

INTERACTION BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS IN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW

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ABSTRACT

The paper highlighted problems caused by interaction between male and female students in our institutions of learning and how students relate with one another, especially during group discussions, lectures and bus stop where students meet and enter busses to their different destinations. According to Islamic injunctions, the Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet (saw) have instructed Muslims on how to relate or interact with one another and the negative effect of interacting with one another. The paper has recommended reward and punishment as regards the interaction between them both within and outside the learning environments, among other things that the parents, government and the school authorities will do to reduce if not eradicate this menace among our students in our learning environment. Parents should be very vigilant when it comes to the issue of their children's behavior and attitudes. They should not compromise it at whatever level they may find themselves. Their dressing in and outside the home, their peers, should also be known; they should not be allowed to interact with people anyhow.

Keywords: Interaction, Students, Learning Environment.

INTRODUCTION

The way by which we used to see male and female students interact in a learning environment that differed from one environment to the other made us feel interested in choosing the topic. Interaction between male and female students in the learning environment is a severe case because it affects almost the generality of people. After all, no society will progress without education. No matter how big or small the towns you come from, it would help if you had an education. Every ideal learning environment is established to provide character and learning. This is what makes students to be good ambassadors in their states and country at large. There must be an interaction between male and female students to search for knowledge. This is one of the reasons we developed an interest in choosing this topic to expose the Islamic point of view as related to this topic. A learning environment refers to the place where teaching and learning take place. A learning environment is where lessons are being carried out, formally or informally. The learning environment can also be seen as a place for imparting knowledge to learners under the guidance of a teacher. It can also be recognized as where teaching and learning take place through the supervision and control of the tutor at a specific time when new skills are being acquired. It is also seen as any place where learning takes place with the help of teachers with specific rules and regulations. (Balogun, 1973)

There are many ways by which interaction takes place in the learning environment.

1. Seating arrangement: Lectures halls, group discussion, playground, Quiz competition, Examination etc.
2. Social gathering: such as capteria, convocation ground, students resting place, libraries, and bus stop.
3. Transportation: Motorcycles, School buses, trekking etc.

1. Sitting closely with women: In our institutions of high learning, you will see staff and students sitting closely with women in and outside offices discussing issues that are not supposed to discuss with the students, especially issues of relationships with others and that could lead to so many things such as shaking hand laughing and above all hocking one another. We have seen students moving with female students holding their hands, and sometimes sitting close to each other. In 2017 a staff saw a student touching a female student, shocking her breast in her hijab on the school premises. This is a severe issue that the school authority should take majors seriously to stop this kind of attitude among our students so that other parents who fear sending their students to the school will have confidence in the school so that they can send their female students to school. The Prophet is reported to have said in his wise words, "To intermingle with a pig is better for me than my body to touch a woman's body. Imam Buhari reported the



hadith." Look at how Prophet (saw) compares or even prefers touching a pig to touching a woman's body. Pigs can be found in a refuse center where every dirty thing can be found, and pigs, in some circumstances, depending on excretes for their survival.

2. Shaking hands or clapping of hands at a social gathering: Shaking of hands with women is very common in our society today, and most people do not take it to be anything, and to this, there is no difference between leaders, scholars of all religions, married and unmarried women and men do shake hands during a social gathering. We witness what happens when it comes to giving prizes during ceremonies or a special visit to the top government officials within and outside the country. Few people can observe that, but the majority did not care that shaking hands between males and females is totally against the teaching of our religion and is punishable by law. Prophet (saw) said, "You cannot isolate yourself with any prohibited woman unless she is together with her husband or any closed relations with her." However, look at what is happening in our schools where male and female students will hide in a tranquil place all in the name of a lesson, or staff will look in their office with female staff or students in the name of discussing lecture notes or any other issue. Qur'an chapter 33-33-34 says, "And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, and perform salat, and give zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger up to the end of the surah." Based on the above, Islam is against the interactions between males and females who are not in blood relations or husbands who marry her based on Islamic injunctions.

3. Bus stop: This is another place where male and female students interact, and many things happen between them. They have the opportunity of exchanging their phone numbers and even make an arrangement to meet in a secret place, and only Allah knows what will happen between them. It is against the religion and culture of our society to allow males and females to hide in secret places. Therefore, parents and government should take this issue seriously and provide buses for males and females differently; at least this will reduce to the barest minimum, if not all.

4. Students resting places: Each tertiary institution constructs places for students to sit and rest after they have finished their lectures before going to another. This place is meant for resting and discussing issues that affect students, especially their lessons. However, students nowadays turn these places into other things. Instead of them sitting, eating whatever they want, you will see them romancing each other, discussing issues that have nothing to do with their studies, like politics, football matches, wrestling, etc. The school authorities should assign security men to watch this place, especially in the evening or at night. Islam is against this, and even the authorities should tolerate this kind of menace in their places. Prophet (saw) was saying in one of his hadith that "Whosoever among you see bad things happening he should stop it or change it with his hands if he is not the position to do that, he should use his mouth and if he is not in the position to do that he should hate it with his heart and this is the list one can do. This shows that we all have a role to play in changing issues like this as teachers/lecturers, administrators watch men, and all other stakeholders have role play. If we do what we are supposed to do, we are helping ourselves and society in general. (Yarosan, 2004).

ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW CONCERNING MALE AND FEMALE INTERACTION IN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Islamic point of view refers to the "total of Islamic law contained in the teaching of both Quran and Hadith, i.e the traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his companions (A B Balogun); therefore, both the Qur'an and traditions of the holy Prophet peace be upon him laid down all that is expected to be followed by a Muslim where ever he/she may find him/herself, be it at home, in the farm, on the road, in the learning environment or anywhere. Allah (SWA) said in (Q 2: 42) "And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know.

From the above verse, we can understand that even in the learning environment, one should not mix the truth with falsehood. One should not use a learning environment to intermingle or interact contrary to the teaching of Islam, irrespective of gender or unusual movement or interaction between the same sexes. In another verse of the same chapter, v: 194, Allah says, "fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear Him." This indicates that whoever fears Allah wherever he is and or whatever he or she is doing, Allah's knowledge encompasses every



location. Therefore, students in the lecture hall, playground, bus stop, or during convocation or ceremonies should know that Allah is watching them, so we should fear Allah in all our doings. In another chapter, Qur'an 3: 200, Allah says, "O you who believed perseverance and endurance and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful.

A Muslim should be patient, outlasting and against your evil inclinations and past his position against his enemy "Satan," who always wants to indulge the Muslim to go away from the right path by making them act against the Islamic injunction, including interaction not by the laws of Allah. In the hospital, learning environment, during group discussion, in lectures, at bus stops and any other place where people gather together. Another chapter of the holy Qur'an (4: 1) says, "O humankind fear Allah your Lord who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. Fear Allah through whom you ask one another and the wombs; Allah is ever, ever you an observer. This indicates that the interaction between males and females in any place should be by Islamic injunctions. Our interaction with females, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, should always cultivate the habit of morality, decency, and good manners as practiced by the Prophet and his companions. Their attitudes and how they relate with others, including non –Muslims, make most non-Muslims accept Islam. The way and manner our Muslim students interact with their fellow students are totally against the school rules and regulations and Islam in general. Our students are in the habit of wearing earring, neckless, bobbles and talking anyhow they like without considering who and who is around them. Even if it is their lectures or those above them, they will not care. You will see a student holding, romancing, kissing or hocking a female student in public. Very few can hide, especially in the evening when they come for a lesson. Our students need to be properly guided on why their parents send them to school; their parents should check what their sons and daughters are doing in school from time to time. They should also know the time their children come and the time they are expected to leave the school; these will help parents, school authorities, and the entire community members who have an interest in the good up bring of children to watch the attitudes of the students and other people within and outside the school environment. Qur'an says in chapter 9: 119. "O you, who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true. Again in the chapter (13: 21-22) And those who joined which Allah has ordered to join and fear Allah and are afraid of the evil of (their) account, and those who are patient, seeking the contented of their Lord and establish prayer and spend from what we have provided for them secretly and publicly and prevent evil with good, those will have good consequences of this home" In this quotations relationship has been mentioned and have also been commended to be carried out where ever we Muslim are it openly or secretly in line with the rules and regulations of the Islamic injunctions. Allah says in another verse 21: 27-28 "they cannot precede Him in words and they act by His command" "He knows what is presently before them and what will be after them and they cannot intercede except on behalf of one whom He approves. And they from fear of Him apprehensive."

In another verse, 33: 70-71, "O you who have believed fear Allah and speak words of appreciate justice, He will then amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins, and whoever obeys Allah and His messenger has certainly attained a great attainment. Islam has pointed out that one should know what to say to each other, especially when discussing with females in whatever place we find ourselves. The lack of this manner is what most courses the backwardness of education. Students do not respect their teachers at all levels of education; this lack of respect for the teachers and the constituted authority is what made students dolls and that Allah will not bless their studies. If we students want to acquire good knowledge that can be used to move their state or country forward, should Shawn avoid all the evil acts and concentrate on their studies? They should attend their lectures regularly and make the library to be their home at any time they are free; they should be reading; when they are at home, they should also find a time that is convenient for them and read their books and lecture notes, they can prepare extra lesson class to assist those who are weak among them. Use of handset to listen to music, watch films, chat and other things should be kept away until after the lesson. Watching television should be stopped, especially when there is a football match and other films. Doing this will help them better understand what they are doing at home and school. This will make their interaction good in school and at home and also make them respect each other and help one another. Allah (SWA) says in chapter 57: 28. "O you who believed fear Allah and believe in His messenger, He will (then) give you a double portion of His mercy and make from you a light by which you will walk and forgive you, and Allah is forgiving and merciful."



No doubt these and many more verses mentioned here are urging Muslims to interact with one another in line with Islamic injunctions. However, we should remember that Allah had created and attached to each of us two angels, Raqib and Atid, recording all that we are doing from the day we mature. So it will continue until when we go back to Almighty Allah.

The life of this world is no doubt purposive and significant. The good works we do in this life will run before us to illumine our path in the next world. Life on this earth is the preparation for life in the hereafter. However, the present life and the future are to be viewed as a unity, and a Muslim should work with the goodness of character. Allah created life before death to test which people are best in point of the deed. Therefore, it becomes the believers' primary duty to actively participate in the struggle to establish a social order based on peace, harmony and justice. Being created after the pattern of Allah's nature, man is capable of developing from one stage to the next highest stage in worldly life. In order to develop one's self, one should have virtue which in the words of the Prophet (saw) is the goodness of character. Sometimes, the spirit feels tranquil, and the heart feels satisfaction. Jealousy, hatred, cut-throat competition, oppression, and deception are evil forces and lead to the character's wickedness. The following Ahadith have pointed out how male and female are expected to interact.

Imam Annawawi bin Saman may Allah be pleased with him. Reported from the Prophet (saw) says, "Virtuous innocence is the goodness of character and wickedness is that which is knit in your spirit and which you would hate. People get to know about" Muslim related it. Another hadith from Abu Hurairah (R A) said the messenger of Allah may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. Said faith has over sixty or seventy branches; the most excellent among them is the confession that there is no God but Allah and the lowest of them is the removal from a path of the harmful thing, and modesty is the branch of faith. Another hadith from Abu Dhar Algifari (R A) relates that "Fear Allah where so ever you may be, follow evil deeds with a good one who will pipe (the former bad deed) out, and behave with people with good nature" Another hadith from Prophet (saw) says "To abuse Muslim is transgression and to fight him is unbelief." Imam Attirmithi and Imam Abu Dawud reported from Abu Huraira reported from the Prophet peace be upon him said, "He is not of us who proclaim the cause of tribal partisanship, and he is not of us who dies in the cause of tribal partisanship." Abu Huraira (R A) reported from the Prophet (saw) that "Do not get angry, He the prophet reported several times saying do not get angry" Imam Al- Buhari related it. (Doi, 1999).

All the quotations mentioned above clearly show all Muslims, both male and female, how to conduct ourselves, and how Islam wants us to relate and interact with each other. Our attitudes or behavior to one another should be based on the teaching of our noble Prophet (saw). Therefore, most of our attitudes, actions and behaviors are not in line with the teaching of the Prophet and his companions. Our attitudes towards relatives, neighbors, friends and others must be checked and corrected. We are all witnessing what the youth nowadays engage in, such as robbery, homosexuality, banditry, kidnapping, taking harmful drugs, smoking Indian hemp, etc. This is the root cause of all evil acts. Politicians hid under this and used them during campaign exercises; they were assigned to kill and destroy people's property, especially the opponents. They carry dangerous weapons, including guns that only security agents are expected to carry. Parents should strive hard to call their wards to order, preach to them and get them something to do. This menace will reduce to the barest minimum. (Tambawal, 2012).

Apart from primary and secondary sources of sharia I, e Qur'an and the sunnah of the holy Prophet (saw), Islamic jurists have also talked about and indicated so many ways by which interaction is supposed to be between males and females, including students in the learning environment. A B Balogun (1973) mentioned in his book "the life of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodiyo" that his brother and son made for Zamfara, where they remained and preached for five years. Many of the people of Zamfara were ignorant of Islam; consequently, the place provided fertile ground for the author's missionary activities. Both males and females flocked indiscriminately to his preaching assemblies; he was criticized for mixing sexes in public. Sheikh Abdullah Gwandu, on behalf of his brother, replied that, although both sexes came to their assemblies, they were seated separately; moreover, women could not be prevented from attending the assemblies because to leave them in ignorance was a greater evil than mixing them with men at a such religious gathering. To this, we can deduce that being educated is a yardstick for any meaningful development; males and females are encouraged to search for it. However, interaction should be according to Islamic injunctions. In searching for knowledge, there are many things one will encounter, and it is obvious that one



has to do one or the other among them, such as transportation, lecture halls, bus stop, and interaction has to take place for both sexes in these places. Therefore, one has to know how to interact with each other to avoid going out of Islamic injunctions. (Balogun, 1973).

Another serious issue is that some lecturers do not care to separate male and female students during lectures; they will allow them to sit anyhow they like because many evil things will happen during the lecture. Some will have the opportunity to exchange phone numbers, watch films, and listen to music, especially those using earpieces. During exams, you will see them going from one lecturer to another, begging him or her to assist them even with an E grade so that they will not repeat the course. However, a severe lecturer who is also conscious of his religion is the one who will separate them during lectures or exams and always concentrates on his students moving from one line to another to see those who are with him or not. Again, in secondary schools where debate and quiz competitions are organized the same thing, you will find out students are seated in the same place, touching each other part of the body. This has to be discouraged at all levels of education. (Ainabor, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The paper conceptualized male and female students' interaction according to the Islamic point of view in the learning environment; examples of interaction between male and female students in a learning environment were also highlighted. Furthermore, the role parents, teachers, society and government can play to stop these issues of unwanted interaction between male and female students was also discussed. Finally, recommendations on how to interact between both sexes in the learning environment were also highlighted in the paper.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations will help significantly reduce, if not eradicate, this menace in our learning environment.

- Parents should be very vigilant when it comes to the issue of their children's behavior and attitudes. They should not compromise it at whatever level they may find themselves. Their mode of dressing both in and outside the home. Their peers should also be known; they should not be allowed to interact with people anyhow.
- The community should also come in to assist in molding the character of their children because it is not only the responsibility of the parents including the society. If a child is not with his parents, he must be with the community, and if he is misbehaving and nothing is done to stop him, it will affect the other people, not him alone. Prophet (SAW) was saying in one of his traditions that "Whosoever among you sees bad things is happening he should change it with his hands if he is not in the position to do that he should use his mouth, If he cannot do so he should use his heart, and this is the last thing one can do.
- Government should make it mandatory for all students that wear dissent dressing is compulsory to all students in the learning environment. If places like Lagos, Imo, Enugu and Osun states can make it mandatory for their students to dress dissent and wear hijab, what about the seat of the caliphate and the state nearby?
- The schools, especially tertiary institutions, should empower the dress code committee to ensure that each student dresses according to the school rules and regulations.
- Religious Preachers should preach about issues that affect the behavior of our students in their places of preaching, and they should remove sentiment and accusation of other religions as no religions accept indecent dressing.
- Teachers/ Lecturers have a role to play in stopping this issue of indiscipline in our schools; any students who come to school in the wrong dress or anything that is against the school rules and regulations should be sent out of the class or lecture hall and will not be allowed until he or she adheres to it.
- Students Associations: They, too, have a role to play in preventing this unwanted behavior among our students. This can be done during their monthly meetings, and during other activities, they organize for them.
- Library Management; They have their role in addressing these issues; they should not be allowed any student that did not appear neat to the library. This will make serious students behave themselves and use the library while those who are not will not even be there so that they will not disturb the serious ones.



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