching and learning process. It is a tool that contributes

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[242] See Omar, *Islamic*, pp. 23-26.
[243] Suwelim, M, "Development of School Curriculum for Secondary", *University of Mansourah Journal of Education*. 6:4, 1984, 13-35.
[244] Jaradat, A, *The Realities of the Seminar of Educational Research and Development*, Irbid: Yrmouk University,1984, pp.18-19.

directly to actualising the defined objectives and enable learners to realise their abilities and develop their skills, competencies and inclinations.

**5.11 Methods of Design of School Textbooks**

Given their central role in the teaching process and their close relationship with the curriculum, a number of authors have addressed the question of how textbook are designed. Abdullah states that school textbook is designed by the educational authority, taking into account the foundation of the curriculum in order to achieve the educational aims that are official requirements. Most of the literature available outlines the following methods used in compiling the school textbook:

a) **Assigning:** one or more authors are assigned to the task of designing and compiling a school textbook. One advantage of this method is that it may channel the job of designing and compiling a school textbook to well-qualified authors, but one clear disadvantage is that the choice might be made of some authors for personal consideration (for more details, see Chapter Six).

b) **Selection of pre-designed textbooks:** existing textbook might be designated as a school textbook after reaching an agreement for this purpose with the author or publisher. One advantage of this method is that there will be no monopoly, but it may not guarantee the selection of the most efficient authors.

c) **Open Competition:** Institutions and individuals may bid for authorship, based on the scientific and professional expertise of those who offer to design and compile the school textbook. The advantage of this method is that it motivates competition among authors,

who are given and equal opportunity, but it may not attract specialists and professional authors, who may refuse to take part in a competition that has a high level of risk.[245]

According to many others, the role of school textbook varies from one country to another, depending on the country's perspective on the role of the educational process in developing the individual and society. In developing countries, it is particularly likely to be considered the sole component of the school curriculum. In countries such as England, by contrast teachers have the right to select the content of the curriculum and the textbook, based on their preferences and values.[246]The entirely different picture in developing countries is due to the method by which the educational authority appoints a committee, which is responsible for compiling, designing and selecting the school textbook to ensure that all pupils at the same level acquire the same knowledge at the same time. It is the same in most developing countries, where the textbook is considered to be the main source of school knowledge because of limited educational resources and insufficient programmes for training teachers. In other words, where education is restricted to a uniform assimilation of knowledge, the textbook is designed in part to compensate for any chronic shortage of fully qualified teachers.[247]

In the case of Jordan, the MoE has followed the assignment method outlined above in dealing with the process of designing and compiling all school textbooks, including those of Islamic education (for more details, see Chapter Two). The results have been subject to serious criticism; the review suggests that Jordanian school textbooks suffer from fundamental

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[245] See Langgulung, *Curriculum*, pp. 21-32.
[246] Elliott, J and Maclure, M.Reconstructing Teacher Education, Falmer Press: London. and Elliott,1993
[247] Fuller and Heyneman. Third World School Quality: Current Collapse, Future Potential. *Educational Researcher* 18, 12-19. 1989

weaknesses, because of lack of experience of those who design school textbook and the shortcomings in the present methods of assigning textbook designers. The perspective of practicing teachers on the matter is detailed in Chapter Six.

## 5.12 Conclusion

This chapter has illuminated some aspects of the theoretical framework of school textbooks in general and those of Islamic education in particular. It has outlined the main factors which are seen to contribute to the design of both ideal and actual school textbooks and related them to the literature in the field. The remaining chapters of this thesis will discuss these factors further, taking into account the researcher's awareness of the difference between the problems of the textbook design in Islamic education and in other school subjects, where most research has been done so far. Despite such differences, this chapter has attempted to show the value of examining the design of textbooks for a range of school subjects. It is possible to learn from them theoretically and see how these experiences could be adapted to the design of improved Islamic education textbook. This fundamental for the current study, which concentrates on the design of Islamic education textbook and its delivery at the lower basic stage in Jordan. Thus, the literature reviewed in the chapter has illuminated many factors which are able to provide some kind of guidance in this study, moving the research towards its aims allowing it to start from the point where other studies have stopped.

This chapter concludes the conceptual as well as contextual aspects of this study, which has introduced the topic, set the research questions and examined the relevant background to Islamic education in the modern Jordanian context and to school textbook design and use. The subsequent chapter will focus on the more applicative side of this study through discussing the findings of the fieldwork for the study.

# CHAPTER SIX: RESULT PRESENTATION

In this culminating chapter, I have attempted to answer study questions through discussing the findings of the fieldwork. I have used open-ended and unstructured interviews and documents' content analysis. This Chapter presents conclusions reached by this study through open interviews and through analysing documents. The presentation of this chapter was done according to the results attained and the questions I asked at the beginning.

## 6.1 Presentation of Open Interview Results

The researcher has thoroughly interviewed the study sample, each person individually and then analysed data obtained. After that, he organised and classified them. He also rearranged the organisation and classification, whenever it was needed, after conducting the interviews until he reached an appropriate organisation and classification for the study questions.

It is worth mentioning that presenting such results is closely associated with interviewee's responses because some of them were answering in details, thus mentioned most of the measures that will be demonstrated, while some others omitted what were mentioned by others, and some gave short and brief answers. For some others it was more than enough to mention the measures briefly while some others elaborated on them in details.

Regarding the method of presenting open interview results, it will be based on the study questions and measures by responses from the study sample for each question.[248]

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[248] It must also be admitted here that the quotations representing the actual statements of the interviewees are essential in the given context of this study. Hence, the researcher has attempted to do full justice with these quotes. The quotes were in Arabic, so that have been carefully translated into almost literal English. Slight amendments have been made to make certain quotations more comprehendible. Since these quotations are too many in numbers they have not been referenced. This is also because the exact information of the interviewees who the quotations belong to is not significant while discussing the results. The following account is mainly to

**6.1.1 Presenting Results Related to the First Question Response**

What are the measures adopted in selecting the Islamic education books content in the primary level in Jordan?

Open interview conclusions showed the existence of several measures approved in selecting the Islamic education books content in the primary level in Jordan. The following are some of such measures:

**6.1.1.1 State Public Policy**

One respondent said: "one of the measures approved in selecting books' content is the state public policy and regime. So if the state is interested in establishing the principles of the Islamic Religion, then the content focuses on that; and if it is interested in democracy, then the content focuses on practicing it. And if it does focus on more than one principle then this will be reflected in the content of its schools curricula.

**6.1.1.2 Education Philosophy and its Objectives in Jordan**

A member of the national team, responsible for managing the curriculum and the school text book 'the education philosophy in Jordan and its objectives' said: "the education philosophy in Jordan is generated from the Jordan constitution, the Islamic Arabic Civilisation represented in the philosophic basis, educational knowledge and the national and socio-cultural knowledge". Meanwhile another member said: "The classroom philosophy comes from the Ministry of Education philosophy for all topics. The education philosophy in the primary level starts the wider layouts for teaching Islamic education subject for primary level,

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demonstrate how the data collected from the documents and interviews have been processed and what results they bear. Please refer to section 5.8 in Chapter Five for details on the original scripts of the interviews and other similar documents.

which translates the curriculum vocabulary and then selects the Islamic education books content".

One of the teachers has emphasised such measures saying: "State's philosophy when teaching contents should be taken into consideration, which varies from a country to another according to their socio-economic, political, and cultural characteristics. Based on this philosophy some topics may be omitted out of the curriculum, or some particular topics may be inappropriate with the state's philosophy as the prevailing conditions in some Arab and Islamic states, such as omitting topics of struggle and martyrdom out of the content of the Islamic education curriculum.

### 6.1.1.3 Education Law in Jordan

One of the national team members said that some of the approved measures and criteria in selecting Islamic education books' contents are "the education law No. 16 for year (1964) and amendments law No. 27 for year (1968) and law No.3 for year 1994, including all measures governing the educational process, and on the basis by which the curriculum designers are guided. All of this would stress – as it says – the outlines of the Islamic education curriculum in the primary education level and the Jordanian constitution which clearly says: "the state religion is Islam".

### 6.1.1.4 Basis of Curriculum Creation

There are some principal factors affecting the preparation of the school curriculum and its implementation; these principals are the general basis for school curriculum. A group of the study sample have demonstrated that selecting contents of Islamic education books depends upon curriculum basis. One of them said: "among measures used to determine the content of Islamic books are curriculum basis such as beliefs, psychology, knowledge, intellectual and

social aspects". One of the educational supervisors said: "some of the measures of selection are content's suitability of curriculum basis which are: the intellectual knowledge, socio-economic principles and cost". One of the teachers said: "upon selecting contents of the curriculum, building up principles has to take into account philosophic, social, psychological, and knowledge principles". Another teacher said: "the most important measures adopted upon selecting content of the primary stage of Islamic education books is the philosophic principle derived from the nation's life ideology and its consideration to the world, man and life". Such principles come in other education goals in different stages, different curricula, and social principle which exists under the environmental frame of education, compatible with the nation social and values' order prevailing in the nation's life style, range of technology progress, and psychological progress influencing growth and learning process with the pupil along with all different growth stages, and the knowledge principle which comprises different nature and fields of knowledge through enhancing human personality and entity with its belief in Allah".

One of the teachers has emphasised such measure by saying: "one of the measures of selecting content is curriculum basis, which is the philosophical basis generated from the Islamic vision of the universe, human, life, attributes of Allah almighty and His names, the social basis which emphasise importance of preparing human to be capable to adapt to society, and the psychological basis, where Islamic education means the psychological basis of the Islamic curriculum considering human, with all his capabilities, as the centre of Islamic education, where Islamic education cares for him as a child, adolescent, and adult, as well as satisfying his physical and psychological needs and his knowledge base. Islamic education curriculum is based upon obvious and effective links between a person's awareness of himself

and facts, and awareness of Allah almighty on one hand, and integration of information and science and its relation with the reality of faith and its requirements on the other hand".

**6.1.1.5 Islamic Education Curriculum and its Outlines in the Primary Education Level**

The national team members have established curriculum document and its outlines, which is the main reference in selecting contents of the Islamic education books. The national team president says: "The main element in selecting contents of the Islamic education books came on the basis of the outlines of the Islamic education curriculum, and was built up in respect thereof". One of the members has indicated: "These lines are generated from the outlines of Islamic education curriculum as the curriculum of the primary education level, which was edited before, then the main basis for preparing the curriculum will be determined by philosophic, psychological, social and knowledge base which emerges from education law that outlines the philosophy and the purpose of education in the Kingdom. Such philosophy and purpose emerge from the Jordanian constitution, Arabic Islamic Civilisation, and the principles of the great Arab revolution". The curriculum was developed – as stated by some of the national team members – within its outlines, and then books were edited after getting acquainted with these outlines which were prepared by the team, and were acknowledged and approved by the Education Board. Curricula have reflected such outlines, and books reflected and translated vocabulary of curricula. In that regard, one of the national team members said: "we are inserting such vocabularies in books' content, any vocabularies or important sub-themes, and transform them into lessons consisting of academic scientific subjects, taking into consideration educational issues".

The content was – as emphasised by authors during personal interviews – a translation of the curriculum, and the curriculum was a translation of the outlines of the Islamic education

study. One of the authors said: "the outlines of the Islamic education curriculum are the basis of authoring books and in the selection of their contents, which also determines the general principles of authorship, while the curriculum directorate determines books assessment guidelines in general, including Islamic education books". Another member said:" The main measure to select contents of the Islamic education books is the outlines. We are restricted by this process, and we are not allowed to go beyond it; lessons' titles, the main goals of Islamic education, and the special goals of each unit are included in these outlines. A third member said:" Measures of selection are the responsibility of the Education Board (council); the curriculum was developed in order to achieve the philosophy of education; measures were initially developed by curriculum editors, and the curriculum shall be developed based on its outlines, since its vocabularies were general, and the author breaks them down. Another member has emphasised that: "School book vocabulary is a description and analysis of curriculum vocabularies. For example curriculum vocabularies are the name of the Prophet, his foster mother, his work and his love….etc; the author analyses these vocabularies and indicates the name of the Prophet his foster mother Halima al-Sa'diah, and his work as a shepherd and trader…….etc". The content as one of the authors said: "gives goals, means, activities… ".

### 6.1.1.6 School Book Author Guide

One of the interview sample individuals said: "at the disposition of the author there are, vocabularies, goals, and instructions of authorship that must be followed". One of the college tutors has emphasised that: "in order for the book to be of high standards, the author (or authors) must be use the authorship guide, and the specifications determined by the concerned parties, in this way the views of authors will be converged as well as the views of their peers regarding other books' authors". Another author said:" the author's guide was used in

developing many topics of the Islamic educational books content in the primary education level. The author's guide helps to specify goals and steer the methods and activities which could be practiced in order to achieve the goals. In addition, such guide can be used to determine the appropriate educational means".

Based upon this, the researcher referred to the curriculum and school books directorate, to curriculum development guidelines, the school book author and the document of school book author guide, they have been analysed and measures included in each document were concluded.

### 6.1.1.7 Education Development Plan Initiation

Education development plan was initiated from issues that were expressed in the instructions. More than half of the national team members, and one third of books authorship team have confirmed that some of the updates entered by the national education development conference in year 1987 must be the trigger to the content of the Islamic education books. The interviewed sample has failed to specify these initiations. So in that concern, one of the national team members has specified them by saying: "he must start out towards hard questions, and educational training aids related to some lessons' scopes such as maps, drawings and texts. For instance upon talking about Bukhary, we have extracted texts and images of Bukhary's book copied from the major fundamental books".

### 6.1.1.8 Information Employment

Linking information theory with reality and environment: For instance whenever a religion education lesson is taught, examples from the Jordanian environment and association to Jordan itself as a country of holy sanctuaries are given. Such type of educations requires pupils' awareness of their own environment and social context. For example, Surah al-Nur

contains social morals and ethics such as asking permissions and issues related to the defamation of innocent women.  Such ethics suit grade 9 students.  Similarly, the issues relating to cheating and forgery used to be taught at grade nine. But after an intensive study, it was found that grade 8 students needed to know them too.  Likewise with the topic of menstruation, it was determined to be taught at grade 8.  Such curriculum decisions were the outcome of the national conference.

### 6.1.1.9 Credibility

It means accuracy and correctness.  One of the curriculum tutors: "the true credible content is the one conform to the Qur'an and Prophet's Sunnah. One third of books' editing team members emphasised on the necessity of adopting the strongest evidence particularly in the Creed, Belief, and Religious regulations.  One of the editing participants says: " One of the obvious measures is: documentation indicates credibility, Qur'an verses are credible, authentic Hadith is credible, Prophet's life and conduct must be credible". Another participant said:  "the measures we are interested in are information accuracy and correctness, and the difference between facts and meanings, particularly in topics and rules where discrepancies can be an issue.  Consequently, such discrepancies must be explained and all views should be presented reasonably and fairly.   The credible content, according to one of the female teachers, is "that it should be true".  One of the university professors says: "credibility of content is conformity to credible sources such as the Qur'an and Prophet's Sunnah". Thus, as one of the female teachers says:  "references to where content was taken or extracted from must be determined".

### 6.1.1.10 Islamic Education Objectives at Primary Stage

All committee members who participated in preparing Islamic education books have agreed that the most important measure for selecting books is the content's compatibility and conformity with objectives, i.e. there should be a direct relation and harmony between objectives and content where students' learning will improve by using books. One member of the national team who has followed up the authoring process said: "content is a real translation of the Islamic education objectives in primary stage derived from the general Islamic education objectives. Objectives are translated into content". A good content as declared by one of the national team members is closely connected with the objectives and capable of achieving them, convey them clearly and making sure that none are being missed out at any level of level. Therefore, as stated by one of the curriculum department members, "well-chosen terminology and learning objectives must be selected in order to develop students' thinking, develop and upgrade the functional side in the subject, and focus upon acts of worship performance. The curriculum has identified objectives where every part of it explains scopes required to be achieved, and the kind of minimum level of knowledge and necessary behaviour.

One of the members explained that the team set up the Islamic education general objectives starting directly from individuals (How an individual may be raised?), society (How a society may be composed and initiated?) and the state (How a state is created?)

In light of all this, the Islamic education curriculum's general objectives may be developed based on study stages' special objectives, and the objectives of each class and level. These will be done in light of the following issues:

- Aims of the Islamic education general objectives to prepare good citizens, a good nation, and a good state from an Islamic perspective.

- Students' particularities, psychological requirements, their growth needs at every stage of their ages.

- Society's requirements for scientific advancement and knowledge acquirement.

In order that Islamic education curriculum objectives may cover all aspects of life, the curriculum must be able to organise human relations with Allah, Glory to Him, with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, with his family, relatives, neighbours, the Islamic society, and with his natural environment.

One of the participants has already emphasised that Islamic education books content must reflect objectives. In addition, the educational aids are an essential portion of the study material because they support the learning and objectives. Activities are a part of the content. This includes motivating students to think and complete information from their prior knowledge or from their thoughts to participate in forming the lesson's content. The plenary activity asks students to finalise the lesson content, and encourage students to participate in achieving objectives in order to avoid the dictating style of lessons, and in order to allow students get used to the scientific research from an early stage.

One of the supervision committee members participating in authoring books says that: "authors are not allowed to make any changes neither on the curriculum wordings and expressions nor in its topics. The author should normally translates the curriculum's wordings, expressions, vocabularies, and topics into a book within the principles set up during the elaboration of the curriculum. The book author must use curriculum wordings, expressions, aids, activities and proposed assessment techniques. Similarly, the author will

come up with wordings and expressions for each lesson. Then aids and lesson related activities will be incorporated to facilitate and help learners achieve lesson objectives. The author has the flexibility and the mandate to select the techniques and methods of expressing the targeted phrase as it varies from one person to another".

Members of the curriculum administration members have expressed the importance of content achieving the objectives. They said: " the content must achieve Islamic education objectives such as establishing and consolidating the Islamic values and morals, the social ethics, loyalty and affiliation to God, emphasising on Palestine Arabism, Islamic Unity, developing the patriotic spirit and respect of others". A university tutor, teaching the curriculum, said: "the selected content should develop the principles, knowledge values, effectiveness, skills, social habits and traditions".

Educational supervisors and teachers agreed that content is closely related to objectives. Some of them said during their interview: "content association with objectives, content achievement of curriculum objectives, and content compatibility with objectives are important". One of the educational supervisors said: "the content must achieve planned and designed objectives including carefully planned experiences, and to contribute to building up the daily learned experiences. Additionally, it must scaffold such experiences, including activities used to achieve objectives, and prepare the psychological and social environment in the classroom". One teacher also said: "upon designing content, we must consider two basic issues, philosophy and objectives. For example, if the objective is to develop and challenge students' cognitive skills then we may focus on metaphysics and signs in the universe such as the creation of skies and raising them up without pillars. If objectives are focusing upon reciting and learning by heart techniques then we may void some of the topics, which require understanding, out of the curriculum content". Another teacher said: "keen to achieve all

objectives in teaching Islamic education lessons and achieve knowledge scope, we care about theory side, intellectual, emotional scopes, values, attitudes, the dynamic scope and the practical behaviour side". One of the female teachers said: "content will achieve goals planned ahead. Success will be achieved by planting belief values in students, motivating them to stick to their religion and continue on pursuing its morals".

### 6.1.1.11 Nature of the subject Islamic education

The Islamic education is based on the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah and it covers all issues and contemporary trends. School book, according to fifty percent of the national team members' responses, is a translation of the nature of the Islamic education and of the academic specialist side, and of the Islamic values and general concepts. So the book, according to one member of this team, gives a complete picture to understand Islam as a whole. Another member participating in the supervision committee and authoring says: "the content gives a complete picture about the Qur'an units and its science, Hadith and its science, biographies, Islamic creed, doctrine and its principles, morals and systems and Islamic intellectuality. One of the female teachers confirmed such facts saying: "Content must suit Islamic education nature, draws its topics from the Qur'an and Sunnah and addresses different ages' issues and trends".

### 6.1.1.12 Nature of Primary Level Students

The consideration of the developmental principles in the primary education stage, learner's needs and problems facing him/her are the most important measures to select content from. This has been said by one of the curriculum tutors in one of the universities: "students' ages, their linguistic, physical, and mental abilities must be taken into account". This was determined by members of the participating committee in accomplishing the Islamic

education book. However, the learner himself, the particularities of his development and requirements, his needs, attitudes, capabilities and readiness for such issues are the most outstanding factors which must be taken into consideration". There are two measures to bear in mind about learners when elaborating topics: personal which includes permissions (Rukhas) that are used to alleviate any inconveniences, and topical which is designed to a group of people. This shows the comprehensiveness of the Shari'ah which has come to cater for the individual and the society.

Authors have never omitted such measures and their emphasis was confirmed by saying: "the terms of the school book are that the content must enrich and expand learner's needs, attitudes, and capabilities to extreme limit". One of the national team members who prepared the curriculum and participated in the supervision committee and in authoring books explained this theme by saying: "the rhythm of delivering information was controlled by the learner's growth requirements and in consideration of his level and needs, meaning the teacher gives ablution lessons for example before prayer lessons then Hajj (pilgrimage). Then he teaches Islamic transactions and dealings in advanced grades to enable students at the end of the stage to get all information about topics, and to make educational units comprehensive of students' requirements in grades (1-10)".

All educational supervisors and teachers quotes have confirmed the foregoing. So says one of the supervisors: "content suits students' growth stages, levels, and their cultural reality. It must also take into consideration individual differences, their knowledge and experiences to meet their needs and interests. One of the teachers said: "students' concept and awareness regarding the subject is to be used when considering the hierarchy sequence in the presentation". Female teachers' concerns had focused upon the same thing: "the conformity of content to the type of learners and their ages must take into account unique properties of

learners growth and needs including suiting content with students' ages, adapting the terminology and jargon to suit their ages so that student may understand. Content must adhere to students' needs and attitudes as well as the personal differences between them. Contents must also meet students' mental and behavioural needs, due to age and individual differences between students. Adherence to mental growth level of students and their potential in learning and reciting by heart upon selecting topics particularly Qur'an verses and Prophet's sayings (Hadith)".

### 6.1.1.13 Nature of the Jordanian Society

Amongst measures adhered to content selection, as one of the national team members says:" Society problems and needs facing Arab societies including challenges which cause several serious problems. These need continuous discussion particularly, in certain Islamic countries with high population density, with lack of economic resources, high level of poverty, and high level of unemployment. The school curriculum must prepare individuals capable of confronting such problems and overcome them". Most of the national team members have emphasised on the necessity of Jordan influence on the curriculum nature (functional aspect) in all knowledge fields, including Islamic education. It is a must to demonstrate Jordan's role in the Islamic history and its role in spreading Islam and its fight against enemies. This was confirmed by books' authoring team where one of them said: "content must be tied to society's reality such as: communication with the mosque leader (Imam) in several activities, including visits to public and private library, steering communication with society and determination of relationship with parents, with family members, neighbourhood and the country. One of the educational supervisors said: "content must adhere to the environment where students live, to religion, and to social conditions". A female teacher words confirmed this by saying: "content is connected to students' environment as it reflects goals derived from

the type of society". Another female teacher said:" The most important thing in content's nature that it must be suitable with the social reality". One of the teachers referred to the necessity of orienting students using their surrounding environment through content. Another teacher said: "curriculum and content are tied to Jordan through discussing tombs and shrines of the righteous people who passed away, loving Prophet's family and descendants, peace and blessing be upon him, as well as Jordan's site during invasions and conquers".

### 6.1.1.14 Inclusion

One of the fundamental measures in selecting the content is inclusion. Authors and most of the interview sample individuals have agreed and concluded that content is characterised by inclusion. The interview sample disagreed about components included in the content. Content inclusion is related to:

➢ Lessons vocabulary. One of the authors said: "lesson scopes' vocabulary and content must be included as a minimum". Another author said: "there is a measure to select content, i.e. describing inclusion. There should be no omissions of any portion of the subject required to study or to be covered. The content must cover most of the curriculum as determined by the education council for the Islamic education subject in the primary level. Therefore, any shortage must be covered or replaced using other methods".

➢ Goals:

One of the authors said: "inclusion must prevail and lessons must be built up depending on intended knowledge acquirement at their different levels, as well as value goals, which should be tangible values in different forms, and dynamic goals, i.e. a set of skills that would ensure a balance range of lesson".

- Islamic education branches: Two authors have supported the Islamic education branches inclusion. It was also supported by one teacher by saying: "content inclusion should be for all branches: Creed, Qur'an, Hadith, Prophet's biography, jurisprudence, morals and systems". One of the female teachers said: "content must include all topics starting from Qur'an, Hadith, to Prophet Biography, jurisprudence, morals and ethics".

- Students' requirements (different life aspects): One of the authors said: "inclusion of students needs". A curriculum tutor at one of the universities said: "content's information must address different life challenges, all personal issues, intellectual, economic, and social knowledge". A female teacher said: "content must include all life aspects in a way that it does not favour one area to another". An author has said: "inclusion of the ideological, legislative, cultural, moral, social values and national issues". One of the curriculum management members said: "it consists of including different cultural, moral, and social issues because there are social measures used to establish and teach the family concept, children rights, and values. These would help establishing the true belief inside learners' minds, and disseminate national measures which determine and teach that interfering in other people's affairs is completely prohibited". One of the female teachers said: "content includes all sides of the Muslim childhood, his relation with Allah and His messengers, with the Qur'an, with himself, with his family, with his friends and with his environment".

- Units: One of the authors said: "units' inclusion is essential so that a student will have been presented with all information by the end of the stage". One of the female teachers said: "addressing the curriculum of the Qur'an completely so that a student at the end of the stage will have completed reciting parts of the Qur'an set by the curriculum either at home or in the classroom. This is in addition to extending their

knowledge of Tajweed rules and therefore, recitation skills". One of the teachers said: "Memorising by heart of the Qur'anic verses and the Hadith so that students may complete Qur'an recitation in the primary stage".

- ➢ Assessment Types suggested by one of the educational supervisors who said: "It includes all necessary assessment types".

- ➢ Knowledge Elements: One of the curriculum university teachers said: "content inclusion of all knowledge elements which include universal and social rules, values, ideas and thoughts, concepts, attitudes, and religious regulations".

- • Internationalism:

One of the teachers, who also participated in authoring, was the only one to mention this measure by saying: "the nature of global Islamic education manifests in the child's awareness of his role as a Muslim, belonging to his country and to the Arab nation, and to the world since Islamic nation is a part of the world and the child is a messenger to this world. Therefore, books must cover such issues in order for the Muslim Arabian child shares Muslim concerns and make up his opinion towards such issues based upon the message that he carries, which is the message of Allah's religion introduced to the entire humanity, avoiding giving the child the impression of his subjection to his citizenship as in some other topics".

### 6.1.1.14 Keeping Up with Contemporary Issues

"One of the measures of selecting books' contents is content recentness which means that content presents events that have occurred in recent years so that it visualises current techniques, and reflecting the culture through modern images and illustration charts". This is what has been said by one of the participants in authoring and confirmed by many of his

peers. The national team members stress the necessity of adopting contemporary pedagogical thoughts in developing the content. One of the members said: "absorbing contemporary concepts, and new topics such as the environment, technology….". One of the members acknowledges its importance in order for students to relate to recent trends of useful sciences that may benefit their nation through development processes and to facilitate life, as well as ensuring security, safety, and prosperity for students. To achieve this, the focus should be on contemporary issues and trends such as education about the environment and other issues, aiming to develop positive attitudes for students to deal with their private and public entourage, are very important matters when it comes to selecting Islamic education books' content". One of the supervision committee members said: "we use domestic and international trends in the field for selecting content". One of the interested college teachers said: "using trends, and preparing Islamic personality in the light of changes in the contemporary social life, meaning that such books and information are adapted to accommodate computerisation, technology and other issues". One of the teachers had focused on this by saying: "we must take into consideration students' current needs to have the necessary knowledge of some subjects and contents". One of the educational supervisors said: "one of the measures is considering the contemporary life development".

### 6.1.1.15. Developing Scientific Intellect and Self-Learning:

The curriculum stipulated, as one of the national team members says and emphasised by many of the interview sample individuals, that an extension book for advanced grades of the primary level for developing self-learning must exist; however such approach was not applied, which indicates, as one of the participants in authoring said: "there is a general orientation towards self-learning, but was this achieved by the Islamic education curriculum? Why such a level was not reached?  Many argue that this was because of lack of teachers and

the inconvenient of conditions presented. Therefore resources of the self-learning process do not exist". One of the teachers, who is also a participant in authoring, points out the necessity of developing self-learning methods and innovative thinking for students, through providing more opportunities for effective participation in designated activities, and improving school books with substance. One of the authors indicates the inability of the current books in terms of providing self-learning opportunities compared with previous books, where he says: "I have followed the edition of curricula and school books since 1964, and found that current written books are different from the old ones. The new ones help achieve self learning through utilising various sources of technology, educational aids, and educational activities which were not used previously. Such actions may provide learners with the opportunity of self-learning from the book which is better in terms of delivering material's methods ". One of the curriculum administration members says: "school curricula's contents do not cover Islamic intellect but it gives students the methodology of scientific thinking, introduction to Islamic sciences; that is why students attending study circles possess a sound knowledge and critical thinking than those attending school alone".

### 6.1.2 Presentation of Results Related to the Answer of the Second Question

What are the adopted measures that have led to the variation in selecting contents of Islamic education branches and its distribution in primary level books in Jordan?

Islamic education books' content includes different units. It is noted that at a school grade, content at the primary level included some units while they were missing in another grade. Results of the open interview demonstrated the existence of multiple measures that have been used or currently being used, leading to such variation in selecting content of Islamic

education branches and its introduction in primary level books. Such measures are as follows:

**6.1.2.1 Islamic Education Curriculum and Its Outlines at the Primary Education Level**

The authoring team has agreed that: "curriculum editors have decided on the Islamic education branches variation content and its distribution in primary level books". The same has been confirmed by a participant from the authoring team. Another participant said: "units and lessons in books are as mentioned in the outlines". One of the national team members who was also involved in following up the authoring process confirmed that: "all units were mentioned in the outlines, for instance, ethics' unit calling for morality was probably included at lower grades of the primary level due to its suitability for youth and as mentioned in the outlines, not mentioning systems and Islamic intellect unit in grades (5-6), and its inclusion in the content for grades (7-10) is due to outlines imposition". One of the participants in authoring has commented by saying: "the national team has imposed these outlines on authors".

**6.1.2.2 Nature of Study Material**

Each study material has its own characteristics. Some has a censorable material which makes it easy to learn, and some has the abstract theory requiring more effort from the learner to understand. Islamic education combines both characteristics, where variation in selecting content of its branches and presentation was based upon that. One of the supervision committee members, who also participated in authoring, said: "systems and Islamic intellect unit requires a certain education level unavailable at lower grades. Students at this stage are only capable to digest subjects expressed in a physical, realistic and easy form, whereas abstract subjects are difficult for children to understand." One of the educational supervisors

said: "concept's variation came in between simplicity and difficulty. The diversity of Islamic education branches, which can be assimilated by different types of learners, is due to the nature of Islamic education, where some parts require unique mental abilities, such as the Creed and Jurisprudence issues for instance, while some other parts of the Islamic education such as Qur'an, Hadith, Prophet's biography, and ethics require only simple mental abilities that focus on memorising more than comprehension".

### 6.1.2.3 Nature of Learners

Interviewees' concern was focused upon this measure, while all participants involved in accomplishing school books have agreed that the most important measures are the existence of variation in selecting and distributing contents of Islamic education branches, as well as the nature of learners, their development, abilities, needs, attitudes, and interests. One of the national team members said: "students' intellect need to be matured. Therefore, pedagogy, behaviours, creed issues and social studies will be more appropriate whereas other topics will be deferred to another level until the student is capable to digest such issues". Another member said: "Such variation was used in consideration of the development stage nature where it is sufficient to emphasise on creed, ethics, and prophet's biography in order to consolidate religious and ethical values at the basic level, and then religious systems shall be presented at advanced levels. However, vocabularies and expressions of the curriculum must be in conjunction with age, cognitive and learning level of student, characteristics of such age stage and its requirements. Students should not be exposed to abstract notion while they need to encounter tangible matters because their mental capabilities are still tender and inexperienced to understand some topics. These should wait until they developed further their thinking skills, i.e., students should not be taught the topic of purification and ablution while they do not need it. One member of the national team members said: "topics were classified

to suit students' ages keeping in mind that concepts, if expanded, will render transition to higher topics easier. This depends upon learner's cognitive level and his ability to absorb some subjects". One member of the national team gave an example saying: "Islamic thoughts and system unit is higher than students' level at primary stage. Thus Islamic education book content in fifth and sixth grades did not include such topics. They were added to contents of grades (7-10) books".

One authoring participating member has confirmed this measure by saying: "variation is attributed to learners' level. Learner's needs and concepts at low grades levels are not adequate to topics he encounters at higher classes. In low classes, students can comprehend tangible topics but it is difficult to understand and digest abstracts". One of the specialists in curriculum says that "variation in learning is due to students' unawareness in some topics particularly those needing information. In the primary stage children are taught values and attitudes. While in advanced stages, they learn knowledge and information".

One author provides an example given by a member of the national team: " It is not easy to teach systems & Islam intellect unit in the first primary classes through fifth and sixth classes taking into account students' levels and capabilities because they differ from a class to another and from a student to another within the same class". Another author confirms this by saying: "variation in students' capabilities is due to the fact that they cannot comprehend and digest certain topics such as Islamic intellect and systems unit in fifth and sixth grades. While this topic could be considered as a specialty to other grades, other topics were received by all grades such as wars and invasions".

Educational supervisors and teachers confirm what interview sample personnel previously said: "Variation considers stages of a child mental, physical and emotional growth."

One teacher insists on "considering the importance of the study stage". For instance, fifth grade students, in majority of cases, lack a degree of comprehension of a tenth grade student. So if the topic of 'sustain' (Rizq) is to be discussed with him he will be unable to understand the concept of God's role in this issue while a tenth grade student, who had previously experienced discussion of topics like belief principles, and Islamic creed components, will be able to understand it. Another teacher said: "the availability of individual variations between students, particularly at this stage, capabilities variations in understanding Islamic education branches and topics for some, such as creed issues (explaining student's relation with his Creator), jurisprudence, require high mental capabilities even though it is only discussed at a simple level. While others need only simple capabilities to focus on memorising and reciting than those needed in comprehension like Qur'an, Hadith, the Prophet's biography and morals". A third teacher expressed: "all of this depends on the level of students and individual differences between them, students' experiences, their growth stages, students' scientific needs, their interests and attitudes, mental and physical growth , and maturity in general".

Female teachers emphasised such measure when one of them declared: "in addition to students' comprehension, the most important thing is its suitability to the age. Students in higher grades need information in contrary with lower level classes wherein they need basic information, easy to digest. Another female teacher says: "variation was obvious in Islamic education topics to meet students' mental needs to drive and motivate their thinking. Some of these topics are the position of women in society, Islam tolerance and Islam interest in the individual. Such topics have never been mentioned or discussed in initial grades due to student's young age and because of prioritising the establishment of creed and belief in them. Another female teacher says: "this might be scheduled because students in this age need to be aware of certain intellectual issues taking into consideration their needs in such age. However

such issues will never be of the same degree of importance in lower grades." A third female teacher says: "this issue is governed by age and lack of knowledge. Students normally need a curriculum in harmony with their cognitive ability because in lower grades they need to understand issues like creed topics which work towards enhancing learners' relation with the Creator, and then they will move to other branches such as systems and Islamic intellect where students in grades (1-10) are expected to be more adequate with their mental abilities".

Some interview sample individuals added that the stage requirements have an apparent impact on topics variety, and one of the university teachers said:" Units are designed to be implemented according to the requirements of each stage and employed gradually in accordance with education stages and grades". One of the educational supervisors said: "experiences and required activities will be considered for each unit according to grades of the stage".

One teacher has demonstrated that: "one of the effects following topics variety is motivating readers or students to proceed in studying such texts from scratch because they may add to their information new information they have never experienced".

### 6.1.2.4 Sequence (Gradient):

This means, according to one of the female teachers "the sequence of previous experiences with the successive, taking into account depth of issues. For example, teaching prayer in a class must be in accordance with the student's mental capabilities in that grade. However, in a higher grade prayer should be taught in enough in-depth and inclusion. In addition, sequence is one of the measures of the content's variety of Islamic education. One of the national team members has said: "the availability of units' sequence chart in the study plan where a unit gradually presented in successive sessions according to the level, provided that such

presentation must be in conjunction with the nature of students' development stage and with the number of scheduled periods for Islamic education per week. So we find some units sequenced in grades (1-4), (5-10), (7-10) in harmony with this age stage."

All authors unanimously decided that units' order was put into sequence in specific tables for that purpose in the Islamic education curriculum and layout. The author is normally obligated to translate all this in the school book. One of the curriculum management members said:"variety is based upon the sequence process besides variety. So the most important topics will take priority over others as per importance so that students will have covered topics and units by the end of stage and finish reciting the whole Qur'an". One of the curriculum teachers at one of the universities said: "topical sequence starts from first grade up to fourth grade and fifth through to the tenth". One of the educational supervisors says: "considering the logical sequence in representing topics and units should normally consider knowledge sequence and logical side of such sequence". One of the national team members, who was also interested in the edition said: "the sequence in selecting topics and units starts by looking at the theoretical side in the first place then goes to practical side. Teacher plays a big role in the practical part, when it is difficult to explain some creed topics to students at early stages; we also find it difficult to translate some topics such as: "extracted from between the backbone and the ribs (يخرج من بين الصلب والترائب)".

One of the teachers has criticised the process of sequencing in certain topics by saying: "advancing or deferring lessons is unbalanced. For instance, the introduction of prayer and its rules came in the first semester, while the Prophet Biography was introduced in the second semester. It would have been better to address the biography of the Prophet that would come immediately after creed topics in order to stabilise concepts of creed at first, then loving the

Prophet and his Biography second, then religious and jurisprudential deeds third. It is the case we found – as the teacher –in fifth grade book".

**6.1.2.5 Integration**

It means, as one of university teachers said, who is a member of the national team: "vertical integration, i.e. first class, second, third, and so forth; and the horizontal integration of different topics of knowledge, i.e., the biography of the Prophet in the social studies, Qur'an translation in the Arabic language studies, and removing harm in Hadith and science, and so forth". Integration is one of the contrast measures mentioned by the national team members, where the president of the team says:" One of the measures to select subjects and the determination of type is the horizontal integration between different science subjects in the same education level, and the vertical integration in one subject for the following educational classes". One of the team members said:" It was approved during variation of selected contents of Islamic education branches and sharing it between classes, the cross-curriculum teaching, meaning integration, it is obvious in the curriculum the extent of overlapping between branches of the Islamic education, and between Islamic education and the other specialties. In this regard, a conference of the national team members was conducted for every study field".

Authors have confirmed that variation was developed in order to achieve integration and coordination. One of the authors said: "integration shall be taken into consideration in selecting contents, as well as taking into account raising different issues in the class where concept shall be displayed from the perspective and the philosophy of each subject. For instance, in Arabic language, ethics shall be introduced and it will not contradict concepts in Islamic education. In books of social sciences, suitable concepts will be introduced; language

competence in Arabic language is shown in Tafseer through understanding paragraphs, awareness of the causes of revealing verses. Approaches differ from each subject but integrate in the same level. Another author said: "variation in displaying content of the Islamic education branches was developed in order to achieve integration between book content for Islamic education subject at any education level and the contents of previous books for the same subject in a vertical integration, and such contents shall be integrated with contents of other subjects horizontally". One of the teachers has illustrated integration by saying: "any study of the Islamic education units at any level shall be determined using the relationship between the subject of such units and the knowledge of other units in the other subjects at the same level. However, we might not find a unit of Islamic education in some class due to a lack of ideas in the subject that the unit addresses ". One of the curriculum teachers said:" Subjects are distributed in order to achieve goals of interdependence between content of Islamic education branches and content of the school books of other subjects that students learn, and the arrangement of subjects in the book was made in a certain way that may help to link these subjects, where no subject that depends on another which the student has yet to be exposed to, shall be introduced until integration of the knowledge introduction to the student is achieved; such integration shall lead students to be aware of the essence of Islam and its capability to address all life issues".

One of the authors said: "one of the variation measures is non-repetition of subjects, for the reason that such subjects were thoroughly studied, thus other subjects were brought in". Another author said: "addressing subjects was done gradually. It started simply and got more and more in depth through classes, with no repetition of concepts, facts, ideas and principles of some subjects. In addition, repetition of lessons' titles was adopted to enable students to absorb other elements of knowledge".

One of the teachers said: "coordination and interdependence in introducing lessons enable students to absorb independent subjects together without any confusion. For instance, we realise that subjects of Qur'an verses and Tafseer are spread throughout the book units enabling students to find integration between such units helping them to memorise and build up a sustainable knowledge". One of the teachers said: "such distribution was developed in order to achieve integration. This means finding a precise relationship between curriculum elements, as well as finding a relationship between educational expertise which may lead to integration as a result of a connection between thoughts and concepts in subjects and activity types in educational subjects. Integration may help learners to establish a comprehensive and wider perspective guiding their attitude in life". Another teacher has emphasised on the approach of integration and coordination between Islamic education subjects' goals and its contents through classes in a special way and the concepts of other studies.

**6.1.2.6 Compliance with the Time Frame Determined in the Study Plan**

Islamic education was taught twice a week, in addition to one weekly period for the Qur'an recitation and its intonations. Selecting units, subjects and lessons was done in accordance with the number of periods. One of the authors said: "subjects were categorised to suit the time period". Another author said:" Study days shall be calculated as per the schedule, and subjects that fit the time period shall be selected following the Ministry of Education's instructions and the requirements to spread lessons over two periods, avoiding overcrowding lessons in a single period and leaving empty periods". One of the teachers said: "one of the measures is suitability of the introduced subjects and units with the allocated time, social context and the place".

**6.1.2.7 Balance**

Only one teacher has mentioned this measure, he said: "each unit of the Islamic education branches will be met by introducing subjects in accordance with the education level. For instance, the biography of the Prophet shall not overcome units at any level that we must adopt moderation in introducing and illustrating such subject".

**6.1.3 Revealing Results Related to the Answer of the Third Question:**

What are the measures approved in selecting a specific subjects amongst different themes of one branch in the content of Islamic education books?

One unit of study includes specific subjects for all levels and the same unit also includes other subjects which are taught in other levels. The results of the open interview with one of the interview sample showed the presence of several measures which were approved or currently being approved to select specific subject out of the same branch for one class only. Such measures are as follows:

**6.1.3.1 Islamic Education Curriculum and Its outlines in the Primary Education Levels**

One of the authors has indicated that in compliance with Islamic education curriculum document stipulations and its outlines, certain subjects were selected amongst themes of the same branch in the content of Islamic education books. He said: "after getting acquainted with the list of concepts existing in the outlines of the level (meaning the curriculum document and its outlines), we were told as authors that: take this list, you should base your work upon it, stick to vocabularies and subjects that you specified.

**6.1.3.2 Goals**

Lessons' vocabularies reflect the goals. One of the participants in authorship has indicated: "selecting subjects came in order to achieve the purpose of the lesson's concept, vocabularies

of one branch included in the lesson or lessons. This is based upon special goals for each subject proved by the curriculum where vocabularies' purposes tune with the goals achieved, and that all vocabularies needed were for the purpose of completing information". A curriculum teacher said: "the selection of such subjects amongst different themes of one branch came in order to achieve goals strived for despite the variation of goals such as strengthening the faith and the relation with the Qur'an, recitation, memorising and interpreting, strengthening relation with the Hadith, the Biography of the Prophet, practicing jurisprudence and observing ethics. Subjects which achieve these goals shall be selected". Some of the teachers have emphasised these measures briefly by saying: "this was developed based on the variation of goals", another said: "this should be made according to the goals strived for". A female teacher said "depends of suitability of the goals".

### 6.1.3.3 Importance

One of the national team members said: "one of the important measures which were used in selecting certain subjects amongst themes of one branch is the relative significance of a subject and its ability to achieve goals". Two of the authors has also emphasised this by saying: "this was developed to indicate the importance of the subject", another said: "selecting certain subjects is arranged according to the level of importance, priorities, and the importance of information from students' perspective according to their age and their general and special interactions". One of curriculum management members said: "selection shall be made based on the importance of the subject. For instance, prayer will be selected and will have the priority over other issues due to its importance".

One of the educational supervisors emphasised this by saying: "when selecting content, the importance of the branch should be taken into account starting with the creed, Qur'an, then

Hadith, and so forth. Concerning the creed, pillars of faith comes first starting with the believe in Allah and all related issues, and then faith in His almighty angels, and etc. Taking into consideration what is important for student and what must be learned first, general ethics of the Muslim must come first, and then acts of worship, i.e. testimony of faith, prayer and fasting. One of the teachers said: "selection shall be made according to the scientific importance of the introduced subject". One of the female teachers said: "selection refers to the importance of the subject. Introducing the subject of prayer for instance at lower primary levels was made due to its importance for students in order for them to envisage prayer being the second pillar of Islam, a pillar of faith, and an important cornerstone". One of the teachers said: "such introduction was brought to indicate the importance of each subject". A female teacher said: "subjects shall be selected in accordance with their importance".

### 6.1.3.4 Nature and Logic of Subject:

One of the national team members commented on what is the most the important measure in selecting subjects amongst themes of one branch; he said: "taking into consideration the nature of the subject and its suitability to be introduced at students' level". Another member has emphasised that by saying: "students at first levels know the most important pillars such as the testimony of faith, and are aware of the religious duties and their details without a great deal of understanding, due to the Islamic education logic that imposes learning creed first then religious duties the Qur'an had focused on creed in Mekkah for thirteen years; after establishing the creed in people's hearts, the focus went to religious duties for ten years in Madinah. One of the participants in authoring said: "that was developed in accordance with the logic of the subject. The Prophet had ordered prayer right after the testimony of faith, and therefore the start shall be by learning to pray, and that requires more allocated time, then the teacher will proceed to other issues". One of the supervisory committee members said:

"subjects shall be distributed based upon the nature of the subject, i.e. creed, worship, and intellect. At first we start to consolidate creed then we proceed to acts of worship, then to thinking and its requirements". One of the female teachers said:" Due to the vastness of almsgiving (Zakat) branch, it cannot be introduced at lower levels because they may not be able to absorb it until they reach advanced levels. Similarly, Hajj has many practical matters that need students' understanding and concentration for longer times which may cause them to feel unfocused and distracted".

**6.1.3.5 Nature and Needs of Learner**

Interview sample individuals had focused on nature and needs of learners as a measure to select certain subjects. Statements of the national team members prove this. One of them said: "the nature of the learner requires it". Another one said: "It is worth mentioning that most of these measures had slipped off authors' minds, and one of the important measures is the suitability of introducing subjects to match students' level, taking into consideration personal differences between them". A third member went into details and said: "if a ten year old child was ordered to pray in fourth grade, a child from the first grade would be training on ablution and prayer so that by the fourth grade he will be able to perform prayer. Each subject will be taken step by step; for example while the almsgiving shall be introduced in the first grades just for reference, its provisions will be introduced in the sixth and the seventh grade. And since the child is not obliged to conduct the Hajj until he reaches fifteen years old, learning its provisions were left for grade 8". One of the participants in authoring said: "this was adopted in consideration of learners' ages and their ability to learn. Prior knowledge will be revisited in advanced levels though". Another one said: "because of learners' different cognitive abilities, learners in lower levels will be exposed to the subject using images more than texts, due to the difficulty to absorb texts". Another one said: "justification of this is the level and

needs, where a grade ten student should not be lectured about prayer because he was exposed to it extensively few times before, but was exposed to inheritance matters in a simple way to suit his ability bearing in mind that it planned for grade nine, and because of its difficulty to understand it, it was chosen for grade ten instead".

Some of the interview sample individuals have emphasised this measure. One of the supervisory committee members said: "subjects are selected in accordance with the needs of students' level and in terms of their mental, physical, and intellectual development". One of the college teachers said: "subjects are selected in accordance with learners' needs, for instance, almsgiving requires spending while the child is incapable of doing it, and full believe in creed shall precedes the practical believe". In this regard, we must take into consideration, as one of the teachers said, the student need, his level, and his maturity. One of the educational supervisors says: "selection was made in order for content to be suitable with students' needs and their mental ability such as the necessity of faith, oneness of Allah, believe in angels, necessity of worship, the two Islamic testimonies, prayer, parents rights, neighbours rights, taking the social necessity into consideration (conflicts) that society is in need of". Another supervisor says: "any unit or a subject framed for one age group is suitable for students' ages, for instance, Tahara or purity issue shall be introduced in seventh grade, and Ghusl or washing the whole body issue shall be introduced in ninth grade; the issue of bonds IVF babies, and organs transplant issues shall be raised in secondary level in order to achieve integration between subjects or study units during students' education. Regarding the issue of creed, the focus will be on its definition and its pillars it shall be concentrated on its definition and its pillars, and later on the focus will be on its properties and consequences which indicate that perception of students is wider than the preceding age group".

Teachers have emphasised this measure, one of them said: "such thing shall be made in accordance with students' level, development, interest and their previous experiences and needs". Another one said: "when selecting, interest and tendencies of students shall be taken into account, as well as their realistic needs and how such information could be employed in real life". In consideration of students' maturity level and diversity of subjects, it was built upon diversity of students' interests, as well as taking into consideration personal differences in absorbing the theory and practice". Two female teachers said the same thing: "the nature of learners was used for this. Grade five students are required to learn and perform the prayer at this age, while they are not obliged to give alms or perform the Hajj".

## 6.1.3.6 The Functional Dimension of Subject

Islamic education includes all life aspects, focusing on practical applications as much as verbal collection. In that sequence, the selection of certain subjects amongst the content of Islamic education branches shall be made on the basis of the functional dimension. One of the national team members says: "there is an interdependence of subjects in people's life. Islamic education includes all life aspects which may be reflected in the life of individuals". Another member said: "there must be a functional dimension of the educational material. Any subject which deemed to be not useful at a particular level shall be addressed at a later educational level. Based on the foregoing, we did not rush into the topics of Al-Hajj and Almsgiving and their provisions at lower primary levels because students do not have money and are not required to perform the Hajj. Students' only concern at this level is what was mentioned in the Hadith (Order your children to pray when they turn seven…..) followed by fasting". A third member said: "such arrangement was used according to the child's needs. When he is at early stages he needs to know about Islamic testimony of faith, to learn ablution and prayer in compliance with the order of the Prophet in the Hadith: "order your children to pray…". As

the child is progressing from early childhood stage to the next stage, he shall be taught other topics such as al-Hajj and almsgiving and other topics, due to his needs of such actions in his daily life".

Participants have concentrated in authoring books on the functional dimension of subjects. One of them said: "this was developed in accordance with employing information with the learner's age. Young children cannot use information and older children can resist longer" Another one said: "this was developed in accordance with real life application of Islamic education, and therefore it goes beyond mental and emotional spiritual knowledge to reach realistic practical life applications". A curriculum teacher said: "the existence of real life application and the functional aspect of knowledge in students life enables them to understand the subject quickly. This is why prayer and fasting are introduced earlier than other subjects". One of the female teachers said: "it is because the knowledge of these subjects is used a lot in our daily life".

### 6.1.3.7 Gradient and Sequence

Gradient was taken into account in the selection of subjects in conjunction with learners' level, as one of the female teachers said: "start with the main subject (the basis), then follow and progress according to the importance of the subject in the whole branch". One of the national team members said: "one of the important measures is the gradual introduction of subjects in a spiral pattern to form an abstract picture where concepts can be followed without interruption. This was developed on the basis of the concept of gradient". Another member said: "such selection was conducted on the basis of the sequential introduction to the educational material, and the transition in learning from one stage to another or from one level to another. On that basis, organisation of books' content was developed in the spider web".

One of the authors has indicated that: "this selection exists in pursuant of the spiral pattern. Subjects are addressed in a simple form and get gradually more in-depth and wider through levels". Another author said: "authoring books was made according to the spiral pattern in introducing knowledge materials. For instance, in regard to creed, students will be taught about faith pillars each year where concepts are presented according to students' development and their ability to absorb. So they will be given a subject in one class, and another subject in a different class for the purpose of gradient as well as what have been said in previous classes and what comes in the next classes to avoid any repetition". A third author emphasises on gradient and non-repetition by saying: "the aim is to avoid subject repetition in classes, and in order to achieve integration in subjects for each branch, in biography of the Prophet, jurisprudence, etc. The biography of the Prophet for instance is taught continuously until achieving the full concept at the next level, and such subject can be repeated in a more in-depth way". One of the authors illustrated spiral pattern building method by saying: "the selection was made using the spiral pattern comprehensive approach in forming the curriculum. For instance the Islamic social order, starting with the importance of the father and mother, parents' obedience, parents' obligations and rights, engagements, marriage, divorce and inheritance".

Selecting certain subjects amongst themes of one branch is, as one of the supervisory committee members said: "selecting gradually", and as one of the educational supervisors said: "in continuity of subject content (sequence of content expertise)". One of the teachers said:" gradually introduce information to students, meaning that it is not appropriate to speak to a grade five students about the Prophet's death before being exposed to his mission, its details and justifications. Gradient aims at starting with simple information to the more important one in order to consolidate students' concepts". Another teacher says:  "What

concerns us in this matter is the repetition of concepts and extending it in a gradual and spiral form, meaning a reasonable gradient from one stage to another or from one class to another, where each one depends on the other". A third teacher says: "it depends on the vertical expansion of the curriculum; subjects shall be addressed gradually. For instance, belief in angels, will be preceded by belief in Allah, and shall precede belief in the day of judgement".

Female teachers emphasised such sequence in subjects for students of this level from the most important to the less important. One of the teachers said: "primary level students are in need to be introduced to prayer and its pillars and conditions, purity more than the Hajj due to their obligation to implement such deeds; sometimes in some curricula we do not find such measure". One of the teachers added:" The book of Islamic education with all its branches is like any other subject that starts focusing on majors issues which are considered the base of other issues. For instance, it is not logical to speak about woman and her position in Islam at early educational stages, or about social order and current deviant groups, relation of the person with society, business, will, or inheritance before focusing on the major issues, such as creed and faith. Gradient manifests in stating names and attributes of Allah and prayer as mentioned in the curriculum of fourth grade, and some attributes of the Prophet in order to follow the example. Then in every branch, we work gradually with students on issues according to their mental level". Gradient aims, as one of the teachers said:" to facilitate absorbing and knowledge for student".

### 6.1.3.8 Integration

The president of the national team has declared that the important measures are: "vertical integration between subjects of one branch and integration between branches of Islamic education and its integration with other sciences, where other subjects will be derived from

Islamic education, for instance, in social studies Islamic education confirms person's relation with society with the emphasis of the Prophet was born within a social environment. Subjects of Islamic education confirm a child's adherence with his society, something social studies are supposed to confirm as well. One of the national team members said: "integration approach between ages and gradient are the most important measures, and since we cannot repeat subjects, then major pillars will be taught first, then the Islamic testimony of faith, then prayer, followed by fasting at further levels, then Almsgivings and Al-Hajj and so forth. Students will be taught faith in Allah and His almighty power and greatness, followed by belief in the divine books and Prophets, until reaching belief in the day of judgement and belief in destiny at advanced classes of the level".

Interview sample individuals emphasised horizontal integration where one of the curriculum teachers said: "horizontal integration will be used with Arabic language and social subjects". One of the educational supervisors says: "Integration in content subjects is taking into account integrating subjects of Islamic education books contents with subjects of other books' contents (characteristics of integrated curriculum)". One of the teachers says: "there is an integrative measure between subjects which were taken into consideration in a certain class in order to avoid repetition in another class". Another teacher says: "selection shall be made on the basis of its relation with other subjects, and its relation with what is being introduced in science. Integration from the perspective of one of the teachers means integration of educational unit subjects during students' education", as he says: "teaching Islamic punishment topic will be in grade ten, the topic of retribution in another class, and reprehension in a different class achieving integration in educational unit through students' education".

### 6.1.3.9 Repetition and Diversity

Repetition and diversity is closely related to gradient and integration, as well as consolidation. One of the curriculum management members said: "it means repeating subjects extensively and adding extras for the purpose of diversity and repetition". One of the teachers says: "selection is made due to the diversity of subjects. Such diversity is due to enrich students' interests, taking into account their ability and differences in absorbing such subjects". Another teacher says: "selection is made in order to achieve diversity in content for one unit, meaning to vary introduced subjects under each unit title in accordance with the educational phase; i.e. creed unit in grade five book addresses the names of Allah Almighty, while the same unit for grade six addresses pillars of faith mostly, and in grade seven the same unit addresses subjects of the day of judgements which is one of faith pillars; while in grade eight evidences of Allah's power were introduced through thinking about the universe. In grade nine, miracles of the Prophets were addressed, while in grade ten, the book addresses issues like means of living, trust in Allah, death, etc. Such diversity was used in order to show the importance of each subject within the educational level, the appropriateness of educational grade, and its suitability with the addressed subjects".

### 6.1.4 Measures Used for Organisation

The results of interviewing the sample showed the presence of different measures is used for organising Islamic education books content; at lower primary levels (1-4) on the basis of relations, and levels (5-10) on the basis of educational units. These measures are as follows:

### 6.1.4.1 Islamic Education Curriculum and Its Outlines at Primary Education Level

As one of the participants in books authoring said, pointing the outlines: "Organising books' content for the first four grades is done on the basis of learners' relation with Allah, the

Qur'an, the Prophet, themselves, their family, their society and their environment. It is also concerned with organising content of advanced level". One of the educational supervisors, a participant in the authoring said: "Such organisation is clear in the teacher's book, starting with the nature of relation in the first grade, in terms of the person's relation with his Creator, then with himself, then with people. After this, a number of subjects will be introduced at advanced grades as units". One of the curriculum teachers at one of the colleges says: "Such organisation is controlled by the outlines and the general specifications of Islamic education books which were indicated in the fifth outline of Islamic education curriculum. The fifth outline divides specifications of Islamic education books in terms of content (goals, sources, verses of the Qur'an and Prophet sayings, values and approaches, methods of addressing subjects, witnessing, real life contexts, the use of strong evidence, taking into account Islamic guidance in education, practical activities, educational methods and assessment approaches), and in terms of the form and the presentation".

### 6.1.4.2 Goals

"Dividing Islamic education books' units at early grades was made on the basis of relations and on the basis of units at advanced grades in accordance with the goals of the primary level" as one of the national team members stated. Another member says who was involved with following up authoring: "organisation of Islamic education books' contents at grades (1-4) of the primary level is done on the basis of relations in order to achieve goals aimed for. We want the child to develop a relation with Allah, Prophet, Qur'an and Hadith, his family, relatives, neighbours, society and the environment". A teacher who was a participant in authoring said: "the unnecessary segregation between Islamic education branches at early stages made that organisation at grades (1-4) was done according to relations, while from grades (5-10) on units. It was mainly because education aims to supply students with

behaviours, while segregation suits better students at advanced grades where they are able to notice the differences between branches". Another author says: "the issue of relations, such as the Muslim's relation with his Creator can be called general goals, and as the student ages, his need for more specific subjects becomes necessary". Teaching Islamic education aims to building Islamic personality, psychologically and personally; organising relations came under the psychological factor, and units came under psychological and personal together, due to the need of covering all aspects in building the child personality".

### 6.1.4.3 Importance

One of the authors said: "the organisation of books is based on the author's initiative which achieves the interest sought after. Thus, Creed comes first, then regulations, the most important and so forth. This emanates from the prophet's emphasis on creed and the Maki Qur'an."

### 6.1.4.4 Teacher Qualifications and Subject Specialism

Some of the interview sample individuals have pointed out that content's organisation depends on the teacher's qualification and subject specialism. A member of the national team said: "such approach is for the first four grades, due to the characteristics of these grades where a teacher will be teaching all subjects of a grade. Whereas for higher grades it was taken into account the fact that a specialist teacher will be teaching these grades". One of the authors has briefly stated in respect of this issue that: "such organisation was developed to simplify the information in early stages enabling teachers to interact with learners". Others have said: "the general approach in all books – the first four grades – was introduced without specialised units, due to an increasing reliance of students on the teacher more than themselves; in addition their reading skills are not strong enough. The rationale behind this is

that topics were introduced without being too speciality-driven because it is difficult for a student at this age to go beyond this content. Organising content as specialised units may result in a rigidity of the curriculum, and restrict the curriculum for each grade. This may result in a lack of motivation amongst children. This is an educational topic that needs to be studied further". Another author said: "a non-specialist teacher in Islamic education shall teach the first four grades, therefore, the contents of such books were organised as units on the basis of non-specialised integrative relation; advanced grades (5-10) are taught by a specialist teacher who is specialised in Islamic and education sciences. He is capable of teaching specialised topics, therefore, the content of such books was organised as specialised units". One of the teachers said: "such organisation was made in accordance with the level of the teacher. A clear distinction was made between a subject specialist teacher and a non-specialist teacher".

**6.1.4.5 Nature of Learner**

Most of the interview sample individuals emphasised that content organisation was made on the basis of the nature of learners and their abilities and age stage. One of the national team members said: "organisation of Islamic education books for the first grades was made considering child age, intellect and culture. Therefore, organisation of Islamic education books' contents at grades from (5-10) was made in units form. Evaluation of the first four grades' books can be conducted answering the following questions: were such books over the level of students in terms of content and volume? Was its material appropriate for students' age? Were such books able to reflect measures, especially that such books use images more?" Another member said: "content of Islamic education books at the first four grades of the primary level was organised in an integrative relation. This is due to the fact that the nature of development within children, especially at this level, is intersected and integrated, and that

children usually remember generalities before little details". One of the curriculum management members said:" Organisation at lower levels is based upon relations so it suits students' ages, and because it is closer to student psychology. At advanced grades, organisation was based upon units as result of student's ability to tell the right from wrong". A member participant in authoring said: "organisation of Islamic education books' contents was made at grades (1-4) of the primary level on the basis of relations in order to achieve the comprehensiveness of the topic, focusing on child behaviours and relations, which suit learners' abilities. Regarding grades (5-10) relations ramify and intersect, therefore, the organisation of books content was laid out as subject units".

One of the national team members, who is also a member of the supervisory committee has emphasised this measure by saying: "organisation of Islamic education books was divided into two sections at the primary level: First primary (1-4) curriculum which is built on the basis of a child relations with his surrounding, his Creator, the Prophet's companions may Allah bless them, his family, relatives, and environment. Regarding the second primary level, the curriculum is built on the basis of study units' form Qur'an, Hadith, creed and the Prophet biography. Such organisation was developed in consideration of child's age, academic level, and educational stage in order to prevent involving students in units that they cannot assimilate at this stage due to their youthful mental abilities regarding absorbing specialism". One of the supervisory committee members, who was also a participant in authoring said: "books for (1-4) were organised in relations form, and for (5-10) in units form because it suits the child's mentality. In addition, the level of conversation may vary among learners and each grade and level has its own characteristics, therefore we can't approach lower levels and advanced levels similarly or vice versa. Such method was initiated from the Prophet saying: "I was ordered to speak to people according to their minds and what they can understand",

meaning that youth under the age of puberty cannot be approached as those who have reached the puberty age, and those who have reached puberty cannot be approached the same way as adults. In some cases, it is appropriate to combine methods, relations and units in accordance with age and topic; however, relations method inclines to simplicity and may cause learners at lower levels to be bored. Curriculum and books must have some kind of challenge; however inappropriate challenge can cause learners to be frustrated, while insufficient challenge may push learners to be careless and less serious. Therefore, the curriculum must be adequate with students' age, culture and abilities".

One of the authors have emphasised this measure by saying: "organising information at the first grades in relations form was developed because such form suits nature and age group of the learner, whereas learners at advanced levels have already reached a level where they can absorb concepts and use them, therefore such approaches must be different from other levels". Generalities at lower levels are noticeable such as I am a Muslim child, while in advanced levels it will be a deeper concept than this, and as students progress they become more related to concepts and will be exposed to advanced issues". One of the supervisory committee members says: "when organising, mental development and student educational needs will be taken into consideration, which requires simplifying in first grades then moving swiftly from the general to the specific". One of the educational supervisors says: "organisation was made in consideration of personal differences between students, meaning that, a first grade student does not have the mental ability that a ten grade student enjoys".

Teachers have focused on that measure. One of those teachers said: "organising content depends on the appropriate form which suits needs and interests of students". One of the female teachers explains the reason of such organisation by saying: "because it suits development of learners, we want them to develop ideas and principles, such as relationship

with Allah, a basic principle that a student will carry for a very long time. The material is simplified in order to be kept and enrooted, and then in-depth details start at advanced levels such as creed and Prophet Biography subjects, etc.  After successfully assimilated the information, students can conclude and link the past and present, ask questions and therefore achieve the intended objectives". One of the female teachers says: "I believe that such organisation is related to students' levels and to their prior knowledge. Students of lower grades at primary level are more capable of understanding subjects through relations form, while students at advanced grades are more capable of handling a whole unit with its different topics then move on to another". One of the teachers thinks that: "repetition of organising content leads students to frustration and boredom, while if there was revival and diversity in topics, then that shall give the students a high susceptibility to absorb such information and stabilise it in their mind".

**6.1.4.6 Integration**

Knowledge in Islam – as one of the national team members insisted – is integrated, meaning to take the path that may achieve knowledge unity in the educational content, therefore, Islamic education books' content was organised in the first four grades of the primary level in integrative relations form because children are more capable of remembering generalities before specific issues. Whereas content at advanced grades were organised in units form, meaning that each unit has lessons with interrelated topics". Another member says: "the curriculum is supposed to address student relations with his surrounding, with Allah, the Prophet, the Prophet's companions, his family, relatives, neighbours, Islamic society and the natural environment. The new curriculum of Islamic education contents for the first four grades at primary level was based on relations or the five principles. These five principles are addressed in the Qur'an, Hadith, creed, Prophet Biography, and jurisprudence, or any other

form of integrative curriculum. The best method for Muslims is integrative curriculum divided into two major sections: creed (spirit and faith), and religion (practical and applicable) which is better than shredding Islam into many ideas where creed and religion have their own nature and division into Qur'an and Hadith which is inadequate and inappropriate for Islam. As for the curriculum of Islamic education at advanced grades in primary levels, it is based on branch units, where there is the Qur'an unit, Hadith, creed, Prophet Biography, jurisprudence, ethics and morals, then Islamic systems and intellect. Such organisation was made in pursuant of primary level goals, while building content of these books is supposed to be based upon the five principles, therefore, I suggested in my book, the curriculum from an Islamic perspective which is originally a doctorate thesis, a system for the five relations for fifth and sixth grades. And I recommend completing this in the remaining grades of the level in order for the curriculum of this level to be completed".

One of the participants in authoring agrees with such recommendation by saying: "I believe in organising and presenting content of Islamic education books in an integrative way due to the impact of such presentation on the integration of subject (knowledge unity). Integration comes from within the subject where any lesson that involves Qur'an and Hadith, or Prophet Biography events or ethics unit shows integration. In addition, the focus on integration comes to provide students with integrative awareness of all aspects of one subject, and we refuse to insert the idea of specialty at this level when the curriculum is still academically specialised. So are we able to reconsider our approach and teach students through life to prepare them for it? And why doesn't the education institution, which deals with all citizens – through education studies –, establish a civilised society".

One of the national team members, who was one of the authors and a member of the supervisory committee, disagrees with the previous recommendation by saying: "Islamic

education books at grades (1-4) were organised in a relations form, in order to provide an integrative image of Islam in accordance with student and his relation with Allah and Qur'an, Prophet, himself, his family, his neighbours, and then with his household. As far as grades (5-10) concerned, contents were organised as before in a units form, despite that it preferred to be designed in relations form, but this is a new experience that could succeed. And we don't want to proceed with all grades".

A university teacher said: "Islam is formed of many fields; units divide its parts and make it a decomposed religion. Such specialisation could be in secondary level, therefore there is no option but integrative approach in introducing the study material. Islamic curriculum in its integrative form helps improve students' cognitive skills and critical thinking and, as one of the teachers said 'creates geniuses every day'. One of the teachers indicated some of the features of the current curriculum by saying: "I believe that what distinguishes the curriculum is the emphasis on integration and coordination between its goals and contents throughout grades of the level on one hand and other study curricula on the other hand".

### 6.1.5 Content Organisation Method

Results of interviewing sample personnel showed the following:

Method of organising and editing content: as a result of analysing a sample of Islamic education books, it was clear that, as one of the national team member said: "developing content starts with the main objective of the lesson (lesson title), and then a brief introduction in preparation of the lesson, and sub headings. Concepts related to the lesson are usually introduced in a narrative form and in some cases, in answering a question, a story, quotes, then the main activity of the lesson, and finally a plenary activity with an evaluation". One of the authors said: "in order to achieve an appropriate readability of the book with students'

level, book's paragraphs have to start with sentences pointing out the main concepts, then a detailed illustration of such concepts. These instructions, guidance and illustrations must be clearly formulated, and for the sequence approach to be appropriate with learners". One of the supervisory committee members, who is also a participant in authoring questions: "how is the book written? Is the book designated to students or in second person? Why don't we use the second person (i.e. Wash your hands instead of now the student washes his/her hands)? Does the book build positive approaches towards vocabularies of the subject? A Muslim child maintains his hands, a Muslim child maintains his eyes, and the book designation is procedural. Then he adds, good introduction of the book content is a good guide that may help the teacher, and introduces the subject in a certain way which may be simple for the learner to absorb, as well as diversifying activities and evaluations helping teachers to create a learning environment in the classroom. In addition, introducing the subject in the book is supposed to facilitate learning of the subject as well as facilitating conducting different mental thinking. It is supposed for the subject to be reasonably organised starting from easy to difficult accordingly and from the known to the unknown and from global to particular. The subject is also expected to give emphasis on concepts and to simplify students self-learning through dividing subject into parts and through enriching the subject with a number of exercises, examples, questions and real life activities related to the environment and current events".

One of the educational supervisors, who is also a participant in authoring, explains the method of organising content saying: "the form of introducing lessons should make learning easier by making illustration charts directly relevant with the verbal text, and make it specific, clear, and understandable by learner. In order for the content to motivate students, it must include clear, direct, and appropriate examples on questions which interests learners".

One of the authors compares between previous and current books methods saying: "current books are different from previous books, where previous books were more focused on the scientific material and subject, then moved into delivering information and subject focusing on teaching methods, using different activities and technology. Previous books were rich of information but extensive at the same time, while new books points to modern methods which are better in terms of teaching delivery". One of the national team members has focused on the introduction method of creed subjects, he said: "in terms of introducing the study material, we find that in creed unit, authors had mainly opted for memorisation method in introducing the educational material feeding the information with the minimum evidences in first grades, and expanded as the student progresses. Based on that we used to introduce the concept of resurrection with no mental evidences at the first phase, and then evidences shall be clarified at a further level as well as the subject of Allah Oneness and so forth. Evidences of creation and power of Allah Almighty will be expanded according to the grade".

One of the teachers criticises the method of organising educational material content by saying: "narration method was used; methods such as acting, discussion, and story do not exist". One of the teachers determines the introduction method of the educational material by saying: "educational material is introduced in a simple form resulting in enrooting the subject in students' minds with no difficulties, as well as using appropriate language that suits students' skills and language". One of the teachers points out the variation in introducing content by saying: "variation in introducing branches of Islamic education was in different forms, such as: investigation (through activity, experiment and implementation), direct (narrating information), questions (questions on images that students answer), historical (narrating stories and Prophet biography), inquisitive (questioning), in addition to linking content with reality, and relying on prior learning".

Regarding the distribution of the educational material's vocabularies, a number of lessons in units depend on, as one of the national team member mentioned: "the nature of the unit. For instance Qur'an and Hadith were spread over the two years along with the other units in order to avoid discontinuation; moreover, the fact that – any student after tenth grade - might not fulfil provisions of Qur'an recitation. Such distribution was made while maintaining the characteristics of the unit to avoid distracting students. We deliver a comprehensive teaching where main concepts must exist along with kinaesthetic lesson without neglecting the unit of Oneness (unit subject). For instance, there are Qur'anic verses and Prophet's sayings that point out rulings regarding gambling". One of the national team members, who was also concerned with following up authoring indicates the method that Qur'anic Chapters were determined by saying: "Qur'anic chapters were spread over the curriculum according to chapter length. It should be pointed out that there is no study conducted to determine the basis of selecting Qur'anic verses".

One of the national team members, who is also one of the curriculum editors and a participant in authoring, emphasises such distribution by saying: "authors preferred in introducing the educational material for verses and Prophet Hadiths to be spread over the entire educational year in books in order to ease memorising them. Learners are asked to revise such verses and Hadiths in order to use as evidence of the content. Variation in arranging units in grades is not rigid; in the first and the second years, teachers have the flexibility to defer or forward addressing the units, while containing the educational material in one book for the two years or a separate book for each year is an organisational matter that curriculum directorate may conduct to facilitate for the student. The important thing is lessons being connected with each other in a topical system". One of the authors indicates the distribution method of jurisprudence subjects in addition to Qur'anic chapters and Hadith by saying: "jurisprudence,

Qur'an and Hadith lessons were spread over the entire year to avoid boredom of students or inability of continuing in the process of memorising Qur'anic texts, for instance, ninth grade book, the topic of Wakalah, Al-Fath chapter, punishments in Islam, all came consecutively because students are not obligated to be aware of such unit. All students have to do is to absorb such information".

One of the national team members, who is also a member of the supervisory committee, points out that content did not include some topics by saying: "it is noticeable that the curriculum did not cover the material that should have been delivered to students such as fundamentals of jurisprudence, subjects which were slightly introduced; acts of worship topic did not come in integrative form, and systems were not fulfilled in regard of Islam multiple systems, ethics and refinement had focused on positive aspects".

### 6.1.6 Displaying Results of Documents' Content Analysis

In addition to open interviews, the researcher has employed the method of content analysis in answering questions of his study. Most of the participants of the interview sample individuals during their interviews have pointed out the necessity of analysing such documents, they also pointed out that such documents, analysis sample, are the reference of conditions and specifications announced by the Ministry of Education and were agreed upon amongst the Ministry and the society and members of Islamic education books authorship. Many of those members have emphasised the importance of referring to Islamic education curriculum and its outlines at primary education level for the reason that such documents are the base approved to be referred to in authoring Islamic education books and determination of its vocabularies.

The researcher has gone through these documents deriving measures from its ideas, explicitly and tacitly. Then he monitored repetition and calculated the percentage of each measure

within every category or field it belongs to, and then arranged them in an appropriate statistic table. The following is an introduction of the analysis' results of the documents' sample content:

Spreading measures appeared in analysis document sample in accordance with the type of measures:

Analysis of the document sample has showed that it contained 752 vocabulary units, 427 measures to select content of Islamic education books, a percentage of 56.78%. It also included 325 measures to organise contents of such books indicating a percentage of 43.22% which indicates prevalence of selection measures over organisation measures which is illustrated in table 2.

# CONCLUSION

The research has explored Islamic education particularly the development of its content and methods of teaching in the specific context of the country of Jordan by a combination of primary and secondary research, as well as study of extensive literature relevant to the topic of research. In order to achieve what it set out to, the researcher has carried out an extensive survey of the published and unpublished literature as well as the data collected during the field work and the interviews.

The main theme of the thesis was to assess how the content of Islamic education curriculum has been developed and what methodologies have been employed to teach that specifically in the Jordanian context. To make the study comprehensive, the above theme was further expanded into specific questions and so various relevant considerations were taken into account; ranging from the social historical context of the subject to pure technicalities pertinent to the theory of education and curriculum development.

In what follows a first brief summary of the thesis is presented in a sequential manner which is concluded by a detailed discussion on final results particularly in correspondence to the following three specific questions that were set prior to conducting the field work:

1. What are the measures adopted in selecting the Islamic education books content in the primary level in Jordan?

2. What are the adopted measures that have led to the variation in selecting contents of Islamic education branches and its distribution in primary level books in Jordan?

3. What are the measures approved in selecting a specific subjects amongst different themes of one branch in the content of Islamic education books?

In addition, an account is presented on further research possibilities in the area and certain recommendations are offered.

After the introduction, which discussed the significance of the subject of this study and also offered a brief outline of its structure, the first chapter established the contextual framework for the thesis. The first chapter, therefore, offered a detailed discussion on education and its aims and objectives and on Islamic education, including its aims, objectives and how it is distinct from religious education. In between, the author also discussed Islamic education in the specific context of Jordan. It traced the evolution of Islamic education in line with the evolution and development in state and education policies of the country. On the one hand it asserted that Jordan being a Muslim country has always been socially and politically compelled to improve and develop Islamic education since the formal establishment of its educational system in early eighties. On the other hand, it showed how the Jordanian government's ambitions in this regard were manifest in the process of the development of the Islamic education curriculum. One of the main issues that this chapter looked into specifically in the context of Jordan is the teachings of Islamic education in terms of how they aim to mould characters, personalities and attitudes of students.

Once done with the contextualisation, this study turned to examine the relevant literature available on the subject. The literature review chapter focused on specific themes pertinent to the subject. It began by assessing wider issues such as theories related to education and religious education. It then located Islamic education with the above-mentioned wider context and analysed some of the key areas specific to Islamic education. On the whole, the major subject-specific categories that this chapter discussed were related to Islamic education curricula, the Islamic education textbooks, including content evaluation, development of the content and selection and organisation of the content of Islamic education textbooks; Islamic

education and its standards in general, standards of selecting Qur'anic verses and standards of selecting the Prophetic Hadith.

With the third chapter this thesis turned technical in nature. It discussed at length teaching methods for Islamic education. In addition, it shed light on technicalities pertinent to Islamic education curriculum and its development. Various technical considerations were explained in order to demonstrate the real scope of content development in Islamic education. The discussion, however, also entailed ethical considerations such as emotional scope that is taken into consideration while talking of the content development. This chapter, in short, presented a bench mark upon which the researcher intended to assess his findings on the development and methodological nuances of the Islamic education curriculum.

Very similar to the above chapter, the fourth chapter too demonstrated the ideal scenario of the manifestation of the development of the Islamic education curriculum. It did not, however, engaged into discussions pertinent to teaching methods. It mainly focused on the formulation of the textbooks for Islamic education and their academic as well as ethical scope. The aim of this chapter was to set a standard. Although, the Jordanian context was often discussed in this chapter, but the real implications of this chapter would be realised when put against the findings mentioned in the sixth chapters.

The methodology statement was deliberately placed as the fifth chapter. This was partly to put emphasis on the fact that the core of this thesis is represented in the subsequent chapter, which contained the presentation of the results of the field work. Another important factor for the situation of this chapter was to prevent the reader from confusions that could possibly arise from the subsequent chapter. The methodology statement reflected that the researcher has not only performed an extensive study but he has also employed advanced

methodological tools to process the data collected. The manner in which the interview results were processed proved essential for the final results. For example, it was explained that the data collection was done through one-on-one interviews with the sample from the population. The interview was conducted in three phases. To begin with, the researcher started out with building trust and confidence among the respondents by initiating dialogues with them. This was done during the course of several meetings that also enabled the researcher to define clearly the purpose of the interviews and about what areas was information expected to be gathered. The respondents were also acquainted with the aims and objectives of the research, as also with the themes within education and specifically Islamic education that the research was focused on. After completing the first phase, the second phase then focused on actually conducting the interviews with the respondents, where the researcher raised questions that were pertinent to the research and documented the responses of the interviewees. The interview with an individual would be suspended when the information provided by the respondent would begin to get repetitive. The responses from the interviews were collected and content analysis of these was done by the researcher to analyse the responses and to present them in a systematic and meaningful manner, which would provide material to raise discussions on the various themes under education and Islamic education that the study is focusing on. The results from the research have been summarised and discussed in the following pages.

Immediately after a detailed and useful methodology statement the reader was led to the final results. It was, then, discussed that in terms of approved methods of selecting text books for Islamic education, the content analysis of primary data showed that there were several measures taken into consideration before the text books are selected. These measures include state and public policy and education philosophy and objectives in Jordan, which in turn is

based on socio-economic, political and cultural attitude of the country. Another measure is the education law in the Jordan that is considered to select text books for Islamic education. The guide provided to school book authors is also an important measure for selecting text books for Islamic education. The guide lays down instructions for authors to follow on various pertinent issues, including vocabulary, aims and objectives and others.

However, this compilation of directions was criticised for not fulfilling its purpose effectively and was therefore supplemented by the Education Development Plan that is then another factor on which selection of the text books for Islamic education is based.

Furthermore, the responses show that one important thing that is looked for, in any content for Islamic education in Jordan is how relevant it is in the current environment of a given time. This includes the author quoting examples that are new, current and relevant to the context of the Jordanian society. Besides this, almost all respondents who have been engaged in selecting course books agreed that the content of the book should be compatible with the objectives of the particular module or course that it is written for.

In this context, the subject of relevance deals with socio-economic and other factors, as well as the position of the country (here Jordan) and the position of Islam in the world. Thus, it goes beyond being simply concerned with matters internal to the country in focus but also covers matters relevant to the country in the larger, macro setting. Thus, if seen in the present situation, Islamic countries and Muslims around the world are struggling against poverty, unemployment, high population and illiteracy. The current Islamic curriculum then must cover these elements and prepare students with the skills and abilities to confront these issues and make a dent into the problem. The most important factor, however, is that the content of a

book confirms with the teachings and text included in the Qur'an and the Hadith, upon which the foundation of Islamic education lays.

From the above criteria for selecting text-books, the parameters upon which the content of Islamic education in Jordan is developed may then also be inferred. However, there are yet other parameters that also guide the writing of content. These include the larger aim of Islam, which concerns itself with instilling students with strong values and good morals among the citizens so that they in turn are able to build a strong society, country and region. The religious text of Islam is also a defendant of inclusivity in education. It is founded on and continues to stress on the belief that the specific needs and requirements of each student must be complied with. These requirements may be growth-related, mental or others. The focus on inclusive education is especially high at the primary level stage where each child's individuality and learning styles have to be established. However, it is also important to consider that the definition of inclusive has evolved over time. Inclusive education today goes beyond involving all students and treating all students as individuals so as to cater to their particular requirements and also involves imbibing students with lessons of respect, equality, acceptance and tolerance. The content and curricula must also be aligned to and complementary with scientific advancements in all areas of education, including technological advancement and knowledge development.

Finally, the fact that Islamic education is based on the understanding of a human being's position in the world under the Supreme Power or Allah, the knowledge of this understanding, i.e. the understanding of an individual' s position in the context of Allah must be disseminated through all modules and texts and in all subjects. This means that Islamic education requires the students to be able to gain the understanding of a range of subjects in the larger context of

Islam so that their knowledge, learning and subsequent profession or work is aligned to the teaching of Islam and Allah.

Another aspect of relevance of Islamic education and its texts is the tools and means through which this learning and knowledge is disseminated. As against earlier times when text books were the primary source of disseminating information and knowledge, today there are audio-visual and other means to interact with students and presenting the information to be given to them. Furthermore, the intention and focus of the modern teaching tools and methods is to promote and encourage self-learning, i.e. taking the knowledge and understanding beyond the text books and lectures. This process would facilitate students thinking for themselves, interpreting texts and values and imbibing the learning and values much more effectively than through the conventional means. However, primary research analysis has shown that there are not sufficient human resources, the self-learning process is largely absent in Jordan's education system and especially in Jordan's Islamic education. There is also another concern in this respect, wherein it is expressed that while the ideas and concepts are there in the minds of the authors and other people associated with developing educational systems and content, there is not enough will or means of implementing these thoughts and ideas. There is, as has been revealed through the interviewing process, a marked absence of a conducive environment within Islamic education institutes and establishments to promote interactive learning.

Relevance is also reflected in the tools of teaching adopted and the manner in which the information, texts from the religious doctrines and knowledge is presented before the students.

While on the matter of discussing content and text books in Islamic education, one area of concern is the existence of variations and inconsistencies in the content of these text books. It has been gathered from the data analysis that owing to various parameters for developing and selecting text-book content, the same content tends to be non-uniform and varying among different grades when compared against the ideal depth and coverage of a topic that is relevant and suitable for the age or grade of the student.  However, another set of responses to the question of variation and the absence of a gradual and consistent ascent into the depth of a subject or area of study is that the focus for students of lower grades should be on imbibing faith in them and in later stages, when they have been provided with the capacity to think and reason on a strong foundation of faith, would the curriculum then introduce topics like individuality in Islam, tolerance in Islam or women's position in an Islamic society, among others. Thus, the view on the matter of the progression of information from lower to higher grades is one area that requires further probing and thought.

The extensive discussion and debates on textbooks relating to Islamic education in Jordan and their content is important because the Jordanian Islamic education has come under severe criticism owing to allegations of low expertise among developers and designers of the curricula and pertinent content that does not effectively capture the education that Islam and the Quran intend and purport to provide to the people. Identifying and understanding this lapse in the present structure of Islamic education in the specific context of Jordan, it was therefore important for the researcher to take up this point extensively with the interviewed sample.

Political agenda and the political will towards education in any country and region, with regard to both non-religious education as well as religious education is important for determining how education takes shape in the said country and region. The political agenda or

willpower manifests in laws and policies of the government, which therefore is a very important tool that influences the system, status and significance assigned to education in the country or region.

In the context of the country of Jordan, the Educational Law was passed and enacted in the year 1964 with two amendments, in the years 1968 and 1994 respectively. The Education Board has been given the authority to develop the framework within which the developers and content creators, including authors work. The same department also sets the guidelines that are then used as one of the factors for finalizing course content and selecting coursework.

Among the various guidelines and outlines that the Education department prepares are the Islamic Education Curriculum, Information Employment that guides authors on means to connect information and teaching of the religious texts with the current realities and socio-political, economic and legal establishments in the present times. It is important to mention here that interviews with the sample of respondents brought forth the importance of re-evaluating the relevance of content vis-a-vis the age, emotional development and comprehending ability of the students. With the progression of time, access to information is becoming easier and communication is becoming more convenient and quicker. In this context, the lessons that were earlier deemed suitable for a particular age of students may have to now be taught to students younger than the original target students since it would be relevant to the younger students in the present time, who would be able to relate to the teachings and texts while they deal with it in real life.

The Educational Training Centre that is the nodal agency for supervising and monitoring the development and dissemination of information relating to Islamic education to the students has been developing means of empowering the content developers, authors and other experts

in Islamic education to enable them to develop better content and by engaging in relevant dissemination of teaching staying abreast of latest teaching tools and methods. Under this agenda, the Educational Training Centre provides training and managerial workshops to teachers, authors and other people concerned with Islamic education in varying capacities. They are also given training on using the latest available gadgets, tools, systems and methods so that they are familiar with these and are thus able to reach out to and connect with their students better. Besides improving the efficiency of the teachers and authors, these programmes also boost confidence of the participants at a psychological level.

Thus, this aspect of policy makers and government agencies on developing the capacities of experts engaged in the creation and dissemination of Islamic education, the focus has not solely been the development of students but also the development of experts so that the quality of education and its continuous evolution is carried forward by able hands.

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