

The background of the cover features a photograph of several open books stacked on a surface. A pair of black-rimmed glasses is resting on the pages of one of the books. The lighting is warm, creating a scholarly atmosphere. The text is overlaid on a light blue and white geometric design that includes a blue triangle on the left and a yellow border.

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**EDUCATION**

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**VOL. 2 NO 1, 2019**

## **MULTIDICIPLINARY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION (MJALE)**

### **OBJECTIVES**

Multidisciplinary Journal of Arts and Language Education (MJALE) is an educative journal of resident in the Arts and Language Education Department, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University. The journal is committed to publishing scholarly articles showcasing modern trends and innovative discoveries in education.

### **SCOPE**

The coverage of the journal include:

1. Blended learning pedagogy
2. Issues of contemporary concern in globalization
3. Reports in educational research
4. Attainment of philosophical goals through pedagogical approaches
5. Current issues in curriculum innovation
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**Prof. Abiodun A. Popoola, Adeleye E. Toba & Ajayi Ayodele**

*Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University.*

*Ilupeju High School, Ilupeju Ekiti. & Ekiti State Government College, Ado-Ekiti*

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*Department of Arts and Language Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti*

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*Department of Educational Management, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebuode, Ogun State, Nigeria*

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*Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria*

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**Florence Taiwo Ogunyemi,**

*Department of Childhood Education, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State*

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**Musa Siddiq Abdullahi**

*Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria*

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**Abdulrasaq Oladimeji Akanbi, Ph.D.**

*Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria*

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*Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.*

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**Onuorah Margaret Ekwutosi**

*C/O Department of Physical Science Education, Faculty of Education, Imo State University*

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<sup>1</sup>Badru, Surajudeen Adewale and <sup>2</sup>Ogunniran, Victoria Oludunni

Yoruba Education Unit, Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin

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Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

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Arts and Language Education Department, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

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Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

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**Araashi, Abdullahi Damola**

Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

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**Akintoye Oluwole Samuel**

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

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Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

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Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

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Department of English, College of Education, Ikere, Arts and Language Education Department, Ekiti State University

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**Oluwatoyin Mary Oyinloye\***

Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa 3886, South Africa

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**Prof. Matthew A. Ayeni & Cornelius A. Ogbiye**

Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria  
Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

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Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow, Department of Science and Maths Education, University for Development Studies, Naurongo Campus Ghana., Lecturer Department of Educational Foundation, University for Development Studies, Tarnale Campus, Ghana, Campus Accountant, University for Development Studies, Naurongo

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**<sup>1</sup>Dr. (Mrs) E. M. Dada & <sup>2</sup>Adeboye, Omolara B.**  
Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

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**Olubunmi Christianah Olagundoye Ph.D & Olusegun Owolewa Ph.D**  
Department of Special Education and Curriculum Studies, Adeyemi College of Education Ondo,  
Department of Arts Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko.

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**Ayòdéle Christiana Ayo (Ph.D)** - Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University

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Department of Educational Foundations & Management, School of Education, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ado-Ekiti

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Education Foundations, Federal College of Education, Zaria

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Ekiti State University, Ado, Ado-Ekiti, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Department of Sociology.  
Department of General Studies, Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke, Osun State

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**Abiodun A. Popoola (Ph.D) & Fatomilola Bamikole Ebenezer**  
Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti Nigeria

# STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF ARABIC EDUCATION IN PROMOTING RELIGIOUS AND NATIONAL VALUES AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

**Musa Siddiq Abdullahi**

[abdullahi.ma@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:abdullahi.ma@unilorin.edu.ng) or [alfulaty2013@gmail.com](mailto:alfulaty2013@gmail.com)

+2348034846194

Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education,  
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

## Abstract

Language is the vehicle through which people's culture is transmitted. It is an index of identity which serves as a repository of a people's culture, industry and exploits. The relationship between language and society cannot be over-emphasized in the overall development of any community. This paper examined the stakeholders' views on the role of Arabic education in promoting religious and national values among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria. The stakeholders in this study consisted of members of Muslim community organisations, Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers/lecturers, undergraduates/ postgraduates of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and parents in Kwara State. All these groups of people constituted the population for this study. 774 stakeholders were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. Researcher's designed questionnaire was used to elicit information from the participants. This instrument was validated by two experts and yielded a co-efficient of 0.72 when subjected to a test-retest reliability procedure. The data collected for this study were analysed using percentage and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significant. Findings obtained from this study revealed among others that Arabic education could promote in-school adolescents' better understanding of Islam and promote religious and national values among them. There was a statistically significant variation in stakeholders' views on the role of Arabic education in promoting religious and national values among in-school adolescents. The study recommended that government should abrogate the current elective status of Arabic and religious education at the Basic and Senior Secondary classes and make both compulsory subjects.

**Keywords:** Stakeholders, Arabic education, Religious and National Values, In-School Adolescents

## Introduction

The development of a country is the responsibility of its citizenry to contribute effectively to the national development. This can only be achieved through qualitative education. Education is a major force in economic, intellectual, social and cultural empowerment (Jimoh,

2001). The value of education brings about character and attitudinal change, reshape human potentials and eradicate poverty.

Education is the total process of human learning by which knowledge is cultivated, faculties trained and skills

developed. Some of the fundamental objectives of education in Nigeria are to promote unity, national integration and development but these have not been sufficiently realised. The hindrances to national integration today are so worrisome that they give rise to socio-religious cleavages and other forms of divisive tendencies that threaten the unity of the country. The introduction of religious and national value curriculum is to inculcate and promote moral education in students (Abubakar, 2014).

Obioma (2012) asserted that the religious and national values curriculum that was recommended by the education commission was a conflation of Religious Education and Moral Education. This was a reform in the content of the curriculum since the programme had a very strong religious and value influence to help "develop the character" of school-going adolescents (Offorma, 2004). The resultant religious and national values curriculum is largely a replica of a curriculum that is designed in transmitting social and civic virtues among on-going school adolescents.

The Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation (CD&E) of the Ministry of Education is charged with the development of the multi-faith religious curriculum. A task force was assigned to design a suitable religious and national values curriculum for Junior Secondary Schools (NERDC, 2010). According to Obioma (2012), the task force came up with aims of religious education which were drawn from the aims of the religious and national values curriculum programme, which were in turn drawn from the aims of the nine-year basic education programme, and they too were drawn from the Curriculum Blueprint of the nine-year basic education programme (2004). The aims

and the curriculum blueprint were drawn by the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation (CD&E). The curriculum blueprint was drawn from the Revised National Policy on Education. The aims of the Junior Secondary multi-faith religious and national values curriculum programme that were drawn by the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation are to enable students to be able to:

- i. respect people whose beliefs differ from their own and have an increased spirit of tolerance and cooperation in their everyday lives;
- ii. investigate, analyse facts and draw conclusions on religious issues using English as a medium of instruction;
- iii. be aware of the contributions religion makes towards the development and understanding of the importance of family, its roles and responsibilities;
- iv. promote an enquiring and sympathetic approach to the study of religion, especially in its individual and corporate expression in the contemporary world;
- v. introduce students to the challenging and varied nature of religion and to the ways in which this is reflected in experience, belief and practice;
- vi. acquire the religious knowledge and develop the religious skills necessary to lead a healthy life in harmony with nature (NERDC, 2010).

Although English Language is a recommended medium of instruction, Arabic also has a crucial role to play in achieving the aforementioned objectives as far as Islamic Studies is concerned. Arabic is a Semitic language. It belongs to the West Semitic subdivision of the Afro-Asiatic family of languages (Rudin,

1976). In Africa, it is spoken as a native language in Algeria, Comoro Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, and Tunisia. In the Middle East, Arabic is spoken as a mother tongue in countries such as Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen (The University of Leeds, 1990; Oseni, 2004).

Historically, Arabic is regarded as the oldest foreign language in Nigeria. This is because its entry into the country dated back to the seventh century of the Christian era and the first century of the *Hijrah* calendar. Centuries before the advent of Europeans in Nigeria, Arabic language had been used for religious, social and cultural purposes in the Northern Nigeria. It was in recognition of its significance that Arabic language is introduced into the Nigerian educational curriculum as an academic discipline. In Nigeria today, three languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) are used as languages of instruction at the earlier stage in the education system in Nigeria. Arabic and French are also taught in Nigerian schools as foreign languages and elective in status (Mahmud, 2012). Language is a vehicle for the religious discourse. It has always been in company of different religions as it is the case of Islam and Arabic.

Arabic and Islamic Studies are integral parts of the school curriculum. They are offered at all levels. For the effective understanding of Islamic Studies as a subject captured under Religion and National Value in the new curriculum, both the teachers and the learners must have solid background knowledge of Arabic. Religious Studies, as a branch of knowledge, is made up of studies about a certain religion or comparative religious

studies. In the Nigerian educational system, learners are exposed to Islamic Religious Studies (IRS) or Christian Religious Studies (CRS) from primary to secondary school levels.

Religion is a system of social coherence commonly understood as a group of beliefs or attitudes concerning an object, person, unseen or imaginary being, or system of thought considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine or highest truth and the moral codes, practices, values, institutions and rituals associated with such belief or system of thought. It is a framework within which specific theological doctrines and practices are advocated and pursued; usually among a community of like-minded believers (Johnston & Sampson, 1994).

Oloyede (2012) defined Islamic Studies as a terminology used to describe an aspect of Theological Sciences which seeks to influence natural, human and social sciences in their services to God (*Allah*) and humanity from the prism of Islamic credo. Islamic Studies, as a subject at all levels of the Nigerian educational system, revolves around the study of Islam generally, and its various definitions also centre on the worship of Allah. The Nigerian government makes provisions for the subject through the design of curricula and syllabi at different levels of educational institutions, formulation and employment of teachers (Abdul-Rafiu, 2009).

Values are broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. As such, values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be. "Equal rights for all", "Excellence deserves admiration", and "People should be treated with respect and dignity" are representatives

of values. The role of Islam in promoting respect and dignity among in-school adolescents cannot be over-emphasised,

The term "Adolescence" comes from the Latin word 'adolescere' that means "to grow" or "to grow to maturity". Maturing involves not only physical but also mental growth. It is a period that transcends between childhood and adulthood. Generally, this period is termed as "youth" (Das, 2000). Adolescence is a period in which boys and girls move from childhood to adulthood mentally, emotionally, socially and physically" (Jagannath & Susandhya, 1997). Therefore, this period can be viewed as a process of achieving the attitudes and beliefs needed for effective participation in the society.

Adolescent's life is full of hopes. The adolescent is eager to interact with new experiences, to find new relationships to examine inner strengths and explore the strengths of inner ability. Adolescents try to have freedom to think and set their own goals and discover means to achieve them. If these are features of adolescence, there is need for proper guidance towards national values which can be done through religion, and for religion (Islam) to do this, background knowledge of Arabic is inevitable. This is in line with Al-Zarkasyi (1972) who opined that lack of competence in Arabic language disqualifies a Muslim from interpretation of Qur'a<sup>n</sup>ic or Hadi<sup>t</sup>h texts. This is not to say that expressing Islamic messages in other languages apart from Arabic is not acceptable, but sticking to Arabic terminology in the discussion of Islamic concepts is more desirable. Abdullahi (2005) concluded that Arabic and Islamic Studies are indispensable, as blood and water are indispensable from the body. Therefore, the study looked into stakeholders'

perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting religious and national values among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to:

- investigate stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National Values among in-school adolescents in Kwara State..
- determine if there is any variation in stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National Values among in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

### Research Questions

The following question was raised to guide the study:

What is the stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National Values among in-school adolescents?

### Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was postulated and tested:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant variation in stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National Values among in-school adolescents.

### Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey type. The population for this study includes members of Muslim community organisations, Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers/ lecturers, undergraduate/ postgraduate students of Arabic and Islamic Studies and parents in Kwara State, Nigeria. Seven hundred and seventy-four (774) stakeholders were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. Researcher's designed

questionnaire was used to elicit information from the participants. This instrument was validated by two experts and yielded a co-efficient of 0.72 when subjected to a test-retest reliability procedure. The data collected for this study were analysed using percentage to answer the research question raised and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the hypothesis postulated for this study at 0.05 level of significant.

### Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher, through 3 research assistants administered the questionnaire forms to the respondents involved in the study. Each stakeholder was given a copy of the questionnaire form and the questionnaires were collected back after two weeks.

### Results

Out of 774 (100%) stakeholders that partook in the study, 183 (24%) of them were members of Muslim community organisations; 242 (31%) were Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers/lecturers; 219 (28%) were undergraduate/

postgraduate students of Arabic and Islamic Studies Language and parents. 130 (17%) of the respondents were parents.

**Research Question:** What are the stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National Values among in-school adolescents?

Participants' responses (perception) on the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National Values among in-school adolescents were subjected to percentage analysis. Given that the questionnaire items were structured in a four-response-type (Strongly Agreed; Agreed; Disagreed; and Strongly Disagreed), such items that were either strongly agreed or agreed were categorized as "Agreed" while such items that were either disagreed or strongly disagreed were summed up as "Disagreed". Thus, the analyses of the responses of the respondents were presented in Table I.

**Table 1:** Percentage Analysis of the Stakeholders' Perception of the Role of Arabic Education in Promoting Religious and National Values

| N   | The perceived roles of Arabic education in promoting religious and national values:                                                                        | Agreed (%) | Disagreed (%) | Total (%) | Rank            |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|
| i   | The teaching of Arabic promotes in-school adolescents' better understanding of Islam and also promotes religious and national values                       | 691 (89%)  | 83 (11%)      | 774 (100) | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| ii  | The contents of Arabic curriculum could curb indiscipline and other immoral vices by making school-going adolescents generally imbibe acceptable behaviour | 579 (75%)  | 195 (25%)     | 774 (100) | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
| iii | Arabic teaching makes in-school adolescents cultivate and imbibe civic values and abstain from incivility                                                  | 612 (79%)  | 162 (21%)     | 774 (100) | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

|      |                                                                                                                                                   |              |              |              |                  |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| iv   | The teaching of Arabic enables in-school adolescents internalise religious and social virtues and also prevents disorderliness among them         | 647<br>(84%) | 127<br>(16%) | 774<br>(100) | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  |
| v    | The contents of Arabic curriculum could make in-school adolescents respect societal norms, rules, regulations and avoid all forms of indiscipline | 455<br>(59%) | 319<br>(41%) | 774<br>(100) | 7 <sup>th</sup>  |
| vi   | Arabic education inculcates in school-going children the right values, attitudes and behaviour that are acceptable in the society.                | 411<br>(53%) | 363<br>(47%) | 774<br>(100) | 9 <sup>th</sup>  |
| vii  | Arabic education curriculum contains such contents that could make students exercise their civic rights within the realm of societal constitution | 351<br>(45%) | 423<br>(55%) | 774<br>(100) | 10 <sup>th</sup> |
| viii | Arabic Education encourages school-going adolescents to be enthusiastic about religious education and imbibe national cultures and values         | 607<br>(78%) | 167<br>(22%) | 774<br>(100) | 4 <sup>th</sup>  |
| ix   | Arabic Education could reduce delinquent behaviour and negative tendencies among juveniles and in-school adolescents                              | 421<br>(54%) | 353<br>(46%) | 774<br>(100) | 8 <sup>th</sup>  |
| X    | Arabic Education curriculum content promotes socio-economic and political peace for national development and integration                          | 517<br>(67%) | 257<br>(33%) | 774<br>(100) | 6 <sup>th</sup>  |

As revealed in Table I, items ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> up to 9<sup>th</sup> were agreed with by the majority of the respondents. This implies that stakeholders perceived that the teaching of Arabic could promote in-school adolescents' better understanding of Islam and promote religious and national values among them; enable in-school adolescents internalise religious and social virtues and prevent disorderliness among them, make in-school adolescents cultivate and imbibe civic values and prevent them from incivility, encourage school-going adolescents to be enthusiastic about religious education and imbibe national cultures and values. The content of Arabic curriculum could curb indiscipline and other immoral vices by making

school-going adolescents generally cultivate acceptable behaviour. Also Arabic education promotes socio-economic and political peace for national development and integration; makes in-school adolescents respect societal norms, rules, regulations and shun indiscipline; reduces delinquent behaviour and negative tendencies among juveniles and in-school adolescents. Rank 10<sup>th</sup> was the item disagreed on by the majority of the respondents. This shows that stakeholders do not perceive that Arabic education curriculum embeds such contents that could make students exercise their civic rights in the society.

### Hypothesis Testing

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis postulated for this study

**Research Hypothesis:** There is no significant variation in

stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting religious and national values among in-school adolescents

**Table 2:** ANOVA Summary of the Variation in Stakeholders' perception of the Role of Arabic Education in Promoting Religious and National Values among In-School Adolescents

| Groups         | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig. | Remark   |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|----------|
| Between Groups | 519.356        | 3   | 173.118     | 18.806 | .000 | Rejected |
| Within Groups  | 7088.117       | 770 | 9.205       |        |      |          |
| Total          | 7307.473       | 773 |             |        |      |          |

\*Significance at  $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 2, the F-value of 18.806 with a p-value of 0.000 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.000 is obtained is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This thus implies that there is a statistically significant variation in stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious

and National Values among in-school adolescents ( $F_{(3, 170)} = 18.806, p < 0.05$ ).

Given the significant difference noted in Table 2, further test was carried out on the various groups to find out where the variation occurred using Duncan's Post Hoc procedure at 0.05 alpha level.

**Table 3:** Duncan's Post-Hoc Showing the Variation in Stakeholders' Perception of the Role of Arabic Education in Promoting Religious and National Values among In-School Adolescents

| Stakeholders                                                        | N   | Subset for alpha = 0.05 |        |        |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|                                                                     |     | 1                       | 2      | 3      | 4      |
| Parents                                                             | 130 | 62.057                  |        |        |        |
| Members of Muslim Community Org.                                    | 183 |                         | 65.709 |        |        |
| undergraduate/postgraduate students of Islamic Studies/Arabic Lang. | 219 |                         |        | 67.797 |        |
| Islamic/Arabic teachers/lecturers                                   | 242 |                         |        |        | 69.922 |
| Sig.                                                                |     | .064                    | .093   | .0161  | 0.192  |

As shown in Table 3, the significant difference noted in Table 2 was chiefly contributed to by Islamic/Arabic teachers/lecturers with the highest mean score 69.922 followed by undergraduate/postgraduate students of Islamic Studies/Arabic Language and Members of Muslim Community Organizations with the mean score 67.797 and 65.709 respectively while Parents had the least mean score of 62.057. Thus, the perception of Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers/lecturers and undergraduate/postgraduate students of Arabic and Islamic Studies are very strong on the role of Arabic education in promoting religious and national values among in-school adolescents.

### Discussion

From Table 1, items ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> up to 9<sup>th</sup> were agreed upon by majority of the respondents. This implies that stakeholders perceived that the teaching of Arabic education could promote better understanding of Islam and promote religious and national values among in-school adolescents. This is similar to the submission of Faisal (2016) who stated that sufficient command of Arabic language or certain degree of competency in Arabic terminologies and grammar is expected for teachers who engage in teaching Islamic Studies. Otherwise, there is likelihood of deviation from the true meaning of the *Qur'aan* and *Sunnah*. The study showed that all the stakeholders perceived that for religion (Islam) to promote national value, and for this to be actualized, there is the need for adequate knowledge of Arabic.

Also, the study indicated that there is a statistically significant variation in stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting religious

and national values among in-school adolescents. This is in line with the findings of Al-Zarkasyi (1972) who submitted that lack of competence in Arabic language disqualifies a Muslim from interpretation of *Qur'aanic* or *Hadiith* texts. This is not to say that expressing Islamic messages in other languages apart from Arabic is not encouraged, sticking to Arabic terminology in the discussion of Islamic concepts is highly recommended and desirable. Khaldun (2001) considered language as a means to acquire knowledge. Therefore, to comprehend the meaning and message of the Glorious *Qur'aan*, knowledge of Arabic is required. The study revealed that there is statistical variation in the view of the stakeholders. This might be because of the passion and experiences had over the time on the relevance of Arabic Language in promoting national values. It was observed that it is only parents that had the least scores. This is in line with Abdullahi (2018) who found that Arabic Language play a crucial role in promoting national value and also helped in reducing insecurity issues both nationally and internationally.

### Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that Arabic education promotes religious and national values among in-school adolescents. Despite the variation in the views of the stakeholders, they all agreed that Arabic education can go a long way in promoting religious and national values among in-school adolescents. However, some parents believe they can influence the interest of the adolescents towards learning Arabic because of their nonchalant attitude towards religious education.

## Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Government should abrogate the current elective status of Arabic and religious education at the Basic and Senior Secondary classes and make both compulsory subjects.
- ii. Parents should encourage their children to develop interest in offering Islamic Studies.
- iii. Curriculum planners should include in the Arabic curriculum content that could make in-school adolescents exercise their civic rights within the realm of societal constitution.

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