

3.4 ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (314)

In the year 2014, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) was tested in two papers. *Paper 1(314/1)* consisted of six structured essay questions and candidates were required to answer five. The paper tested the *Quran, Hadith/Sunnah, Devotional acts* and *Pillars of Iman*. *Paper 2 (314/2)* also had six structured essay questions of which candidates were required to answer five. This paper tested *Akhlaq, Muamalat, History of Islam and Muslim scholars*. Both Paper 1 (314/1) and Paper 2 (314/2) were marked out of a maximum of 100 marks each and time allocation for each paper was 2 hours and 30 minutes (2½ hours). Each question in the two papers carried a maximum of 20 marks.

The questions in the IRE examination tested candidates:

- Knowledge of the factual materials relevant to each topic in the syllabus.
- Understanding of the meaning and interpretation of each of the topics.
- Ability to express themselves on the basis of evidence and argument.
- Appreciation and evaluation of the materials studied in each topic.
- Ability to respond and apply the religious, moral and social issues raised in each topic.

3.4.1 GENERAL CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE

The table below shows candidates' performance in IRE at the KCSE level for the last four years.

Table 12: Candidates' Overall Performance in IRE in the last four years

| Year | Paper | Candidature | Maximum Score | Mean Score | Standard Deviation |
|------|----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 2011 | 1 | 13,319 | 100 | 41.13 | 15.19 |
| | 2 | | 100 | 45.04 | 21.15 |
| | Overall | | 200 | 86.13 | 33.60 |
| 2012 | 1 | 17630 | 100 | 36.42 | 16.61 |
| | 2 | | 100 | 27.91 | 15.11 |
| | Overall | | 200 | 64.29 | 29.59 |
| 2013 | 1 | 16472 | 100 | 39.20 | 18.74 |
| | 2 | | 100 | 30.47 | 16.47 |
| | Overall | | 200 | 69.63 | 33.15 |
| 2014 | 1 | 19,271 | 100 | 53.55 | 18.81 |
| | 2 | | 100 | 40.90 | 17.77 |
| | Overall | | 200 | 94.44 | 54.48 |

Observations can be made from the table above:

- (i) The candidature increased from 16,472 to 19,271 in 2014, a percentage increase of 14.52%.
- (ii) In the year 2014 candidates' performance improved in both Papers.
- (iii) The year 2014, registered an overall mean of **94.44**.

This report analyses the candidates' general performance in the year 2014 KCSE IRE examination papers, paying special attention to the questions where candidate's performance was relatively poor.

An attempt has been made to highlight possible causes of the poor performance. The report also gives samples of expected responses and makes suggestions to the teachers of IRE with the hope of helping them evaluate and improve their teaching methods and approaches with the aim of improving candidate's performance in future.

PAPER 1 (314/1)

The general performance of candidates in IRE Paper 1 (314/1) examination improved from a mean of **39.20** in the year 2013 to a mean of **53.55** in 2014. The questions in which candidates' performance was relatively poor in the year 2014 KCSE IRE Paper 1 (314/1) examination were **3 (a) (b)** and **6 (a)**,

Question 3 (a)

Describe four ways through which hadith evolved

The question is from the topic of hadith, candidates were expected to know the history of the development of hadith

Weaknesses

The candidates did not give a description but just stated the four ways through which hadith evolved

Expected Responses

- (i) *Hadith* evolved in situations where a question or problem was referred to the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and there was no guidance from the Quran. In such a case Allah would want the prophet to give an answer to the matter or a directive and hence such directives became *hadith*.
- (ii) As an interpretation of the Quran. Some aspects of Quranic messages are concise and brief and the Prophet (p.b.u.h) had to elaborate further on such matters such as prayers, Zakat e.t.c.
- (iii) As a demand of circumstances. There were situations where Muslims did not know what to do and the prophet provided the required guidance e.g. the decision to fight the enemies outside *Madina* in the battle of *Badr*.
- (iv) Through the prophet's own initiative. Allah gave the Prophet (p.b.u.h) the authority to legislate on some matters of faith. Such laws given by the prophet became the second primary source of law and were recorded as *hadith* (Q 53:3, 3:32, 59:7).

Advice to Teachers

Teachers need to guide candidates on how to answer examinations questions.

Question 3(b)

Discuss the contribution of hadith to Islamic culture

The question expected the candidates to explain how hadith has affected Islamic culture.

Weaknesses

Candidates were giving the general contributions of hadith

Advice to Teachers

Teachers should teach the topic of hadith exhaustively.

Expected Responses

- (i) Contributed to the development of Arabic language, especially new vocabularies of religious significance such as *Sunnah, qaul, taqrir* e.t.c.
- (ii) It contributed to the development of Islamic law as it forms the most authoritative source after Quran.
- (iii) Led to the emergence of *Ulumul hadith* (science of *hadith*) and *Muhaddithun* as specialist of this branch of knowledge.
- (iv) It influenced Muslims' code of behaviour emulating the model of the Prophet (p.b.u.h).
- (v) It contributed towards the emergence of new ways of observing ceremonies and festivals such as *nikah, aqiqah* e.t.c.
- (vi) Influenced the growth of centres of learning/education where *hadith* was taught.
- (vii) *Hadith* re-defined concepts of aura, personal hygiene, ritual purity and dietary regulations. Most of these regulations and norms are contrary to prevailing cultures.
- (viii) It led to the development of press, publication and writing of books on *hadith* such as *Sahih Al-Bukhari*.
- (ix) Acceptance of the genuine sayings and practices of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) became part and parcel of the requirements of faith.

Question 6 (a)

Discuss the significance of the belief in Qadha and Qadar in the life of a muslim

The question expected candidates to explain the benefits of believing in Qadha and Qadar.

Weaknesses

Candidates were unable to give correct responses.

Advice to Teachers

Teachers should expose candidates to application questions right from form one and not just wait until they are about to sit for KCSE.

Expected Responses

- (i) Fosters in a Muslim contentment and satisfaction that it's Allah who created him and gave him what he has.
- (ii) Develops deep trust and devotion to Allah among Muslims.
- (iii) Creates a desire in a Muslim to keep away from worldly pleasures and to concentrate on pleasing Allah.
- (iv) A Muslim who believes in *Qadar* keeps away from envy and greed.
- (v) Encourages Muslims to remain steadfast on the path of truth.
- (vi) Develops patience in Muslims and enables them endure suffering and hardships.
- (vii) Muslims strive to do good and avoid evil as each will be held accountable for their own actions.
- (viii) Belief in *Qadar* develops a Muslim's faith in the divine will and encourages them to seek Allah's guidance in all their endeavours.

3.4.3 IRE Paper 2 (314/2)

The paper tested the syllabus adequately and all questions were within the syllabus, the performance improved from a mean of 30.47 in 2013 to a mean of 40.90 in 2014. Questions which posed challenges to candidates were 4 (c), 5 (c), and 6 (a)

Question 4 (c)

State five lessons that Muslims learn from the leadership of Khalifa Maamun in the development of education during the Abbasid era.

Weaknesses

Candidates were giving the achievements of the Abbasids.

Expected Responses

- (i) importance of libraries in the advancement of education, he encouraged the establishment of both private and public libraries.
- (ii) importance of supporting scholars and patronising them, Maamun financed the writing of books and supported scholars with stipends.
- (iii) that Islam does not differentiate scholars on the basis of religion, he supported both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars.
- (iv) Islam does not discriminate women in the pursuit of education - he encouraged women to attend school.
- (v) importance of establishing learning centres, during his reign, schools were established even in private houses, he established the Baitul Hikma which was an important learning centre.
- (vi) significance of research in advancement of education, he financed research.
- (vii) role of Muslims in promotion of education, that Muslims should strive to encourage the pursuit for knowledge. Muslims were free to attend scholarly discussions in his court.

- (viii) we should educate our children and inculcate in them love for knowledge. Al-Maamun was well educated and encouraged establishment of schools even in private houses.
- (ix) importance of translating education works into languages that are understood by Muslims so as to promote knowledge. e.g. works of scholars such as Plato, Aristotle, Galileo were translated into Arabic for easy understanding.

Question 5 (c)

Explain the circumstances that led to the formation of the Khawarij movement.

Weaknesses

Very few candidates were able to come up with the correct responses

Expected Responses

- (i) murder of Khalifa Uthman which caused discontent and division among Muslims.
- (ii) Muawiya's refusal to pledge loyalty to Ali, they neither supported Ali nor Muawiya, felt that both were wrong hence formed their own group.
- (iii) battles of camel and siffin which weakened Ali's camp hence gave strength to the rise of the Kharijites.
- (iv) foreign influence since most of them were new converts from Persia.
- (v) lack of proper guidance since most of them were youngsters with little knowledge and did not seek guidance from the older generation especially the Sahaba's.
- (vi) self made *fatwas* and principles such as excommunicating their opponents e.g. considered Ali and Muawiya as infidels.
- (vii) the arbitration incident, they were opposed to the idea of Ali negotiating with Muawiya whom they considered an infidel and instead insisted on Quran to be the basis of their negotiation.

Question 6 (a)

Describe eight lessons that a Muslim can learn from Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy

Weaknesses

Candidates were giving achievements of Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy

Expected Responses

- (i) A Muslim should dedicate his time and energy to the course of Islam.
- (ii) Bad health and old age should not prevent one from serving Allah, he dedicated his whole life to serving Allah even when old and sick.
- (iii) In order for Muslims to truly worship Allah, they have to obey him and eradicate innovations. He wrote a book called Bidaa.
- (iv) With sincerity, Allah will bless one's work to benefit humanity, he was able to translate the Quran into Kiswahili which benefited many Muslims, and is still in use up to date.
- (v) Muslims should dedicate their lives in the propagation of Islam. Sheikh Abdallah Farsy visited all parts of East Africa for the purpose of *Daawa*.

- (vi) The way to reforms is through education, he taught and authored many books, e.g. “Utukufu wa swala na namna ya kuisali” etc. He spent most of his life as a teacher.
- (vii) offering service to Islam is not restricted to one’s place of birth. He served as a chief Kadhi of Kenya even though he was a Zanzibari by origin.
- (viii) Muslims should be firm, steadfast and courageous in promotion of Islamic affairs. He fought *Bidaa* practices and even wrote a book on the same.
- (ix) Muslims should support women education bearing in mind that his first Quran teacher was a Muslim female educationist, Fatma Hamid Said.
- (x) Muslims should seek both Islamic and secular education. Sheikh Farsy undertook the study of religion from many Muslim Ulamas and also went upto primary teacher’s training college.

Advice to Teacher

- Students should be trained in higher order thinking skills e.g. application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. It is evident from the answers given that majority of I.R.E students are only exposed to questions that require them just to recall answers.
- Teachers should use the recommended text books by K.I.C.D, and not the revision books that have flooded the market, because they tend to have wrong information that misleads the students.
- Teachers require training in the setting of I.R.E examination questions.
- Teachers must go an extra mile and teach these candidates on how to answer application questions.

Conclusion

- Teachers in IRE require in-servicing so as to acquire techniques and BEST practices in the teaching and examining of IRE.
- All teachers handling KCSE candidates need to acquire this feedback report so as to know the weaknesses of the previous candidates and prepare theirs better.
- The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development need to ensure that the IRE course books are accessible to all schools that offer IRE.
- Teachers should strive to teach all topics as stated in the syllabus, not just give students answers to possible examination questions.