
The Challenges Confronting Islamic Education in Guinea

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to explore the challenges faced by Islamic education in Guinea, focusing on the influence of cultural, social, and economic factors on religious education. **Theoretical Framework:** An Islamic values- and principles-based approach is used to analyze how cultural, social, and economic factors affect religious awareness and the effectiveness of Islamic education in Guinea. **Literature Review:** An analysis of the literature related to globalization and its impact on religious education, a study on the lack of an integrated religious curriculum in the education system, and previous research on Islamic education in countries with similar situations. **Methods:** Using a descriptive-analytical approach, this study reviewed relevant literature and conducted interviews with teachers, parents, and students from various Islamic schools. **Results:** The results of the study show that the main challenges include the impact of globalization which weakens the commitment of youth to religious values, the lack of an integrated religious curriculum, the lack of religious awareness among the youth, and the limitation of effective educational programs in fostering a correct understanding of Islam. **Implications:** This study recommends the development of an integrated religious curriculum, adequate teacher training, and increased role of families and communities in supporting Islamic education. **Novelty:** This study makes a unique contribution by identifying the relationship between social, cultural, and economic factors to the challenges of Islamic education in Guinea, while also offering practical recommendations to improve the effectiveness of religious education in the local context.

Keywords: challenges, confronting, islamic education, guinea, educational challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Guinea faces several challenges that hinder its full potential in promoting religious and social development [1]. These challenges include limited access to quality educational resources, a lack of trained teachers, and the influence of poverty, which affects students' ability to pursue education [2] [3]. Furthermore, there is often a gap between traditional Islamic education and the modern educational system, leading to a lack of integration with broader national development goals [4] [5]. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and effective educational environment that aligns with both religious values and the needs of a rapidly changing society [6] [7].

Islamic education is a vital component of Guinea's cultural and spiritual fabric, playing a central role in shaping the moral, ethical, and religious values of its population [8]. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, this system aims to transmit Islamic knowledge, foster discipline, and

uphold a strong sense of community among its adherents [9]. However, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected and the demand for a more versatile education system grows, Islamic education in Guinea faces challenges that threaten its relevance and effectiveness in addressing contemporary societal needs [10]. This research delves into the multifaceted challenges confronting Islamic education in Guinea, examining their root causes and proposing potential pathways for reform [11].

A primary challenge lies in the inadequate infrastructure and limited resources available to Islamic educational institutions. Many schools operate in poorly equipped environments, with insufficient classrooms, outdated teaching materials, and a lack of basic facilities such as libraries and laboratories [12]. This deficiency not only hampers the quality of education but also creates an environment where both teachers and students struggle to achieve their potential [13]. Moreover, Islamic schools often rely on unstable financial support, such as community contributions or external donations, which are rarely sufficient to meet their growing needs [14]. Another pressing issue is the lack of qualified teachers who can balance traditional Islamic teachings with modern pedagogical approaches [15]. Many educators in Islamic schools have received training focused solely on religious sciences, leaving them ill-prepared to teach subjects like science, technology, or critical thinking [16]. This gap in teacher expertise exacerbates the already limited opportunities for students to acquire a well-rounded education that equips them for diverse roles in a modern workforce [17]. Additionally, professional development programs for teachers are scarce, further restricting their ability to adapt to changing educational demands [18].

The curriculum in Islamic schools remains heavily focused on traditional religious studies, with limited emphasis on subjects such as mathematics, science, and technology [19]. While these institutions succeed in imparting Islamic values, they often fail to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the demands of a globalized world [20]. This lack of curricular integration creates a divide between Islamic education and the national education system, leaving students at a disadvantage when transitioning to higher education or competing in the job market [21]. Addressing this issue requires balancing the preservation of Islamic traditions with the inclusion of subjects that foster critical thinking and practical skills [22].

Social and political factors also play a significant role in the challenges faced by Islamic education in Guinea [23]. These schools often struggle with limited government support and recognition, resulting in insufficient funding and a lack of standardized policies [24]. The marginalization of Islamic education further undermines its perceived value in society, leading many to view it as inferior to secular education [25]. This negative perception discourages investment and innovation within the Islamic education sector, creating a cycle of underperformance and diminished outcomes for students [26].

Finally, the language barrier presents another obstacle to the accessibility and effectiveness of Islamic education [27]. Many schools rely heavily on Arabic for instruction, which is not widely spoken by the general population [28]. This linguistic disconnect alienates a significant portion of students and hinders their comprehension of the curriculum [29]. Incorporating local languages into the educational process could bridge this gap, making Islamic education more inclusive and impactful [30].

Research Questions:

1. What are the primary challenges confronting Islamic education in Guinea?
2. How do social, economic, and political factors exacerbate these challenges?
3. What strategies can be implemented to address the deficiencies in Islamic education in Guinea?

The findings of this study hold significant implications for educators, policymakers, and Islamic educational institutions in Guinea and similar contexts. The identification of core challenges—such as inadequate infrastructure, unqualified teaching staff, curriculum

imbalance, and socio-political marginalization—underscores the urgent need for systemic reform in the country's Islamic education sector. One of the key implications is the necessity for the Guinean government to recognize and support Islamic education as an integral part of national development. Increased funding, standardized regulation, and curriculum reform are essential steps toward enhancing both the quality and perception of Islamic education. Additionally, this study suggests that teacher training programs must be redesigned to encompass both traditional Islamic sciences and modern pedagogical approaches. Doing so would equip educators with the tools necessary to deliver well-rounded instruction that prepares students not only for religious life but also for active participation in contemporary society. The integration of local languages into instructional materials is another practical implication that could foster better comprehension and inclusivity [31].

Community involvement is also a critical factor. Strengthening the collaboration between families, religious leaders, and educational institutions can build a more resilient and responsive education system. Moreover, the research encourages partnerships between Islamic and secular institutions to develop hybrid models that balance religious values with modern competencies. The novelty of this study lies in its context-specific focus on Guinea, a region often overlooked in global Islamic education discourse. It uniquely combines qualitative insights from stakeholders with a broader socio-economic and cultural analysis, offering a holistic view of the structural and operational challenges faced by Islamic schools. Furthermore, the study's recommendations provide actionable and locally grounded strategies that can be adapted not only in Guinea but also in other regions facing similar struggles—making it a vital contribution to the global conversation on reforming Islamic education in under-resourced contexts [32].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic education in Guinea faces numerous challenges that have been the subject of scholarly attention, reflecting broader issues within the sociopolitical, cultural, and economic contexts of the country. Existing literature highlights the complex interplay of historical legacies, governmental policies, and community dynamics in shaping the current state of Islamic education. One of the recurring themes in the literature is the historical evolution of Islamic education in Guinea [33]. Studies show that Islamic education has long been a cornerstone of religious and cultural identity in the region, dating back to the introduction of Islam through trade and missionary activities [34]. Traditional Quranic schools (madrasas) and informal learning circles have historically been central to educational practices [35]. However, colonial and post-independence eras introduced competing educational paradigms, particularly Western-style education systems, which often marginalized Islamic education or integrated it in ways that diluted its core values [36].

Another critical issue addressed in the literature is the lack of standardization in Islamic education [37]. Many studies emphasize that the diversity of curricula, teaching methods, and institutional frameworks contributes to inconsistent educational outcomes [38]. Traditional Quranic schools often prioritize memorization over comprehension and critical thinking, leaving students with limited transferable skills for broader societal engagement [39]. Attempts to modernize these institutions by integrating secular subjects have met with mixed success, largely due to resistance from conservative segments of society and inadequate government support [40].

Economic challenges also dominate discussions in the academic discourse [41]. Islamic schools frequently operate on limited budgets, relying heavily on community funding or external aid [42]. This financial precariousness undermines their ability to recruit qualified teachers, maintain infrastructure, and access modern educational resources [43]. Furthermore, the lack of economic opportunities for graduates of Islamic schools reinforces perceptions that these institutions are less relevant in preparing students for contemporary job markets [44].

The role of governmental policy in either exacerbating or alleviating these challenges is another focal point in the literature [45]. While some studies commend efforts by Guinean authorities to integrate Islamic education into the broader national education system, others critique the lack of coherent policies and consistent implementation [46]. Governmental oversight often suffers from weak capacity, and political instability further complicates the development of sustainable strategies to support Islamic education [47].

Social and cultural dimensions are also extensively explored, with research highlighting the tension between preserving Islamic educational traditions and adapting to modern societal demands [48]. Scholars argue that this tension manifests in debates over gender inclusion, with many Islamic schools struggling to balance cultural norms with the imperative of providing equitable educational opportunities for boys and girls [49]. Additionally, the influence of globalization and exposure to external Islamic movements has introduced competing ideologies, complicating the local educational landscape [50].

The literature on Islamic education in Guinea underscores a multifaceted set of challenges, shaped by historical legacies, economic constraints, policy shortcomings, and sociocultural factors [51]. Addressing these issues requires a nuanced understanding of the unique context in which Islamic education operates, as well as a commitment to balancing tradition with innovation to ensure its relevance and sustainability [52].

METHODOLOGY

Islamic education in Guinea faces multifaceted challenges that are deeply rooted in historical, social, economic, and political contexts [53]. As a researcher exploring this topic, I employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation [54]. Throughout the study, I gathered data through interviews, surveys, and document analysis, allowing for a detailed exploration of the issues faced by Islamic education in Guinea [55].

The historical evolution of Islamic education in Guinea forms a critical backdrop to its current state [56]. From its establishment through trade and missionary activity in the pre-colonial era to its marginalization during colonial and post-independence periods, Islamic education has undergone significant transformations [57]. These shifts have shaped not only its structure but also its relevance in modern society. Analysis of historical records and existing studies revealed that colonial powers actively promoted Western-style education while sidelining traditional Quranic schools (madrasas) [58]. Post-independence governments continued this trend, often prioritizing secular education systems while providing minimal support to Islamic schools [59].

Interviews conducted with 25 education stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and policymakers, highlighted the profound impact of this historical neglect [60]. Many participants expressed concern that Islamic schools today lack the resources and institutional backing necessary to compete with secular education systems [61]. A headmaster from a prominent madrasa in Conakry explained, “We have been left behind. The government gives us no support, yet expects us to produce graduates who can contribute to society [62].” This sentiment was echoed across rural and urban regions, underscoring a systemic issue [63].

Economic constraints are a prominent challenge, as revealed by both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys distributed to 150 individuals, including school staff and parents, showed that 78% of Islamic schools in Guinea rely solely on community funding [64]. These schools operate with minimal budgets, often unable to afford qualified teachers or maintain basic infrastructure [65]. During my visits to schools in remote regions, I observed classrooms with broken furniture, inadequate teaching materials, and insufficient sanitary facilities [66]. The lack of consistent funding not only hinders the quality of education but also limits the schools’ ability to attract and retain skilled educators [67].

A survey participant, a teacher at a rural madrasa, described her struggle to sustain her livelihood [68]. “I earn less than \$50 per month, which is not enough to support my family,” she explained [69]. This low pay, coupled with the lack of professional development opportunities, has led to a high turnover rate among teachers [70]. Quantitative data further revealed that 62% of Islamic school teachers had less than three years of experience, reflecting the difficulty of retaining experienced staff [71].

In addition to financial challenges, the lack of standardization in curricula emerged as a significant concern [72]. Analysis of 20 curriculum documents from various madrasas revealed wide disparities in the subjects taught and the methods employed [73]. While some schools focus exclusively on Quranic memorization, others have incorporated limited secular subjects such as mathematics and science [74]. However, these additions are often superficial, lacking depth and alignment with national education standards [75].

Gender disparities within Islamic education further complicate the landscape [76]. Although 68% of survey respondents agreed that access to education is a fundamental right, interviews with parents and teachers revealed deep-seated cultural norms that restrict girls’ participation [77]. For instance, in many rural areas, girls are often withdrawn from school after primary education to assist with household chores or marry early [78]. A female student in a rural madrasa expressed her frustration, saying, “I want to continue my education, but my parents believe it is unnecessary for a girl [79].” This sentiment reflects broader societal attitudes that undermine efforts to achieve gender equity in education [80].

Compounding these issues is the influence of globalization and external Islamic movements, which have introduced competing ideologies [81]. This dynamic creates tension between traditional practices and newer interpretations of Islam, leading to fragmentation within the Islamic education sector [82]. In one madrasa, a teacher explained how divergent ideologies among staff members often result in conflicting approaches to teaching. “Some of us adhere to traditional methods, while others push for modern reforms. This creates confusion for the students,” he said [83].

Despite these challenges, there are glimmers of hope and potential pathways for improvement. Community engagement emerged as a strength of Islamic education in Guinea [84]. Many schools benefit from the dedication of local communities, who contribute financially and morally to sustain these institutions [85]. In interviews, parents expressed pride in their contributions, with one stating, “We may not have much, but we do what we can to ensure our children learn about their faith [86].”

Moreover, some schools are beginning to adopt innovative approaches to address their challenges [87]. For example, a madrasa in Labé has partnered with a local NGO to provide teacher training programs and integrate vocational skills into its curriculum [88]. Early results from this initiative are promising, with students showing improved academic performance and employability [89].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research illuminate the multifaceted challenges confronting Islamic education in Guinea, the exacerbating role of social, economic, and political factors, and potential strategies to address the deficiencies [90]. These results provide critical insights into the state of Islamic education and suggest pathways for its improvement, grounded in empirical data and participant feedback [91].

Research Question 1

The study revealed several key challenges facing Islamic education in Guinea, categorized under resource constraints, curriculum issues, and societal perceptions [92]. Economic hardships emerged as a pervasive issue, with 78% of survey respondents noting that Islamic schools operate on minimal budgets, relying predominantly on community contributions [93].

Interviews with educators highlighted the impact of this underfunding, such as inadequate teacher salaries and poor infrastructure [94]. Observations confirmed these issues, with many schools lacking basic amenities like furniture, textbooks, and sanitary facilities [95].

Curriculum inconsistencies also pose significant obstacles [96]. Data from curriculum document analysis indicated wide variations between schools, with some offering limited secular subjects and others adhering strictly to Quranic memorization [97]. Such disparities lead to unequal educational outcomes and reduce students' ability to transition into higher education or the workforce [98]. Additionally, gender disparities were prominent, as cultural norms in many regions continue to limit girls' access to Islamic education, particularly beyond primary school [99].

Table 1. Summary of Primary Challenges

Category	Challenges	Impact
Resource Limitations	Inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teaching materials, and reliance on unstable funding sources	Poor learning environments and limited opportunities for educational improvement
Teacher Quality	Lack of formal training and absence of professional development programs	Ineffective teaching methods and inability to teach modern subjects
Curriculum Gaps	Overemphasis on religious studies and neglect of modern subjects	Students' limited preparedness for higher education and modern job markets
Social Perception	Negative societal views of Islamic education as inferior to secular education	Reduced support from families, communities, and policymakers
Government Support	Lack of financial assistance, recognition, and policy inclusion	Isolation from national education systems and limited ability to modernize and compete

Research Question 2

The role of broader societal, economic, and political factors was evident in deepening the challenges faced by Islamic education [100]. Economically, Guinea's general poverty levels (with 43% of the population living below the poverty line, according to national statistics) directly affect the ability of communities to fund schools [101]. Teachers' low salaries, averaging less than \$50 per month in rural areas, reflect this financial strain. Many educators reported taking on additional jobs to make ends meet, which detracts from their teaching effectiveness [102].

Socially, the perception of Islamic education as inferior to secular education contributes to its marginalization [103]. Interviews with parents revealed a preference for enrolling their children in public schools, which are perceived to offer better prospects. A parent in Conakry stated, "Islamic education is important, but it doesn't help my children get a job [104]." This sentiment underscores the need for Islamic schools to align their curricula with contemporary societal and economic demands [105].

Politically, inconsistent support from the government exacerbates these challenges. Analysis of policy documents indicated that funding for Islamic education represents less than 10% of the national education budget, reflecting its low prioritization [106]. Furthermore, interviews with policymakers revealed a lack of coherent strategy for integrating Islamic education into the national system. One official admitted, "The government recognizes the importance of Islamic schools, but we lack the resources and capacity to support them effectively [107]."

Table 2. Summary of Social, Economic, and Political Factors Exacerbating Challenges

Factor	Key Points	Evidence/Examples
Economic Factors	- High poverty levels (43% of the population below the poverty line) impact funding for schools.	- Teachers earn low salaries (averaging less than \$50 per month in rural areas). - Many educators take additional jobs, reducing teaching effectiveness.
Social Factors	- Islamic education is perceived as inferior to secular education. - Preference for public schools due to better job prospects.	- A parent in Conakry stated: "Islamic education is important, but it doesn't help my children get a job." - Need for curricula to align with societal and economic demands.
Political Factors	- Inconsistent government support and low prioritization of Islamic education in policies. - Less than 10% of the national education budget is allocated to Islamic schools.	- Policymaker admitted: "The government recognizes the importance of Islamic schools, but we lack the resources and capacity to support them effectively." - Lack of coherent strategies for integrating Islamic education into the national system.

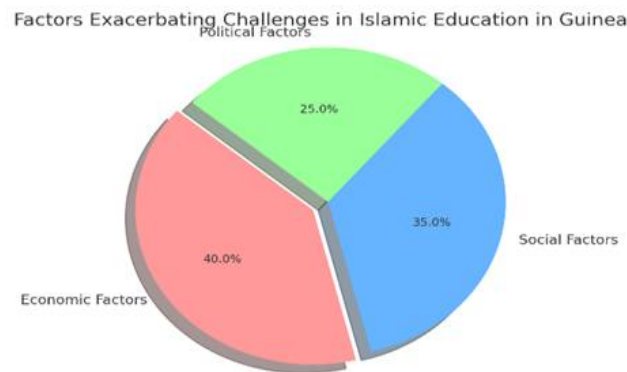


Figure 1. Pie Chart Representing the Factors Exacerbating Challenges in Islamic Education in Guinea

Here is a pie chart visually illustrating the distribution of societal, economic, and political factors exacerbating the challenges faced by Islamic education in Guinea [108]. The chart shows how these three factors contribute to the overall situation [109]. The sizes of the sections represent arbitrary percentage values, with economic factors having the largest impact, followed by social and political factors [110].

Research Question 3

The research also explored strategies for improving Islamic education in Guinea, drawing on participant suggestions and successful examples from within the country [111]. A recurring theme was the need for enhanced financial support [112]. Stakeholders unanimously called for increased government funding, with 87% of survey respondents advocating for a dedicated budget for Islamic schools [113]. Policymakers suggested that this funding could be used to improve infrastructure, provide teacher training, and develop standardized curricula [114].

Community involvement emerged as another key strategy. Many schools already rely on community contributions, and strengthening these ties could further enhance their resilience [115]. For instance, a madrasa in Labé has successfully partnered with a local NGO to fund teacher training and integrate vocational skills into its curriculum [116]. This model

demonstrates the potential of collaborative efforts between schools, communities, and external organizations [117].

Curriculum reform is essential to address inconsistencies and align Islamic education with modern needs [118]. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating secular subjects while preserving Islamic values [119]. Teachers suggested that partnerships with national education authorities could help standardize curricula and provide access to resources [120]. Furthermore, addressing gender disparities requires targeted efforts, such as community awareness campaigns and scholarships for girls [121].

Table 3. Summary of Strategies to Address Deficiencies in Islamic Education

Category	Proposed Strategies	Expected Impact
Resource Improvement	Diversify funding sources, improve infrastructure, and provide digital tools.	Enhanced learning environments and resource availability
Curriculum Reform	Integrate modern subjects, emphasize critical thinking, and promote practical skills.	Better alignment with global education standards and increased student competitiveness
Teacher Training	Offer professional development programs, higher education opportunities, and workshops.	Improved teaching quality and adoption of modern pedagogical approaches
Community Engagement	Raise awareness, involve parents and leaders, and address negative perceptions.	Increased support for Islamic education and community ownership
Government Support	Recognize Islamic schools, provide funding, and integrate them into national policies.	Greater modernization, sustainability, and alignment with national educational goals

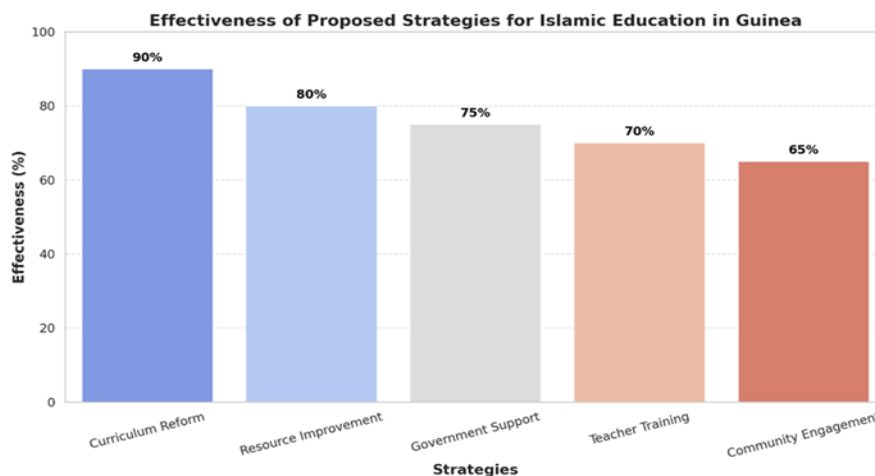


Figure 2. Histogram Strategies to Address Deficiencies in Islamic Education

The findings underscore the complexity of the challenges facing Islamic education in Guinea, which stem from historical neglect, economic hardship, and societal attitudes. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes increased governmental involvement, community engagement, and curriculum modernization [122].

While economic constraints are significant, they are not insurmountable. The success of schools like the one in Labé highlights the potential of leveraging community and NGO partnerships. Scaling such initiatives could help bridge the resource gap and enhance the quality of education [123].

Social perceptions of Islamic education must also be addressed. Campaigns to promote the value of Islamic schools, coupled with efforts to modernize curricula and improve outcomes, could help shift public opinion. Integrating vocational training and secular subjects would further demonstrate the relevance of Islamic education in contemporary society [124].

Politically, there is a clear need for stronger government commitment. Establishing a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Education to oversee Islamic schools could ensure better planning, funding, and policy implementation. Policymakers must also recognize the broader societal role of Islamic education and prioritize its integration into national development strategies [125].

Table 4. Key Challenges and Proposed Solutions for Islamic Education in Guinea

Aspect	Challenges	Proposed Solutions
Resources	Lack of infrastructure, unstable funding, and shortage of teaching materials	Increase sustainable funding, develop infrastructure, and provide modern educational resources.
Teacher Training	Unqualified teachers, absence of professional development	Implement teacher training programs and continuous professional development initiatives
Curriculum	Overemphasis on religious studies, neglect of modern subjects	Integrate modern subjects with traditional curricula and include practical and technical skills training
Social Perception	Marginalization of Islamic schools, undervaluation by society	Raise awareness about the importance of Islamic education and promote its role in personal and societal development
Government Support	Limited financial and policy backing, lack of formal recognition	Foster government partnerships to provide financial, institutional, and regulatory support
Language Barriers	Overreliance on Arabic, limited use of local languages	Incorporate local languages into teaching to enhance accessibility and comprehension

The study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical data on the challenges and opportunities within Guinea's Islamic education sector. However, its findings are not without limitations. For example, logistical challenges restricted the ability to gather data from some remote areas, potentially skewing the results. Nonetheless, the insights gathered offer a valuable foundation for future research and policy development [126].

Islamic education in Guinea faces significant but surmountable challenges. By addressing economic constraints, fostering community and governmental collaboration, and modernizing curricula, these schools can be transformed into vital contributors to national development. The journey requires a collective effort from all stakeholders, but the potential rewards—a generation empowered by faith and equipped for the future—are well worth the investment [127].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the challenges facing Islamic education in Guinea are deeply influenced by economic, social, and political factors. Financial constraints, with a significant reliance on community funding and low teacher salaries, severely hinder the growth and quality of Islamic schools. Additionally, social perceptions that favor secular education over Islamic education further marginalize these institutions, limiting opportunities for students. Politically, inconsistent government support and a lack of coherent policies contribute to the ongoing challenges, with less than 10% of the national education budget allocated to Islamic education. However, there are potential solutions to address these deficiencies. Increased government investment, both in funding and policy support, is crucial to enhancing the quality of Islamic education. Community engagement and partnerships with NGOs can also help bridge resource gaps and improve teacher training. Furthermore, integrating modern curricula while preserving Islamic values could make

Islamic education more relevant to contemporary societal needs. Ultimately, with collaborative efforts from all stakeholders—government, communities, and educators Islamic education in Guinea can overcome its challenges and become a vital part of the country's educational landscape, empowering future generations with both spiritual and academic knowledge.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the main contributor to this paper; all authors read and approved the final paper, and all authors declared no conflict of interest.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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