



**EXPLORING WAYS IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF THE ALMAJIRI
INTEGRATED EDUCATION FOR
NATIONAL COHENSION AND
GLOBAL COMPETITIONS**

**OLADUNJOYE PATRICK (PH.D), OWUGHA,
WOYENGIDISEYE OWEI & AKENE, EUNICE
TITUS**

*Niger Delta University, Educational Foundations
Dept. Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.*

Abstract

This study is aimed at examining the ways in which the Al-majiri Integrated Education can be used to achieve cohesion and global competitiveness. The researcher adopted the descriptive survey design. 184 Muslim

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teachers were randomly selected for this study from North-

INTRODUCTION

National Cohesion can only be best achieved when there is a nationalistic interest in using education as a natural parameter for integrating every individual into mainstream of formal education. Based on the history of formal education in Nigeria, there was noticeable education imbalance between the Southern and Northern Nigeria. The reasons for such imbalance as noted by Nwagwu (2009) could be adduced to religious, cultural, political and geographical factors. There is no gainsaying that the Northern Nigeria has long embraced Islamic education even before the introduction of Western education by the missionaries. So,

West and North-East and the reliability country through the geo-political zones. A index was established language learning, questionnaire title at 0.82. Two research curriculum, skills and “Using Al-majiri questions were mutual interaction but education for National formulated to guide challenges such as cohesion” (UAIEFNC) the study and items on political will, fund, was constructed by the the questionnaire religion, parents and researcher. This was were drawn in line wrong orientation has validated by experts with the research crippled the and tested for questions. From the programme. It was reliability using the result of the analysis of suggested however test-re-test method data, it was discovered that the programme be and data analyzed that the Almajiri revived and made to using the Pearson Integrated Education function in line with Product Moment would be useful for the nationalistic ideals. Correlation Statistics unification of the

Islamic culture and religion has gained much ground in the Northern Nigeria.

Most of the people we guided by the Islamic Religion and Christian Religion. After the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorate in 1914, there was the need to harmonize the educational system in line with our colonialists. The place of Western education therefore inevitable. Even after the independence and regional government, efforts were made by the various regions including the Northern Regions to harmonize and respect the place of Western education hence the setting up of the old-man commission in February 1961 which was met to advice the government on the “one-best-way”, of administering and organizing Western education in the Northern Region.

Despite these efforts, the Northern region still witnessed a special form of education where children are made to learn koranic education under a

Mallam or Muslim teacher in most cases under an informal setting. These children could learn under a tree, veranda and other informal settings mostly reciting the Koran – (the Holy Book). With time these children will be engrossed with this form education such that they have little or nothing to do with the Western education, secondly, the children are made to roam the street begging for alms thereby constituting a lot of security risk to others. With time these children become ready-made tools for political violence and other religious crises.

The Federal Government then took a device step in actualizing the details of the Universal Basic Education which is concerned about 'Education for all'. The menace of idle children and youth roaming the street begging all in the name of acquiring education became a source of concern to policy makers in Nigeria. Recent studies conducted by the Ministerial Committee on Madrasah Education (2010) put the population of the Almajiri's at about 10 million. It becomes imperative on the government that for the government to achieve national cohesion, these 10 million children must not be neglected and for Sustainable Development Goal, a special form of education is needed to integrate these children into the mainstream of Western education hence the timely intervention of the Universal Basic Education Commission.

In a nationwide broadcast in 2012, Democracy Day Celebration of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan reiterated his commitment to education in Nigeria. He stated that the Government has made concerted efforts to remove the Almajiri children from the streets by establishing the integrated Almajiri education and promised that similar efforts will be made in other zones.

The integrated Almajiri education is a form of education that integrates the Islamic school system with Western education to provide quality education for their target population. The UBE guideline (2011) state that for Almajiri education to be an instrument for national cohesion, the policy framework must address two critical factors.

1. The rationalization of the existing traditional system of Islamic education with a view of addressing existing problems and challenges. Consolidating achievement and expansion of the system.

2. The mainstreaming and promotion of a dynamic Almajiri Education Model which seeks to integrate effectively Islamic disciplines and conventional school subjects, instill value, morals, provide dual language competence in English and Arabic, cultivate a culture of educational excellence. (UBE guideline 2011:8).

In line with the pronouncement by the President that similar effort will be made in other zones. It was expected that the Nomadic Education addressing the “Cattle Fulani’s” and the Niger Delta “Fish Villages” will be addressed. The framework of the Almajiri Education seeks to itinerancy and begging. It was expected that it will provide viable educational platform and model Almajiri schools that could steadily and effectively integrate conventional disciplines into Islamic education system as well as providing basic education access to all children of school going age throughout the country for national cohesion.

It is expected that Almajiri Education will produce quality products that are imbued with the discipline, character, knowledge and skills to enable them take full advantage of available opportunities and participate effectively and meaningfully in the socio-economic and political life of the nation (Ajayi, 2012).

Apart from adhering to the Principle of ‘Education for all’ and some of the challenges allowing children to beg (bara) endlessly for the sake of education thereby becoming tools for political and religious riots. One major factor that caught the attention of the government that warranted quick intervention was the report on the out-of-school children in Nigeria. It was reported that in survey that:

1. In Ondo State, out of every 12-0 children of school going age 119 are out for school.
2. Anambra: 117 out of every 120
3. Cross Rivers: 114 out of every 120
4. Delta, Abia: 113 out of every 120
5. Plateau: 113 out of every 120
6. Zamfara: 28 out of every 120
7. Borno: 29 out of every 120
8. Kebbi: 34 out of every 120

9. Sokoto,Yobe: 42 out of every 120
(The Nation; Education Aug. 25, 2011)

The report also revealed that 72% of children of school going age in Borno State have never been to school and children of school going age in Core-Muslim State, patronize the Almajiri schools more. Apart from the fact that Islamic education has come to stay in Northern Nigeria. The region of the people favours this form of Almajiri education. The Koran is the basic of the religion, so any education focused on the study of the Koran will be favoured. The bible is associated with Western Education, so learning English Language may be considered an indirect way of converting the child and this will surely be resisted by parents.

Using Almajiri-Integrated Education, national cohesion could be achieved as noted by Adolu (2011). According to him the child will be fully integrated into the mainstream of education like other children in all parts of Nigeria. Through this, the child will learn using the national curriculum where he will appreciate the unity of country and learn to think globally. Subjects like Civics, Geography, History and other related school subjects will widen not only the educational horizon of the child but will make the child to think more in a wider perspective that Nigeria is made up of several ethnic groups with diverse culture and tradition.

The child is now made to be fully integrated into the ideals of nationalism. Makinde (2011) noted that at this stage the child is fully integrated into the culture and tradition of Nigeria and not just the culture and tradition of his people or religion.

The accepted language of Universal Communication in Nigeria is English. Knowledge of the language will enhance national cohesion. Awinotu (2011) noted that the English Language is the centre of unification of all Nigerians as communication is essential for understanding and cooperation. The Almajiri child will be taught English Language such as he can communicate with other children outside his religious cycle.

Education in Nigeria has gone beyond rote learning. The average Nigeria child is taught to be useful to himself and the society at large. Education is qualitative based. The child is exposed to skills which will be useful to him. Subjects like Creative Arts, Entrepreneurship and Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) are introduced to the child. This will enable the child be useful to the nation. The Almajiri child is now exposed to subjects which will enable him to interact with the wider world. Wright (2008) stated that exposing the child to ICT alone is exposing the child to a wider world. The child can now interact with people outside his geographic, social and religious cycle. He is exposed to new ideas such that he sees the need for the unity of the country.

The challenges faced in exposing ways in the management of Almajiri Integrated Education for national cohesion and global competitiveness are numerous. The political will of the government in power is a major issue. Kayor (2012) noted that the success of any educational programme is based on the political will of the government in power to sustain the programme. The Almajiri Integrated Education has suffered a major setback because every government in power in Nigeria will often like to start a new programme instead of continuing with the existing one.

The admission policy of the Almajiri Education was considered not properly skewed according to Allen (2011). It favoured a section of the country and so the others feel cheated. Not all Almajiri's even benefited, hence Nnegi (2010) suggested that the Almajiri schools were suppose to integrate other children from other background and ethnic nationalities such that it would function as unity schools. The religious, cultural and social barriers will no longer be so visible. Informal groups will be mixed and this will enhance national cohesion.

Non availability of fund has remained a perennial problem in nearly all government projects and programmes. Adeola (2011) stated that funds are not available to fund government programmes in Nigeria. Since the provision of fund will dedicate the quality of reachers to be employed, the infrastructures to be provided and the right actualization of the objectives without adequate funds, the programme could not achieve its mandate.

However, if Almajiri Integrated Education is well managed it is assumed that it could help in national cohesion.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to find out:

- i. How the efficient management of Almajiri Integrated Education can encourage national cohesion and global competitiveness.

- ii. The challenges facing the efficient management of the Almajiri Integrated Education such that it could not encourage national cohesion and global competitiveness.

Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following Research Questions:

1. How will the efficient management of Almajiri Integrated Education encourage national cohesion and global competitiveness?
2. What are the challenges facing the efficient management of the Almajiri Integrated Education such that it could not encourage national cohesion and global competitiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Almajiri Integrated Education is expected to be a form of education where Islamic education is integrated with the Western Education for the Almajiri children. There is a bound to be conflict between these two forms of education programme; but can this form of education bring about national cohesion and global competitiveness.

Methods

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. A total of 184 million teachers were randomly selected from the North East Geo-Political Zones. A questionnaire titled "using Almajiri Integrated Education for national cohesion (UAIEFNC) was constructed by the researcher. The items were validated by experts in Test and Evaluation Administrators. The corrections and suggestions were affected. The instrument was further subjected to a reliability test using the test-re-retest method. The data collected was computed and analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) a reliability index of 0.82 was obtained. The questionnaire was divided into two sections – Section A and Section B. The section A sought information on the personal background of the respondent. Section B contained 20 items which were drawn in line with research questions and objectives of the study. The questionnaire were administered to the respondents through the assistance of 6 research assistants. They waited to collect the forms back hence the 100% rate of

return. The data collected was analyzed using the mean score statistics. The decision rule s 2.50 above it is significant while below is not significant.

Result

Research Q1: How will the efficient management of Al-majiri Integrated Education encourage national cohesion and global competitiveness?

The research question was answered with items 1-10 in the questionnaire. Table 1. Mean Score analysis of Almajiri Integrated Education and national cohesion.

S/N	Item	X score	Decision
If Al-majiri Integrated Education is well managed it will bring about			
1	Effective communication in the Lingua Franca thereby enhancing national cohesion	3.17	A
2	The subject taught will expose the children to the ideals on national unity	3.18	A
3	There will be mutual interaction among children of varied backgrounds thereby enhancing national cohesion	3.63	A
4	The school curriculum will enhance religious tolerance thereby encouraging national unity	4.10	SA
5	Integrated Almajiri Education will enable the child acquire skills which will make him useful to the society thereby enhancing national cohesion and global competitiveness	4.11	SA

A = Agree SA = Strong agree

The table shows that if Almajiri Integrated Education was well managed, it is expected that it could have brought about the knowledge of English Language which could have enhanced effective communication in the nations Lingua Franca thereby enhancing national cohesion 3.17 mean score of the total respondents attested to this fact.

3.81 mean score of the total respondents agreed that if Almajiri Integrated Education is well managed, there will be mutual interaction among children of varied background thereby enhancing national cohesion.

4.10 of the total respondents strongly agreed that effective management of Integrated Almajiri Education will enable religious tolerance thereby boasting nation unity tolerance.

Integrated Almajiri education will enable the child to acquire skills which will make him to be useful to himself and the entire society as strongly agreed by a mean score of 4.11 of the total respondents.

Table 1: Mean score analysis of the challenges facing Almajiri Integrated education that could hinder national cohesion and global competitiveness.

S/N	Item	x score	Decision
	The following could be regarded as the challenges that faced Almajiri Integrated Education thereby not able to enhance national cohesion and global competitiveness		
1	Lack of political will	4.14	SA
2	No support from state governments	3.72	A
3	No support from most parents	2.63	A
4	Lack of infrastructure	3.10	A
5	Wrong admission policy	2.14	D
6	Does not have national outlook	3.10	A
7	No specialized books for the programme	4.11	SA
8	Effect of religion	3.71	A
9	Lack of fund	3.83	A
10	Wrong orientation	3.63	A

Based on the respondents mean score analysis of their responses to the items, it was strongly agreed that lack of political will and no specialized books for the Almajiri Integrated Education posed serious challenges to the administration of the programme to enhance and global competitiveness.

A mean score value 3.72, 2.63, 3.10, 3.71, 3.83 and 3.63 all above the decision mean rule of 2.50 thereby agreeing to the fact that lack of support from the States Governments, no support most parents, lack of infrastructure, the programme lack national outlook, no specialized book for the programme, effect of religion, lack of fund and wrong orientation contributed to the failure of the Integrated Almajiri Education.

However, most respondents strongly disagreed that the wrong admission policy contributed to the failure of the programme.

Discussion of Result

The Integrated Almajiri education was established with good intentions and it was expected that it would be a programme that could foster national cohesion and encourage global competitiveness. The result shows that the programme could have been a good instrument for national unity as highlighted in the UBE guidelines. Through Western education, and the Integrated Islamic education, the child is exposed to elements of language skills in line with the national lingua franca, as well as skills and other specialized abilities which could enhance national cohesion. Their interaction with children in other cultural backgrounds during sports or inter school visitation will enhance cooperation and mutuality among them. Religious tolerance will be enhanced as noted by Adeolu (2011) with the curriculum of the Western education, the mental and social abilities of the child will be widened to such an extent that his thinking and conduct will be in line with the 'educated' and will be able to function effectively with others and be able to contribute to national growth.

Despite the lofty ideals of the programme, it died a natural death soon after the Jonathan Regime in 2015 as a result of lack of political will. The vision of the past regime, so there is no strong political will to encourage the Almajiri Integrated Education. The State Government had enough responsibilities coupled with the economic recession that is ravaging the country where salaries of even the regular teachers are yet to be paid for several months. Most parents consider Integrated Almajiri education as an indirect way of converting their children to Christianity. The bible is written in English and Koran in Arabic as knowledge of English is an indirect desire or knowledge of the bible. Most children on their own are

already very satisfied with the act of begging, so confining them to a dormitory or classroom is an indirect imprisonment as noted by Nnegi (2010). The questions that readily come to mind is “How many children in the Southern Nigeria are confined in that matter?” So to them the programme does not have a national outlook. Allen (2011) noted that the effect of religion cannot be completely ruled out as well as the wrong orientation already given to the Almajiri children. It is pretty difficult to re-orientate someone who has been indoctrinated. Most of the actions of the Almajiri child are often backed by their religious belief; so it is difficult to change overnight. It is expected that books that will be used in this programme must be specialized books written in both Arabic and English-Awinotu (2011) noted that through the English Language is important but the Arabic language must also be given its pride of place.

Conclusion

The Integrated Al-majiri education was supposed to be a unifying programme which could have been able to integrate the Nigeria society and enhance a better understanding and respect for our diversity as a nation. The curriculum could have exposed the Al-majiri child to a better understanding of Nigeria as a nation, the child could have been exposed to the nations lingua franca, the child could have been made to acquire skills that will make him useful to himself and the society, the child could have been able to integrate and relate with others through several school activities, the child could have been exposed to activities that could enhance national cohesion and global competitiveness but challenges such as lack of political will, fund, parental support, religion and the willingness of the child all contributed towards the inability of the programme meeting up with the challenge of using the programme to foster unity and advancement.

Recommendations

It recommended therefore that; the integrated Almajiri education should be revisited and encourage by the government. The past situation in which specialized books are not provided should be improved upon; funds should be made available by Federal Government to run the Almajiri education.

Suitable qualified teachers should be employed by the Government and specially trained to run the Integrated Al-majiri education.

Infrastructure that will improve teaching and learning should be provided by the government.

Al-Majiri education should be geared towards national cohesion.

The activities of the programme should be tailored towards global competitiveness

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