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اللوح

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ISLAMIC STUDIES AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMINATION OF PH.D. THESES IN ISLAMIC STUDIES UNIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS, UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN (2002-2022)

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Abstract

A university's core functions involve teaching, research, and community engagement, and these elements are intricately interconnected. Teaching provides support for research, and research, in turn, contributes to the development of the community. However, there is widespread acknowledgment that research efforts in Nigerian universities often fall short compared to those in more developed nations, resulting in a limited direct impact on community advancement and the slower development of Nigeria as a whole. This challenge is exemplified by the neglect of Ph.D. research projects across diverse fields, allowing them to remain overlooked in university libraries. This study specifically examines the relevance of Ph.D. works within the Islamic Studies unit of the Department of Religions at the University of Ilorin concerning national development, utilizing a descriptive research method. The primary literature for this investigation is drawn from the University of Ilorin's library, revealing that, despite Islam being perceived not only as a religion but as a comprehensive way of life, only a few of these works exhibit direct relevance to national development. Consequently, it is recommended that lecturers in this unit

make a deliberate effort to consider broader areas essential for national development when assigning research topics to students.

Keywords: Islamic Studies, national development, Ph.D. research, University of Ilorin.

Introduction

The highest priority of a government is rooted in attaining an elevated level of development that forges a natural bond between its citizens and governance. However, specific prerequisites, including socio-political and economic stability, are imperative for a nation to enter a phase of development. The gap between developed and developing nations is not fixed; instead, it is continually expanding. A substantial portion of the global population in the developing world, Nigeria included, grapples with poverty. Persistent challenges such as urban population issues, rural stagnation, unemployment, and escalating inequalities contribute to a disheartening scenario that raises concerns among stakeholders and citizens. Despite Nigeria's rich resources, achieving meaningful development has proven challenging, adversely affecting the quality of life for its people. Poverty, unemployment, and hunger persist nationwide.

Development plays a crucial role in the prosperity and sustainability of any nation, with education serving as a key determinant of a country's progress. Developed nations have achieved their advancement by effectively leveraging their educational systems. The University of Ilorin's Department of Religions, specifically the Islamic Studies unit, distinguishes itself by producing graduates with doctoral degrees across various subjects. While the expectation in any university program is to address societal issues or propose solutions, the question arises: How impactful is the research conducted by Ph.D. graduates from this unit on national development? This paper critically examines the trajectory of national development in Nigeria and proposes a practical approach to achieve it through purposeful research. The paper is structured as follows: an introduction emphasizing the importance of purposeful research, a conceptual clarification, an overview of Ph.D. works in the unit from 2002 to 2022, findings and discussion of research data, and finally, a conclusion and recommendations for enhancing the relevance of Ph.D. works in Islamic Studies within the unit and in Nigerian educational institutions.

Concept of National Development

Numerous attempts by researchers, philosophers, writers, economists, socialists, legal practitioners, and others have been made to define the concept from diverse viewpoints. Nevertheless, the various definitions commonly regard national development as the embodiment of progress, growth, and advancement within a country achieved through the standardization of its sectors: economic, political, educational, socio-cultural, and technological.¹ The overall development or collective socio-economic, political, and religious advancement of a country, known as national development, is perceived as best achieved through thorough planning. This

planning, described as the government's collection of strategies, is instrumental in guiding the country toward its goals.

The advancement of a nation is of paramount importance, serving as a benchmark for assessing the well-being of its citizens and their capacity to fulfill their potentials. National development is a significant outcome driven by the influential contributions of citizens, utilizing human, financial, and material resources to foster growth and progress. In essence, this collective effort contributes to the overall improvement of the well-being of citizens.ⁱⁱ National development implies enhancing the material well-being of all citizens, regardless of their social, economic, and political backgrounds. It is a deliberate effort aimed at elevating the living standards of the nation's citizens in all aspects.

The foremost priority of a government is national development, and its commitment to this goal determines its standing on the global stage. National development is not a result of magic but rather emerges from a series of consistently activated, planned schemes that must be carried out collectively by both leaders and citizens of the country. To be considered a developed nation, the government must remove all constraints on human endeavors and allow the full realization of individual potential. This approach can address issues such as unemployment, poverty, promote economic growth, ensure socio-political sustainability, foster religious tolerance and freedom, and enhance viable international diplomacy. These objectives are fundamental goals for every nation, and various strategies are being implemented to make these goals realistic. Qatar serves as an exemplary case, demonstrating remarkable progress surpassing about five other countries in a short period in political, economic, religious, and other realms. This prosperity is not limited to Qataris alone but is also shared by non-Qataris, as numerous amenities contribute to the prosperity of both humans and the environment.ⁱⁱⁱ The assertion is that national development should not exhibit bias in terms of race, socio-political standing, religious affiliation, socio-cultural background, or economic status of every citizen. Instead, it should be an all-encompassing transformation that benefits everyone, without discrimination and for the collective progress of all.^{iv}

Nigeria is a diverse nation, characterized by numerous tribes, cultures, religions, and professions coexisting. The complexity of this diversity necessitates extensive planning and implementation for Nigeria to be recognized as a developed nation, despite being naturally endowed with abundant resources. With the goal of national development in mind, every government, regime, and tenure designs, maps out, and adopts a National Development Plan (NDP) to establish a focus on improving the country for all within a specified timeframe. However, there are apparent obstacles that hinder the achievement of these goals.^v The National Development Plan (NDP), 2021-2025, crafted by the Federal Government of Nigeria, is perceived as a medium-term blueprint aimed at unlocking the country's potentials across all sectors of the economy. The plan is designed to foster sustainable, holistic, and inclusive national development. It was developed

collaboratively by various stakeholders, including the Private Sector, Sub-national Government, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), with facilitation by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

By the year 2025, the effective implementation of the Plan is anticipated to yield an average economic growth of 4.6 percent. Over this period, it is expected to lift 35 million people out of poverty and create 21 million full-time jobs. Additionally, the plan aims to increase the revenue-to-GDP ratio to 15 percent and enhance the health and education of the population. The NDP represents a strategic effort to propel Nigeria towards comprehensive development and global competitiveness.^{vi}

Development planning is crucial, involving processes that ensure national policies and strategies are realized, and development concerns at all levels are fully integrated into the overall national development agenda. This is essential for translating initiatives and programs into tangible results that meet globally recognized benchmarks of true development. The effectiveness of such plans necessitates, as a matter of urgency, getting the basics right. This includes instituting sound development policies, ensuring good economic management, promoting private investment, developing human resource capacity, fostering synergistic public/private sector partnerships and collaboration, as well as providing robust physical and institutional infrastructure.^{vii}

In the context of Nigeria, the country is naturally rich in resources that could be harnessed for development. However, the reasons behind its retrogression have been a subject of contemplation, debate, and discussion among scholars. While various factors are considered, some scholars point to bad leadership as a major contributor. They argue that the attitudes and reactions of leaders toward national matters can have a negative influence on every sector of the nation, despite the existence of planning initiatives.

Acknowledging that the Nigerian government is actively pursuing a vision of sustainable growth and a desirable sphere, Olorunjuwon asserts that insecurity plays a significant role in hindering the achievement of these goals. He emphasizes that a nation plagued by crises and insecurity faces challenges in making progress. Furthermore, Olorunjuwon highlights the devastating effects of insecurity on the psychological health of individuals and the state as a whole. Insecurity, according to this perspective, has far-reaching consequences on various sectors of the Nigerian state, impacting its overall development.^{viii}

Certainly, meaningful development in a country requires the comprehensive consideration and involvement of various aspects of human endeavor, encompassing economic, political, socio-cultural, and spiritual dimensions. This inclusive approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of these facets and underscores the importance of addressing them collectively for holistic national development.^{ix}In

this context, Islamic Studies is more than just a course that imparts knowledge of historical events. It goes beyond informing enthusiasts about the past; it equips them with the necessary qualities to adjust their interactions, fostering peaceful coexistence irrespective of religious affiliation, socio-political understanding, and diverse professional exposures. Islamic Studies, in this light, emphasizes values and principles that contribute to harmony and understanding among individuals, transcending historical knowledge to promote positive engagement in contemporary society.^x In light of this objective, the paper aims to examine and evaluate several doctoral (PhD) theses conducted between 2002 and 2023 at the Islamic Studies Unit within the Department of Religions at the University of Ilorin. This effort is deemed necessary to illuminate the significant academic contributions made by the university toward national building and development in Nigeria. The scrutiny of these theses provides insights into the scholarly endeavors undertaken within the Islamic Studies Unit, offering a comprehensive understanding of the academic contributions made by the University of Ilorin in the realm of Islamic Studies during the specified period.

Education and National Development

Education occupies a crucial role in national development by providing the essential human resources needed for progress. Beyond this, education plays a pivotal role in the socialization of individuals, integrating them into the fabric of the society in which they reside. Education is perceived as the process of drawing out the inherent powers and potentialities in individuals, facilitating the acquisition of skills, aptitudes, and competencies necessary for self-actualization. In essence, education is not only a means of imparting knowledge but also a mechanism for personal development and societal integration.^{xi}

Certainly, the undisputed catalyst for the development of a nation lies in its education system. This conviction is reflected in the national policy on education (2004), which recognizes education as an exceptional instrument for promoting national development. The philosophy underlying Nigerian education is rooted in three core principles: (a) The development of the individual into a sound and active citizen, (b) The full integration of the individual into the community, and, (c) The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, both within and outside the formal school system. Individuals developed through education will in turn develop the nation when they are fully integrated into the society.

In Nigeria, education is not just a means to meet the nation's social, political, moral, cultural, and economic aspirations. It is also a vital tool for instilling in individuals the knowledge, skills, dexterity, character, and desirable values necessary to enhance national development. Education, therefore, stands as a cornerstone in the holistic growth and progress of the nation. The department of religions in all institutions of learning with university of Ilorin being inclusive, has

Religion serves as a guide for individuals, offering principles for life and the afterlife, thereby providing essential incentives for engaging in productive activities throughout one's lifetime. It can be seen as a significant catalyst for growth and development, as it directs and motivates individuals toward virtuous actions such as discipline, hard work, honesty, education, and thriftiness, all of which contribute to the development of the nation.

Ph.D. Theses in Islamic Studies Unit of the University of Ilorin (2002-2022)

1	The Islamic Jurisprudence of Debt Creation and Management and its Relevance to Contemporary Nigeria	YUSUF, Owolabi	The author conducted a study examining conventional debt creation and management in contemporary Nigeria, employing the Islamic Jurisprudence of Debt (Fiqhud-Dayn) as a template.	2022
2.	Business Activities in Ilorin Emirate Within the Context of Islamic Commerce Jurisprudence	BUKHARI, Sikirullahi	In this work, the author conducted an assessment of the awareness among Muslim merchants in Ilorin Emirate regarding the institutions of Zakāt, Istisna, Murābahah, Mudārabah, and Mushārahah. The primary objective was to uncover the extent to which	2021

			these merchants abstain from dealing with items forbidden by Islam within the markets of Ilorin Emirate.	
3.	The Practice of Zakat and Poverty Alleviation in South-Western Nigeria	ASHAFA, Saheed Afolabi	In the thesis, Ashafa investigated the methods employed by selected religious organizations in managing the institution of Zakah and addressing the level of poverty among the people of South-Western Nigeria.	2016
4.	The Rights of a Woman to Acquisition, Ownership, and Disposal of Property: The <i>Shari'ah</i> Perspective	ABDUS-SAMI', Imam Arikewuyo	In the research, the author explored the legal rights of a woman in the context of laboring for wealth. The study delved into aspects such as ownership and the permissible utilization of wealth acquired by a woman, examining these issues from an Islamic perspective.	2003

Table 1: Theses on Socio-Economic Issues

1.	A Study of <i>Da'wah</i> Activities of Ansarudeen Society of Nigeria (ADS), South West Nigeria (1973-2018)	AZEEZ, Nurayn Ademola	In the study, the author conducted a survey on the emergence of the Ansarudeen Society of Nigeria, its aims, objectives, and impacts in the Southwestern region between 1973 and 2018. The author particularly evaluated the <i>Da'wah</i> Committee of the Society, shedding light on the challenges it faced and the achievements it garnered during the specified period.	2022
2.	Modern Criticism	HARUNA,	In the academic	2

	of the Hadith: A Study of Adwā'alā As-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah of Abu Rayyah	Muhamma d Baba Sanusi	exploration, the author conducted a critical examination of the views expressed by Abu Rayyah in his work "Adwā'alā As-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah." Abu Rayyah's claim that the Sunnah (tradition) was not recorded during the era of the Prophet was likely subjected to scrutiny. The researcher, through constructive argumentation, aimed to counter this perspective by asserting that the Sunnah of the Prophet has indeed been a fundamental and recorded source of Islamic law.	0 2 1
3.	An Exegetical Study of Shawkani's Interpretation of Ayāt Al-Ahkam in the Fathi Al-Qadīr	GAMBARI, Muhamma d Aliyu	In this work, the author examined the perspective of Shawkāni concerning the interpretation of certain legislative verses in the Qur'an. The study delved into Shawkāni's insights, methods, and analyses regarding the understanding and application of specific verses that pertain to legal or legislative matters within the Qur'anic text.	2 0 1 9
4.	An Examination of some Selected Salafiyyah Scholars' Discourse on Sufism	YUSUPH, Dauda Gambari	In this research, the author conducted an investigation into the perspectives of Salafiyyah scholars on Sufism, exploring the dynamics of their relationship with Sufi	2 0 1 8

			practices and assessing their overall impact on Nigerian Muslims.	
5.	A Study of Selected Theological Themes in the Tafsīr of Al-Imam Al-'Alūsī's Ruhul Ma'ānī	SURAJU, Saheed Badmus	In this work, the author examined the theological views of al-Imam al-Alūsī as presented in his exegesis of the glorious Qur'an Ruhul Ma'ānī in relation to the fundamental principles of Islam. The study delved into al-Imam al-Alūsī's interpretations and theological perspectives as outlined in Ma'ānī, exploring how these views align with or diverge from the fundamental tenets of Islam.	2018
6.	A Study of the Approach of Shaykh Abdul-Hamid Kishk in Hifsi Fī Riḥābi at-Tafsīr	HUSSEIN, Mohammad Sani	In this research, the scholar examined the approach of Shaykh Abdul Hamid Kishk to Tafsīr (Quranic exegesis). The study involved a detailed analysis of the characteristics of specific chapters within Kishk's work, "Fī Riḥābi at-Tafsīr." Additionally, the researcher may have illuminated the environmental challenges that influenced the composition of the book, shedding light on the socio-political issues addressed within the Tafsīr.	2018
7.	Igbomina Muslims and the Development of Islam in Yorubaland (1940-2017)	BAMIGBOYE, Yusuf Adeola	In this research, the scholar investigated the endeavors of Muslims in Igbomina concerning the propagation of Islam in Yorubaland. The study involved a comprehensive examination	2018

			of the activities and contributions of Muslims from Igbominaland in the dissemination and promotion of Islam within the broader Yoruba region. The goal was to assess the significance and impact of their efforts in the spread of Islam, considering historical, cultural, and religious dimensions.	
8.	A Socio-Theological Study of Tafsīr Al-Manār	OGUNSO LA, Miftahuddin Babatunde-Adesina	In the thesis, the author delved into the study of Tafsīr al-Manār, a work authored by Shaykh Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā and Shaykh Bahjah al-Bayṭār. The study involved an analysis of the writing style, themes, and approaches employed in the book.	2016
9	A Study of the Ja'fariyyah Sūfi Group in Nigeria	TAOFIQ, Awwal Baba	In the research, the scholar investigated the doctrines and teachings of the Ja'fariyyah group in Nigeria. The study encompassed an examination of the activities and conduct of the group's members, along with an exploration of the factors that led to the formation of the Ja'fariyyah group in Nigeria.	2016
10	A Study of the Yoruba Tijaniyyah Šūfi Works on the Personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)	Muhammed-Jamiu, Yakeen Ajadi	In the research, the author focused on the limited scope and premise surrounding the perception of members of the Tijāniyyah order in Yorubaland regarding the personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). As a researcher, the author conducted a thorough examination of various Šūfi	2016

			written works on this matter, comparing their notions with Qur'anic verses, Ḥadīth (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad {SAW}), and the views of other scholars.	
11	Impact of the Jamā'atuI zālatil Bid'ah WaIqāmati Sunnah on the Muslims of Bauchi and Gombe Emirates	UMAR, Aminu	In the research, the author examines the establishment, objectives, approaches, challenges, and achievements of the Izālah movement in Bauchi and Gombe Emirates in Nigeria. The study provides a detailed analysis of the Izālah movement's presence and impact in these regions, considering its organizational structure, goals, methods, as well as the challenges and successes it has encountered".	2016
12.	Protection of the Qur'an in the Face of Contemporary Challenges among Muslims in Yorubaland, Nigeria	JIMOH, Lasisi Ayanda	In the research, the author focuses on the attitude of the Yoruba Muslim community toward the preservation of the glorious Qur'an. The study delves into various aspects such as Qur'an memorization, recitation, the handling of published copies, and the establishment and management of Qur'an centers among the Yoruba Muslim population.	2016
13.	A Study of the Contributions of Jamā'at Nasrīl-Islām (JNI) to the Development of Islam in Nigeria	ADUA, Sulaiman Sheu	In the research, the author emphasizes the impact of the activities of the Jamā'at Nasrīl-Islām (JNI) on the Muslim Ummah in Nigeria. The study involves a thorough examination and	2012

			documentation of problems encountered by the society, as well as recommendations for addressing these issues. Additionally, the research analyzes the vital roles that JNI has played in persuading Northern Muslims in the country to cooperate with the government on various programs.	
14.	Modern Trends in Islamic Thought: A Study of Islamization of Knowledge Programme in Nigeria	ADEBAYO, Rafiu Ibrahim	In the thesis, the author traces the origin of Muslim educational reform programs and assesses the extent of their practicability and acceptability. The study aims to identify the problems and prospects associated with these reform initiatives within the context of a multi-religious society like Nigeria.	2003

Table 2: Theses on Theological/Religious Issues

1.	An Appraisal of <i>Sharī'ah</i> -Related Criminal Enactments in Northern Nigeria (1999 - 2006)	SHITTU, Abdulwahhab Danladi	In the thesis, Shittu examines the <i>Sharī'ah</i> criminal-related enactments in certain Northern parts of Nigeria. The scope of the work is limited to the period between 1999 and 2006. The researcher documents provisions of various criminal-related cases during this timeframe, providing details about some adjudications carried out on the offenders. The study aims to analyze the implementation of <i>Sharī'ah</i> criminal laws in the specified regions of Nigeria during the given period.	2013
2	A Study of Rukhsah in the	YAHAYA, Oyewole	In this study, the author examines the application of the	2003

	<i>Sharī'ah</i> in Modern Society	Imam	concept of Rukhsah in <i>Sharī'ah</i> , with specific attention to the modern era. The study explores how the concept of Rukhsah, which refers to concessions or dispensations in Islamic law, is applied under certain extenuating circumstances. The author submits that Rukhsah is granted in situations such as sickness, fear, traveling, coercion, impurity, need, and necessity.	
	An Analytical Study of the Legislative Verses of the Glorious Qur'an	MURTAD, Gbade Haroon	In the research, the author examines legislative verses in the Qur'an related to Tawhid (monotheism), Ibadat (worship), Family Law, Commerce, and Politics. The study explores how these verses form the basis for the <i>Sharī'ah</i> , the Islamic legal system.	2002

Table 3: Theses on Jurisprudential Issues**Research Findings and Discussion**

A total of twenty-one theses submitted to the Islamic Studies Unit of the Department of Religions between 2002 and 2022 were analyzed. Among them, four focused on socio-economic issues, constituting 19.04% of the entire research during this two-decade period. Additionally, three theses delved into Jurisprudential issues, representing 14.29% of the overall body of work. The majority, comprising fourteen theses or 66.67%, explored theological and religious matters. The summarized findings are presented in the table below:

S/N	Issues	Frequency	Percentage
1	Socio-economic matters	4	19.04
2	Jurisprudential matters	3	14.29
3	Theological and Religious matters	14	66.67

Table 3

In the national development plan, the Nigerian Federal Government recognizes human capital development as a vital component of national progress. The plan underscores the pivotal role of education in enhancing quality of life,

boosting productivity, fostering inclusive economic growth, and ultimately addressing poverty. Recognizing the need for a significant increase in resources, both in quantity and quality, the plan emphasizes the importance of improving education and human capital. Leveraging the abundant human capital potential in the country and cultivating skills relevant to the 21st century labor market are imperative.

The plan advocates for expanded access to the education system and enhanced teaching quality, aiming to provide every Nigerian with the tools to fulfill their potential, irrespective of their background. Only through such measures can the nation effectively transform and compete with leading global economies.^{xiii} In the forward to the development plan document written by the then president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Bukhari, he posited that by the year 2025, the successful execution of the plan is anticipated to result in an average economic growth of 4.6 percent. Cumulatively, this implementation according to him, is projected to elevate 35 million individuals out of poverty and generate 21 million full-time jobs.^{xiv} With this high hope, researches in institutions of higher learning need to be purposeful. Works should be done on how to achieve the sustainable development goal and such works should not be restricted to those in Social Sciences rather, researches in Arts should follow suit.

Recommendation and Conclusion

This study evaluates the significance of Ph.D. dissertations in the Islamic Studies Unit at the University of Ilorin in relation to national development. The authors explore the concept of national development as a collective responsibility across all realms of education. Emphasizing that a government's success lies in enhancing the well-being of its citizens, the paper contends that a developed nation is one that attains economic independence and security. The research identifies the crucial role expected of the country's educational system in fostering national development.

The examination focuses on twenty-one Ph.D. dissertations from the Islamic Studies Unit of the Department of Religions at the University of Ilorin. The findings reveal that a significant portion of these theses predominantly addresses theological issues. The authors argue that dissertations in Islamic Studies have the potential to contribute to the formulation of theories and policies aimed at building an economically viable nation. Based on the paper's conclusions, the authors recommend that:

1. The Islamic Studies curriculum in universities should undergo review in alignment with the nation's development goals.
2. Lecturers in the unit should guide students in selecting research topics that would serve a clear purpose.

3. Existing Ph.D. works should not be neglected in the library but rather efforts should be made to study the observations and recommendations contained within them for the advancement of national development.
 4. Ph.D. theses should be oriented towards policy-making, such as exploring the Islamic economic system in the context of national development.
- The authors express a strong belief that adherence to these recommendations will lend greater meaning to the teaching of Islamic Studies in institutions of higher learning.

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