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SIGNIFICANCE AND CHALLENGES OF SPECIAL COMPANIONSHIP (AS-SUHBATUL-KHASAH) IN THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

One of the major means of cognition in the Islamic Education is Companionship (As-suhbah), because it determines the originality of the content of information in the Islamic Educational System. As-suhbah reflects in different aspects of Islamic Education, such as the chain of transmission of the Quran, which is the primary source of the Islamic Education, the Sunnah, the second source, the flow of information between the Companions of the prophet, and those after them in the system till today. Therefore, this present study intends to investigate the significance of As-suhbah in the Islamic Education and the related emerging challenges, in order to identify ways in which the new ICT benefits the Islamic Educational System in authenticating its originality. Thus, this study has been conducted using qualitative method which generally focuses on library research and document analysis from primary sources to obtain the information needed. The paper's overall conclusion is that the Special Companionship in Islamic Education studies as an interdisciplinary field of empirical research, professional develop ment and scholarly inquiry in both Islamic and wider Western higher education would facilitate such a much-needed knowledge.

Keywords: *Companionship, Islamic Education, Internet, Information Technology.*

The Meaning of As-Suhbah

As-suhubah can be defined in two deferent ways; literarily and technically. The literary meaning which was derived from an Arabic root word (***As-suhubah***) means "companionship, association, company, comradeship, fellowship and friendship. (Veruzabadiy, 1987). Accordin g to English Lexicon, companion is refereed to among other things; a friend, acquaintance or partner, someone with whom one spends time or keep company (http://wiktionary). Thus, An-Nawawiy claims that there is no controversy

amongst the Arabic Lexicographers that the word As-sahabiy (The Companion) was derived from the root word As-suhubah (Companionship) (An-Nawawy, 2004). Therefore, the technical Meaning of *As-suhubah*. The Islamic Educationist and specialists in the Chain of Transmission have narrowed down the definition of As-suhubah in different expressions. *An-Nawawy* defined As-sahabiy as (the Companion) as any Muslim who saw the Messenger of Allah, (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) during his life time, even if it was just for a moment (An-Nawawy, 2004). Likewise, this definition is the opinion of Ahmad bnHambaliy, Al-ImamulBukhariy in his famous work on collection of sound Hadiths of the prophet, Muhammad, (Peace and Blessing of Allah Be upon him) and all *Muhadithin*, Specialists in the field of Hadith. As-sahabah (The Companion) was also defined by many Fundamentalists and Jurisprudents as: "whosoever accompanied the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) for long period of time"(An-Nawawy, 2004). From the above definitions, it is obvious that physical contact of the prophet who is the source of Islamic Information is paramount. Consequently, without such contact, the concept of As-suhubah, Companionship would not be realized.

Categories of As-Suhubah

As-suhubah (Traditional Companionship) is categorized according to the arguments of Scholars into two categories. Namely: As-suhbatul Khasah and As-suhbatul-`Aamah. Firstly, As-suhbatul Khasah: it is referred to Saeed bnl- Musayyab been with the messenger of Allah for a year or two or fought a battle or two with him and narrated one or two Hadiths from him. Secondly, As-suhbatul- `Aamah: is referred to the general opinion of Scholars, as seeing the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him) in the state been a Muslim, even though the relationship was not long and no single Hadith was narrated from him (Shakir, 1998).

Significance of As-Suhubatul-Khaasah in Islamic Education

As-suhubaul- Khaasah (Special Companionship) is an essential aspect of Islamic Education due to its role in the Chain of Transmission of Information from the Source. As-suhubah reflects in the transmission of al-Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet, the opinions of the Companions of the Prophet, the Tabiun and those who follow them till date. It was *As-suhubaul- Khaasah* (Special Companionship) that has being guaranteeing the originality and authenticity of contents of the sources of information in Islamic Education; The Quran, the Hadith, *aqwalus-Shahabah, Ahwalut-tabiun* and those after them till date(Nadirah, 2006). Equally, As-suhubah automatically brought about As-sima' (Listerning) which is the most reliable channel for obtaining reliable information in Islamic Education. Without As-sima`, there can be no factual narration of any reliable knowledge in Islamic Education. In fact, Al- Khateeb said;" Sami`tu (I heard) is the highest expression (i.e in narration of information) (Shakir, 1998). Abdullahi bn Az-zubairul Humaidiy said: If it was asked: what makes the narration of a man to be rejected forever? I will say: when he narrates from another person that he heard him and never met him

alive, or met him alive but never (met him to) hear from him (Nadirah, 2006).Although, there are other expressions that signify that the narrator witnessed the source(s) of information which includes "Hadathana" He told us, and "Hadathani" He told me, yet As-sim`a remains the pillar upon which all information in Islamic Education is built.

***As-Suhubaul- Khaasah* and Its Implication on *At-Tadlis* (Narrating in Ambiguity)**

At-tadlis (Narrating in Ambiguity) technically means "when a person narrates from another person but he neither heard nor met him" (Athahabiy, 2007). Al- Imamus- Shafihi was reported to have said: At-tadlis (Narating in Ambiguity) is a brother to the lie (Shakir, 1998). Consequently ***At-tadlis* is of two types:** The First, to narrate from whom a person met alive but never heard from him. Or in another expression, to narrate from his contemporary but never met him, in other to think he heard from him. The second to narrate from his Sheikh (Mentor) by mentioning his name or alias contrary to what he is known to be, in other to vague his personality or obscure his actual status. Hence, The first type was condemned by almost all scholars especially Shu`ubah who was reported to have said: "It is dearer to me to fornicate than to narrate in ambiguity(At-tadlis) While, the second type of At-tadlis was said to be accepted considering the intent of the narrator, such as when the source of the information is younger than the narrator, or the source is lower in hierarchy to the narrator. Otherwise the narration is to be rejected, such as when the source is not trustworthy or when his alias can mistakenly be taken to be another stronger and trustworthy narrator (shakir, 1998). Henceforth, It is pertinent to mention here that despite the importance attached to *As-suhubah* and the advantages of *As-sima`a* which lead to *At-tasalsul* (continuation of the chain of transmission) from the beginning to the end and the advantage of being distant from At-tadlis, it is difficult to have hadith (the prophetic saying) in this form (Shakir, 1998).

Merits and Challenges of the New Ict in Special Companionship, As-Suhbatul-Khaasah in Islamic Education

Mike and Tama (2014) state that the Massively Open Online Course otherwise known as MOOC had started long ago, not less than 150 years. It started alongside with Distance Learning and before Computers and Internet were introduced (Mike and Tama, 2014). Example Essay.com, had it that: WWW (World Wide Web), which was considered technology of information transmission, has attracted attention of many people in the twenty first century and has modified their entire life style. Also, the next web.com (2019 December) commented on how the Internet is revolutionizing Education. It was observed that 10 years ago in April 2001, Charles M. Vest, the MIT President at the time, opened up on a proposal that universities would avail readers the opportunity of getting courses materials freely available on the Internet. The proposal was later known as **Open Course Ware** which gives opportunity to listen and read what is being taught at MIT. UC Berkeley later announced, 5 years after Charles implementation, in April 2006, its readiness to make complete academic courses available on Apple's iTunes U, which paved way for the

largest catalogue of recorded classroom lectures in the world. Just a year later, in October 2007, UC Berkeley was launched on YouTube, and over 120 million downloads was realized just from the first sharing of videos online, which they started doing in 2001 (Retrieved on 5-12-2019).

All the above factual extracts have put the traditional companionship into a serious challenge. The ultimate challenge of the ICT on *As-suhubah* is challenge of originality. Islamic Education absolutely relied on certainty in conveyance of information which reflects in the security of the Chain of Transmission. The cumulative of the above is one of the unresolved problems of the ICT despite its wider usage in education. The UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (2003), highlighted the Main problems in the use of New Information Technologies in Education which include Internet. I found the following findings more particular about *As-suhubah:*

Some authors tell about a potential danger of dehumanization of education, elimination of "the linchpin of the process – a personal contact between the teacher and the learner in the classroom" (UNESCO World Education Report, 1998). Barron and Orwig (Barron and Orwig, 1997) call on the educational community to remember the balance between the high-tech ("high-tech") education and the education "of a high level of contact" ("high-touch"): the "live" teachers are essentially required to provide "the factors of contact" in our high-tech society. The human sympathy and ability to analyse individual needs of the pupils remain in the field of activity of the teacher. J. Brunt (Brunt, 1996) asks – rhetorically "whether you can put a hand on the shoulder of the student in the Internet"– and defends the humanist approach to the usage of Internet technologies in education.

It is therefore Crystal clear that ICT can not represent the physical contact in Education, a fact that supports the years of practice in Islamic Education on the concept of As-suhubahul-Khasah. Some other problems associated with the use of ICT according to The UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (2003), are: Information retrieval for teachers, administrators and, specifically, for learners the biggest barrier in obtaining data of any type is the navigation problem residing in the lack of functionality (and, in some cases, even in total absence) of tools and systems. Educational information of the Internet is characterised by the irregularity of distribution of represented information. The problems of legislative and public control over Internet contents are a part of the general problem.

The simplest and most obvious consequence of the described nature of the Net is the demand for a language-mediator. "Concerns have been raised in some non-Anglophone countries that the Internet is either implicitly or explicitly a tool to promote the linguistic dominance of English" (ibid). As a result, even the materials published on the Net by non-Anglophone authors are often presented in English. Among the problems revealed by the experience of individual communications in teaching and learning via the Internet (basically using e-mail), one can distinguish the following:

First of all, there is the **problem of searching for a required address.** Although most existing e-mail software contains mechanisms for managing the lists of e-mail addresses, only several universal search engines can perform searches for required addresses by various criteria. While online address-bases for educational institutions yet present on the Net (although, in a limited quantity), the search for an e-mail address of a particular teacher or specialist can be unrewarding. Apparently, the absence of such technology can be attributed to the unsettled questions of information security. The struggle against unwanted advertising mail ("spamming"), the efforts to provide confidentiality of messages by using various encryption systems, which is especially important in distant making contracts with a learner ("learning contracts"), together with the teaching staff, has not lead to a complete success. The important problem, which directly influences the didactics of teaching on the Net, is the low degree of interactivity. This quality of electronic mail makes it difficult to react timely to individual needs of learners, which finally leads to a feeling of isolation from teachers and other students. In the literature devoted to the problems of distance education, a special term is introduced – "distance of interaction", which means the psychological space between a learner and a teacher, and is a function of the degree of "dialog" of their communication and timeliness of teacher's answers.

Group learning and teaching via the Internet

The majority of the problems noted by the experts who analysed the AIE utilization experience, are connected with the fact that Internet technologies originally are not specifically oriented toward educative usages. As it is stated in the UNESCO World Education Report, 1998, "the fact that large technological developments were motivated by the needs of education as such used to be a rare case. Most probably, on the contrary the education showed the tendency to the attempts of use for its own purposes of the technologies which were introduced in other fields".

The problem of pedagogical efficiency in the use of new information technologies (including the Internet) in education is widely discussed in the research literature. Unlike the obvious and quantitatively valuable achievements in enhancing of the availability of education, the specific positive effect of the environment-intermediary on the quality of teaching is not so evident. Moreover, according to some researchers, the last 50 years of studies of unconventional media used in education (from radio and TV broadcasting to www) have not revealed, however, any considerable specific effect on the process of teaching for the given type of environment. This idea is shared by R. Clark (Clark, 1994) considering that the new methods of designing for teaching by means of new information technologies may stimulate improvement of the education quality, but not their use as the means of delivery for the teaching material.

Generalising this discussion, R. Owston (Owston, 1997) writes that the Internet, as any other environment intermediary, cannot improve the quality of teaching. To strengthen this position, the researcher following G. Solomon with the co-authors (Solomon et al, 1991), considers that the use of the world telecommunication network as a means or tool

of education does not contribute to shaping specific cognitive and other skills by learners who would communicate only with the given technology. The key moment in promotion of www technologies in education, in his opinion, is their effective utilization in certain situations of teaching/learnin(UNESCO World Education Report, 1998).

All the above have proved beyond reasonable doubt that the New ICT cannot substitute what is known as *As-suhbatu-lkhasah*, Special Companionship in Islamic Education except with extra ordinary carefulness and taken to consideration the reliability of the transmission system.

Conclusion

This paper has positioned the restructurings of special companionship in the Islamic Education system with its significance and challenges; This paper highlighted literary and technical meaning, scope, limits and types of *As-suhbah*ul *Khasah*, Likewise, the significance and challenges of *As-suhbatu-lkhasah* in the Islamic Educational System and underscore the merits and challenges of new ICT on Special Companionship, *As-suhbatu-lkhasah* in Islamic Education. Practical recommendation for restructurings based on the deficiencies acknowledged in the system through a critical appraisal of its numerous parts was discussed. Accordingly, *As-suhbatu-lkhasah* has been the only reagent relied upon to test the authenticity of information over one thousand four hundred years ago, but with the introduction of New Information and Communication Technology, *As-suhbatu-lkhasah* has taken new dimensions with its merits and challenges. Also, this paper deemed necessary in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the variables of the study and relates with ICT acceptance, since the absence of ICT was frequently reported as barriers to education system in this 21 century as well as Islamic Education system. The significance of such a comparative study lies in its potential to expose the strengths and deficiencies of each of the educational settings, as well as highlight the merits, significance and challenges as presented in this paper.

Recommendation

The paper recommends that the contribution to the growing body of scholarship on reforms in the traditional Islamic Education system in the contemporary Muslim settings are needed, as was recommended from the first Muslim Conference held in Saudi Arabia in 1977. In addition to this ICT skills training should also be given professional development exposure to equip them with the pedagogical content knowledge required to use ICT variously and meaningfully in Islamic Education system.

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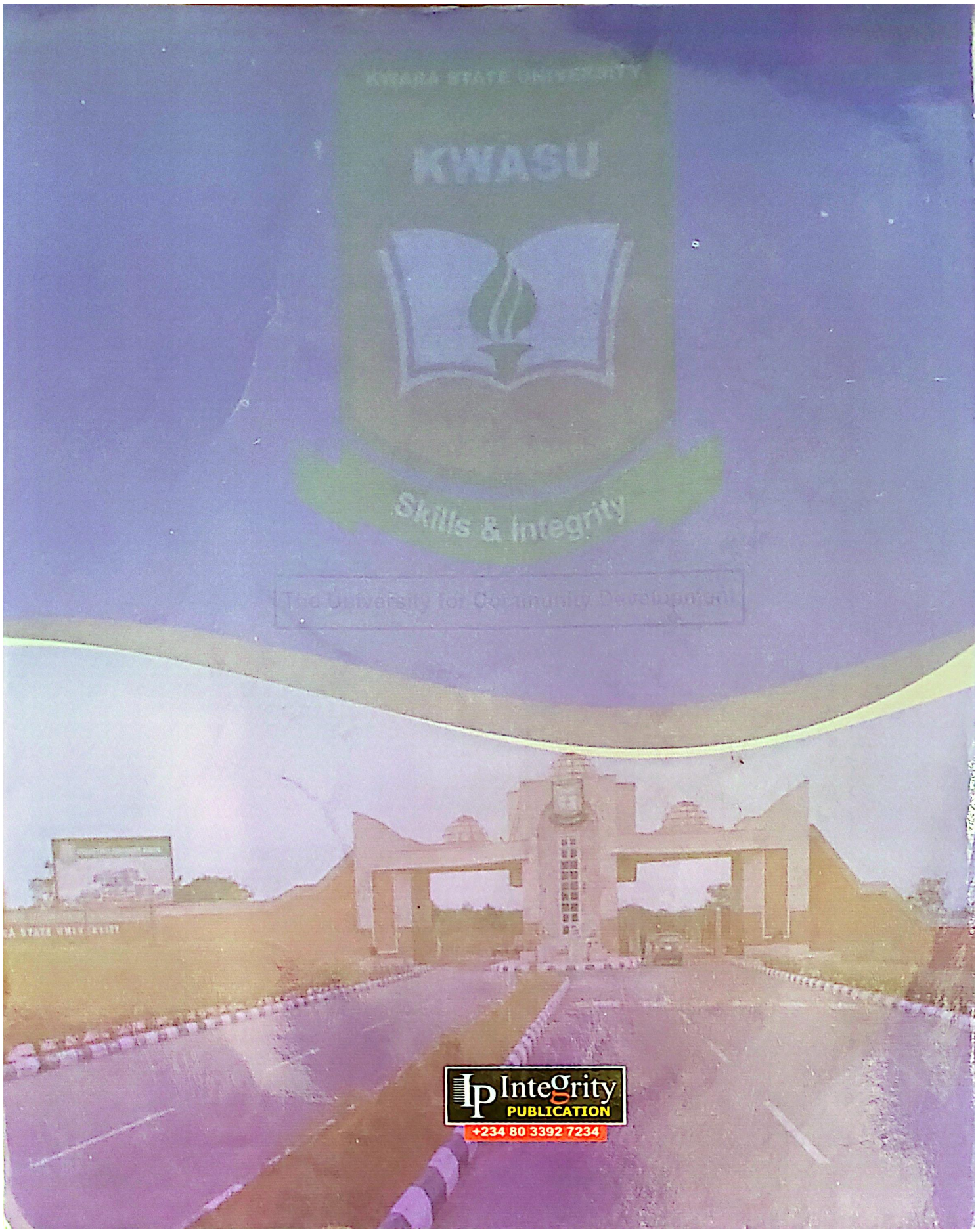
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