RURAL MIGRANT HAUSA GIRLS, A COMMUNITY FAITH-BASED SCHOOL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN SOKOTO, NORTHWEST NIGERIA

By

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ABSTRACT

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Engaging with feminist and post-colonial theories to examine the ways in which gender identity, gender power, and gender relations are enacted, this dissertation examines a shift that has recently been occurring in the education of rural Hausa girls, whose families are increasingly sending them to residential Quranic schools in metropolitan Sokoto rather than to government schools. At the root of this change, it identifies Hausa parents' desire to entrench traditional gender roles grounded in the cultural values and principles of Islamic religious ideology. To fulfill this aim, however, these parents must disrupt another aspect of the existing system of traditional gender roles, in which girls disproportionately farm and perform household duties. Moreover, it identifies the driving force of such disruption as Hausa fathers, who as the major decision-makers in their households are often making these schooling choices on their daughters' behalf in the face of sharp opposition from their wives. As a result, Hausa mothers must adjust to the loss of a major source of household labor, among other effects of the absence of their daughters from their homes. In other words, families lose their daughters' labor contributions when they leave their rural communities to go to Qur'anic schools in urban centers like Sokoto. The dissertation concludes by drawing the attention of the Nigerian government to its new data on the cultural and religious issues that should be considered by policymakers seeking to bring free universal primary and secondary education to under-served rural Hausa children and families in Northern Nigeria.

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father, Alhaji Idris, and to my mother, Hajiya Aisha, for sending me to school in very difficult circumstances throughout my educational journey in Nigeria.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

Residential: providing living accommodation for students

Qur'anic School: a community-based school in the house of an Islamic scholar (Malam) teaching children to recite and memorize the Qur'an using a wooden slate

Almajiri: a migrant whose travels are driven by the search for knowledge, especially in the context of Qur'anic education in northern Nigeria

Out-of-School: describing a person who is within Nigeria's government-mandated age of compulsory school attendance, but who has either never attended school or dropped out

FPE: Free Primary Education

UBE: Universal Basic Education

SUBEB: State Universal Basic Education Board

LGBEB: Local Government Basic Education Board

UPE: Universal Primary Education

NPE: National Policy on Education

EFA: Education for All

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

NEEDS: National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies

WEF: World Education Forum

UNESCO: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

DHS: Demographic and Housing Survey

SAP: Structural Adjustment Program

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

In sub-Saharan Africa, some 30 million children between the ages of six and 15, 55% of them girls, do not attend school (Institute of Statistics, UNESCO, 2015). Nigeria's 2006 population was 190-200 million, making it the most populous nation in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world (Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, DHS 2013). It is also is home to 10.5 million non-school-attending children, the highest number of any country (UNICEF, Quality Basic Education report, 2015). In Nigeria, 60% of these children are girls from the poorest households in the North (UNICEF, Quality Basic Education report, 2015). In the Nigerian context, however, all school-age children who do not attend Nigeria's government schools or who drop out of these schools are classified as not attending school. As a result, all children aged six to 15 who are enrolled in informal residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria are officially deemed to be not in school; and it is in part for this reason that official figures on girls' participation in school remain so low in Nigeria, and persistently low in northern Nigeria.

In this Almajiri school system, girls – unlike their male counterparts – are generally not allowed to participate as residential students, but usually return to their family homes at the end of the day's session. Recently, however, a new trend of allowing Muslim Hausa girls to board in such schools has emerged in northern Nigeria, especially in the major city of Sokoto. In the current context of Nigerian public education, these schools are considered to be informal because they operate outside of the Nigerian government's formal education structures, i.e., the federal, state, and local-government education authorities. Nevertheless, private schools that follow the standards and regulations of the Nigerian Ministry of Education, including the national

curriculum and examination structures, are considered to be part of the formal school system. Alongside official recognition, private schools' pupils can meet the entry requirements for further education and access to employment within the public and private sectors. In contrast, residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools are established by an Islamic spiritual leader with the support of families and local communities for the purpose of providing Qur'anic education, and are not associated with any clear pathways to either further education or formal employment. Against this background, the present study explores the participation and experiences of Muslim Hausa girls in a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school and the impacts of such participation on their households, with the aim of understanding the needs and challenges of these girls and their families in the context of northern Nigeria.

In particular, this study reveals the dilemmas Muslim Hausa girls encounter when seeking equal access to education in an informal residential Qur'anic Almajiri school. It is expected that my data on the experiences of Muslim Hausa girls in such a school will have useful implications for the policy and practice of expanding girls' school-participation rates. In particular, my findings imply that policymakers and families alike should look beyond an instrumental view of education for girls as gaining economic benefits for their households. Rather, ensuring that they enroll in school and complete their schooling helps them to gain knowledge and skills that contribute positively to their quality of life.

Statement of the Problem

Prior to independence, Nigeria's educational development and reform focused primarily on formal education aimed at human-capital development, and especially, the filling of government jobs. This emphasis on formal education continued after the end of British colonial rule in 1960, and eventually led to an oversupply of labor in the public sector, and indeed in

formal employment more generally, leading to high rates of graduate unemployment.

Another, longer-term consequence of this national emphasis on formal education has been the exclusion of poorer and/or geographically isolated children and families, who especially in northern Nigeria often participate in the informal residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools instead of their more structured, and more expensive, government-run or government-approved counterparts. Though the Nigerian universal basic education policy holds that formal public schools should be cost-free, inadequate government funding means that parents are in practice expected to pay some fees and charges related to uniforms, books, the parent-teacher association, and even tuition *per se*. For low-income families, this financial deterrent is compounded by the loss of their daughters' labor support while they are at school. Due to the informal residential Qur'anic Almajiri school program's more flexible schedule, it is better suited to the needs of these poor households, offering the opportunity for children to gain some schooling without taking them entirely away from the housekeeping, farming, and petty-trading duties that are vital to their families' well-being. In northern Nigeria, girls are likely to never attend any school, or to drop out due to their families' demands for their labor, and by complying with these familial and cultural expectations miss out on equal opportunities to receive not only education, but also necessary life skills.

Some prior studies have examined the experiences of Muslim Hausa boys in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri School system in northern Nigeria (Bano, 2009; Hoechner, 2011; Khalid, 2001; Umar, 2001; Usman, 2008), but little or nothing is known about girls' participation in it. The current study helps to fill this gap, with the aim of understanding how they offer educational opportunities to underserved girls and families in northern Nigeria. However, the existence of this research gap does not mean that the problem has gone unnoticed: Nigerian

policymakers have pushed for mass formal primary and secondary education to address persistent education gaps, with a particular focus on the gender gap and promoting girls' access to all levels of education. These educational policy initiatives include two famous mass-education programs, Universal Primary Education (UPE, 1976) and Universal Basic Education (UBE, 2000). Yet, despite their notable efforts to extend basic education to all Nigerian children regardless of gender or geographic location, these national education-development policies ignored the important role and indeed the existence of the informal residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria. As a result, Muslim Hausa girls there are not receiving the equal educational opportunities supposedly guaranteed by a range of local and international education-development programs, including Education for All (EFA, 2000) and the World Education Forum (WEF, 2000). Studies on girls' education in developing countries have identified poverty, distance to school, school environments, household labor, and early marriage as some of the major barriers to girls' access to education in developing countries, Nigeria included (Ohba, 2011; Warrington & Kiragu; 2012, Chisamya et al., 2012; Cammish & Brock, 1994; Humphreys et al., 2015; Guinee, 2014; Hartmann-Mahmud, 2011; Unterhalter et al., 2013; Foulds, 2013; Grant et al., 2013).

However, all of the studies cited in the preceding paragraph focused on formal schools only. The omission of girls educated in Quranic Almajiri schools is particularly important, given that they are more likely to drop out of or never attend formal schools with more rigid structures that prevent them serving the labor needs of their households. As noted above, scholars have produced a substantial literature on the education of female children from diverse contexts, but only a small body of research is available on girls in Qur'anic schools, let alone in the specific context of northern Nigeria. Therefore, the current study represents an important contribution to

the existing literatures on both girls' education and the informal Qur'anic education system in northern Nigeria and in other regions of the world with comparable systems.

Specifically, this study examines a shift currently taking place among rural Hausa families, who are increasingly sending their daughters to the metropolis of Sokoto to study in informal residential Qur'anic schools, as opposed to either sending them to government schools or keeping them at home. Hausa people in northern Nigeria are predominantly Muslim, and the Hausa language serves as the lingua franca across northern Nigeria, albeit with small differences in dialects. Such differences are usually connected to pronunciations, rather than total departures. For example, the local dialect of Hausa in Sokoto differs only slightly from that spoken in Kano, more than 300 miles away; and it can be argued that differences in Hausa speakers' outlook and value systems are equally minor across equally large spans of territory. In the context of this study, the term "Hausa culture" is used to refer to Hausa-speaking people and their cultural activities in rural communities around Sokoto, northwestern Nigeria, as well as in the rural communities of neighboring Zamfara State and Kebbi State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the experiences of Muslim Hausa girls attending the residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria, and the related experiences of their family members: in particular, the changes that households must make to their routines due to their daughters' prolonged absences. The existing literature on Qur'anic schools has hardly anything to say about West African girls' boarding in such schools. As such, this study helps to fill an important gap in the current literature, and takes account of the roles of gender, geographical location, and family background in relation to access to education for rural girls. Ultimately, this research engages with the legacies of the British colonial administration,

and in particular, its influence on present-day Nigerian girls' access to primary education within the formal education system in northern Nigeria.

This study addresses one broad research question and three more specific ones relating to the experiences of Muslim Hausa girls attending Qur'anic Almajiri schools residentially. The broad question is:

How do Hausa families decide whether or not to send one or more of their daughters to the residential Qur'anic Almajiri School in Sokoto, northwestern Nigeria?

The specific questions are:

1. What factors propel Muslim Hausa girls to migrate to Sokoto, northwestern Nigeria to attend residential Qur'anic Almajiri school there?
2. What do different actors – Muslim Hausa girls, Muslim fathers, mothers, and community leaders – perceive to be the benefits, drawbacks, and challenges of this migration and school participation?
3. How does the administrator of the target residential Qur'anic Almajiri School support Hausa girls' participation in it?

Significance of the Study

With regard to the significance of this study, it is first necessary to point out that residential participation by girls in Qur'anic Almajiri schooling is an unprecedented practice in northern Nigeria that arose only in the past decade. In traditional Hausa culture, girls are generally expected to engage in domestic household chores side by side with their mothers, to attend schools quite near their homes (if at all), and not to mingle with the opposite gender. Therefore, the focal phenomenon represents a profound shift that may both reflect and cause wider socio-economic processes in the region. As such, the findings of this study will contribute

to education policymaking, pedagogical practices, and developmental programs to increase access to education for girls in rural northern Nigeria; and the contextual and empirical evidence it produces will expand scholarly understanding of girls' informal education in northern Nigeria and beyond.

Second, the Nigerian Ministry of Education has endorsed several global education-reform movements aimed at providing educational opportunities to underserved children in the developing world, and especially to adolescent females living in poor rural communities of sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Education for All [EFA] and Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] 2000). The Nigerian government has also demonstrated a commitment to the education of the female children through a range of local policy initiatives, including the Blueprint on Women's Education 1986, the Nomadic Education Program 1986, the National Commission for Mass Literacy and Non-formal Education 1991, the Family Support Basic Education Program 1994, the Universal Basic Education program 1999, the National Policy on Women 2001, the Strategy for Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria 2003, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) 2004, and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act 2004 (Aja-Okorie, 2013). Yet, none of these global and local initiatives have addressed northern Nigerian Hausa girls' attendance at in residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools, a practice that is both entirely novel and excluded from official consideration of who is in school, including the Nigerian government's 2011-15 strategic plan for the development of the country's education sector and widening of access. According to the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2008), Nigeria's Federal Constitution "stipulates the direction of national policy towards ensuring equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels and the provision of free, compulsory, and universal primary education and adult literacy programs as soon as practicable" (p. iv). In short,

in spite of the various initiatives by the Nigerian government and international mandates on education that it has adopted, Hausa girls in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school system in northern Nigeria remain missing from the country's universal education initiatives and directives. Bearing in mind the importance of education and skills to the well-being of girls and their families, this study has the potential to influence policy and resource commitments from the Nigerian government and their international partner institutions to address the barriers to education Muslim Hausa girls encounter, either as a cause or an effect of their engagement with the informal schooling system, and incorporate them into the free primary and junior secondary education guaranteed by the Nigerian constitution and global mass-education resolutions.

Third, alongside the venerable tradition of Qur'anic education in northern Nigeria, many negative stereotypes of the Hausa culture of women's seclusion and its supposed implications about attitudes towards education have arisen. The facts are these. In Nigeria as a whole, Christians make up 49.3% of the population and Muslims, 48.8% (Pew Research Center, 2010). Islam's seclusion tradition as embraced by the Muslim Hausa population does not allow women, especially married women, to go outside their homes except for specific reasons, such as hospital visits, family visits, and familial ceremonies, and then only with the consent of their husbands. In a wide range of other situations, Hausa families therefore depend on their children, especially female children, to perform day-to-day tasks outside of their homes, in addition to household chores such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water, and taking care of younger siblings, as well as participating in income-generating trading activities. For this reason, the enrollment of Muslim Hausa girls in school generally has serious negative implications for their families, who depend on children's labor contributions both inside and outside of their households, with the exception of wealthy households that can afford to hire house servants instead. These implications become

even more critical the farther away from home the female pupils live. This study of Muslim Hausa girls' participation in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school system in northern Nigeria will shed new light on their experiences, and hopefully dispel widespread negative stereotypes of why such girls do not normally attend school, alongside the many issues they grapple with when they do go to school and are physically separated from their own households. As such, the results of this study may help inform Nigeria's education authorities and their international partners about key changes in the social and economic circumstances of Muslim Hausa parents and their school-age female children.

It should also be noted here that in northern Nigeria, the traditional age of marriage for Muslim Hausa girls is at puberty, which is held to occur at age 11 or 12 in rural areas; and therefore, the international consensus that girls should attend school until age 18 or beyond is broadly incompatible with the rural community's cultural system. The picture is further by the fact that early marriage, just as much as schooling, could serve to deprive a girl's parental household of the economic benefits associated with her presence. Both phenomena therefore have interrelated and potentially serious implications at the local, state, and national levels of the Nigerian economy.

Epistemological Orientation of the Study

Prior to clarifying the epistemological orientation informing this study, it is important to define epistemology. Crotty (2003) called it "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (p. 3). This study will be informed by the interpretive qualitative inquiry paradigm. For interpretivists – as followers of this paradigm are known – "the world is constructed by each knower/observer according to a set of subjective principles peculiar to that person" (Sipe & Constable, 1996, p. 158). That is, an interpretivist believes that reality is not

discovered, but constructed in multiple ways. Thus, the selection of the interpretivist principle as an epistemological stance is suitable for this study, because it will facilitate examination of the participants' unique experiences. Sipe and Constable (1996) also note that interpretivists "attempt to understand situations from the point of view of those experiencing the situations and are concerned with what will assist them in doing so – what is heuristically powerful" (p. 158). Consequently, each individual participant's context is an important consideration, in light of the interpretivist principles of constructing and understanding participants' worldviews.

The core beliefs of the interpretivist paradigm also hold that reality is socially constructed, and that understanding is contextually grounded in the activities of the researcher and researched. The interpretivist epistemological view that is socially situating phenomena is consistent with the constructivists' theory of knowledge in cognitive psychology. In addition, Piaget's theory of childhood and cognitive development posits that "knowledge, at its origin, neither arises from object nor subject, but from interactions – inextricable between the subject and those objects" (Willis, 2012, p. 3). Piaget's view stresses the constructivist's idea of individuals progressively constructing their personal understanding of the world through experience and development. Similarly, to interpretivists, "an interaction between the researcher and researched is necessary for constructing and understanding a particular context, a process where the researcher and researched inform and influence each other" (Sipe & Constable, 1996, p. 158). In other words, individuals form diverse realities as they interact in social environments, and this results in the socially constructed meanings of multiple realities. It is against this background that the current study is situated in the interpretivist epistemological conception of understanding and interpreting experiences. Although it also adopts feminist and postcolonial principles as part of its theoretical viewpoint, its focus is specifically on exploring the gender dynamics revealed by

the *experiences* of Muslim Hausa girls in residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria, and for that reason, interpretivism is paramount within that viewpoint.

Structure of the Study

This study is divided into five main chapters. The first provides its general background, and the second reviews the existing literature on the history of Nigeria's formal and informal education systems, its current systems, and girls' education, and concludes that the northern Nigerian context was unfriendly to girls' education during Nigeria's period of British rule, and has largely remained so since independence. The third chapter explains the study's methodology, its theoretical framework, the researcher's role and positionality, and various ethical and power concerns. Chapter Four presents the qualitative data and interpretations of the participants' narratives; and Chapter Five summarizes and discusses the findings and their implications, as well as potential directions for further studies as revealed by the results of this one.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will begin by tracing the historical foundation of the Nigerian education system, before reviewing the literature on the system in its current form; on the Qur'anic school system in northern Nigeria; on the education of girls in Nigeria; on the benefits of girls' education worldwide, and strategies used to promote it education in developing countries; and the participation and experiences of Muslim Hausa girls and families in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria. Next, I provide a synthesis of the literature review, the gaps in the existing literature, and the ways this study fills some of the gaps in the broader literature of girls' education in Nigeria and other related settings.

History of Education in Nigeria

To understand Nigeria's current education system, it is essential to trace the roles of Islamic scholars, Christian missionaries, and the British colonial administration in earlier periods. Islam and its educational component arrived on the West African coast during the eighth century. The religion spread rapidly through the West African region by means of trans-Saharan trade between North and West Africans, which also brought some educational components, especially learning of the Qur'an (Callaway & Creevey, 1994; Coles & Mack, 1991; Fafunwa, 1980; Hiskett, 1975). Soon, Qur'anic education took root in West Africa, notably in northern Nigeria. By the nineteenth century, Qur'anic education there was known in Hausa as *Makarantan Allo* ("school of slate"), and such education existed throughout the Muslim parts of what would become the British West African territories prior to the arrival of the Christian missionaries and the British colonial administration (McIntyre, 1982; Orr, 1911; Perham, 1937).

However, the Islamic religion did not touch the core Hausa towns like Kano, Sokoto,

Zaria, and Kebbi until the mid-fourteenth century (Fafunwa, 1980), when it was introduced to these areas by Wangarawa traders to the old city of Kano during the reign of Emir Ali Yaji (r. 1334-85), in whose time the first Mosque and Quranic learning center were built there (Orr, 1911; Fafunwa, 1980). In the subsequent century, during the reigns of Emir Yaqub (r. 1452-63) and Emir Muhammadu Rumfa (1463-99), there was further growth in the teaching of Islamic religion and law among the Hausa and Fulani, especially by scholars from Timbuktu, and as a result, Islam became deeply rooted in Kano and its hinterland (Orr, 1911; Meek, 1925; Fafunwa, 1980). The city-state of Katsina in what is now northern Nigeria also emerged as a center of Islamic learning in the fifteenth century, and the late medieval and early modern periods witnessed many pilgrims visiting it from Mecca, Sankore University, and Timbuktu (Fafunwa, 1980). The activities of these Islamic scholars from prominent centers of Islamic education led to the emergence of indigenous Islamic scholars in northern Nigeria, including Muhammadu Dan Marina (d. 1655) and Muhammadu Dan Masin (d. 1667) (Fafunwa, 1980). In the present, Nigeria is considered a secular state, but as noted in the previous chapter, the majority of its northern population are Muslims from the Hausa ethnic group (Adamu, 1999).

In the late Victorian period, the British colonization of Nigeria proceeded outward from Lagos, southwestern Nigeria, and divided it into two regions, the north and south, each with its own distinct set of colonial policies affecting both political and social institutions (Perham, 1937). These policies were broadly describable as direct in the south and indirect in the north, which was predominately inhabited by the Hausa Muslims. Indirect rule implied that the British colonial government retained the existing traditional Muslim emirs' institutions and leadership structures that they came across throughout the region (Callaway, 1987; Meek, 1925; Perham, 1983). The emirs were made accountable to the British colonial government through British

resident officers who functioned as advisors to them as they administered the affairs of their respective emirates (Meek, 1925).

British rule, however, was significantly preceded by missionary activity. In 1842, Wesleyan Methodist missionaries arrived in the coastal area of Badagry, near Lagos, and were followed four years later by the United Presbyterian Church, which established a mission station in Calabar, and two years after that by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), with mission stations in Abeokuta, Ibadan, and Oyo. Subsequently, the Baptists arrived in 1853, and the Roman Catholics in the 1860s. All of these Christian missionaries established church schools for local people that combined evangelism and standard British educational elements, albeit without much if any involvement from Britain's government (Perham, 1937; Fafunwa, 1985). All such activity occurred in what would become the southern region of Nigeria.

The British made their first education ordinance for all their West African colonies in 1882, but its primary purpose and outcome was to give the colonial authorities substantial control of Christian missionaries' educational initiatives in southern Nigeria (Perham, 1937). The scope of such control was further expanded by the introduction of a grants-in-aid incentive system for Christian missionaries to open schools, which some have argued effectively gave the colonial government complete control over the educational activities of the missionaries in all British West African territories (Meek, 1925). However, others note that it largely remained a system of approval for the opening of additional mission schools, and gave little or no consideration to their curricula, let alone control of it (Fafunwa, 1980). As such, it can be said that Nigeria's colonial-era education system grew up piecemeal, with curricula based largely on the principles of several rival Christian denominations, amid a laissez-faire attitude from the British administration.

In northern Nigeria, however, formal education evolved very differently, insofar as Christian missionary groups and the British colonial government had been developing formal educational systems for decades before the first attempts to apply them there (Meek, 1925; Perham, 1937). In 1904, the CMS became the first Christian organization to secure permission from the British colonial administration to establish a mission station in a Hausa town (Orr, 1911). This station was 40 miles south of Zaria. Jointly with the colonial government, this station founded a school for the sons of the Muslim emirs the following year, primarily to prepare them to assume positions in the indirect-rule system of the British administration in northern Nigeria (Orr, 1911; Graham, 1966; Perham, 1937). The local Hausa language was used as the medium of instruction in the school, in addition to English (Orr, 1911).

Meek, 1925, noted that, although "Government and mission schools were found in northern Nigeria by the colonial government but parents did not encourage their children to attend these schools because they would be deprived of the [children's] valuable agricultural assistance" (p. 255). In other words, the unwillingness of Muslim Hausa parents to encourage their children to join the Christian missionary and British colonial school systems was based on opportunity cost for the fears of the girls abandoning traditional values and domestic routines, rather than opposition to the Western education, as is now widely supposed (Tibenderana 1985, p. 108). Due to the long history of Islamic religion and education in northern Nigeria, the British colonial administration took pains to assure the Muslim emirs of its neutrality in matters of religion and traditional rituals (Orr, 1911). And this pledge of neutrality regarding religious affairs effectively forestalled official attempts to stop or regulate Qur'anic education in northern Nigeria, though Christian missionaries' educational activities remained regulated through the aid-in-grants system described above, and largely confined to the south of the country. In

practice, then, the Qur'anic education system provided by mosques and emirs' palaces remained the only such system accessible to Muslim children even long after the establishment of the British colonial state (Smith, 1969). Unsurprisingly, the British colonial government's promise to the Muslim emirs to remain neutral in religious matters in the emirates, as an integral part of its indirect-rule policy, was also interpreted by some as positively forbidding the provision of British financial or material resources to the Qur'anic schools (Perham, 1937). Nevertheless, some colonial administrators considered offering small grants to what they called Mohammedan schools as a means of developing cheap educational infrastructure with the limited resources available; but in the event, these funds never materialized (Hubbard 1975; Orr, 1911).

The net result of this patchwork of policies was that religion became inseparable from education in both southern and northern Nigeria and was manifested in a huge education gap between these regions after the British colonial administration amalgamated Nigeria into a single British colony, in 1914 (Imam, 2012). As Hubbard (1975) noted, "British colonial territories had to be self-supporting due to a shortage of resources at the disposal of the British colonial government, and [because] northern Nigeria produced little revenue, funds were limited and particularly so for education" (p. 153). The scarcity of funds for the British colonial administration slowed down the development of education in northern Nigeria, which allowed Qur'anic schools to serve as the only educational opportunity for the poor Muslim children of that region (Orr, 1911).

The Current Nigerian Education System

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained independence from Britain, and its new administration took control of all the Christian missionary and government schools in the country, which evolved into the current national education system (Imam, 2012). Notably,

however, this process did not involve the Qur'anic schools of northern Nigeria. The inherited system was a "7-5-2-3" one, i.e., comprised seven years of primary education, five of secondary education, two of Higher School Certificate Levels, and three of university. Not long after independence, however, it became an "8-5-2-3" system when an additional year of primary education was added (Imam, 2012).

At present, the Nigerian education system is a "6-3-3-4" system, that is, six years of primary school, three years of junior secondary school, three years of senior secondary school, and four years of university (NPE, 2008). According to the NPE, educational development is a joint responsibility of all three levels of government, federal, state, and local. The primary role of the federal government, through the Ministry of Education, is the formulation of strategic national education policies and the provision of financial assistance to the states and local governments to implement its programs. The latter two tiers of government, on the other hand, both actually provide basic education, i.e. primary and secondary school education, through the ministry's Universal Basic Education (UBE) department (NPE, 2008). The federal government established the UBE commission in 1999 to coordinate and implement its free, universal, and compulsory primary- and secondary-education programs. The UBE scheme directs the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB) and the Local Government Basic Education Boards (LGBEB) in all 36 states of the federation.

The federal UBE Act of 1999 did not include Qur'anic Almajiri schools among the mandates for government at any level. This omission of such schools both prior to and since Nigeria's independence is linked to the colonial government's legacy of failing to fund, integrate or regulate Qur'anic education in northern Nigeria, in contrast to Christian missionaries' educational activities in southern Nigeria (Imam, 2012). This systemic decision by the British

colonial administration, tacitly endorsed by the governments of independent Nigeria, has perpetuated wide educational gaps between the northern and southern regions of the country at all levels of education from basic to tertiary.

The Qur'anic School System in Northern Nigeria

Qur'anic schools today are community owned and offer only religious-based education, chiefly through recitation and memorization of the Holy Qur'an, and do not teach lessons on subjects like mathematics, English, or the sciences (Imam, 2012). This makes it difficult for graduates of these schools to either find employment with governmental organizations or to pursue further education in the mainstream system (Fafunwa, 1980).

Bano (2009) notes that the Hausa term Almajiri originates from the Arabic concept of *Hijra* that originated in the period of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. to describe his migration from Mecca to Medina. It is in keeping with this historical and religious principle that Muslim Hausa parents in northern Nigeria have long embraced migration as an integral part of seeking education for their children. In part for this reason, there are two main forms of Qur'anic schools in northern Nigeria today. The first comprises residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools, or *Makarantan Allo* in Hausa, where Muslim children from various cities and towns of northern Nigeria gather at the residence of a Malam or in a mosque to learn how to recite or memorize the Qur'an from a wooden slate. The second, itinerant form, known as *Tsangaya* in Hausa, involves the Malam moving from place to place with the children, as an enactment of the belief that an itinerant life is essential to full concentration on Qur'anic study (Modibbo, 2012, cited in Antoninis, 2014).

In northern Nigeria, nearly all Qur'anic Almajiri schools have traditionally received young boys from considerable distances away. These children, known collectively as Almajirai,

usually arrive with few or no supplies. The Malam, who depends on charity and alms from the Muslim community, is unable to provide anything to the Almajirai beyond shelter and teaching (Fafunwa, 1980). The Almajirai normally tour the community both after school and in between school sessions asking for food and other forms of assistance. Many Muslim parents attach great importance to knowledge of the Qur'an and are willing to take considerable risks to ensure that their children learn it properly (Hoechner, 2011).

Until recently, girls attending Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria have generally done so as day Almajirai, commuting from their family homes instead of enrolling in the residential system like their male counterparts. Similar cultural attitudes are in evidence in Senegal, where girls are not allowed to attend Qur'anic schools as residential students. According to Ware (2014), "[l]ive-in instruction was barred to most girls, as it was extremely rare to have girls consigned to the care of strangers outside of the lineage. Unless a girl belonged to a prominent clerical lineage, therefore, she would receive an inferior drop-in education" (p. 172). He further notes that those few girls who are enrolled in such schools tend to be the daughters of bureaucrats, *marabouts* (Malams), or rich families (p. 173), an echo the above-mentioned colonial-era restriction on school admission to the sons of emirs.

A few Qur'anic Almajiri schools in Sokoto state, northwestern Nigeria have taken the remarkable step of included girls in their residential system, in opposition to the general tradition of such schools in that region and similar schools elsewhere, e.g., Senegal. However, no researchers within or outside of Nigeria have yet studied this phenomenon; and only six studies on these girls' male counterparts in Almajiri schools have been published to date (Bano, 2008; Boyle, 2004; Hoechner, 2011; Khalid, 2001; Lantana, 2008; Umar, 2001). These studies suggested that majority of these boys migrated from rural villages to the urban areas seeking the

knowledge of the Holy Qur'an. The authors found out that not all of the boys begging on the streets or car parks are students of these Qur'anic schools. After the completion of the Holy Qur'an, majority of these boys engaged in commercial activities as petty-traders or joined the teaching staff of these Qur'anic schools.

Girls' Education in Nigeria

With the enactment of UBE in 1999, the Federal Republic of Nigeria committed itself to providing free, universal, and compulsory primary and junior-secondary education to all Nigerian children irrespective of their family background or geographic location. Nevertheless, a UNESCO report (UIS, 2012) indicated that 13 years later, there were around 10 million children in the country – mostly, northern girls likely to attend the Qur'anic Almajiri schools – who had never attended state-run or state-sanctioned schools or who had dropped out before the age of 15.

Multiple factors have been identified as contributing to this large population of out-of-school children, including geographic location, cost of attendance, religious beliefs, cultural norms, and gender structures. Some scholars have linked the predicament of these children, and girls in particular, to the legacies of the British colonial administration's education policies in northern Nigeria, and argued that as Hausa-speakers and females, Hausa girls in that region are doubly disadvantaged when it comes to basic educational access (Lewis & Lockheed, 2007). Usman (2000) studied the experiences of nomadic girls in northern Nigeria, with particular attention to the causes of their street-hawking activities, which usually occur on school days and during school hours. Usman's major findings regarding these causes include parents' gender-based divisions of labor among their children; the general poverty level of the families; the specific pressure to finance daughters' marriage expenses; and a view that this type of sales work represents an opportunity for daughters to meet potential husbands. In addition, Usman

highlighted various challenges nomadic girls face during hawking, including lack of safety, exposure to abuse, and omission from basic school and literacy-acquisition programs. Although her study focused on Muslim girls in northern Nigeria, however, it did not include Muslim Hausa girls in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school system.

One of the key findings of Aja-Okorie's (2013) investigation of the political, economic, and social barriers women encounter when they seek education in Nigeria was that girls drop out of school earlier than their male counterparts do: with more than two-thirds of 15- to 19-year-old girls in northern Nigeria unable to read a sentence. The same study highlighted factors preventing girls from taking advantage of educational opportunities provided by the Nigerian government's UBE scheme, including unequal power relationsand discrimination, material poverty, family responsibilities, and the low age of marriage. It also sought to measure the possible benefits of educating women, including reduction of poverty, improvement of children's well-being, empowerment to make choices about their bodies and lives, delay of marriage, and control of population growth. Such findings are consistent with the benefits generally ascribed to educating girls in developing countries (e.g., Moeller, 2013; Vavrus, 2003). However, Aja-Okorie's examination of the barriers confronting girls' education in Nigeria did not account for subjectivities and local factors such as ethnic identities, family backgrounds, and regional history, and thus is not readily generalizable to the experiences of girls from all sociocultural backgrounds in Nigeria, notably including Muslim Hausa girls.

Jatau's (2010) dissertation research on the complications and complexities of the schooling experiences of northern Nigerian women aged 18-30 living in Zaria indicated how these women had struggled to obtain education while discharging domestic chores in their homes. Her study also revealed how having a Hausa linguistic background was a barrier to

formal schooling, in which the main medium of instruction is English. These findings echo prior literature on the sociocultural factors inhibiting women and girls from enrolling and staying in school, notably including the lack of social and cultural capital. Nevertheless, Jatau also omitted to mention Muslim Hausa girls who migrate to attend Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria.

As briefly noted above, Lewis and Lockheed (2007) described some women as being doubly disadvantaged, i.e., by being women, and through their membership of ethnic groups with long histories of educational marginalization based on geography and ethnicity. However, their study sampled only college-aged adult women, mostly from Christian backgrounds.

Unterhalter et al. (2013) conducted a comparative study of girls' schooling experiences and gender justice in northern Nigeria and northern Tanzania. In particular, it explored what girls gained from schooling, despite the persistence of gender inequalities, in these two African communities; and highlighted the impacts of the United Nations structural adjustment policy (SAP) on the families' ability to keep girls in school beyond the basic level, despite the commitments of these developing countries' national governments to expand access to education at the basic level. In addition, Unterhalter et al. revealed regional differences with regard to girls' education, and variation in the barriers girls encounter in school even within northern Nigeria. Yet, despite the important historical, cultural and other differences between the two focal countries, similar barriers were encountered by girls in both, including early marriage, pregnancy, poverty, and distance from home to school. Another key finding of Unterhalter et al.'s study involved the relationships between specific obstacles and solutions that their participants articulated. For example, in schools with better teachers across the two studied regions, girls were likely to link the obstacles "distance to school" and "pregnancy" to "political"

solutions such as “abolishing fees and levies” and “implementing family life, or sexual and reproductive health, education” (p. 573). The same study also stressed the importance of taking contextual factors into account when framing and interpreting the relationships between distribution of educational access and empowerment in girls’-education discourse in the developing world. Because Unterhalter et al. reached its findings using secondary quantitative data sources, from the Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria and Tanzania (TEGINT) project, the present qualitative study will complement it methodologically in the northern Nigerian case.

Lincove (2009) studied the impact of cost on the possibility of girls receiving free primary education in Nigeria and reported that girls’ attendance depended on opportunity costs relating to their households’ demands for childcare for younger siblings, and family farming activities. The central finding of that study was that the Nigerian government’s experience of implementing its first universal primary education policy in 1976 – which made primary years one through six free, but not compulsory – was that of success in increasing enrollment nationwide; but then, the government experienced an economic crisis due to the introduction of SAP, which led it to transfer part of the financing of basic education from the federal level to local communities, which involved new taxation on parents to fund schools’ day-to-day operations. Subsequently, the 1999 UBE Act not only made primary education universal and free, but compulsory, including the abolition of the fees and levies that had been introduced during the SAP era. Importantly, Lincove also argued that cost is not among the significant obstacles to girls’ schooling in Nigeria, which include a lack of legal protections against child marriage, forced marriage, and female seclusion. Therefore, the study recommended conditional cash transfers, improvement of school quality, outreach to parents, and other policies that

responsive to demands on girls' time, including flexible school schedules, the building or re-siting of schools so as to reduce commuting distances, and improving families' household resources such as access to clean water and modern cooking facilities, as potential mechanisms for promoting girls' access to education in Nigeria.

Taken together, the above-cited research on the Nigerian education system and girls' education reveals a close and complex interrelationship between education and politics, which has had and continues to have a major effect on the omission of girls from the Nigerian government's basic education programs, as well as on the growth of the Qur'anic Almajiri school system in northern Nigeria. Based on this background, my study aims to uncover factors associated with why such a large number of children, especially girls, are not benefiting from the country's basic education system despite the right to education guaranteed by UBE. In addition, this study will provide a better understanding of the challenges girls face in their attempt to obtain an education in northern Nigeria and propose ways to address the historical and cultural obstacles to doing so. Lewis and Lockheed's (2007) comment that girls are disadvantaged not only as girls but also "because they come from impoverished families, tribal, ethnic, or linguistic 'minority' communities, geographically remote settings, or lower castes" (p. 8) resonates strongly with the situation of Muslim Hausa girls living in northern Nigeria.

General Benefits of Girls' Education

Educators, policymakers, and international development organizations worldwide have declared that sending girls to school is the most critically important path to their empowerment and amounts to a panacea for economic advancement in developing countries (Guinee, 2014; Vavrus, 2003). The wide range of specific benefits are associated with educating girls in such countries have been argued to include poverty alleviation, eradication of HIV/AIDS, reduction of

maternal and infant mortality, delays to the age of marriage, and controlling population growth.

Taking poverty alleviation first, international development agencies tend to see educating girls as an important step in addressing extreme poverty: for example, in sub-Saharan Africa, where girls and women are likely to be engaged in unpaid household chores like cooking, cleaning, fetching water and firewood, or informal economic activities such as farming or hawking in the streets, instead of going to school (Foulds, 2013; Usman, 2010). Therefore, girls' education is conceived of as the single most powerful development tool, insofar as it empowers half the population with the knowledge and skills necessary to joining the formal economy, earning their own incomes, and becoming less dependent on their spouses and/or wider family networks (Aja-Okorie, 2013; Chisamya et al., 2012; Lewis & Lockheed, 2007; Moeller, 2013).

With regard to HIV and AIDS, international development bodies, policy analysts and national governments have portrayed educating girls as having a similar power to physical prevention measures in controlling the spread of the epidemic, via the provision of information and resources (Vavrus, 2003). This led to the introduction of sex-education curricula in schools, with girls specifically tasked to control the spread of the epidemic because they were considered to be more vulnerable to infection than boys were. In addition, such intervention in girls' education was intended as a preventive measure to mother-to-child transmission of the virus at birth. Therefore, education of girls became arguably the most important tool for empowering their future adult selves to understand and avoid the health risks associated with unprotected sexual practices, and their devastating consequences not only for individuals, but for households and whole communities in developing countries (Aja-Okorie, 2013; Hartmann-Mahmud, 2011; Vavrus, 2003).

In terms of maternal and infant mortality, it has been widely reported that education

effectively equips adolescent girls with the knowledge and skills needed for safer childbearing and child-rearing, including proper nutrition for their children and themselves (Schwandt & Underwood, 2016). When girls are educated, it positively impacts not only the educational attainment of their children, but also their children's health (Osili & Long, 2008), in part because educated women are more likely than uneducated ones to seek antenatal care during pregnancy (Aja-Okorie, 2013).

In many parts of developing countries, early marriage is deemed obligatory, and often prevents girls from enrolling, staying in, and completing even basic education. This cultural practice is amplified by the tradition of dowry or bride price, which leads parents to monetize their daughters through early or forced marriage (Aja-Okorie, 2013; Cammish & Brock, 1994; Guinee, 2014). In some sub-Saharan African countries, families are likely to remove their daughters from school for marriage when they reach puberty, or even to deny them the chance to enroll in school in the first place, for fear that they might not accept early marriage if they become educated (Tuwor & Soussou, 2008). Therefore, educating girls has emerged as a strategic solution to ending the practice of early or forced marriages in developing countries. In addition, educated girls are more likely to delay their marriage until they complete school, especially in communities where marriage is not compatible with continued school attendance due to seclusion and/or the burden of household responsibilities. It should also be noted that parents' decisions to remove their daughters from school early, or not enroll them at all, do not necessarily mean that they are unaware of schooling's benefits. Rather, these decisions can be due simply to demand for their daughters' labor at home (Hartmann-Mahmud, 2011).

Controlling population growth is another advantage associated with educating girls, especially in the parts of the world where women each tend to bear many children. This view is

commonly connected to the fact that educated women are likely to delay childbearing or give birth to fewer children, and to embrace family planning as a means of preserving enough time and resources to focus on their own careers and their children's schooling (Osili & Long, 2008). Thus, girls' education improves the standard of living and economic prosperity of developing nations (Moeller, 2013). It is against this background that the provision of education to girls becomes a powerful instrument for decreasing fertility, and thus for reducing pressure on environmental resources, managing climate change, and lowering dependency on fossil fuels, which in turn increases national governments' opportunities for capital investment (Osili & Long, 2008).

Strategies Used to Promote Equal Access to Education

A number of strategies have been employed to promote girls' access to education around the world, especially in developing countries. Some of these include single-sex school facilities, conditional cash transfers, elimination of school fees and levies, gender-neutral curricula, re-admission policies for former pupils who dropped out due to pregnancy, and recruitment of female teachers.

Establishment of single-sex school amenities comprises the construction of single-sex schools, classrooms, and toilet facilities (Aja-Okorie, 2013; Chisamya et al., 2012; Hartmann-Mahmud, 2011; Lincove, 2009; Tuwor & Sossou, 2008). Conditional cash-transfer programs, meanwhile, provide money to poor families as a reward for sending their daughters to school (Lewis & Lockheed, 2007), and are meant to reduce the burden of peripheral and indirect school costs – including uniforms, textbooks, and even desks, as well as loss of children's labor in the home or family business – on poor parents who might otherwise prefer to focus on a male child's education due to financial constraints. The elimination of school fees and levies is another

important means of expanding access to education in developing counties, including in sub-Saharan Africa, and especially for girls (Humphreys et al., 2015; Lincove, 2009; Ohba, 2011; Omeva & Gale, 2016; Osili & Long, 2008).

Another widely adopted strategy for keeping girls in school is the implementation of gender-neutral curricula, which are designed to avoid introducing or reinforcing culturally gendered divisions of labor between males and females: for example, the idea that women should perform all household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, washing, and fetching water, while only men work outside the home. It presents gender-equitable content by challenging children with experience of male-dominated cultural contexts to reconsider their understanding of gender (Foulds, 2013).

Policies of readmitting girls who become pregnant while still in school generally operate by requiring those schools that have an expulsion policy for pregnant girls to allow them back in after a certain period of time. For example, in South Africa, schools may expel a girl immediately upon becoming aware of her pregnancy, but must readmit her 12 months after her baby is delivered (Chilisa, 2002).

Female teachers have been recruited as a means of encouraging parents to send their daughters to schools, especially in sub-Saharan African countries, in part because it reduces parental fears about the safety of their daughters when teachers are male teachers (Stacki, 2002). However, female teachers are also expected to serve as role models for girls within the school environment, and by their presence, uncovering and tackling society-wide dominant gender prejudices among male teachers and students alike (Stacki, 2002). Moreover, female teachers' employment offers them an opportunity to act as advocates for girls by representing their perspectives and needs and promoting girl-friendly learning environments, for example, through

the provision of better toilets and washing facilities for adolescent girls, whose active participation in school during their menstrual periods has been found to depend on access to clean toilet facilities separate from those used by boys (UNESCO, 2006).

Challenging the Narrative of Girls' Education in Northern Nigeria

Based on my reading of the historical documents I gathered from the Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto, the migration of rural women and girls from Hausa villages and lands to metropolitan Sokoto to participate in the search for Islamic knowledge is as old as the Sokoto Caliphate. Historical data suggests that Nana Asma'au, daughter of the Caliphate's founder Sheik Usman Dan Fodio, established the women's religious-education network known as the Yantaru movement around 1840 (Boyd & Mack, 2013). This movement succeeded in mobilizing and educating women and girls from both urban and rural areas, who went on to serve as teachers, imparting religious knowledge to other women via adult education programs upon their return home. As a result, there was eventually a female representative of the Yantaru movement, who was known as a Modibbo, in nearly every village and town of Hausaland at the time the British colonial government arrived in northern Nigeria; and Sokoto – as the administrative center of the Caliphate – was particularly well represented. The Yantaru movement applied poetry as its teaching method, with female scholars composing educational poems for Yantaru members to memorize. These trained teachers then recited these memorized poems in their own communities when they returned there from Sokoto and employed the repetition and memorization technique they had learned from Nana Asma'u to disseminate the knowledge gained to their families, neighbors, and others (Boyd & Mack, 2013). In short, Nana Asma'u's strategy succeeded in massive mobilization of women for education under the Sokoto Caliphate, and her training of teachers was community-focused: emphasizing topics relevant to

women and their communities, including how to dress, how to pray, and how to reshape the common details of their lives into Islamic tradition. The Yantaru movement included the following offices: Jaji (president), Waziri (vice president), Majidadi (welfare officer), Imamu (religious leader), Beru (program officer), Zakara (orator), Zamzama (chief whip), Atuwo (food mistress), Mai taru (chief hostess), and Yantaru (associate) (Ibrahim, 2016).

Nana Asma'u's philosophy for the Yantaru women's education movement in the Sokoto Caliphate has parallels to the current shift occurring among rural Hausa families, who increasingly send their daughters to Sokoto to participate in residential Qur'anic schools instead of government day schools. Both Yantaru and Almajiri schooling can be described as community-organized programs committed to the education of mostly rural women and girls on the basis of the Qur'an to facilitate their performance of obligatory religious duties for the benefit of the entire society. Of critical importance to the founding of both movements was a sense of the importance of training young girls due to their status as the future of the community. Girl participants in the Yantaru movement traveled to Sokoto in the company of older women (Boyd & Mack, 2013), and girl pupils of current residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools are brought there by their fathers, and entrusted to the school administrator and the host community. Despite the fact that men are the heads of the families making decisions that affect their wives and daughters, the decision to send their daughters to the Qur'anic boarding school is considered as a family business exception to the general rule that only males and young unmarried females should emerge from the home in most circumstances.

Modern technology and gender of the teachers are some of the major differences between Yantaru and current residential Qur'anic Almajiri schooling for girls. Mobile phones and networks, which are increasingly available in rural areas of Nigeria, enable parents to contact

their daughters on a daily basis, mitigating their concerns about the distance between themselves and the school. This contrasts to the period of the Yantaru movement, when contact between the daughters and their families back home depended on person-to-person reports, particularly when community members visited Sokoto for personal or business purposes. Nevertheless, in keeping with this important tradition of face-to-face communication, the parents interviewed for this study also depended on information from those who had visited the school to keep them informed about their daughters' well-being. The constant flow of information between the parents and their daughters decreased the widely cited problem of distance between mothers and their daughters, especially as they were unlikely to have any opportunity to visit each other during the two to three-year period implied by residency at the school. However, obtaining information from those who had visited the school was not considered sufficient by some mothers, who also sent packages containing food, clothing, and other supplies to their daughters. In addition, the Yantaru movement was women-managed while the current program is directed by men. This is a remarkable change from mainly female-run program to male over the period 1840-2019, considering the cultural restriction between women and men.

Based on the historical data, Nana Asma'u's Yantaru movement for the education of Muslim women has a contextual relationship with the current shift that is occurring among rural Hausa families. Nevertheless, Hausa parents' decisions to send their daughters to residential school is disrupting existing traditional gender roles in their communities, as discussed above.

In both contexts, girls were seen as a medium for entrenching traditional gender roles in accordance with the teachings of Qur'an and the principles of good Islamic behavior acceptable in the community. Perhaps more importantly, however, the migration of Hausa women and girls from rural villages to Sokoto in search of Quranic education can be described as keeping with the

Islamic mandate to travel far and wide in search of education, and especially Qur'anic education. To fulfill this obligation, Hausa parents believe that their children can only acquire blessed Qur'anic knowledge if they are sent away from home and live in a disciplined, focused environment. Nana Asma'u's Yantaru movement and the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school I studied equally positioned young girls as the bedrock of addressing problems facing society via their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers.

Moreover, analysis of the historical data indicates that Qur'anic education's emphasis on on preparing young girls to assume family responsibilities bears similarities to the colonial administration's introduction of a girls' school in Sokoto, where pupils were taught how to perform domestic duties and become good wives. A series of factors have informed the decisions of poor rural Muslims to educate their daughters in Islamic schools rather than government-approved ones, however, despite the distance of the former from their homes, including a sense of religious obligation, gender norms, the low cost of attendance, and Islamic schools' more flexible schedules. From my interview and observation data, the spike in interest and uptake of residential Almajiri schooling for girls could also be related to the availability of new technologies, which were noted as making domestic chores and farming activities easier, and thus rendering it more convenient for rural families to send their daughters away to be educated.

Historically, there has been a broad desire to provide girls with Qur'anic education, in fulfillment of what is seen as a religious obligation on the part of their parents. The sampled Hausa parents' openness to the educating their daughters in the focal school was a sign of their determination to transform their daughters by inculcating religious beliefs based on Islamic values, as a means of preserving societal values that they consider culturally and religiously acceptable. Considering the importance attached to the traditional lifestyle, Qur'anic education,

and adherence to prevailing values, the majority of the parents I interviewed would have risked nearly anything to see their daughters acquire Qur'anic education, and to overlook factors such as the location of the school, their own income levels, and whether the school admits boys as well as girls. The strength of these feelings is in part driven by the philosophy, widely accepted in Hausa Muslim society, that a child should have full knowledge of the Qur'an before attaining adulthood at the age of 16. In the context of the Nigerian education system, the Qur'anic schools are considered a parallel system, as they were never integrated into the mainstream education system by the colonial government, whose fractured educational legacy – arising from a combination of 'indirect rule' in the North and a Church-led Christianization agenda in the South – is still being followed by the Nigerian government at the present time.

Synthesis of Literature Review

The Nigerian state education system was set up by Christian missionaries, who concentrated their efforts on the southwest of the country and who were only belatedly and partially placed under the control of the British colonial administration. Their mission schools combined Christian evangelism and education. In northern Nigeria, on the other hand, the education system was founded in medieval times as part of the area's prevailing Islamic belief system and was run by local emirs without input from the central state. The educational systems originated by the Christian missionaries and British colonial government arrived in northern Nigeria as mature systems tailored for the needs of the country's southwest as much as for the needs of the colonial power; and tellingly, the first mission school they established in the North – on the outskirts of Zaria – was for training the sons of the emirs to hold responsibilities within the British system of indirect rule. Muslim parents were reluctant to enroll their children in mission schools for various reasons, including mistrust of Bible-based instruction as a potential

technique for converting their children from Islam to Christianity, and demand for their children's labor on their farms.

After the British government first established girls' schools, girls were trained in subjects related to domestic responsibilities such as cooking, hygiene, childcare, and being good wives for the sons of the emirs. This non-inclusion of girls in the regular school curriculum has been perpetuated down to the present day in Nigerian education systems, both formal and informal. Although various policy initiatives, notably including UBE, have been introduced to provide girls with educational access, Muslim Hausa girls are not benefiting from them.

Numerous studies have pointed out a wide range of benefits of educating girls, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. These include ending extreme poverty, reducing the fertility rate and population growth, increasing GDP, controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS, and conserving environmental resources.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study of the participation and experiences of Muslim Hausa girls in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school system in northern Nigeria is informed chiefly by postcolonial and feminist theories. Postcolonial theory is adopted as a means of more clearly understanding the legacies of the British colonial administration and its impacts on education policies in northern Nigeria. Feminist theory is used to interpret gender relationships and their influence on the oppressed based on individual, community, and institutional practices, and specifically, how it leads to inequalities of educational access for Muslim Hausa girls within the focal school system. In short, both these theoretical systems share a primary focus on the critical role of power in influencing the opportunities and experiences of the marginalized; and here, both are utilized to discover the agents of power and their influence on the educational

experiences of the focal population.

Postcolonial Theory

To understand the underpinnings of postcolonial theory, it is important to explain the concept of colonialism and its forms of operation. Colonialism refers to a system of government whereby the sovereignty of a nation or people depends on another nation controlling the political and economic affairs of the colonized nation or people. Childs and Williams (2013) further described it as "[t]he settling of communities from one country in another with organized interference in its culture" (p. 37). This situation birthed postcolonial theory as a theoretical framework to examine the legacies of colonial rule in relation to colonized countries or people across the world. Ashcroft et al. (2002) noted that "[t]he idea of 'post-colonial theory' emerges from the inability of European theory to deal with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of post-colonial writing" (p. 11). In addition, postcolonial theory is characterized by the political, imaginative, and social control involved in the relationship between colonizer and colonized (Ashcroft et al., 2002). Broadly, postcolonial theory is guided by the principle that the present and the future of former colonial countries cannot be fully understood without a clear knowledge of their past political and economic experiences. As a result, crucially, scholars assert that colonial interference and its legacies in former colonies result in present-day coloniality, rooted in historical colonialism. For example, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) suggests that coloniality comprises "the long-standing patterns of power" that emerged from colonialism, and that still "define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production, well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations" (p. 128). Thus, coloniality and its manifestations continue to have important effects on the institutions, policies, and administration of former colonial territories. In the same study, Ndlovu-Gatsheni proposed three mechanisms for examining

coloniality, as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of the roots of Africa's various predicaments and dilemmas, be they political, social, ideological, economic, or epistemological. These are "Coloniality of power, Coloniality of knowledge; and Coloniality of being" (p. 7). Coloniality of power involves the use of power to occupy a nation to control its political, economic, and social affairs. This occurred throughout sub-Saharan Africa, by positioning colonial officers in a superior position while native Africans assumed an inferior status in their own lands. Moreover, Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues, this type of coloniality came with the institution and constitution of a new colonial structure of labor and resource control, reinforcing through economics the above-mentioned unequal socio-political relationship between the colonial power and the colonized people of Africa.

In the specific context of Nigeria, the external influence of British colonial rule is important to the current study because of its legacies in the form of political, social, regional, and cultural institutions. The colonial government used its economic as well as its political power to privilege Christian missions' educational activities in southern Nigeria, and especially in that region's towns and cities, but was restricted from taking a similar course in the North. These power effects help to explain the strategies used by alternative schooling systems such as the Qur'anic schools of northern Nigeria, which did not receive any support from the British.

Coloniality of knowledge (epistemology) speaks to the way in which the knowledge system that colonial rulers value and support remains the 'right' knowledge even after decolonization. In Africa, for example, the Western system of knowledge that was imposed on former colonial countries through the activities of Christian missionaries, backed by the power and resources of colonial administrations, is largely still recognized as the rightful and truthful form of knowledge. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) notes, "[s]ince the time of the European

Renaissance and Enlightenment, Westerners worked tirelessly to make their knowledge and ceaselessly spread it through Christianity and other means across the world, in the process appropriating and displacing existing African Knowledges" (p. 8). Though not uniquely British, this form of knowledge-violence certainly occurred in Nigeria, championed by the various Christian missionaries that replaced the traditional modes of education they found there with the British style of schooling (Taiwo, 2010). This led to the suppression of indigenous knowledge and institutions, as British colonial regulation portrayed this Western form of education as an instrument for 'civilizing' traditional African peoples and their cultures.

Lastly, the concept of coloniality of being helps to explain colonized peoples' feelings of alienation and depersonalization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). In northern Nigeria, in line with this principle, women were deprived of educational opportunities under colonial rule, and exposed to all forms of power violence. This was exemplified by the British colonial administration's launching a school only for the male children of chiefs. Moreover, the early girls' schools founded under the colonial system were aimed to prepare their pupils to be good wives, rather than skilled workers like their male counterparts. The theory holds that these types of lived experiences of colonized and marginalized ordinary people are critical to understanding and explaining the meanings they ascribe to their lived realities after colonialism. Therefore, postcolonial theory is well positioned not merely to analyze, but also to decolonize, the legacies of colonialism, and thus to empower colonized peoples.

Nevertheless, postcolonial theory has been criticized as a conceptual framework. One such criticism centers on the connection between the Western academy and the colonized people whose narratives postcolonial theory seeks to describe. Many of the proponents of postcolonial theory have been educated in Western institutions and thus arguably hold Western mindsets

different from those of the colonized cultures they study. In essence, then, the critics of the theory see it as yet another tool for re-colonization of the postcolonial world. Another shortcoming attributed to postcolonial theory is that it lives in academia and/or in the upper strata of society, making little or no difference to the experiences or environments of the colonized. Based on these limitations, several critics have argued that postcolonial methods must be applied by those who have been colonized, rather than by academics trained by and practicing in Western institutions. For example, in many colonized societies, women have been forced to articulate their experiences in the language of their colonizers. In short, postcolonial theory has been challenged to *empower* those who have been colonized, rather than continuing to marginalize them through discourses that can only be understood by an academic or social elite (Ashcroft et al., 2002). In addition, opponents of the theory question the ability of postcolonial theory to employ the language of the local people. Ability to translate from local languages is one defense of postcolonial scholars to this linguistic criticism; but their critics argue that even when such scholars translate, they do not genuinely express the voices and experiences of the colonized, since the ultimate outcome is yet more discourse in the language of the colonizer (Ashcroft et al., 2002). Thus, researchers should pay close attention to the power of language in shaping the realities of colonized people and legitimizing the political and cultural hegemony of the colonizer.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory seeks to discover and change historical, cultural, and institutional systems whereby ‘men’ and ‘women’ are socially constituted and positioned based on hierarchy and discrimination (Nfah-Abbenyi, 2005). It is based on these principles that feminist theory pursues the total freedom of women from all forms of oppression or suffering enforced upon

them based on biological sexual identity. For this reason, feminist theory is useful for examining the politics of culture and gender whereby women experience exclusion or discrimination through their 'bodily' experiences, as well as developing ways to achieve equality and fair treatment between men and women (Mohlakoana-Mosala, cited in Bennett & Pereira, 2013). In other words, feminist theory seeks to change the unequal treatment of women in a male-dominated society (patriarchy) and help them to attain freedom. According to Solo and Mama (2001), "[f]eminism signals a refusal of oppression, and a commitment to struggling for women's liberation from all forms of oppression, cultural, internal, external, psychological and emotional, socioeconomic, political and philosophical" (p. 59). Feminists have advanced a number of perspectives for understanding and interpreting the oppression of women based on their gender characteristics, which can broadly be divided into Western feminism and the view from the global south or 'third world'. These two theoretical traditions' differences include their conceptions of what gender is; their theorizations of gender within research; and the role of the researcher's positionality in gender studies. After carefully considering the various viewpoints proposed by feminists, I elected to be guided by African feminist perspectives and interpretations in the present study, as most appropriate to understanding and interpreting the experiences of Muslim Hausa girls participating in residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria.

African feminists view gender as a socially constructed concept, located in daily social practices involving males and females, rather than as the biological characteristics that are normally central to Western gender discourse. In other words, the idea that gender differences were predestined by nature, as advocated by many Western feminist scholars, is opposed by African gender experts (see especially Oyewumi, 2005). Oyewumi's work shifts the understanding of gender on epistemological grounds, insofar as the principles underpinning

‘male’ and ‘female’ classifications differ widely from culture to culture. Therefore, gender understanding becomes historically and culturally grounded. It is against this background that Oyewumi advocated the idea that, if gender is socially constructed, then it cannot be observed and explained using a universal perspective; i.e., one cannot describe women’s predicaments and their manifestations without also taking account of their cultural and social contexts. From this perspective, gender construction in feminist theory is *performed* rather than predetermined by physical characteristics, further challenging the Western notions that biological appearances determine gender and that women’s subordination in a patriarchal culture is unchangeable. Therefore, it is necessary to interpret the gender concept from the epistemic perspectives of women’s experiences and local conditions, instead of relying on biological features (Mohanty, 2003). Following the lead of African feminists, my analysis of Muslim Hausa girls’ experiences takes into consideration their particular experiences and specific local setting, as opposed to any generalized notion of women’s subordinate role in ‘third-world’ contexts.

Another major point of departure between African and Western feminists occurs in their respective theorizations of women’s gender oppression, due to the oppressions experienced by African women not being the same as those experienced by women in the Western world. For example, while Western feminism may be concerned with women’s issues such as female control over reproduction and equal pay for equal work, African women’s concerns may involve access to birth control or paid work *tout court*, and therefore, African women’s experiences must be theorized and interpreted from the experiences and local conditions of African women rather than having Western feminist perspectives superimposed upon them.

As such, an African feminist theoretical framework conceptualizes the experiences of African women as being shaped by the historical, social, political, and economic order, as a

means of challenging all forms of their oppression without alienating their womanhood in the process (Odhiambo, as cited in Pearce, 2014). Provided that it does this, an analysis of African women's experiences will be able to capture a multitude of aspects of their identity and daily struggles and holistically address their sources of discrimination, including race and class, in contrast to a Western feminist view that traditional African gender roles and patriarchal origins are the main or only causes of oppression that need to be addressed on the path to African women's liberation (Sylvester, 1995). For instance, in the case of American women, they assert their feminist power by engaging in the same activities as men in their personal and professional lives. While African women considered their position in the traditional society as a source of power to wear many hats other than being a woman in competition with men. For this reason, Western feminist perspective has no relevance to the African women situation because African women can do a number of things men do not reduced to the traditional gender roles within their homes.

As a theoretical framework, African feminism advances the power of African women in an indigenous relational context, which celebrates female autonomy, motherhood, nature over culture, the centrality of children, multiple mothering, and kinship (Odhiambo, as cited in Pearce, 2014). These are examples of common representations of African women's daily experiences within their local conditions that are often overlooked by Western feminist theorizations of African women's experiences. African feminists do not deny the applicability of the Western feminist movement to unveiling the disempowerment of women in patriarchal systems, but criticize its limitations, including its failure to deal with the realities of African women's local conditions, cultural histories, the history of colonization and imperialism, Africa's traditions, and the need not to separate oneself from males in the construction of African feminism (Odhiambo,

as cited in Pearce 2014). In effect, the African feminist theoretical framework encourages men and women to work together to tackle gender inequalities and to seek the freedom and agency of all women, irrespective of their status in society (Odhiambo, as cited in Pearce, 2014).

Another important principle of African feminist theory is the inclusion of researchers' positionality as either insiders or outsiders, which influences not only their methodological choices but also their studies' conclusions (Falcon, 2016). This is because every researcher possesses privileges that could consciously or unconsciously shape the process of carrying out a study of women's experiences. My own positionality as a Muslim male who has been educated abroad will certainly have impacted my relationships with the participants in the current study. My African feminist perspective demands that I remain aware of my power and how it might turn into "power over", to prevent alienating my participants or diminishing the importance of their experiences or local conditions. In addition, it holds that researchers must acknowledge the value of alternative worldviews, rather than imposing a 'universal' worldview on women's relationships with their male counterparts.

Of course, feminist theory has its limitations as a means of pursuing women's liberation from male-dominated culture. These limitations include its being labeled as a political movement rather than a tool for attaining women's freedom from oppression or exclusion. Another criticism is the perception of the theory as a Western construct designed to promote Western culture in developing countries while universalizing women's experiences and the potential solutions to their problems. Despite these criticisms, however, I would argue that feminist theory is a suitable theoretical lens through which to understand the politics of gender and discrimination in the schooling experiences of Muslim Hausa girls in residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in northern Nigeria.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the qualitative case study method that I used. In particular, it describes the setting of the study, its sampling method and participants, its data-collection and analysis procedures, and the ethical concerns that were encountered during its field phase. In a qualitative case study, according to Merriam (2002), the researcher "is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon"; such meaning "is mediated through the researcher as an instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive" (p. 6). Additionally, Merriam (2003) noted that qualitative researchers "are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 23). My study was designed based on the above conceptualizations, as being highly appropriate to the chosen subject matter. A case study method was also selected, as having the greatest potential to enhance our understanding of the ways in which girls who are classified as 'out of school' by Nigeria's official education system are seeking alternative educational opportunities. Dooley (2007) defines a case study as including "settings, characters, events, problems, and conflicts" and as such, being "much like a richly detailed story" (p. 35). Similarly, Cohen (2000) has argued that such a study provides "a unique example of real people in a real situation, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories" (p. 181). Closely following Merriam's, Dooley's, and Cohen's conceptualizations of qualitative case study methods, the present work explores in detail Muslim Hausa girls' and their families' experiences relating to the former's residential participation in Qur'anic Almajiri schooling in Sokoto, due to such methods' well-known ability to examine a case within its real-life context in an in-depth manner

(Yin, 2005).

Study Setting

Sokoto State in northwestern Nigeria was selected as the site for this study for several reasons. These include its history as the seat of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, and Sokoto's position as the main administrative center for Islamic and other traditional institutions in northern Nigeria as a whole. Not unexpectedly, due to that status, what goes on in Sokoto has a profound influence on religious, social, and political affairs at the local, regional, and national levels. It has also been identified as one of the states with the highest number of out-of-school children in northern Nigeria, and particularly prominent in that population are young girls discouraged from enrolling in formal schools due to their geographic remoteness, and/or the cost (including opportunity cost) of their attendance. At the end of the twentieth century, the city of Sokoto accounted for around 50% of the total Qur'anic school pupil enrollment in northwestern Nigeria, as well as the lowest number of school-aged children attending government schools (UNICEF, 1999). The Qur'anic Almajiri school selected for this case study was identified as the leading school in Sokoto that accepted girls from distant places as boarders. The majority of the students participating in this school came from neighboring rural areas to seek educational opportunities that are unavailable or difficult to access in their local communities. There were total of 200 students in the school, of whom 150 were boys and 50 were girls. Of the 50 girls, 10 were purposefully selected for this study. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998).

At the time of my fieldwork, the school was attached to the residence of the proprietor, and the lobby or entrance hall of the house (known as its *Zaure* in Hausa) served as its main

classroom. There was also a wide-open verandah in front of the house where students sat, especially during the dry season. There were mats for the children and teacher to sit on, and the seating arrangement was based on gender: with boys and girls on separate sides, leaving enough space between them for the teacher to be able to walk. The school proprietor and the teacher both earned their qualifications from the same type of Qur'anic school through home learning.

Sokoto, like other states in Nigeria, has 23 local-government areas, in this case including Binji, Bodinga, Dange-shuni, Gada, Goronyo, Gudu, Gwadabawa, Illela, Isa, Kware, Kebbe, Rabah, Sabon-birni, Shagari, Silame, Sokoto north, Sokoto south, Tambuwal, Tangaza, Tureta, Wamako, Wurno, and Yabo. Sokoto is an agrarian society, in which about 80% of the population is involved in some kind of peasant-farming activity. Hausa and Fulani are the main languages spoken there, while English serves as the official language used in government schools and offices. Sokoto has two major higher-education institutions, Usman Dan Fodio University, and Sokoto State University.

Gaining access to one's chosen study site and participants is one a primary concern associated with qualitative-study fieldwork. I achieved this through a preliminary study conducted prior to the field study in December 2016, when I traveled to Sokoto from the United States to identify Qur'anic Almajiri schools that were accepting girls into their residential programs. Through local contacts, educators, and faith-community leaders, my assistants and I were referred to some well-known schools that fit this criterion. We visited two of them, and after we carefully described the study's objectives, we invited the schools' administrators, community leaders, and their communities to participate in the study, and they agreed to do so voluntarily. However, one of the two schools was eliminated from consideration because the girls did not meet the age limits used in sampling the participants the researcher deemed to be

able to reflect upon their experiences and provide detailed information.

Study Participants and Sampling Procedure

A total of 25 participants comprising the 10 girls mentioned above, 10 parents, two teachers, two community leaders, and one school administrator were sampled. In consultation with the participating school's administrator, purposeful sampling of the girls was conducted based on their age (14 to 16) and residential status i.e., only students from rural areas who live in the residence of the school administrator. The parents we interviewed were all those of the participating girls, and were chosen in part based on whether their decision-making about their daughters' schooling was influenced by similar or different factors from the other parent. Girls over age 13 were chosen as having greater cognitive ability than younger ones to reflect upon and describe their experiences in a detailed manner. A school administrator, teachers, and community leaders were included in the sample to enable the researcher to gain a more rounded understanding of the experiences of the girls' residential attendance of the target school from the perspective of all stakeholders, including the roles of power relations in those experiences. It is noteworthy to point out that polygamy is socially acceptable practice in the target communities. Majority of the sampled male participants are having two or more wives with several children. As a result, some of the families have more than one daughter participating in the focal residential Qur'anic Almajiri school at the same time. In the case of a polygamous family with many children, the daughters participating in the residential school are likely to come from different mothers. For this reason, there was no single parent among the population but stepfathers or stepmothers in some families.

Table 1. Description of Participants

Pseudonym	Age (Years)	Gender
	Parents	
Asabe	30	Female
Lami	32	Female
Talatu	33	Female
Laraba	37	Female
Ladidi	38	Female
Talatu	38	Female
Auta	47	Male
Mudi	50	Male
Talle	52	Male
Sallau		Male
Total = 10		
	Girls	
Kandala	14	Female
Magajiya	14	Female
Kande	14	Female
Kulu	14	Female
Baturiya	14	Female
Tasalla	15	Female
Nana	15	Female
Saratu	15	Female
Shafa	15	Female
Haske	16	Female
Total = 10		
	Teachers and School Administrator	
Audi (Teacher)	28	Male
Tanko (Teacher)	40	Male
Malam Kalla (Administrator)	70	Male
Total = 3		
	Community Leaders	
Lamido (Chief Imam)	55	Male
Jumare (Ward Head)	45	Male
Total = 2		
Grand total = 25		

Data Collection

Data collection commenced in August 2017 and concluded in January 2018. It involved interviews, participant observation, and document collection.

Interviews

In August 2017, all 15 of the non-parent participants were interviewed using semi-structured interview protocols (see Appendices "B" and "E"). For the girls' interviews, I focused on their experiences as females in the residential Qur'anic school program, the administrator's house, and the host community. When interviewing the school administrator, I explored factors that informed his decision to accept girls into the residential program, and how he supported their participation. I asked the teachers their opinions on the participation of the girls in the residential Qur'anic school program; and with the community leaders, I focused on how they supported the involvement of the girls in the residential Qur'anic school program through school-community relationships, given the important positions they occupied in the society. Through the parents' interviews, which were postponed until January 2018 for reasons that will be explained below, I sought to understand the reasons they and their wider family groups were sending their daughters away to Qur'anic school, especially in light of the important economic role that female children play in rural households in the region.

All the interviews were conducted in the local Hausa language with the assistance of one male and one female research assistant, and each lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. The male research assistant was a teacher in a public secondary school and the female was a student-teacher in Sokoto. The interviews were recorded using an iPad device with a voice-recording application called iTalk. The recorded interviews were later transcribed into Hausa by the researcher, and then translated into English by Hausa language translators from Ahmadu Bello University and the Federal College of Education.

During the field study, one of the challenges that the research team encountered lay in explaining the goals of the study to school administrators and community leaders. In addition,

the interviews took place during the rainy season when roads were difficult to navigate by car. As a result, we had to park our vehicle far away and walk to the participants' communities along muddy and slippery roads. Another challenge was the inaccessibility of the girls' parents, who were often busy on their farms taking advantage of the rains. Following phone calls to the parents by the school administrators, we decided to postpone our parental interviews until after the end of the rainy season.

Thus, in January 2018, I returned to Sokoto to visit the parents' communities and interview them. Without hesitation, one of the school administrators expressed readiness to lead us to the parents, provided that he could first make a plan for covering his family and school responsibilities before we set out. My male research assistant and I expressed our appreciation for his willingness to lead us, and offered him some financial support for his family needs for the duration of our trip, which he accepted. We hired a commercial vehicle and a driver recommended by the school administrator to take us to the parents' communities in neighboring Zamfara State, and spent two days in each of these places, interviewing a total of 10 parents, 4 male and 6 female. Our presence in the communities in question attracted the attention of local people, members who often gathered at the residence of the community leader or a religious scholar to learn about the purpose of our trip. As Hausa culture requires of guests, our first place of contact was the community leaders' house, and the school administrator always served as our spokesperson. He would begin by speaking to the crowd to explain the purpose of our research and visit, and to seek their cooperation in the interview process. This strategy worked, calming the crowds and encouraging some of their members to approach us to be interviewed. Throughout this process, we were offered free food and accommodation in each of the communities.

I had a rare experience when interviewing one of the community leaders in his courtyard. After the interview session, he asked me to wait for him as he proceeded into his residence. A few minutes later, he returned and gave me 1,000 naira, equivalent to about US$3.00. I was surprised and puzzled for a moment because I never expected anything from him beyond the interview time. But in Hausa culture, it is culturally inappropriate to reject gifts of any kind, and especially so if they are from an elderly person. Thus, instead of refusing the money outright, I looked up at him and requested that the money to be taken to my group's leader (i.e., the school administrator), who was also elderly and a religious scholar. The community leader granted this request, and called upon his eldest son to follow me with the money to the village square where the administrator was. The community leader's son gave the administrator the money and explained to him that it was a token of appreciation for our interest in studying the educational experiences of their children and community; and, when accepting the money, our own leader promised to express his appreciation to the community leader for this extra generosity toward us.

Much as in our first interview phase, however, we encountered some challenges during our second. These included a tense security situation relating to violent cattle rustling in the communities we were visiting, which was especially likely to occur on their weekly market days. We were alerted to this on arrival in the first community, and the news created serious panic in me because we still at least two more such communities to visit if our parent interviews were to be completed. I discussed with my research assistants whether we should continue to the next communities or go back to Sokoto. After this private conversation, we approached the school administrator and our driver and shared our concerns about continuing to the remaining communities. However, both of them guaranteed us that there was no problem and we stuck to our research plan. Here, I was highly aware of my positioning as a *relative outsider* – a concept

derived from Nwando Achebe's book on the female king of colonial Nigeria to describe her positionality as a native Igbo speaker, but a stranger to unfamiliar cultural issues of the Igbo people – despite my being a native Hausa speaker amongst other Hausa speakers. As a result, I was still extremely worried for our safety even after the assurance of safety by those relatively more familiar with the region we were traveling through. In the event, we visited all the target communities and conducted our interviews successfully. I believe this success can be attributed to decades of trust that had accrued among the school administrator, parents, and community leaders.

At the end of the one-on-one interviews, we attempted to conduct focus-group discussions with parents, but this was not successful, as the participants refused to engage with one another. In my view, this refusal to talk resulted from their discomfort with expressing their personal opinions among their friends, neighbors, or community leaders, perhaps due to fear of disapproval from these other community members. As a result, the opportunity for the participants to challenge each other, extend each other's thoughts, or introduce new ideas was lost. We completed our field trip and returned safely to Sokoto on January 6, 2018. After courtesy visits to thank the school administrators and community leaders, I departed Sokoto on January 10, 2018.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a style of data collection that involves the active engagement of the researcher with the members of the community that he or she wishes to study, typically as an equal member of the group, (Fine, 2015). Students' activities both during school sessions and after school were observed. In keeping with the school's norms, a physical separation between boys and girls was maintained during lessons, with male and female students sitting in separate

spaces with a single male teacher overseeing both spaces simultaneously. At the end of each such session, the female students rushed into the school administrator's house while the boys remained in the school compound. While I had the opportunity to observe the activities the male students engaged in at the end of the school sessions, I was unable to obtain access to the administrator's residence and thus could not make any parallel observations of the girls. This is because it is culturally inappropriate in Muslim Hausa society for a grown-up male to go into the house of a married woman with whom he has no familial or matrimonial relationship.

I had multiple opportunities to learn the names of many students, both male and female, because I sat with the school administrator for the duration of my participant observations. My informal interactions with him afforded the school administrator opportunities to become more knowledgeable and comfortable with the study and its objectives, due to the series of questions he asked me during these observation visits. Mealtimes constituted another set of informal moments I shared with the school administrator, who regularly engaged me in cultural jokes, referring to me as his important guest and to the need for him to feed me well, as the Hausa culture requires of a host to his or her visitor. In many instances, he expressed surprise about how I ate the food he served me. I believe he was surprised because he thought I would not eat the same food that he ate, due to my experience of living abroad. In fact, I ate whatever type of food he gave me because it is culturally inappropriate in the Hausa culture for a visitor to refuse the food or water served by his or her host.

Document Collection

As Patton (2002) notes, "[d]ocuments are valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as a stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through interview and observation" (p. 294). The Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau served as

an additional data source for me. Specifically, I visited it to review and photocopy archival documents dating from the colonial administration in northern Nigeria, including memos, letters, minutes of meetings, and newspaper clippings on educational development in Sokoto. These archival resources provided important data and information about girls' education in Sokoto that shaped the interviews and observational data I gathered during the fieldwork phases of the study. Downe-Wambolt, (1992) states, "Content analysis is a research method that provides a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual, or written data in order to describe and quantify specific phenomena" (p. 314). Content analysis was used to sort out useful information embedded in these documents, with a specific focus on the educational opportunities that had been provided to girls within the Sokoto Caliphate.

Data Analysis

In a qualitative study, data analysis is a continuous process that begins when the first piece of data is collected (Dooley, 2007). As Merriam (2003) explains, "[s]imultaneous data collection and analysis allows the researcher to make adjustments along the way, even to the point of redirecting data collection, and to 'test' emerging concepts, themes, and categories against subsequent data" (p. 14). Following Dooley's and Merriam's recommendations for analyzing qualitative data, I began listening to the audio recordings of my interviews and transcribing them into Hausa myself on the same day I started gathering such data, and continued this practice after each interview session throughout the study period. I also maintained a journal as I read the Hausa transcripts, and began identifying words, phrases, and concepts relevant to my study's overall goals and the specific aims of my interview questions. This activity helped me to identify inappropriate interview questions and to reframe them to better fit the participants' experiences and local context.

I chose to transcribe the audio interviews myself without any help because of my understanding of the participants' Hausa accents and the interviews' contexts. After completing the Hausa transcription, I sought Hausa-English translation assistance from two lecturers who were native speakers of Hausa, one from the Department of African and Nigerian Languages at Ahmadu Bello University, and the other from the Federal College of Education. Both these institutions are located in Zaria, Kaduna State. I then re-listened to the original Hausa audio recordings of the interviews to make sure that the thoughts and contexts of the study participants had been translated appropriately in the English versions of the transcripts.

To prepare for analysis of the interview data, I first printed the English transcripts and read each one repeatedly to identify words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that were relevant to my study's purpose and guiding questions, and then used a set of crayons to mark such words and passages. I also added reflective notes in the margins of the transcripts throughout the reading and color-coding process. After that, the colored areas were organized into categories and sorted using an Excel spreadsheet based on the emergent themes. Lastly, I used the spreadsheet to sort and interlink participants' comments on the themes derived from my analysis of the interview data.

I employed the above three-layer process to minimize the chances of omitting any points participants had made due to the multiple activities involved in converting the original Hausa audio recordings into final English transcripts. The assistance I received from the two Hausa-speaking lecturers provided additional insights that helped to ensure not only the accuracy of the original audio interviews but also the proper representation of the study participants' voices and settings. While this was not a conventional approach to qualitative data analysis, I found the multi-layer processing of the raw interview data to be a valuable means of enhancing its

trustworthiness, defined by Dooley (2007) as "the degree of confidence that findings of the study represent respondents and their context" (p. 38).

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to checking the accuracy of data using multiple methods of data collection as a means of confirming the validity of one's study's outcomes, rather than relying on a single data source, viewpoint, or opinion (Anfara et al., 2002, p. 33). Triangulation in this study was achieved via careful comparison of my three data sources, i.e., interviews, observations, and documents, to cross-check their trustworthiness.

Ethical Concerns That Arose During Fieldwork

Several ethical dilemmas emerged during the field phases of this research, including the positionality of the researcher, gender identity, and educational status. All affected my position as an insider/outsider.

I was born into a Muslim family in Zaria, Kaduna State, northwestern Nigeria. Before I enrolled in formal elementary school, my parents enrolled me in a Qur'anic Almajiri school five minutes' walk away from my family's house. As a day student, I had the opportunity to return home after each school session and be with my family, unlike many children who came to the school from faraway places. This school had a population of about 200 students, the majority of whom were male borders. During my personal experience with there, only boys were accepted into the residential program. The apparent exclusion of girls from the residential system fascinated me, and became my study interest when I later found out that there were a few Qur'anic schools that did accept girl residents in northern Nigeria. It is based on this personal context – which places me as an insider to the culture of the Qur'anic school practices – that the current study examined the participation and experiences of Muslim Hausa girls in the residential

Qur'anic Almajiri school system in northern Nigeria. Indeed, many people I encountered during this research questioned why I had returned to Nigeria from the United States to study girls' participation in such a school, based on their assumptions that I already knew everything about Nigerian schools.

On the other hand, I was also an outsider, as Islam discourages commingling between males and females who are unconnected by familial or marital relationships, especially in private spaces; and this impeded me from gaining access to this study's female participants. I overcame this obstacle by employing a female research assistant to interview all those participants.

Additionally, none of the focal school's staff or the participant community leaders had ever traveled or studied abroad as I had. As Foucault (1972-1977) notes, "[i]ndividuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application" (p. 56). In this sense, it was very clear that I carried the influence of the United States with me to the study's setting and to its participants, or at any rate to some of them according to their individual opinions and interpretations. That is, everyone has his/her own opinion of the United States, and some participants seem to have perceived my presence as a representation of that country, or even as a spy for it, rather than as an individual Nigerian scholar. Likewise, my educational status influenced our relationships for good or ill at different moments during my fieldwork. Some of the participants were very excited that I had studied abroad, apparently in anticipation that I would contribute to the development of my community and country. All of this affected the quantity and quality of information the participants shared, due to their uncertainty about how it would subsequently be used.

I was also an insider insofar as Sokoto and my native Zaria share a common language, religion, and set of traditions because of their close proximity to each other. Nevertheless, while Hausa is the lingua franca of northern Nigeria, there is a slight difference in accent between the

Hausa spoken in these two places, and this made me an outsider whenever I interacted with participants during fieldwork. Thus, on balance, my gender, accent, travel experiences, level of education, and connection with United States led me me assume an outsider's position throughout the field study.

My female research assistant also encountered a certain degree of resistance from the female participants. Some of the females initially identified as participants provided only very brief responses to the interview questions, or simply declined to be interviewed. This, too, impacted the quality and quantity of the information gathered during my fieldwork.

The situation was further complicated by the fact that my team's general familiarity with the target culture led some participants to view us as members of their community, but as members with an agenda that was difficult to comprehend. This – coupled particularly with the fact that I had traveled to Sokoto from the United States – prompted some of them to mistrust us. Also, as insiders, it is possible that we overlooked certain details that could have stood out to a complete outsider, e.g., someone who was not a Muslim or had not grown up in northern Nigeria.

While in the field, the main role my research assistants and I played was listening to the study participants share their individual experiences concerning their participation and experiences in the residential program of the Qur'anic Almajiri school system in Sokoto. As I relied on my general knowledge of the local Hausa context, the voices of the study participants, research assistants, observational notes, and archival documents shaped the direction of the field study. Schneider and Laihua (2000) note that "[t]he prime aim of good fieldwork is a sharp eye, open ears, mostly closed mouth, and lots and lots of recorded detail" (p. 63). In keeping with this dictum, I always reflected on my sentiments and monitored my personal beliefs, feelings, and

assumptions during the study and sought to maintain a clear focus on the participants and the local context. I kept field notes through daily journaling activity at the end of each interview, observation, visit to the history bureau, and interaction, to assist me in representing the study participants and their experiences appropriately. As mentioned above, it was my personal life and school experiences that inspired me to study this topic, and I came to this research as one of very few youths from northern Nigeria who gain the opportunity to do a doctoral degree in Educational Administration at an American university. As recommended by Schneider and Laihua (2000), I went into the field with flexible plans that would allow the participants' voices and local context to determine the direction and the outcomes of the study through their lived experiences and the meanings they attributed to them. As I was planning this study, I was aware that this was a delicate area to explore, given the complex nature of religion and traditions in northern Nigeria and the Muslim world generally.

In this chapter, I have discussed the methods used in this study, the rationale behind the selection of my methods, the study site and the reasoning behind its selection, the study participants and sampling process, my data-collection and analysis methods, and the ethical issues I faced during fieldwork. The next chapter presents my findings.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

My findings can be divided into four major themes that emerged from the data, and that were closely connected with the four research questions that guided this study. These themes were as follows: 1) the importance of gender roles, 2) the importance of school trust, 3) the importance of community trust, and 4) the importance of school affordability. As noted in the previous chapter, interviews with the participants were coded through open coding and analyzed thematically to isolate both their individual perspectives and their shared understandings and experiences. Through this thematic analysis, words, concepts, phrases, and patterns relating to individuals' experience about their own reasoning and decision-making emerged, as well as aspects of such thought processes were shared across broader groups including girls, fathers, mothers, teachers, and community leaders.

These above-mentioned themes, which form my main findings, will be explored below using direct quotations drawn from the data to bring forth the voices of the participants. Content analysis of the girls' interview data suggested that the decision for them to attend residential Qur'anic school was solely that of their parents, but especially their fathers. In part for this reason, the quotations below do not include any from the girls, who tended in any case to provide short, uninformative responses. Instead, their experiences are reflected as much as possible in quotations from their parents, educators, and community leaders. I have used pseudonyms to keep the identities of the participants and the data they contributed confidential, to protect them from any potential harm as a result of their participation, including but not limited to invasion of their privacy. Importantly, the school administrator did not initially disclose to us that there were girls residing at the focal school, and it was only after we convinced him that we were students

doing fieldwork on how to improve access to education that he revealed this information to us, having feared that we were working for the government. Maintaining our participants' anonymity was also part of this study's IRB approval requirements.

Gender Roles

As explained earlier, the fact that the focal community-owned residential Qur'anic Almajiri school espoused traditional Hausa gender norms influenced rural Hausa fathers' decisions to send their daughters to be educated there. It is a core Islamic religious belief that seeking Qur'anic knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim man and woman; and it is also commonly believed that rigorous Qur'anic knowledge is impossible to attain in the comfort of one's own home. Based on this philosophy, rural Hausa parents have traditionally been happy to send their children – albeit, usually only their male children – far away to acquire high-quality Qur'anic knowledge, which Nigeria's formal schools do not provide enough based on the parent desires.

For this reason, Muslim children from multiple villages in northern Nigeria will migrate to the residence of the same Malam to learn the Qur'an. Considering the widespread respect and admiration given to children and families that acquire deep Qur'anic knowledge, parents feel a powerful desire to send their children to good Almajiri schools, even if they are far away from their immediate communities. One mother, Lantana, clearly expressed how important it was to her that her daughter acquire Qur'anic education: "I am happy about that. I am happy as I sent my own daughter to be educated early. I am really fascinated with this form of education". Lantana's further responses made it apparent that this attitude sprang from the high status accorded to those knowledgeable about the Qur'an in her culture.

Another mother, Ladidi, provided a different perspective on her decision to send her

daughter to a residential Qur'anic school outside of their village: "Lack of qualified teachers around us, coupled with the fact that people around here are sending their children. You know how people gossip unnecessarily in our village". In other words, she was concerned about the negative reputational consequences within her community of *not* acquiring a sufficiently high-quality Qur'anic education. Her response also brought up one of the important challenges facing schools located in rural areas, whether public or private: lack of suitable teaching personnel. Another mother, Talatu, affirmed Ladidi's point regarding community influence and peer pressure: "I just developed interest [in the residential Almajiri school] because other neighbors' daughters are going to the school and graduating".

Similarly, many of the participant parents considered learning in a residential environment to enhance the power of Islamic teachings and practices, as well as the learner's spiritual strength, discipline, and perseverance for achieving success in life. As stated by one father, Mudi, trust was an important factor in his decision to send his daughter to the residential school: "We trusted the Malam and the environment in which he teaches our wards. We do not have any reservations or fear as far as our children are concerned". Such a high level of trust could have been connected to the traditional Hausa gender values the school espoused, and with Hausa fathers' general sense that Qur'anic knowledge is more important for girls, who must be instilled with the principles of good Islamic female behavior if they are to function effectively within their households and communities, and eventually, become desirable marriage partners on that basis. As teacher Audi explained: "When it comes to seeking her hand in marriage, you see men struggling to win her over. But if she is not educated, no one will bother to even seek her hand in marriage". This opinion implies a view of Qur'anic education as a total way of life for Hausa people, wherein conformity with God's laws is interpreted by community leaders as well

as religious ones, and is not confined to any specific space. Audi further described the value of educating girls to society, as follows:

> If a woman is left without religious education, then she becomes a problem to society. She is the one to get married, stay with her husband, rear children, and train them. If she herself is not well trained, then everything is ruined. So, it is necessary that they are brought here to be educated in religious matters, and when they return home, they will help in educating their siblings and the children of neighbors, and when they get married, their family will benefit too.

This statement reflects a belief that young girls are fundamentally important to solving present and future communal problems in northern Nigeria, based on religious knowledge used as a dispute-settlement procedure by the community and religious leaders for a range of life practices including marriage, family responsibilities, land transactions, and trade. Audi went on to say, "Honestly, girl child education is very vital. […] [E]ducated or not educated, she will eventually get married. No one knows whether the husband she is going to marry her is educated so as to teach her or not. But if she is educated before marriage, all will be perfect". From Audi's perspective, marriage is a form of empowerment, and many of the parents I interviewed considered the focal school to be empowering their daughters, insofar as in Hausa culture, every girl is expected to marry and have children. From the perspective of African feminism, such responses illustrate the special importance African cultures place on motherhood, especially in rural contexts. But within the world-view expressed by Audi, becoming a good mother is not limited to birth-related experiences or gender-specific behavior, but the ability of a would-be mother to possess certain key cultural and spiritual credentials. That is, a woman with high-level religious knowledge is seen as an ideal mother in a cultural context where sacred status is

accorded to motherhood.

The widespread view of young girls as future women who will solve the problems of their communities fed into the importance my participants – whether parents, community leaders, or religious leaders, especially in remote rural communities – assigned to educating them at schools of the focal type. The community leaders' opinions about this were perhaps disproportionately influential, however, given that they were responsible for ensuring compliance with their communities' fundamental beliefs and behavioral norms.

Lamido, a chief imam, shared another perspective, emphasizing the advantages of the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school vis-à-vis the family lives of its female pupils.

> When eventually they get married, they run their houses better and treat their husbands with lots of respect, thus raising a good family. This is as opposed to those that did not go to the school. When we look at all these achievements, we do nothing but to thank Allah. Therefore, it is by far better to educate your girl child to be literate and have a good life rather than to stay an illiterate[.]

The above quotation makes it clear that in rural Hausa culture, men are the heads and decision-makers of their households, while women serve as subordinates to them. Similarly, Lamido's responses suggest that Hausa fathers send their daughter to residential Qur'anic Almajiri school to absorb traditional Hausa gender values in environments where they are taught not only the Qur'an, but also the principles of good Islamic female behavior, as required by their culture and the accepted religious ideology regarding expectations of a good wife. While parents' permission is essential to girls' access to the residential Qur'anic Almajiri schooling experience, in which case no girl could attend the school *without* a parent's permission, Lamido's response took it as read that fathers are the primary decision-makers about whether to send their daughters to such

schools, despite the daughters' absence creating a major vacuum in the domestic lives of their mothers. As such, it reflects an entrenched Hausa tradition of gender hegemony in which women and girls serve as subordinates to the men within the household.

A father, Mudi, provided a different perspective on the advantage of inculcating religious literacy to preserve cultural and societal standards, stating firmly, "there is no way the behavior of an illiterate person will equal that of literate person". This suggests that the ability of a parent to send his or her daughters to a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school is critically important to a form of social stratification, whereby those who acquire religious literacy are held in higher esteem than those who do not. His response further explains the importance of being religiously literate in the Hausa cultural context.

Another key consideration influencing the parents' decisions to send their daughters to residential Qur'anic Almajiri school was their sense of responsibility to educate their daughters. From the interview data, it could be seen that the parents shared a common opinion that sending their daughters to school in Sokoto was a way of fulfilling this parental obligation despite their low incomes.

Another impact of the participation of their daughters in the residential-school environment that the parents referred to was that it shaped the behaviors of their whole families, and even members of other families living nearby, through the transformation of religious knowledge into moral character. In addition, the parents described the impact of educating their daughters in this way as nurturing the latter's behavioral and attitudinal development, elevating their social status, and enabling them to serve as role models to other children. One father, Talle, framed the importance of learning the Qur'an in a residential setting in terms of the privilege it afforded to children and their families within their communities. In his words, "from what we

have seen from others, we discovered that when a child goes to school, she is [well-]regarded in society". While this is a general honor, given to every child who acquires the Qur'anic education, it appears to be a higher honor when the child is female, in light of the position of girls as potential women who will be responsible for taking care of households in compliance with Hausa cultural expectations.

Additionally, parents, community leaders and faith leaders explained how girls' educational journeys equipped them with social and religious capital that aided their functioning in the community, not least by attracting competition among suitors who preferred brides with residential Qur'anic Almajiri school experience to other girls in the community who lacked it. This reflected how Hausa societal norms are intertwined with Islamic values.

Interestingly, Hausa fathers often described their daughters' school-participation experiences from the point of view of their wives, instead of from the perspectives of their daughters or themselves – even though, in the traditional rural lifestyle of the Hausa culture, men are the primary breadwinners and decision-makers in each household, while women serve as subordinates to them. Based on cultural order, men make important decisions affecting women's and girls' socialization, division of labor, education, and marriage. From the fathers' point of view, as a father called Sallau stated,

> recently people started sending their female wards to school just like the males, and it is always to Malam Bello's school, which the children prefer. But it is not easy to let your child go, most especially on the part of their mothers, but we keep on encouraging them. At the end of the children's study, their mothers are always happier than us, their fathers.

One way to interpret Sallau's above-quoted comments is that he felt the participation of his daughter in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school had a more major impact on her mother than

on him or even on the daughter herself. His response also reveals the authority of Hausa men in managing household affairs. Meanwhile, Lantana, the mother of the same child, described the experience of her daughter through the lens of the extra work she had to take on in her absence: "I am just managing to cope". This is because, by sending girls to school, Hausa fathers reshaped labor within their households and communities, often in sharp opposition to the desires of their wives, who found themselves without a major labor source. Conversely, a mother called Laraba described her experience arising from her daughter's absence from the point of view of having helping hands to fill the vacuum in her domestic duties occasioned by her daughter's absence: "No, I am not disturbed, because I have somebody that will take care of her responsibilities". Another mother, Asabe, specified that she had other children to perform household duties in the place of her absent daughter. "I felt nothing, and nothing is in my mind but happiness", Asabe said. "I simply continue with what I am used to, but for sales, it has been taken over by the boy that just runs in".

As noted above, the sampled Hausa fathers were the primary decision-makers in their households, including about whether to send their daughters to residential Almajiri schools, and my interview data revealed that such educational decisions are primarily informed by their efforts to entrench traditional Hausa gender roles. I also found, however, that achieving that ambition required that they first disrupt existing traditional gender roles in which girls disproportionately farm and perform household duties, to free them to attend school. Asabe's response implied that the absence of her daughter from the household had no significant impact on the fulfillment of her family responsibilities, because her son now worked to fill the void created by her daughter's absence in Sokoto. In this context, sending her daughter to attend residential school reorganized traditional gender norms, implying that gender was determinable

by the roles and functions of an individual in this rural society, rather than by male or female physical features. Given this context, gender can be seen a social construct or role-playing organized on the basis of local cultural norms. By reorganizing these traditional gender norms, this mother received the social support necessary to cope with the shift occurring among those rural Hausa families sending their daughters away to school.

In conclusion, the learning of the Qur'an was found to significantly determine a person's place in traditional rural Hausa society, in which children are expected to be brought up with Islamic values. Hausa culture emphasizes the acquisition of Qur'anic knowledge because Islam makes it an obligation to travel far and wide in search of such knowledge, and specifically, to migrate in search of Qur'anic education. It is based on this philosophy that Hausa girls migrate from their rural villages to urban centers such as Sokoto to live and learn the Qur'an in a residential setting under the guidance of knowledgeable scholars. However, a few parents saw this practice as a way to reduce their childcare burden.

School Trust

Trust in the school was one of the key factors the sampled Hausa parents took into consideration when deciding whether to send their daughters away for their education in a residential Qur'anic school setting. Traditionally, such schools have been mainly for boys, and exclusively so when attendance involved migrating from rural villages to urban areas without any family ties. Nonetheless, despite such traditions and the domestic expectations of Hausa girls in rural areas, underpinned by their economic value within the home, the Hausa parents in this study chose to send their daughters to a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school to inculcate them with Islamic principles and traditional gender roles.

The fathers, however, never described their decisions from the perspective of altering the

affairs of their households; instead, their responses focused on the trust they had in the school, the environment the school operated in, and the support of host community for the school and their daughters. As already mentioned above, Mudi stressed his trust for the Malam and the teaching environment, and his own lack of "reservations or fear". This reflects the generally high level of trust the sampled fathers had in the focal school, and especially in its administrator, propelling the migration of their daughters from their family homes for two to three years. The major factors noted by fathers in connection with their confidence in the school were the examples set by the school administrator both in the performance of his school duties and in the conduct of his private life.

When the girls went to the residential school, they remained there without interruption until they graduated, even during festival seasons. During this time, the school administrator served as the primary communication channel between the girls and their parents back home, though technology – usually, telephones – played an important role in bringing the parents into contact with their daughters. After a maximum of three years in residence, graduation would occur when in the opinion of the school administrator they have acquired the requisite knowledge and skills.

Additionally, some of the girls' fathers and male petty-traders from their communities visited the school to check on the girls whenever they visited Sokoto for business or personal reasons. Based on his role as a faith leader in the community, Lamido was able to delineate the communal strategies used to ensure that the connection between parents and their daughters remained uninterrupted:

> We have transporters [i.e., truck drivers] among us that often go there, and they also have their wards in the school too. Whenever they visit on our behalf, they will assemble all

> the children to see for themselves how they are doing and what progress they are making. They will also find out which children will be graduating at the next harvest season so that the parents can be told the good news[.]

In the words of one mother, Lami, "whenever we heard of someone going or those that normally come for visit, we will send whatever we can. I did that just that day before yesterday". She said that her husband had visited their daughter during the most recent Sallah celebration, "and gave her what was available". In addition, she reported receiving information "from children that usually come around from Sakkwato, and we send them with whatever we can afford to our wards". Most of the mothers reported speaking regularly on the phone to their daughters, since they did not have the same opportunities to visit them at school that the girls' fathers did.

As all of this suggest, the problems of distance and prolonged absence were mitigated by the regular monitoring of the girls by various members of the community and the resultant flow of information to those among their parents who lacked the opportunity to visit them, i.e., especially their mothers. Emphasizing the importance of these visitations, Lamido said, "[w]e feel it is all right because we do visit them from time to time to make sure things are all right". This suggests that the experience of placing one's daughter in a residential Almajiri school is still novel enough to produce considerable anxiety among rural Hausa parents, but also well-established enough that their communities have already established effective mechanisms for dealing with such anxiety.

Malam Kalla, the school administrator, provided much deeper insights on the level of trust between parents and the school setting.

> You know if a female student is brought before you, whatever you tell your own daughter, is what you are going to tell her, whatever you give to your daughter, you give

her and whatever you feed your daughter, you feed her. There is no difference. The issue of 'this is just a student' does not even arise. She is entrusted to you, and we do all within our power and by the grace of God to honor that trust. Whoever brought his daughter and she is treated badly, he will not return or recommend the school to others.

Thus, we can see that the key basis of trust between the residential school and the families of its female pupils stemmed from prior experience of this shared endeavor. Specifically, the parents appreciated – based on the experiences of other parents in their communities and/or the experiences of their own older children – that their daughters currently enrolled in the school would almost certainly return home displaying behavior reflective of life-changing positive experiences. A mother called Talatu noted that her interest developed "because other neighbors' daughters are going to the school and graduating successfully. Oh! There is remarkable progress". In other words, stemming from the trust between the school and families, the whole community helped to attract parents of prospective pupils to learn about the school and its procedure for enrolling their children. As the school gained recognition in the community, a network of parents, developed with the support of community and faith leaders, emerged based on the common aspiration of having their daughters educated through the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school.

The community and faith leaders encouraged enrollment of children in the school on the grounds that this would make them valuable, well-adjusted members of the community, able to live and interact in conformity with its norms. Moreover, the community leaders supported Hausa fathers' decisions, and were in turn supported by religious leaders responsible for enforcing members' adherence to the cultural and religious principles of the community. In his position as a father, Sallau described how the school united the parents of its female boarders:

> You see, whoever sends his daughter to school, when she returns home, she will teach her mother and even her grandmother. She too will send her own children to be educated, and if she can take care of that aspect herself then she will. And stories will travel from that village to another, and people will be sending their daughters to that teacher too.

Although the school administrator benefited considerably from this widespread parental trust and support from community and faith leaders, he still carried out annual student-recruitment drives in rural communities, when most families had completed their harvests and achieved food security and sufficient money to cover their household expenditures for the rest of the year. During my fieldwork trip to interview parents in rural villages, the son of the school administrator was on one such recruiting trip. I observed that he had a bus filled with newly recruited students waiting to be conveyed to the school in Sokoto. Lamido explained the importance of the harvest season to the parents, and the support the residential school receives from families, in the following terms:

> We are united in what we do here. Once a person has his child in the school, then he is a stakeholder in everything about the school. For example, the Malam does not engage in any work apart from teaching our children, and so after harvest, we contribute bags of grains that will be enough for him to eat and sell some for his needs throughout the year.

Whether the costs of sending their daughters to the focal school were paid in the form of money or food support for the school's operations varied from one family to another according to their means.

During my study period, a few children that graduated from the school returned home, having lived in the residence of the school administrator for two or three years. As the above details from the parental data suggest, most of the parents I interviewed arrived at the decision to

send their daughters to the residential school based on the prior positive experiences of other families' children. Mati, for instance, noted that he had decided to send his daughter to Malam Kalla's school "because those who attended before her came back without any negative impact." And while I was visiting rural areas interviewing girl boarders' parents, a few girls who had previously attended the school and returned home were introduced to me by way of demonstrating its success.

In addition, several parents expressed that they were simply pleased by the Islamic form of education and considered it a necessary basis for their daughters' effective functioning in the community, owing to the potential of such religious credentials in a future female in charge of a household to attract potential suitors. Lantana, as reported above, described herself as "fascinated" by the fact that her daughter was attending a school where she was being taught Islamic obligation and traditional Hausa gender roles. Some of the parents mentioned that their trust in the Almajiri school was built on the belief that it could provide their daughters with training based on Islamic principles in a way that Nigeria's public schools could not.

Considering the value attached to both the seeking of Qur'anic knowledge and strict adherence to traditional Hausa social systems, it is perhaps unsurprising that most of the Hausa parents I interviewed – especially those living in rural areas – did not feel at ease with the idea that their daughters might lack full knowledge of the Qur'an. In addition, it is obvious that the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school's good reputation and multifaceted, frequent interactions with the local community enhanced the trust-building process, its access to community resources, and its overall support network.

Chief imam Lamido described the extent to which the host community provided support to its daughters as follows:

> We feel it is all right because we do visit them from time to time to make sure things are all right. For example, I once visited the house where my daughter used to visit, and the gentleman came out with his family to greet me and I was served with food. My daughter does not lack as far as her studies are concerned; the good people have taken care of that for the sake of Allah.

This, he explained, was because the students brought to the school were under the supervision of the whole community rather than just the school administrator or his household. His feelings about this would undoubtedly have had an influence on the perspectives of the parents from his own community regarding the benefits and challenges of this migration of girls, both on the rural parental households and the girls' adaptation to life in urban Sokoto.

Some of the benefits to their rural households included an increase in the girls' desirability for marriage due to their religious-education credentials; and an increased ability on the girls' part to send money and household items back to their rural homes to support their parents, particularly their mothers. Lamido described the role of the residential schooling in this way:

> When they come back home after graduation, you will notice that they greet elders in the Islamic way. Not only that, they become humble and well behaved. That is why prospective suitors are struggling and competing to win their hands in marriage. When eventually they get married, they run their houses better and treat their husbands with lots of respect, thus raising a good family. This is as opposed to those that did not go to the school. When we look at all these achievements, we do nothing but to thank Allah.

In other words, the imam felt that education of his community's girls through the Qur'anic Almajiri school eventually led to stability in their matrimonial homes, by making them fully

aware of the various traditional and religious principles underpinning the role of a woman in the Hausa cultural order, as well as its specific rituals.

The major challenges the mothers and their daughters shared with my team included the emotional challenge of separation between them; the difficulty the daughters experienced in securing work in urban Sokoto that would allow them sufficient food, or for money to buy food; and the selling off livestock by mothers in the rural areas to survive during times of extreme food insecurity. After first denying that he "had any problem with my family concerning sending my children to school", and asserting that "[a]ny time I decided to send them to school, I just sent them without any problem from their mothers", Sallau conceded that the challenge of separation between daughters and their mothers did exist, but noted that it "eventually passes away with time".

The fathers I interviewed saw their decision to send their daughters to residential Qur'anic Almajiri school as a means of fulfilling their parental obligations to attract potential suitors for them, regardless of the impacts their absence might have on their mothers, because of the importance Hausa culture attaches to marriage; and were overt in their formulations of this idea. For example, Auta said, "it is an obligation for a father to see that his wards are educated" and "we notice a change of behavior and we thank God for giving us the opportunity to discharge our duties as parents". Mothers, on the other hand, shared different perspectives from fathers on the rationale behind the decision to send their daughters to residential school. Lami expressed this contrary opinion by saying, "I want her to be literate because it is good", and added, "[w]e want them to acquire knowledge because of its importance, and our prayer is that they shall succeed". In this context, it should be noted that knowledge refers to teaching and learning based on Islamic values regarded as acceptable to the preservation of traditional Hausa

societal norms. Responding to our questioning about the cultural importance of preserving traditional societal values such as marriage, the mothers said that they had taken on greater burdens as part of their efforts to adapt to the recent trend of fathers sending their daughters to residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools in Sokoto. With regard to these divergent parental views about trust, only one parent (Mudi, father) acknowledged that the decision to send daughters to the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school as a means of fulfilling the parental responsibility to educate children was collective. Specifically, he said that "it is with the consent of their mothers I sent them to school. In fact, they are happy since it is our collective responsibility to train our children". Mudi's point of view regarding the father and mother as co-decision makers indicated his awareness of the power relation between Hausa fathers and the mothers in relation to the decision about how and where to educate their daughters. Taken as a whole, the interview data suggest that Hausa men are accepted as the heads of their households and make important decisions on behalf of their wives and daughters that maintain traditional gender roles in accordance with Islamic religious principles.

The sampled fathers' view of their decision to send their daughters to the focal school as fulfilling their parental obligations to attract potential suitors for their daughters, regardless of the impact the absence of the girls has on their mothers, was underpinned by the fathers' focus on culture, identity, and the development of a sense of tradition and loyalty as the most valuable aspects of their daughters' education. Although the notion that they were preparing their daughters for marriage was very obviously held by both mothers and fathers, the focal schooling decision went beyond simply wishing that they would become good wives to their husbands. Rather, it is important to note that state education facilities were not available in, or within any reasonable distance of, the rural areas I visited. Therefore, part of why these parents were

sending their daughters to residential Qur'anic school instead of keeping them at home was their sense that some education is better than none, despite the material and emotional hardships that obtaining it entailed.

Community Trust

Community participation in the administration of the school was another key element that the sampled Hausa parents considered when sending their daughters to the residential school in Sokoto. Community ownership of that school connected the parents to the host community, which they considered collectively responsible for the learning and well-being of their daughters. Lamido's above-quoted description of how the community contributed bags of grain to the Malam on the grounds that he "not engage in any work apart from teaching our children", and explicitly referred to every father as being a stakeholder in the school; and during my fieldwork observations in the parents' communities, I observed a truck loaded with food about to be sent to the residence of the school administrator in Sokoto. This data highlights community participation as a central characteristic of the school, leading parents to embrace not only the school as an institution, but also the members of the host community who provide support services to their daughters.

Participation by families in the host community also occurred in the form of volunteering at the school site; offering financial assistance and food; and offering the girls work, paid for with either food or money. The administrator's family members and host-community volunteers sometimes oversaw school sessions when the administrator himself needed to be away for family-related or other personal reasons. The teacher, Tanko, noted that he had "three elder brothers and all of them participate in the affairs of the school. And we are farmers too. So, whenever there is a problem, we put our head together to solve it": a fairly clear statement of

how the school leverages community resources for its operation. Several rich community members also gave direct financial assistance to the administrator's family as a means of supporting the school's core functions. Another goal of the monetary donations was to supply students' basic needs that were not being met by their parents. Due to this system of donations in cash, goods, volunteer labor, and employment opportunities from the community in Sokoto, the school imposed no fixed charge upon the parents for their children's attendance. Rather, the parents were expected to offer regular donations, in line with their respective incomes, towards their daughters' material needs and the upkeep of the school administrator.

The work accessible to the girls generally took the form of domestic duties such as doing laundry, grocery shopping, house cleaning, and babysitting, among a range of many other domestic chores related to the local culture's gendered division of labor. Chief imam Lamido described the community support for these students as follows:

> We started sending food to them, but we discovered that they were being well taken care of by some Muslims who are doing it for the sake of Allah. Some of the girls stay with families around the school, and they give them all they need and care for them just like their own children. They lack nothing and have everything, to assist them to learn. After graduation, parting is always amidst tears, because they have become so close.

In short, community participation in its administration served as a central way for the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school to recognize, cultivate, and maintain a reliable local network of support, which in turn helped it to build up additional cultural and social capital by gaining the trust of parents in farther-flung communities. School administrator Malam Kalla claimed that his program was "now universal", explaining:

> We have parents there, and they have daughters here. For example, you told me you are

> studying in America. When you first reached America, who did you know? No one, you yourself said it. What happened to you? Your entire problems are being tackled for you there, and here at home, you are being monitored. But what of us here that are already one.

I had asked Malam Kalla a question earlier in the same interview about how the school supported girls' participation in its residential arrangements, but had not received an adequate answer, perhaps because I had been unable to provide appropriate context for the question; thus, I repeated it, and received the above response, which includes several distinct points that need to be unpacked. The initial point is the school's ostensible universality: a suggestion that the relationship between pupils' families and the school had transformed into familial ties, amounting to a continuous presence by the school 'family' in every community – however geographically remote – that its children had come from. Next, he compared my own experience of being educated abroad to reinforce his point about how both parental and community support in the administration of his school helped the girls to stay enrolled and to fulfill their graduation requirements. Then and since, it has been unclear to me how accurate or even realistic his imaginings of my study-abroad experiences were; but as noted above, the concept of a familial relationship was built into his theme of community participation. He also said:

> As I told you earlier, there is nothing to hide, like you see our own biological children, whatever type of work, they do it together. The question of 'this is a member of the family and this is a stranger' does not even arise. We do not differentiate between them, and we have no intention of doing that. If it is to fetch water, they go together. All household chores they do it with our own children. Now that technology is easing things, there is no hard work in the house. The engine is there to grind maize and so forth.

This response was to another question that I had asked about how rural families and communities made up for their daughters' labor while they were away attending the school. It suggests that residential living experiences imply a transformation in both girls' labor roles within their households and agricultural production, and others' expectations about those roles, in the rural agricultural environment of northern Nigeria. Another point embedded in the above quotation is the lack of conflict between domestic chores and girls' education, due to technology reducing the overall workload associated with agricultural production. I would have liked to see the engine described in Kalla's response, but as noted earlier, I was unable to access the school administrator's home due to my lack of a familial relationship with its female occupants.

As previously mentioned, community and faith leaders played key roles in bringing local and more distant communities together to support the residential Qur'anic school. When a community leader called Jumare was asked about this, he responded,

> Whenever the teacher confronts me with a particular problem, I will take the complaint to the well-to-do members of society, and tell them that their assistance is needed and what is needed from them. And sometimes we solve the problems through Zakat. In some cases, I take the teacher directly to them, so that he can tell them what assistance is required.

This reveals how such leaders can be critical agents for mobilizing community resources in such contexts.

It is interesting that Jumare specifically mentioned Zakat among the sources of support for the focal school. In Islam, Zakat is a religious obligation upon all Muslims who have attained a certain level of wealth to give out a certain percentage of the wealth to charity. In emphasizing his role in engaging the community to support this Almajiri school, Jumare further stated, "I

offer my assistance according to my strength. I also ask other members of the society to assist, and I always make sure things are done well".

Despite the fact Jumare served as the representative of the community, mobilizing its members in support of the school, he also went out of his way to contribute to it himself, by providing domestic work opportunities in his household for its female pupils. This appeared to be linked to his general philosophy regarding the necessity of women's Islamic education:

> Honestly, on this issue, the teacher is a person who travels a lot. He knows all the places where there is a need for girls to have an education. So instead of leaving them in the darkness of ignorance, it is better they are brought to school to have a religious education. If a woman is left without religious education, then she becomes a problem for society. She is the one to get married, stay with her husband, rear children, and train them. If she herself is not well trained, then everything is ruined[.]

This community leader's perspective on the impact of educating girls residentially makes it obvious that the primary objective of the program is not the educational interests of the girls themselves, but rather the stability of their future families and the communities that consider them responsible for their survival and well-being. He went on to explain a procedure he deemed necessary for encouraging enrollment in the school.

> The first and most important way is for the parent to know the character of the teacher they are entrusting their wards to, they must also know in what way he is taking care of their children, the kind of training he is imparting to them, is he a good person. On his own part, he must also try to find out the type of student brought to him, from where they are brought, the duration of their studies and what type of assistance is required from him. The teacher should also know the type of people that are assisting him in the discharge of

> his duty. He should make sure that his students are studying at the right time, and after studies, he can send them to the houses of well-to-do members of society to assist in doing household chores, so that they can have food and money to help themselves.

This quote reflects not only the community leader's acknowledgement of the importance of the residential school, but also his satisfaction with the selfless contributions to the school made by both its administrator and prominent members of the wider community. It is also important to point out that, in this cultural context, it was a sign of respect for and trust in the administrator that parents allowed their daughters to attend his school at all, given its residential character and, in most cases, great distance from their homes. It was far from clear that these same parents would have been equally supportive of government schools and their leaders, even if they had possessed the resources to do so.

School Affordability

Unsurprisingly, the multiple factors affecting parental decision-making about enrolling their daughters in residential Qur'anic Almajiri school also included the affordability of the school fees. Sallau highlighted the affordable nature of the school, saying,

> Malam does not ask for anything, he just takes them and educates them. It is up to the parents to give him whatever they can afford, and if you don't have anything to give, so be it. That is the way it is.

Another parent emphasized that affordable access encouraged parents to send their daughters to the school. Mudi stated,

> I know the Malam trains these children not because of what parents normally give, for it is nothing. He trains them for the sake of Allah, of which I urge him to continue and not to relent in his efforts[.]

The prior literature has highlighted the distance between girls' homes and schools as an important barrier to their school attendance. However, the parents sampled in the current study overcame their fears regarding how far away the focal school was by building a trusting relationship with the school's administrator and its local community.

It is important to point out here that the practice of sending children to residential Qur'anic schools is widespread among poor families living in rural areas where there are no public schools, or who are unable to pay the fees charged by such public schools as are available. As pointed out earlier, the absence of fixed school fees was one of the factors that attracted the interviewed parents to enroll their daughters in the focal school. In the absence of such fees, the parents contributed food and money to the administrator of the school. The amounts of such contributions were not fixed, other than via an expectation that they would be 'generous' relative to the families' respective means. Nevertheless, parents who found themselves unable to contribute anything were not penalized for this.

Another angle on school affordability, however, is that to fulfill their responsibility to educate their daughters, parents must relinquish the household support their daughters would otherwise render to their mothers in the form of cooking, cleaning, fetching water, taking care of younger siblings, and farm labor. This means that the residential-schooling movement for girls is reshaping labor in their households and communities, often in the face of sharp opposition from their mothers, who must negotiate their daughters' schooling in the context of the labor shortages that it causes both within the household and in agricultural production.

Nevertheless, some of the respondent mothers expressed resilience in the face of such hardship: for instance, Asabe, who as noted earlier replaced the labor of female children with that of male ones, even in the traditionally female preserve of selling her goods in the streets.

And Talatu, who did not have anyone to step in and assist her while her daughter was away at school, shared an essentially similar opinion: “Nobody helps me, but I always use whatever comes my way”. In other words, she was continuing to perform all the responsibilities expected of a woman in charge of her household despite the absence of her daughter, without much stress – especially as compared to other mothers who reported rising stress associated with fulfilling their household responsibilities. Lantana, too, was “managing to cope”, and Laraba described herself as “not disturbed”.

From the above responses, it can be deduced that the willingness of Hausa women to embrace the higher demand on their own labor caused by their daughters going to residential school might not be unrelated to their own adherence to cultural and religious expectations regarding a ‘good wife’, irrespective of whether they had anyone available to step in to replace their daughters’ labor contributions. Though residential Qur’anic schools evidently do not offer the same empowerment benefits associated with girls’ education within Nigeria’s formal education system, they provide a pathway to education that is rooted in respect for local culture and religion, and have come to be considered indispensable by rural Muslim Hausa families and communities.

My final chapter will address the answers to the research questions that guided this study, challenge the dominant narrative of girls’ education, and provide a historical account of women’s and girls’ migration in search of education on the basis of the Nana Asma’u Yan-Taru female educational movement in Sokoto. It also discusses this study’s implications, limitations, conclusions and recommendations, including for further areas of study.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

How do Hausa families decide whether or not to send one or more of their daughters to the residential Qur'anic Almajiri School in Sokoto, northwestern Nigeria?

This chapter presents the answers to the research questions that guided my study of why rural Hausa parents send their daughters to participate in a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school in Sokoto, northwestern Nigeria. As discussed in the previous chapter, my findings were classified into four main themes, i.e., gender roles, school trust, community trust, and school affordability. The prior literature suggested that Hausa parents were unwilling to send their children to government schools for fear of losing the valuable agricultural labor they provided to their families. In other words, such parents' lack of interest in enrolling their daughters in government schools was based on opportunity-cost considerations rather than on antithetical attitudes toward formal education, as is popularly supposed. However, the present study has revealed a much more complex picture than either of the above views would allow. Moreover, the prior literature has often failed to note that Muslim Hausa parents were not attracted to government schools during the colonial period because the school curriculum was predominantly focused on knowledge of the Christian Bible, rather than on general education intended to equip children with life and career skills. Thus, they avoided such schools not only out of concern that their children would be converted to Christianity, but because of a perception of the curriculum's low utility. In addition, the prior literature points out that the distance between girls' homes and school sites was a common obstacle to their school attendance. The findings of this study help us to understand why increasing numbers of rural Hausa parents are ignoring such geographic obstacles, and sending their daughters to attend a Qur'anic Almajiri school in Sokoto, northwest

Nigeria as boarders.

From the findings of this study, it is obvious that these parents are not only interested in equipping their daughters with Islamic knowledge, but also in entrenching traditional gender roles grounded in the principles of Islamic religious ideology, which would be unlikely to occur if these girls attended government schools, especially as the Qur'anic school's residential environment was deemed ideal for inculcating the principles of good Islamic female behavior. This importance assigned to traditional gender roles and character development can be identified as the main driver of migration by Muslim children from different villages in northern Nigeria to the residences of Islamic scholars known as Malamai As such, the findings of this study help to explain the current dramatic shift whereby rural Hausa families are sending their daughters to the metropolis of Sokoto to board in Qur'anic schools, a phenomenon that was exclusive to boys as recently as last decade, while also shedding light on the general operation of northern Nigerian residential Islamic schooling of girls. Bearing in mind the foregoing overview of this study's findings in relation to the existing literature about girls' education generally, I will now discuss such findings with reference to my research questions and to the prior literature specific to Islamic education in northern Nigeria.

Summary of Findings in Response to the Research Questions and Existing Literature

1. What factors propel Muslim Hausa girls to migrate to Sokoto, northwestern Nigeria to attend residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools there?

Detailed information on the factors informing Hausa parents' decisions to send their daughters to attend a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school in Sokoto are important to know, insofar as the existing literature on girls' education in developing countries suggests that physical distance between girls' family homes, coupled with fears for their daughters' safety, represents a

major barrier to such education. Indeed, my data confirmed that the safety of the school environment itself was one of the key factors Hausa parents considered when sending their daughters to the focal school. From the parent perspective, a single migration to Sokoto in a safe place was safer for their daughters than commuting daily on foot in the outskirts of the village or mingling with vehicles along busy roads.

Though the Hausa parents in this study did harbor some fears centered on the distance of the school from their homes, they overcame such fears by building relationships of trust with its administrator and the local community where the school was situated. As I pointed out in earlier chapters, the Almajiri school engaged its local community in its administrative affairs, rather than relying on the administrator alone. Although their daughters being away at school removed a valuable source of labor for their families' agricultural production and domestic chores for a period of several years, the above-mentioned trust among parents, the school administrator, and the local community in Sokoto underpinned parental willingness – albeit disproportionately on the part of fathers – to make such sacrifices in the interest of their daughters' learning and well-being. Separately from these girls' learning *per se*, however, the interviewed parents' decisions about this were an expression of a desire to fulfill the parental duty to educate their daughters that they believed had been placed upon them by God.

2. What do different actors – Muslim Hausa girls, Muslim fathers, mothers, and community leaders – perceived to be the benefits, drawbacks, and challenges of this migration and school participation?

    From the parents' perspectives, boarding at the focal school influenced the lives not only of the children concerned, but of their households and wider family networks. One of the sources of such influence that parents reported in interviews was the affordability of the school, as compared to the government's ostensibly free UBE schools, which regularly expect

> extra fees. The focal school, in contrast, did not demand any fees of any particular amount or at any fixed interval. Rather, the parents usually contributed foodstuffs and donated money, according to their means, for the use of the entire school population. Another impact of the girls' participation in the residential system was the shaping their behaviors – and, it was assumed, that of their own future families – through religious knowledge and the molding of their moral character. In addition, these parents described this type schooling for their daughters as including behavioral and attitudinal development that elevated their social status and enabled them to serve as role models to other children and families in their communities of origin.

Parents and community leaders alike described how the girls' educational journey would spark competition among prospective suitors, because their schooling would better prepare them for matrimonial life than other girls who had not traveled to Sokoto for this purpose. Most important to my participants, however, was that the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school provided an affordable way for underprivileged families to educate daughters who were unable to attend Nigerian government-approved schools.

When I asked what the sampled parents considered to be the benefits of sending their daughters to the school in Sokoto rather than to UBE school, they noted that the latter required them to pay fees for school uniforms, textbooks, and sandals, as well as a range of other levies connected with school operations. In most cases, they said, poor rural parents were unable to meet these financial demands, and this led to their children dropping out of the UBE schools and ending up in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school instead. Thus, my interview data implies that the parents' decisions to send their daughters to Sokoto were not due entirely to the Islamic character of the education they would receive there, but because it was the most affordable means of giving them a decent education of any kind.

Many parents stated that one of the challenges associated with the focal educational phenomenon was the separation of daughters from their mothers. Nevertheless, the fathers described the decision to send their daughters to residential Qur'anic Almajiri school in Sokoto as a joint decision between both parents.

3. How does the administrator of the target residential Qur'anic Almajiri School support t Hausa girls' participation in it?

    The material needs of the focal school and its pupils are primarily met by its immediate community. As noted in my literature review, I asked this question especially because residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools operate outside the educational regulations of Nigeria's federal, state, and local governments. From my interview data, it was clear that the school administrator supported girls' participation through a number of different methods, which – as well as involving the local community in providing for them materially – included strategies for building trust between himself and parents; ensuring that the school remained affordable to rural parents; and providing a co-education program that facilitated equal educational access to girls from rural communities.

Based on the interview data, the key element in the administration of the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school appeared to be involvement by an immense range of community members in the day-to-day activities of the school and its pupils, rather than the teachers and/or administrator taking the nearly complete responsibility for school operations that is usual in public schools. This communal ownership of the school's affairs meant that it ceased being the property of an individual or a family, and in effect became the property of the whole host community. This, in turn, increased the confidence level of the parents sending their daughters to the school from great distances away that their daughters would be well looked after there, in contrast to their feelings about the government's UBE schools, where most of the administrators

and teachers are from outside the area, and frequently miss school or individual classes for bureaucratic or personal reasons.

Interestingly, the school administrator described it as challenging that the government neglected his school's efforts, given his belief that it was playing a major role in bringing accessible and affordable educational opportunity to remote rural poor families all over northern Nigeria. Both he and the community leaders I interviewed called on the Nigerian government to help them upgrade the school's infrastructure and instructional materials, and to provide for other basic needs, including remuneration for the teachers.

Application and Implications of Postcolonial and Feminist Theoretical Frameworks

Next, I turn to the key aspects of postcolonialism and feminism that informed my examination of the experiences of rural Muslim Hausa girls and their families' access to education in northern Nigeria. Postcolonial theory as a theoretical framework assesses the legacies of colonial rule in relation to colonized countries or people across the world, and is guided by the principle that the present and future of the former colonized territories cannot be fully explained without a deep knowledge of their past experiences. In other words, we need to know about the transition "when nations moved from colonial rule to independence known as postcolonial status" (Young, 2003, p. 3). Feminist theory seeks to change the unequal treatment of women in a male-dominated society (patriarchy) as part of their attainment of freedom. In particular,

> the emancipation and empowerment of women, the right to make decisions that affect their own lives, and the right to have equal access to the law, education, to medicine, to the workplace, in the process changing those institutions themselves so that they no longer continue to represent only male interests and perspectives[.] (Young, 2003, p. 5)

Drawing on these major principles of postcolonial and feminist theory, I will now discuss the context of the past and present Nigerian education system and the barriers poor rural children experience in accessing it in northern Nigeria, with special attention to the persistence of gender inequality in such access. Stemming from the principles of feminist theory, gender roles and community trust emerged consistently in my data as common obstacles to girls going to school in northern Nigeria, as in other developing countries. From the perspective of postcolonial theory, meanwhile, education policies from Nigeria's era of British rule are deeply implicated in my findings about school trust and affordability.

Based on my review of the literature, poverty, geographic distance, and lack of trust between parents and schools were among the top obstacles to parents enrolling their children in the schools in colonial Nigeria that had been established by Christian missionaries. The lack of trust in such schools by Muslim Hausa parents in particular originated from their curricula, which focused on evangelism and the Bible. During the colonial period, Muslim Hausa parents became worried that their children's Muslim background would be undermined by these schools, which would seek to convert them to Christianity to fit into the colonial government's educational philosophy. That government's education-policy agenda produced an additional obstacle to Muslim Hausa parents and their children, by granting financial aid to Christian missionary schools while studiously ignoring the Qur'anic ones that were deeply embedded in the religious, traditional, and educational beliefs of the predominantly Muslim communities in northern Nigeria. The exclusion of Qur'anic schools from colonial government aid was based on the sharp contrast between Muslim and Christian religious principles, as well as the incompatible nature of Qur'anic education with the beliefs of Nigeria's colonial and postcolonial governments. Education policy and reform initiatives in Nigeria from the colonial period onward failed to

address the aspirations of its predominantly Muslim communities through national educational development, by consistently excluding Qur'anic schools from consideration as part of the country's education system. Based on this long-standing tradition, poor rural Muslim families continue to experience barriers to accessing primary and secondary education in northern Nigeria. Therefore, to address the persistent inequalities in education in Nigeria, the nation's government needs to take into consideration religious and traditional, as well as purely educational, principles, and formulate education policies that align with the local culture and religion of the predominantly Muslim communities of its northern regions.

A review of the prior literature suggests that Muslim Hausa parents have traditionally been unwilling to support the education of their daughters through government schools because such schools' schedules and activities conflict with traditional gender roles, especially in the case of rural villages where young girls serve as a major source of labor for their households. The literature review also revealed that across Africa, the distance from family homes to school can discourage parents from enrolling their daughters in government-funded schools. My findings, within the framework of feminist theory, challenge these core points highlighted in the existing literature. The context of rural Muslim Hausa girls' participation and experiences in the focal Qur'anic school extends our understanding of the nuances of these processes from a new perspective. Specifically, participation by poor rural girls in a residential school – at a great geographic remove from most of their family homes, and despite the loss of labor to those homes and family businesses that this migration entails – contradicts the factors cited by the prior literature as the primary ones discouraging girls' school attendance in the broader context.

Traditionally, among the Hausa, only boys migrated from their rural villages to urban areas to study under the guidance of famous Islamic scholars in residential settings. However, a

shift is occurring amongst rural Hausa families, who now send their daughters to the city of Sokoto to study in residential Qur'anic schools there, in preference to either sending them to government schools or keeping them at home. While sending their daughters to acquire Qur'anic education in this way was clearly of great importance to the Muslim Hausa parents I interviewed, through the lens of feminist theory, it is equally clear that their motivations went beyond a pure desire for them to be educated. Rather, these parents hoped to entrench traditional roles, grounded in gender, through the principles of Islamic religious values in the residential environment. To fulfill their desire to have their daughters educated in a residential Qur'anic school based on these interests and intentions, however, these parents first had to disrupt another aspect of the existing traditional gender roles, in which girls disproportionately perform household and farming duties, and instead free them to attend such a school – in some cases, with the father making such a decision in the face of sharp opposition from his wife. Such Hausa fathers – who are the major decision-makers for their families – are reshaping labor in their households and communities by sending their daughters away to school.

Parents' Decisions about their Daughters' Participation in Residential Qur'anic Almajiri School: Issues of Trust vs. Issues of Leaving the Parents?

Based on my interviews with and observations the parents of the girls in their rural communities, I can conclude that their decisions about sending to their daughters to participate in residential Qur'anic Almajiri school was made almost solely on the basis of the trust they had in the school administrator, the local community in the environs of the school, and the ability of the school to inculcate desirable Islamic values in their daughters. There is no doubt that these parents trusted the school and its community due to its reputation as a place of safety for the girls who migrate to it. It is important to note here that public opinion about the practice of sending

children from rural to urban areas to seek Qur'anic education is extremely negative throughout Nigeria. Specifically, negative opinions about it include that the parents are freeing themselves from their parental responsibilities, getting rid of their children to reduce the number of children to feed at home, and facilitating flight from rural areas to urban ones due to a lack of economic opportunities in the former.

All the parents I interviewed stated that they were sending their daughters to participate in the residential Almajiri school in Sokoto to pursue Qur'anic education that was unavailable in their villages. Unanimously, they pointed out that this was not because their children were not wanted at home, or did not play an important role in their families and communities. In addition, the parents reported that they checked on their daughters through regular phone communication, in addition to receiving information about their welfare from community members who visited Sokoto on a regular basis; and to confirm the exchange of information between the girls and their parents, the mothers regularly sent packages to their daughters. In fact, by sending girls to residential school, Hausa fathers are reshaping the structure of labor in their households and communities, along with existing traditional gender roles. Despite these disruptions, the community and religious leaders responsible for enforcing adherence to cultural and religious principles expressed support for Hausa fathers' decisions to send their daughters to residential school. In contrast to commonplace negative stereotypes of why parents send their daughters to such schools, the parents I spoke to were deeply engaged with their daughters' education, and made sufficient concrete provision for their daughters themselves, in addition to the contributions of maize, millet, and sorghum they made to the school administrator the general use of the school. The further benefits of their daughters' participation in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school to their rural households that the parents reported included the fulfillment of

their parental obligation to educate their daughters, increasing their daughters' desirability for marriage due to their religious-education credentials, and empowering their daughters via mastery of traditional socially acceptable behaviors. The major challenge that the mothers and their daughters shared with my team was the emotional challenge of separation between them, with particular reference to the mothers' lack of support in carrying out household duties.

Migration of these girls from their rural communities to metropolitan Sokoto does appear to have represented the transfer of a cheap labor force to the immediate neighborhood of the school. The family of the school administrator was the primary beneficiary of this perpetuation of traditional Hausa gender roles in which household duties exclusively rest on women. Given that the girls were living with the family of the school administrator, they continued to gain knowledge of how to perform domestic responsibilities and agricultural jobs, perhaps in much the same way as they would have if they had remained at home. Other residents of the host community also recognized the girls' value as a pool of inexpensive labor, and engaged them to help out with household chores including the cleaning of compounds, washing and ironing of clothes, running errands, and caring for the babies of working-class married women who could not take their babies with them to their workplaces. Despite this work, for which they were rewarded with food and/or money, their parents' contributions to the school were based solely on their own incomes, i.e., without reference to how much their daughters might be earning in Sokoto.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have implications for both the theory and practice of school administration and policymaking aimed at increasing access to education among underserved girls. Specifically, they suggest that school leaders play a fundamental role in developing trusting

relationships with parents and the wider community, and that such relationships are key to the effective administration of their schools. The present study also offers evidence exceptionally relevant to the current efforts of the Nigerian government to reform its existing educational policies to eliminate barriers experienced by rural families seeking access to UBE. Each of these critical themes will be dealt with in its own section below.

School Leadership

The context of the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school pointed up the importance of a school administrator operating as a representative of both the pupils' parents and the community, rather than primarily as a bureaucrat. Through this broader representative approach, a school leader is able to build strong relationships as a core value and as an essential basis for securing the common good of the children, their families, and people in the school's more immediate environment. In this case, the school leader worked closely with parents and the local community to access and harness the resources he required to administer the affairs of the school in line with their expectations. This is because Qur'anic schools in northern Nigeria are considered to be part and parcel of the local communities in which they are located, and the leadership qualities of the school leader fit comfortably with the values of traditional Hausa society, thus enhancing his support system.

In traditional Hausa social structures, members of the community support each other in every sphere of life, and extend the same assistance to Qur'anic schools as they consider such contributions to be a way of fulfilling their communal responsibility. As data from my interviews and observations indicate, the Qur'anic school could not have succeeded without full community support, including from its students' parents, community leaders, and individuals and families who were initially connected to it by nothing more than spatial proximity. Trust was the

foundation of the shared commitment of these stakeholders to support the administrator and the smooth running of the school with money, time, and domestic labor. In addition, my findings suggest that the trust the parents have in the school is in large measure because of the school administrator accepted their daughters on behalf of the local community. And for the sake of this trust, the parents take the risk of patronizing the school irrespective of its distance from their homes and their limited personal contact with it. Importantly, the system described above operated regardless of the poverty of the schoolchildren's parents.

Based on my interview and observation data, trust also stemmed from the positive experiences of children who had graduated from the school in the past and returned home. Assuming responsibility for the Quranic school made the administrator a public servant, advancing the community's expectations regarding Islamic education. In that context, the role of an effective school leader goes beyond the formal authority wielded within the school building, to serving the community at large by upholding its core values. In this role, moreover, the administrator of such a school serves as the guardian of the children who migrate from their rural villages to participate in its residential program. Although in this case the school administrator's residence served as the school building, the parents and the community still regarded the school as their property and made sure they protected and supported it accordingly.

Policy Decision

Despite the Nigerian federal government's UBE efforts, millions of primary and secondary school aged children – the majority of whom are Muslim Hausa children in northern Nigeria – do not attend state-sanctioned schools. Most of these children are from disadvantaged rural families and between the ages of 12 and 16. A large number of these children are, however, receiving Qur'anic education in a day or residential school. The parents of these children are

sending them to these Qur'anic schools as an alternative to the federal government's universal primary and secondary schools. While a considerable number of the parents who enroll their children in Qur'anic schools do so in the hope that they will acquire Qur'anic knowledge, the majority are simply unable to enroll their children in universal primary schools due to their absolute inaccessibility and, sometimes, high costs. And, in some cases, parents are hesitant to enroll their children in government schools even if they are conveniently located or relatively affordable, due to fears that the education they provide will require the children to renounce their cultural and/or religious values. Here, it is important to point out that the Nigerian formal education curriculum has a small religious-studies component that allows the teaching of Christian and Islamic doctrine for a short period of time; but many parents view such time to be insufficient.

As a matter of policy, UBE schools are supposed to be free, and while formal tuition fees are not normally charged, parents are still expected to contribute sizable sums to the education of their children through the buying uniforms, textbooks, sandals, and food, among other things. The Qur'anic schools, in contrast, do not require children to wear uniforms or to bring textbooks as a condition of enrollment, providing the children from the poorest households in rural areas with a strong incentive to favor them over their state-sanctioned alternatives.

The affordability of the Qur'anic schools provides the opportunity for poor rural parents to send their children to urban areas to access Islamic religious education. Often in consideration of the above-mentioned absence of mandatory school uniforms and stationery, poor rural families are choosing to send their children to such schools regardless of geographic distance – a practice that also has long historical roots, to the Yantaru movement of the nineteenth century, and beyond that, to the medieval migrations of scholars from Timbuktu to Sokoto, and the

teachings of the Qur'an itself. Findings from this study can therefore inform the formulation of policies and development interventions aimed at addressing the barriers to universal access to education for girls based on more realistic expectations of these historical as well as cultural contexts, and which will therefore be more likely to help achieve the wider goal of universal education for sustainable development. Specifically, lessons learned from the focal residential Qur'anic Almajiri school include the importance of Qur'anic education to rural northern Nigerian parents; the importance of parents' support, when school policies may result in monetary burdens on them; and the role of community members and leaders in decision-making about, as well as the success or failure of, school policies on the targeted community.

Future Research

This study of Muslim Hausa girls' experiences in a residential Qur'anic school also refines our understanding of gender-based issues in the education of female children in developing countries, while also challenging the broader literature on the main factors influencing girls' schooling. Following the core principles of feminist theory, it has uncovered an interesting insight regarding how gender relations are enacted in rural Hausa families, with its evidence that fathers can and do disrupt existing traditional gender roles and expectations to maintain power over their daughters and wives. More importantly, however, my findings offer a different critical lens for utilizing feminist theoretical principles to assess how gender issues are experienced, challenged, and recreated to entrench gender norms based on the perspectives and interests of men. As such, this study generates fresh inroads for the reexamination of the relationship between school distance and poverty for girls in the wider literature. While the findings of this study are of course context-dependent, it nevertheless stresses the importance of contextualizing theoretical applications by scholars to reach a logical interpretation of a complex

study's findings.

Recommendations

If the objective of universal access to basic education for school-aged children in northern Nigeria is to be achieved, especially in its rural areas, then Qur'anic schools should be seen as part of the solution. To this end, I recommend that the Nigerian government consider the following strategies for integrating such schools and their students into its UBE structure.

1. Organization of the Qur'anic schools as part of the state and local governments' education programs
2. Provision of financial assistance to the Qur'anic schools through grants to reconstruct their facilities
3. Enforcement of the government's compulsory basic education law by state and local government authorities
4. Establishment of penalties in form of fines for parents who do not enroll their children in government-approved schools
5. Provision of instructional materials and teaching staff through National Youth Service Corps scheme
6. Engagement of the local community in the administration of schools through traditional and religious leaders

Limitations

Though it is a case study of just one Qur'anic school, the present work has brought to light some important issues that are yet to be resolved in terms of providing universal education to school-aged children regardless of their family backgrounds, gender, and geographic location in Nigeria. From this case, we have learned about the various ways in which a residential

Qur'anic school serves girls migrating from rural villages to the city of Sokoto in search of Islamic education in a residential environment. Despite the delay in the parental interviews due to rainy season, the study was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, i.e., all of the interviews and observations occurred within a single school year. As a result, I was not able to measure the girls' educational or later-life outcomes; that it was non-comparative because I did not use control group of state-educated girls, Almajiri-educated boys, or totally uneducated girls or boys in addition to the difficulty getting the girls to say anything about their personal experiences. Although Qur'anic schools are widespread in northern Nigeria, however, the findings of this study might not be applicable across northern Nigeria, insofar as the particular experiences of the focal migrant girls and their families might have been shaped by local conditions, and thus not generalizable to other regions or populations.

Directions for Future Research

Some potentially fruitful areas for future research raised by the current study are as follows. First, it focused on a single Qur'anic school that was accepting girls into its residential program as of 2017, and further study could uncover more nuances if conducted among more schools – Islamic and non-Islamic alike – across Nigeria, West Africa generally, and/or over a longer time period. Also, it could be useful to obtain the perspectives of other stakeholders, including but not limited to the members of Nigeria's UBE Commission, regarding female enrollment in Qur'anic schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion, several studies have examined girls' education and the obstacles to educational access for marginalized girls in developing countries. Some of the barriers they have identified include poverty and distance to school. Such studies have also suggested the benefits

associated with educating girls, both as personal empowerment and as a contribution to national development. As the present study has demonstrated, rural Hausa parents' decision to send their daughters to participate in residential Qur'anic Almajiri school in the city of Sokoto challenges the existing literature on the education of girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, in terms of the centrality of poverty and school distance to their educational decisions and school access. Hausa fathers appear to be dominant in decision-making about the education of their daughters, and in the case of the focal residential school, make such decisions in line with traditional gender roles and religious norms. However, in attempting to fulfill their desire for their daughters to be educated in residential Quranic schools, these fathers were willing to disrupt other aspects of their households' existing traditional gender roles, to free their daughters to go away. The parents' pursuit of their desire to inculcate traditional gender norms and religious principles into their daughters also forms the bedrock of the strong relationship I observed between them, the school, and school's local community.

Further conclusions that can be reached about the perceived benefits driving the decision-making of rural Hausa parents to send their daughters to residential Almajiri school include an increase in the girls' desirability for marriage due to their religious-education credentials. Also, the mothers and their daughters reported that it was emotionally challenging to be separated from one another. As such, it is hoped that the findings of this study will form an important contribution to the efforts to address important issues of unequal power relations between Hausa fathers and mothers in decision-making when choosing between school and household labor in northern Nigeria.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB Approval

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Initial IRB Application Determination *Exempt*

December 5, 2016

To: Terah Venzant Chambers
620 Farm Lane, Room 433

Re: **IRB# x16-1316e** Category: Exempt 1
Approval Date: November 14, 2016

Title: The Muslim Girl-Child Education: A case study of Muslim Hausa Girls in a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school system in Northern Nigeria

The Institutional Review Board has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **your project has been deemed as exempt** in accordance with federal regulations.

The IRB has found that your research project meets the criteria for exempt status and the criteria for the protection of human subjects in exempt research. **Under our exempt policy the Principal Investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects** in this project as outlined in the assurance letter and exempt educational material. The IRB office has received your signed assurance for exempt research. A copy of this signed agreement is appended for your information and records.

Renewals: Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. If the project is completed, please submit an ***Application for Permanent Closure***.

Revisions: Exempt protocols do not require revisions. However, if changes are made to a protocol that may no longer meet the exempt criteria, a new initial application will be required.

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category of review, notify the IRB office promptly. Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the IRB.

Follow-up: If your exempt project is not completed and closed after three years, the IRB office will contact you regarding the status of the project and to verify that no changes have occurred that may affect exempt status.

Please use the IRB number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the IRB office.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at IRB@msu.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

H. McGee

Harry McGee, MPH
SIRB Chair

c: Abubakar Idris

Office of Regulatory Affairs
Human Research Protection Programs

Biomedical & Health Institutional Review Board (BIRB)

Community Research Institutional Review Board (CRIRB)

Social Science Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB)

Olds Hall
408 West Circle Drive, #207
East Lansing, MI 48824
(517) 355-2180
Fax: (517) 432-4503
Email: irb@msu.edu
www.hrpp.msu.edu

APPENDIX B: Interview Protocols

A. Student Interview

I. General Information

Student's Name _____

School's Name _____

School's Location _____

Age _____

Number of Years in School _____

Place of Birth _____

II. Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. When did you decide to enroll in a residential school?
3. What was your reaction being in a residential school?
4. How long have you been living here?
5. What are the things you like about your residential school?
6. Describe your relationship with your peers in a residential school.
7. How would you describe your schooling experiences as a female in a residential school setting?
8. Would you rather not be in a residential school? If so, why?
9. What problems did you encounter being in a residential school?
10. How does being a female in a residential school impact your schooling experience?
11. In what ways do your residential schooling experiences shape your female identity?
12. What would a typical day look like for you in this residential school?
13. What activities are you involved in within school, home, or community?
14. What changes do you wish to see happen for girls in residential school settings?
15. Where do you see yourself after leaving the school?

B. Student Focus Group

Questions

1. What factors attracted you to participate in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?
2. What are some of the benefits you get from participating in this school?
3. What kinds of problems do you face participating in the school?
4. In what ways do you think these problems could be addressed to make you feel comfortable?
5. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your experience of participating in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?

C. Proprietor Interview

I. General Information

Proprietor's Name _____

School's Name _____

School's Location _____

Number of Students _____

Number of Female Students _____

Number of Male Students _____

II. Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. How did you begin the practice of allowing girls' participation in the residential system?
3. What does the participation of girls look like in the residential system?
4. Do you have volunteers assisting you to manage the participation of girls in the residential system?
5. What kind of curricular activities do you prepare for the girls in the residential system?
6. What does a daily plan look like for the girls, and how closely do they follow these plans?
7. What are your thoughts about the education of a female child?
8. Would you consider yourself as an advocate of female children's education?

9. What are your accomplishments connected with the practice of girls' participation in the residential system?
10. What kind of challenges have you encountered and how have you resolved them?
11. How do you keep parents informed about their daughters?
12. Is there anything you think is important that you would like me to know about your practice of admitting girls into the residential system of your school?

D. <u>Parent Interview (Father)</u>

I. General Information

Daughter's Name _____

Daughter's Age _____

Father's Name _____

Father's Place of Birth _____

Father's Level of Education _____

Father's Occupation _____

Number of Children _____

II. Interview Questions

1. What factors influenced your decision to allow your daughter to participate in a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?
2. What kinds of household activities would your daughter normally assist you with prior to her joining the school?
3. Describe how your daughter's participation in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school impacts your household.
4. How do you cope with the absence of your daughter's contribution to your household?
5. What are you doing to support your daughter's education in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?

E. Parent Interview (Mother)

I. General Information

Daughter's Name _____

Daughter's Age _____

Mother's Name _____

Mother's Place of Birth _____

Mother's Level of Education _____

Mother's Occupation _____

Number of Children _____

II. Interview Questions

1. What factors influenced your decision to allow your daughter to participate in a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?
2. What kinds of household activities would your daughter normally assist you with prior to her joining the school?
3. Describe how your daughter's participation in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school impacts your household.
4. How do you cope with the absence of your daughter's contribution to your household?
5. What are you doing to support your daughter's education in the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?

F. Community Representative Interview

Questions

1. In what ways does your community support the residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?

2. What is the reputation of that school for promoting girls' education in the community?

3. How are you involved in parents' decision-making about letting their daughters participate in the residential system of the Qur'anic Almajiri school in your community?

4. What role do you play in the administration of the school in your community?

5. What would you say to parents who are considering enrolling their daughters in residential Qur'anic Almajiri school?

Study Information for Participants

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have. You must be at least 12 to participate in this research.

Explanation of the study

- You are being asked to participate in a study that seeks to understand relevant needs and barriers of Muslim Hausa girls in a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school from their viewpoints as well as from the perspectives of relevant stakeholders who may play an important role in their educational experiences and success.

What you will do

- You will meet with a researcher for an interview that will be approximately 1 hour in length at your abode or another convenient location of your choice.
- Each interview session will be audio-recorded and later transcribed before being analyzed.

Your right to participate or withdraw

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

Contact information for questions and concerns

- If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the Principal Investigator of the research: Associate Professor Terah Venzant Chambers, Department of Educational Administration, 433 Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48825, USA, terah@msu.edu or 517-884-4526.
- If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, fax 517-432-4503, e-mail irb@msu.edu, or regular mail at Olds Hall, 408 West Circle Drive, Room 207, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA.

APPENDIX C: Participant Assent to Participation in the Study

My name is Abubakar Idris. I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Educational Administration and Leadership at Michigan State University. I am working with my faculty Advisor, Associate Professor Terah Venzant Chambers, on a research study about girls' education in northern Nigeria. Before you decide if you want to be in this study, I would like to tell you about it and ask if you will like to take part in it.

What is the study about?

This research study seeks to collect information on Muslim Hausa girls' schooling experiences in residential Qur'anic Almajiri school in order to understand relevant needs and barriers from their viewpoints.

Why are we talking to you?

We are inviting you to participate in the study because you identify as a Muslim Hausa girl aged between 12 and 18 in a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school in northern Nigeria.

What will happen if you participate in this study?

If you agree to participate in the study and your parent or guardian give permission:

- You will meet with me for an interview that will be approximately 1 hour in length at the school site or any location of your or your parent or guardian's choice.
- You can take breaks during the interview as often as you need to.
- Participation in the study is voluntary and you can always change your mind later if you decide you don't want to be in the study any more, and no one will be mad at you if you don't want to participate in the study at all.

Who will know about your study participation?

The researchers are the only ones who will know about your study participation besides you and your parent or guardian. We will not use your name or any personal information that will identify you if we publish papers or give talks about the research results. To help protect your confidentiality, we will keep audio recordings/notes only for the period of this study on a computer with a password that only the researchers are allowed to use.

Will you get paid for being in the study?

No, you will not be paid for participating in this study. You may receive a token of appreciation

as thank you for your time and effort for being part in the study.

Do you have any questions?

You can ask questions about this study at any time, now or later. You can talk to me, or your parent or guardian, at any time during the study. You can contact my faculty Advisor or me as follows:

Associate Professor Terah Venzant Chambers, Department of Educational Administration, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48825, USA, terah@msu.edu, 517-884-4526

Abubakar Idris, Department of Educational Administration, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48825, USA, abubaka4@msu.edu

If you have any questions or concerns about your role or rights as research participant, you can contact Michigan State University's Human Research Protection office by phone at 517-432-4503, by email at irb@msu.edu, or by regular mail at Olds Hall, 408 West Circle Drive, Room 207, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA.

If you and your parent or guardian agree to your participation in this research study, we'll give you a copy of this form to keep for your future reference. If you would like to take part in this research study, please sign your name and date below:

ASSENT OF ADOLESCENT (Parent or Guardian)

_____	_____
Subject's Name/Signature (*written by adolescent*)	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Investigator/Person Obtaining Assent	Date

APPENDIX D: Parental Consent to Participation in the Study

My name is Abubakar Idris. I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Educational Administration and Leadership at Michigan State University. I am working with my faculty advisor, Associate Professor Terah Venzant Chambers, on a study about girls' education in northern Nigeria and we are inviting you and your child to participate in the study. Before you decide if you want her to participate, I would like to tell you about it.

What is the study about?

This study is seeking ways to improve basic education opportunities for girls in northern Nigeria, based on the perspectives of Muslim Hausa parents whose daughters attend residential Qur'anic Almajiri schools. By gathering parents' perspectives on these schools and their students, this study seeks to develop deeper understanding of what factors influence girls' participation in such schooling and the impacts it has on their families.

Why are we talking to you?

We are talking to you because you have been identified as a parent of a Muslim Hausa girl aged between 12 and 18 attending a residential Qur'anic Almajiri school in northern Nigeria.

What will happen if you agree to participate in the study?

- You will meet with me or my research guide for an interview approximately 30-45 minutes long, at any location of your choice.
- You can take breaks during the interview as often as you need to
- Participation in the study is voluntarily.
- You can always change your mind later if you decide you don't want to continue or be in the study any more.
- We will be using an audio-recording device to record the interview session.

Who will know about your participation in the study?

The researchers are the only people who will know about your participation in the study, because your identity will be kept confidential. We will not use your name or any personal information that will identify you or your opinions if we publish papers or give talks about the outcomes of the study. To help protect your confidentiality, we will for the duration of the study keep the audio recordings and our notes on a secure computer with a password that only the researchers are

allowed to use.

Will you get paid for being in the study?

No, you will not be paid for participating in this study. However, you may receive a token of appreciation as thank you for your time and effort.

Do you have any questions?

You can ask questions about this study at any time, including now. You can talk to me at any time during the study or contact me at the following postal and addresses:

Abubakar Idris, Department of Educational Administration, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA and abubaka4@msu.edu

You can also contact my faculty advisor at these addresses and phone number:

Associate Professor Terah Venzant Chambers, Department of Educational Administration, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48825, USA, terah@msu.edu, 517-884-4526

If you have any questions or concerns about your role or rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Michigan State University's Human Research Protection office by phoning 517-432-4503, or emailing irb@msu.edu, or by regular mail at Olds Hall, 408 West Circle Drive, Room 207, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA.

If you agree to participate in the study, we will provide you with a copy of this form to keep for your future reference.

Please sign your name and date below:

_____	_____
Name/Signature	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Investigator/Person Obtaining Assent	Date

APPENDIX E: Hausa Interview Protocols

Tambayoyi don Dalibai Mata

I. Shimfida

Ya sunaki? _____

Shekarunki nawa _____

A wane gari aka haifi ki _____

Ya sunan makarantarku _____

A wane unguwa makarantar ku take _____

Shekarunki nawa a wannan makarantar _____

II. Tambayoyi

a. Mi nene takaitaccen tarhinki, watau a ina kika fara karatu?
b. Mi zaki ce game da makarantar Allo ta kwana?
c. Mi yafi burgeki a wannan makaranta?
d. Yaya zamanta kewarki take da sauran dalibai maza ko mata?
e. A matsayinki na mace, me zaki ce dangane da karatun makarantar Allao ta kwana?
f. Shin kin fi son makarantar Allo ta kwana ko ta jeki ki dawo a gida?
g. Ko kina fuskantar wasu matsaloli a wannan makarantar?
h. A matsayinki na mace kina ganin wannan makarantar Allo ta kwana tana taimaka maki akan cigaban karatunki na Muhammadiya?
i. Ta yaya zaman makarantar ya taimakawa matsaayin na mace?
j. Wane irin abu kuke yi a wayewar safiya har zuwa dare a wannan makarnatar?
k. Ko akwai ayyukkan da kuke taya matan malam?
l. Wane irin ayyuka kike yi a gidan ku da kuma kike yi anan makarantar?
m. Wane irin canji ko gyara kike son ayi a makarantar ku ta kwana?
n. Ko da akwai gidan da kike aiki?
o. Kuma wane irin ayyuka ne kike yi a wannan gidan?
p. Me kike fatan ki zama bayan kin kamala karatunki?

Tambayoyi don Iyayen Yara Mata

I. Shimfida

Ya sunan ki? _____

Shekarun ki nawa? _____

A wane matakin karatu kike? _____

Ya sunan yarki? _____

Akalla shekarun yarki nawa? _____

II. Tambayoyi

a. Mi ya ja ra'ayin ki har kika amince da tura yarki makarantar Allo ta kwana a Sakkwato?
b. Wadanne irin ayyuka ne take taimaka maki dasu a gida kamin a tura ta makarantar Allo a Sakkwato?
c. A wane irin yana yi kika sami kanki bayan an tura yarki makaranta a Sakkwato?
d. Ta yaya kike cika gibin da tabari, mislai: ayyukan gida ko kuma na sana'a?
e. Wane irin taimako kika bayarwa don ganin ta yi karatunta a tsanaki?
f. Ta wace hanya kike samin labarin yarki da kuma irin halin da take ciki a makaranta?
g. Ko kina aikawa yarki sako akai-akai mata da shi ko take aiko maki da shi?
h. Kamar irin wane sako kike aika mata da shi?
i. Ta wace hanya kike aika mata da sakon?
j. Daga karshe ki fada mini irin cigaban da kuke samu ko kuke gani ta hanyar ilimantar da yaranku mata da ilimin Muhammadiya a makarnatar Allo ta Kwana?

Tambayoyi don Iyayen Yara Maza

I. Shimfida

Ya sunan ka? _____

Shekarun ka nawa? _____

A wane matakin karatu kake? _____

Miye sana'arka? _____

Yaranka nawa? _____

Ya sunan yarka? _____

Akalla shekarun yarka nawa? _____

II. Tambayoyi

a. Mi ya ja ra'ayin ka har ka amince da tura yarkia makarantar Allo ta kwana a Sakkwato?
b. Wadanne irin ayyuka ne take taimaka maka dasu a gida kamin ka tura ta makarantar Allo ta kwana a Sakkwato?
c. A wane irin yanayi ka sami kanka bayan ka tura yarka makaranta a Sakkwato?
d. Ta yaya kake cika gibin da tabari, mislai: ayyukan gida ko kuma na sana'a?
e. Wane irin taimako kake bayarwa don ganin ta yi karatunta a tsanaki?
f. Ta wace hanya kike samin labarin yarki da kuma irin halin da take ciki a makaranta?
g. Ko kana aikawa yarka sako akai-akai?
h. Kamar irin wane sako kake aika mata da shi?
i. Ta wace hanya kake aika mata da sakon?
j. Daga karshe ka fada mini irin cigaban da kuke samu ko kuke gani ta hanyar ilimantar da yaranku mata da ilimin Muhammadiya a makarnatar Allo ta Kwana?

Tambayoyi don Wakilan Al'umma

I. Shimfida

Ya sunanka? _____

Shekarunka nawa? _____

A wane matakin karatu kake? _____

Mi matsayanka a wannan gari? _____

II. Tambayoyi

a. Mi ne ne takaiceccen tarihin ka?
b. Shin yaya al'umma ke kallon matsayin makarantar Allon mata ta kwana?
c. Ko da wata gudummuwa da wakilan al'umma kuke bayarwa wajen su iyaye domin su tura ya'yan su mata makarantar Allo ta kwana?
d. Ta wadanne hanyoyi ne al'umma ke taimakawa makarantar Allo ta mata ta kwana?
e. Ta wace hanya ce ake sanar da iyayen halin da yaransu ke ciki ganin suna can nesa?
f. Ko da wani abin da zaka kara ko Karin bayani dan gane da ilimin yara mata dake gudana a makarantar Allo ta kwana?

Tambayoyi don mai Makarantar Allo

I. Shimfida

Sunan mai makaranta _____

Shekarun haihuwa _____

Mahaifa _____

Sunan makaranta _____

Adireshen makaranta _____

Yawan Dalibai _____

Yawan Dalibai Maza _____

Yawan Dalibai Mata _____

II. Tambayoyi

a. Mi ne ne takaiceccen tarihin ka?
b. Yaushe aka kafa wannan makarantar?
c. Yaushe ka fara gudunar da karatun mata na kwana?
d. Mi ya jawo ra'ayin ka game da ilimin yara mata?
e. Wadanne iri tsari ne ake shiryawa dalibai mata na kwana?
f. Ko kana da yan sa-kai dake taimkawa wajem gudunar da wannan tsarin na karatun yara mata na kwana?
g. Wadanne irin nasorori ne aka samu game da wannan karatun yara mata ta kwana?
h. Wadanne irin matsaloli ne ake huskanta akan wannan tsarin karatu na yara mata na kwana?
i. To wasu hanyoyi ne ake magance irin wannan matsalolin?
j. Ko da wani abin da zaka kara ko Karin bayani dan gane da ilimin yara mata dake gudana a wannan makarantar?

Bayani ga Masu Shiga Binciken

Ana bukatar ka/ki da shiga cikin wadanda za'a gudunar da wannan bincike da su. Masu gudunar da binciken za su bada takardar amincewa da zama daya daga cikin wadanda za'a gudunar da binciken da su, don a nuna amincewa. Amincewar ka/ki zata biyo bayan gamsasshen bayani ne da masu binciken za su yi maka ko maki game ga matsayin wanda za su gudunar da wannan binciken da shi. Haka kuma kana ko kina da daman tambayar duk abin da ya shige maka ko maki duhu game da binciken. To amma ka ko ki sani dole wanda za'a gudunar da binciken da shi ko ita ya kasance shekarun shi ko ta na haihuwa suna tsakanin 14 suwa sama.

Bayani game da Binciken

Wannan binciken na son fahimtar bukatu da kuma matsalolin da ke tattare da karatun yara mata musulmi Hausawa a makarantun Allo ko tsangaya na kwana a jihar Sakkwato. Za'a kalli lamarin ne ta huskar su kan su daliban da iyayen su da wakilan al'umma da msau ruwa da tsaki cikin harkan karatun.

Me ake Bukatar ka ko ki yi

Ana bukatar da ka ko ki tattauna ko amasa tamboyoyin mai binciken a wurin da kake ko kike kuma da wurin da zaka zaba na tsawon kusan minti talatin zuwa arba'in da biyar ko awa daya. Kuma ko wace tattaunawa aka yi da kai ko ke, za'a a nadi muryar ka ko ki, don Nazari da tattancewa daga baya.

Me Zai faru a yayin Tattaunawa

In ka ko ki yadda da shiga cikin wannan tattaunawar, za'a yi wannan tattaunawar ne a wuri da ka

ko ki ka zaba ko kuma iyayen ki ko wakilan su suka zaba. Ana iya sararawa tsakanin tattaunawar ko sau nawa ake bukata. Kana ko kina da damar sauya ra'ayin ka ko ki a yarda da shiga wannan binciken duk lokacin da kake ko kike so.

Su wa Zasu San Tattaunawar da aka yi?

Baya ga masu bincike, ba wanda zai san an tattaunar da aka yi. A matsayin mu na masu bincike, ba za mu yi amfani da sunan ka ko ki ba ko wani abu da zai bayyana ka ko ki ba. Hatta muryar da muka nada zamu adana ta a cikin kwamfuta ta yadda mu kadai ke iya budewa don amfani na tsawon lokacin wannan binciken.

Shin Za'a Biya Ka ko Ki?

Ba za a biya Ka ko ki shiga wannan bincike ba. Sai dai za'a bada dan tukwuicin yabawa da gudumawar da aka bayar.

Zabin Yarda ko Janyewa daga Binciken

Kana ko kina da zabib yarda ko kuma janyewa daga wannan binciken. Ko da an fara tattaunawa da mutuum. Zaka ko zaki iya zabin amsa tambayoyi ko kin amsawa baki daya.

In da Za'a Tuntuba in ana da wata damuwa ko Tambaya akan wannan Binciken

In ana da wata damuwa ko tmabaya, sai a tuntubi mai sa ido akan gudunar da wannan binciken farfesa Terah Chambers a wannan adireshi: Department of Educational Administration, 433 Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48823, USA; terah@msu.edu; or 517-884-4526. Haka nan in kana da wasu tambayoyi ko wata damuwa ko

wani hakki naka a matsayinka na wanda ake tattanawa da shi ko ita akan wannan bincike ko kuma kana ko kina son bada wani korafi ko shawara ba tare da bayyana kan ka ko ki ba, sai a tuntubi ofisin dake bada izinin gudunar da bincike na wannan jami'a a adireshi kamar haka: Michigan State University, Human Research Protection office, Olds Hall, 408 West Circle Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823, USA; irb@msu.edu; or 517-355-2180.

In ka ko kin yarda da shiga cikin wannan bincike, to sai ka ko ki rubuta sunan ka ko ki da kwanan wata a layin dake kasa:

Suna _____ Kwanan wata _____

Suna _____ Kwanan wata _____

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