
Impact of Islamic Education in Addressing the Problems of Out-of-School Children in Northern Nigeria

Umar Alhaji Umar¹, Mohammed Alhaji Bukar²

^{1,2}Mohammed Goni College of Legal, Islamic and Educational Studies, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

¹umarumarawal1980@gmail.com, ²malammamman734@gmail.com

Received August 27, 2025; Revised November 29, 2025; Accepted December 07, 2025

Abstract

Objective: The objective of this study is to assess the role of Islamic education in addressing the issue of out-of-school children, focusing on how it can improve access to education, enhance learning outcomes, and create a supportive environment for children's intellectual, spiritual, and moral growth. **Theoretical framework:** The study is based on theories of educational access, equity, and holistic education, focusing on how Islamic education can contribute to reducing educational exclusion and promoting well-rounded development. **Literature review:** The review explores the barriers faced by disadvantaged children in accessing education, such as financial constraints and inadequate facilities, while highlighting the potential of Islamic education to provide inclusive, moral, and intellectual growth. **Method:** A qualitative approach was used, involving case studies, interviews, and site visits to Islamic schools and community-based education initiatives to explore the challenges and benefits of Islamic education. **Results:** The results indicate that Islamic education plays a significant role in providing education to children who are otherwise excluded from the formal education system. While it offers a balanced approach that fosters intellectual, moral, and spiritual development, the study also identifies several challenges, including limited resources, inadequate facilities, and a shortage of trained teachers. Despite these obstacles, Islamic education has shown promise in improving learning outcomes and providing an enabling environment for children's growth. **Implications:** The findings suggest that Islamic education should be considered in education policy to address the out-of-school children issue, with investments in resources, facilities, and teacher training to improve quality and access. **Novelty:** This study highlights the underexplored role of Islamic education in resolving the out-of-school children issue, providing a unique perspective on non-formal education as a solution to educational exclusion.

Keywords: islamic education, out-of-school children, access to education, learning outcomes, holistic development.

INTRODUCTION

The critical roles education plays in the socio-economic and political development of any nation can never be overemphasized. Education is the pivot upon which the quality of a country's human capacity development is enhanced. From every indication, the economic and technological advances recorded in every nation are tied to the educational attainment of its citizens globally [1]. It is obvious, therefore, that the survival of any organized nation depends on the quality of education of its population. Beyond the production of a capacity of think-

tanks for the advancement of the people, education creates room for better health and nutrition, thereby helping to improve hygiene. It also assists societies to experience a higher child survival rate and provides an avenue for a greater sense of health awareness [2]. Education, as submitted by Adeyinka, is a tool for liberating the individual from the shackles of ignorance to the world of ideas, knowledge and imagination. Internationally, education is accepted as a fundamental tool of human development and an essential element for the preparation of an informed individual [3]. There is no gainsaying that education is power. Education helps to moderate social tensions in society. It emancipates the minds of men to be creative and enables them to think without limitations. A well-educated person, according to Ikiyei, is generations ahead of the poorly educated ones. Education also creates an opportunity for the child to become an asset to society, while the absence or mal-education of the child prepares that child to grow up in most circumstances as a burden to that community [4].

In modern societies, the school is generally accepted as the place where children are sent by their parents to acquire formal education, which prepares the growing child to assume adult responsibilities later in life. Yes, a child could also acquire informal education by passing through an apprenticeship scheme to actualize their future. The school is a place where teachers who are professionally trained are given the responsibility to train children from varied backgrounds about academic knowledge, provide an opportunity for children to meet and interact with other children beyond their immediate environment and from that point learn to cooperate more with other children outside their neighbourhood. The school teaches children life and survival skills from which they will develop themselves for sustainability in the future [5]. The school is a creator of self-actualization and a director to the growing child as they are being prepared to chart a course for their future aspirations. The school is a place where talents are discovered, nurtured and empowered for their future well-being. Out-of-school children certainly may not benefit from this empowerment process, which the school provides.

According to Darma, education or formal school training had enabled man to improve in agricultural productivity, assisted women and girls to enhance their status and wellbeing, ensure a better protection of the environment, supported man in reducing unchecked population growth rate and, without doubt, enable them to utilize a variety of skills for the improvement of their standard of living [6]. All of these imply that schooling, vis-à-vis education, is a means for the creation of human happiness. A builder for a healthier society, a provider that enhances man with skills and information to be more self-confident, education also enables an efficient and productive workforce, and indeed a holistic personality.

The school is an organ of society that enables man to, through the knowledge acquired, be better prepared to make genuine choices concerning the type of life human beings are expected to lead. The place of the school then corroborates the position of Mohammed, Quadri and Yoshifumi [7]. Development globally is also often a qualitative measure of the literacy rate and the productive capacity of skilled labour, the level of technology and education.

The education sector had, on its own part, over the years, put in place several measures and policies with the intent of ensuring or cushioning and providing an equal playing ground so that all Nigerian children can enjoy a right to free/compulsory primary education. To make this project work, governments at different levels had built public schools within reachable distances for the children to attend. Although the government had supported the education sector at the federal, state and local governments at different instances, these measures put together by the government to reduce the statistics of out-of-school children had created even further gaps. The trend had pressured the Federal Government into the establishment of the Nomadic Education Commission with the intent to cater to the immigrant herdsmen; Education, the Fishing Port Education to take care of the immigrant fishing populations along the riverine settlements/communities and the river basins in the Lake Chad areas; however, something desperate most definitely still needs to be done. In most states of the Federation, there are also special schools for the disabled children. The country is a signatory to the 'Education for All' convention, entered into in the United States of America and an active partner to the Sustainable Development Goals, of which child literacy is uniquely enshrined.

Although these policies of the government are quite laudable, in most cases, policy implementation appears to be inefficient, poor or weak. Nigeria is currently being described globally as the nation with the highest number of out-of-school children. This assertion may not go down well with those in positions of leadership; however, it is a wake-up call for a nation with the kind of pedigree and resources as Nigeria [8].

Islam has a very holistic view of education, stressing not just the acquisition of knowledge but also the complete metamorphosis of the individual. This method combines intellectual, ethical, and spiritual aspects in an effort to develop a well-rounded person who upholds Islamic principles [9]. The framework of Islamic education emphasizes the value of thorough human growth, knowledge acquisition, and internalizing moral values. It is expressed through the components of *Tarbiyyah*, *Talim*, and *Tadib*. All of these components are essential in moulding people into *khalifatullah fi al-ard* (vicegerent of Allah in the world), those who can successfully traverse the temporal and eternal facets of existence. This viewpoint casts education as a lifetime path of spiritual and self-improvement, challenging the traditional understanding of education as merely an intellectual pursuit. Islamic education aims to create people who are not only learnt but also morally and spiritually conscious by placing a higher priority on the implementation and real-world application of these teachings than on theoretical debates. In the end, this all-encompassing framework cultivates a community of people who are devoted to their religion and capable of making meaningful contributions to society, thereby living out the core principles of Islam [10].

Islamic education has been an integral part of the Nigerian educational system for centuries. However, despite its importance, Islamic education in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including a lack of funding and resources, limited access to quality education, and a shortage of qualified teachers. These challenges are particularly pronounced in North Central Nigeria, where many children are out of school and lack access to quality education [11].

Reducing the number of out-of-school children (OOSC) is a key priority for countries across Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria. This is because more than half of the children globally who have not enrolled in school live in Sub-Saharan Africa, and more than 85 percent of children in Sub-Saharan Africa are not learning the minimum [12]. Moreover, education is a fundamental human right, a critical driver for economic advancement and a powerful tool for poverty reduction. Hence, no child of school age should be denied access to quality and equitable education, and an opportunity to acquire skills that guarantee future employability and long-term earnings [13]. This study seeks to examine the impact of Islamic education in addressing the challenges of out-of-school children, with a view to identifying potential solutions and strategies for promoting access to education and improving learning outcomes for all children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

UNICEF similarly conducted a formative evaluation of the out-of-school children initiative (OOSCI). In a similar vein, the Education Policy and Data Center did a comparison study of the rates of out-of-school children ages 7-14 across India [14]. Burnett, Guison-Dowdy and Thomas investigated the problem of out-of-school children and expressed that enrolling out-of-school children back to school is not only a moral obligation, but a productive investment and that economies suffer a far greater loss from maintaining a large out-of-school population than they would from increasing public spending to enroll those children in school [15]. The challenge of out-of-school children has been a subject of intense study both in Nigeria and around the world.

Okoh, Emenike, Doma and Akinsola conducted a study on out-of-school children: enhancing factors and consequences for sustainable development in the North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. In the methodological aspect, the study adopted a survey research design, utilizing a questionnaire to gather data from 800 respondents, including teachers and parents, in the North Central Geo-Political zone [16]. The study utilized mean

and standard deviation scores to answer research questions and an independent t-test statistic to test hypotheses at a 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Ogunode, Chinwuba, and Ayoko conducted a study on out-of-school children in Nigeria: causes, social implications and way forward. This study examined the concept of out-of-school children in Nigeria, the factors responsible for out-of-school children, the social implications of out-of-school children and suggested a way forward. Secondary data were used in the study, and the study depended largely on the desk review technique to source data from existing works [17]. The study identified causes of out-of-school children in Nigeria to include: poor funding of education, corruption, poor implementation of the Child Rights Act, insecurity problems, lack of political will to address the problems, high rate of poverty, and high fertility rate.

Another study was conducted by Ndanusa, Abayomi and Harada in their work examining the fragments and causes of increasing out-of-school children in Nigeria examined the causes of rising out-of-school children in Nigeria, where approximately 16 million children are out of school, accounting for about one out of five globally. The study adopts a qualitative approach, relying largely on secondary data to examine the fragments and causes of increasing out-of-school children in Nigeria. The study identifies insecurity, weak institutional and policy structures, norms and traditions, poverty, and exclusion of children with disabilities as major factors contributing to the growing number of out-of-school children in Nigeria [18].

Diana, Azani and Mahmud conducted a study on the concept and context of Islamic education learning in the digital era: relevance and integrative studies. This research examines the relevance of Islamic education in the digital era. In this study, a literature review and library research are employed along with qualitative research techniques. In-depth information and data are collected through various sources, including books, notes, journals, other references, and relevant findings from previous studies [19]. The empirical material or data used in this research is collected from books, journals, and research papers.

In a study in North North-Western state of Sokoto, Musa, Bello, and Danjuma determined school dropout as discontinuities of educational programs by a child or student. Education is the most important instrument for national development. Every nation, irrespective of its economic growth, whether developed, developing, or underdeveloped, engineers its educational programs towards the provision of mass literacy for the production of quality manpower for human resources and economic growth for national development. This research is a descriptive correlational type. The study was limited to school dropouts within the Sokoto metropolis. A total of 300 participants were selected through random sampling techniques [20].

METHODOLOGY

A methodological survey was utilized in the conduct of this research. Basically, there are a variety of ways to collect data for survey-based research, the most popular of which are interviews and questionnaires. However, the primary data used for research is obtained through the desk review methods. Finding and gathering reference materials that are relevant to this research is the first of three processes the researchers adopted when putting this piece together. Secondly, the researchers utilize several literatures, analyze and elaborate on such to fully understand the intersections of this work. Thirdly, the researchers conclude the research by highlighting the outcome of the research for further study.

Table 1. Research Methodology Overview

Stage	Description	Purpose / Outcome
Data Collection through Desk Review	Researchers identify, locate, and gather reference materials relevant to the topic using desk-based research methods.	To obtain primary data sourced from existing literature and documented materials.
Literature Analysis and Interpretation	Researchers review, analyze, and elaborate on various academic works to understand the intersections and core issues related to the study.	To produce a comprehensive understanding of the concepts, debates, and themes supporting the research.
Synthesis and Conclusion	Researchers integrate insights from the reviewed literature and highlight the main findings of the study.	To present conclusive remarks and provide directions for future research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Education

Education is the action or process of imparting knowledge, skills to someone, especially in a school, college, or university. Education refers to the knowledge, skills, and understanding that pupils/students get from attending a school, college or university. Education is a field of study that deals with the methodology and problems of teaching and learning [21]. Education is considered to be the aggregation of all the processes by which a person develops capabilities, skills, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of practical values in the society he or she lives in. It is called the social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and controlled environment, so that they may obtain social competence and optimum individual development [22].

Education is an essential process in human development. It is different from schooling. Schooling is just one of how education is provided, whereas education deals with the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties are trained, and different skills are developed. Education is also defined as the act or process of educating or applying discipline to the mind, or a process of character training. It is a dynamic instrument of change. Education is expected to affect or condition the social behaviour of the person being educated. Education is a life-long process which is always used to imply a positive state of mind. Education, according to Haladu, is considered an ongoing method of developing intellectual capacities, skills, and attitudes, all of which shape our diverse perspectives and dispositions to action in life [23].

Olaoti stated that education is an important factor in the development of any society. The level of development of any nation is usually determined by its level of education. At the same time, the nature of education available to any community will depict what the affected community would look like. It is this context that makes it paramount for Muslims to look inwardly into the situation we find ourselves today politically, socially, economically, and spiritually. Without mixing words, everybody will testify that the nature of education bequeathed to us by our former colonial masters is alien to our culture and has failed woefully to meet our aspirations when one considers the evils that have plagued our society. Education plays a crucial role in the overall development of individuals and societies. It helps individuals to develop their critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and communication skills, which are necessary for personal and professional growth. Education also contributes to the social, economic, and cultural development of societies by producing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, promoting scientific and technological advancement and preserving cultural heritage [24].

Islamic Education

Education in Islam is a holistic and deeply spiritual pursuit that aims to develop the awareness and understanding of an individual, shaping their beliefs, actions, and decisions based on the ethical values of the faith. The objective of this endeavour is not alone to acquire academic knowledge, but also to mould the fundamental nature and behaviour of an individual so that they may reflect Islamic ideals and serve as representatives of Allah in the world, referred to as *khalifatullah fi al-ard* [25].

Many educators indeed, believe that the term “education” is not subject to a specific meaning due to the complexity of the educational process on the one hand and its impact on customs, traditions, values, religions, norms and goals on the other hand. Hafizuzuddin defines it as: preparing the Muslim completely in all respects in the stages of his growth in this world, and the hereafter. In the light of the principles, values and methods of education, Yaacob defines it as "an educational system in its comprehensive sense". It aims at treating the whole human being in a comprehensive way, leaving nothing out of it, and not neglecting anything in its body, mind, spirit, material and moral life and all his activities [26]. It is indeed a purposeful and intended process in terms of its objectives. In summary, the meaning of Islamic education can be determined based on a comprehensive educational system that cares about preparing the righteous person in an integrated manner in secular and religious terms, in the light of the main sources of Islamic laws. The term education could really mean the development and purification of the human soul in general. The Most High said:

Just as We sent among you a Messenger from among you, he recites Our verses to you and purifies you [27].

It is also mentioned in some verses, including:

He is the one who sent among the illiterates a Messenger from among you who will teach you... [28].

The Prophet (S.A.W) said,

The best of you is the one who learns the Qur'an and teaches it.

The two ultimate goals are to provide individuals with the essential abilities and understanding to lead a purposeful life that encompasses both the temporary earthly realm and the eternal afterlife that follows death. Often, three Islamic scholars explicate the notion of education from an Islamic viewpoint, emphasizing three distinct elements, each illustrated by specific concepts. *Tarbiyyah* emphasizes the comprehensive advancement of an individual, embracing their physical and intellectual maturation. However, *Tadib* focuses on developing individuals who have a profound understanding of faith and adhere to the moral ideals and ethical norms supported by Islam. *Talim*, on the other hand, is based on the ideas of transmitting and acquiring knowledge through instruction. These elements synergistically merge to create a comprehensive approach to education that embraces the spiritual and ethical ideals of Islam [29].

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) stressed the importance of learning knowledge for all Muslims, irrespective of gender. The Prophet (S.A.W) emphasized the need to pursue information, even if it entails journeying to far-off places, noting, "Obtain knowledge even if it necessitates travelling to China". The Islamic educational concept advocates for the cultivation of "righteous cognition and behaviour," intending to foster individuals' awareness of their purpose in being, self-understanding, and recognition of Allah. The teaching emphasizes that the ultimate objective of life is to achieve Allah's satisfaction, going beyond simple acts of worship to include recognizing the rights of all living beings and the inanimate components required for constructing a fair and exemplary society [30].

It is possible to develop people who are passionately committed to upholding the tenets of their faith and who possess a balanced intellectual and spiritual makeup by considering all facets of teaching and learning activities that embody these notions. Islamic education thus

centers on teaching Islam and its religious way of life, with the Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) providing the sources of knowledge for human development.

Indeed, the concept of Islamic Education combines the tenets of learning, teaching, and nurturing into a coherent system. In fact, the Islamic concept of Tarbiyya (good upbringing) includes the importance of morality and the separation of right from wrong. It emphasizes the importance of observing Islamic laws and principles. Islamic education basically aims at developing human potential for a better life. It also helps in realizing the values of Islam. Islamic schools have been around for a long time, and many families have benefited from them. It could also be defined as something that got its roots from the Islamic heritage in terms of synonyms and meanings. Sudan referred to it by looking at the word education in the idiomatic sense as one of the modern words that have appeared in recent years and are linked to the movement of educational renewal in the Arab countries in the second quarter of the twentieth century, and therefore, we do not find it used in ancient Arabic sources. As for its synonyms and terms that were used in the olden dates to refer to, or denote the concept Education, include: 1. Upbringing. 2. Reform. 3. Discipline. 4. Politeness. 5. Purification. 6. Education. 7. Policy. 8. Advice 9. Guidance. 10. Ethics. Terms like discipline and refinement are related to education, especially to Islamic Education, as politeness or discipline is a common term mentioned in some hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). Refinement, on the other hand, relates to purification and adjustment of the soul, relating to virtues of deeds and sayings. And conversely, discipline is closely related to education, as it derives its meaning from the designation of knowledge and etiquette [31].

Islamic education is based on the integration of knowledge, the idea of Tawhid, which emphasizes Allah's unity, and the example of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). Islamic education seeks to prepare students for a balanced life in this world and the next by teaching knowledge while fostering moral and ethical ideals that govern daily life. This comprehensive method integrates spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects, taking cues from the Prophetic paradigm to implement Islamic teachings in real-world contexts. Tawhid upholds the interdependence of all knowledge, encouraging a more profound comprehension of Allah's creation and a sense of obligation to the global community. Islamic education places a strong emphasis on morality, critical thinking, and community spirit, ensuring that people acquire empathy and justice in addition to their knowledge foundation.

The goal of Islamic education is to develop individuals who have a thorough awareness of all aspects of life, including social, political, and economic issues. The goal is to develop responsible persons who understand their rights, respect legal norms, and have strong emotional and mental fortitude. Throughout Islamic history, Muslim scholars have exhibited a commitment to exploring the physical cosmos and making significant contributions to scientific progress [32]. Moreover, Islamic education aims to foster beneficial transformations in society by discarding antiquated beliefs and adapting to changing conditions, given that Islam is a progressive faith.

Concept of Out-of-School Children

According to the United Nations, out-of-school children refer to children who are yet to be enrolled in any formal education, excluding pre-primary education. The age range for out-of-school children is 6-11 years. Out-of-school children are school-age children who are supposed to be in schools but are not in schools due to parental and governmental failures to provide accessible, quality education for them. Out-of-school children are young children in the age group of 1 to 12 that are roaming the streets without access to a functional educational system [33]. Out-of-school children are the children whom the government and the parents have failed to provide quality basic education for. The term "out-of-school children" is a non-attendance of the school of school-age children for some established factors.

Dejnozka and Kapel see out of school to signify individuals who leave an activity, a course, a programme or a school before the fulfillment of its requirements. Out of school, according

to Moore, majorly signifies an elementary or secondary school member who has been a member during the normal school year and who withdraws or is suspended from membership programme, or a school, before the fulfillment of its requirement. Khan and Ali viewed out-of-school children as a situation where students or pupils drop out of school before finishing a school year or a level of studies [34]. Olatoun sees out-of-school children as dropouts or pupils who leave school before the end of the final year of the educational stage or cycle in which he/she enrolled. In this regard, a UNESCO report on the state of the world's children points out that about one in a million children in the developing world are denied their right to education through dropping out. Nevertheless, the same UNESCO out of recent studies and environmental peculiarities have come up to adduce that out of schoolchildren as dropouts and are children who enroll in school but fail to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle. At the primary level, this means that the dropout fails to reach the final grade, usually grade V or VI. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, children, adolescents, and youths are categorized as out-of-school if they are not enrolled or attending school during a given academic year. With all these apt definitions and generalizations, the bottom line is that any child denied education at any given academic session ultimately is out of school, which may permanently lead to dropout. An asocial phenomenon that is grievous and detrimental [35].

The attempt to define the phrase school dropout raises the obstacles raised by the diversity of perspectives and the ambiguity of theories. The formal definitions that relate the phenomenon to obtaining a diploma, enrolling in an educational system, are in contrast with the functional definitions that refer to the competences that allow individuals to work or to function in a specific environment. The American studies Ressa & Andrews associate the notion of dropout with the circumstances in which youngsters leave school without earning a high school diploma.

Also, school abandonment represents “the ultimate evasion behaviour, which consists in ending school attendance, leaving the education system, regardless of the level attained, before obtaining a full professional qualification or training, or before completing the level of initial education”. Out-of-school children simply means children who never attend school at the school age level, either formal or non-formal schools. Out-of-school children refer to children who do not have access to a school in their community for one reason or the other. Out-of-school children refer to children who do not enroll despite the availability of a school in their community. Out-of-school children (OOSC) refer to children who are not enrolled in formal education or are not attending school regularly. Out-of-School Children can also be referred to as children of official school age who are not enrolled in school or are not attending school regularly.

On the other hand, Out-of-school children are those of primary school age who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary school. This includes children who have never attended school, those who dropped out, and those who are attending pre-primary education instead of primary school. The term "out-of-school children" signifies a failure by parents and the government to provide basic education [36]. This explanation focuses on children within the officially recognized primary school age group.

Factors or Causes of Out-of-School Children in Nigeria

There are many factors responsible for out-of-school children in Nigeria. Some of the factors include: poor funding of education, corruption, poor implementation of the Child Rights law, insecurity problems, Lack of political will to address the problems, high rate of poverty, and high fertility rate. UNICEF identified the following as causes of out-of-school children: Household Income and Financial Circumstances. Household income is a major factor in determining access to education as schooling incurs a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Upfront costs include school fees, while hidden costs include such things as uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school [37]. Croft, cited in UNICEF, linked household income to a number of factors, such as when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they

drop out. Several studies have shown a close link between poverty and out-of-school and/or dropping out of school. Statistical data as well as empirical research point out that children from better-off households are more likely to go to school and/or remain in school, whereas those from poor families are more likely never to attend or drop out of school.

School Fees and Indirect Costs of Schooling

In this context, the focus is on schooling costs such as fees and other indirect costs, which impact household decisions around access to education. Studies have shown that direct and indirect schooling costs are major factors in whether children should enroll and attend school. In the same vein, some research has indicated that the cost of schooling, including tuition fees, is a major reason for dropping out. It is a fact that the inability to pay tuition fees more often than not leads to under-enrolment and drop out, and by extension limits attendance to school.

Income Shocks

How households deal with income shocks is equally a major factor in either maintaining schooling access or having access to education. Studies have shown that vulnerable households can withdraw children from school or prevent children from enrolling in a school as part of their coping strategy to deal with shocks to income, often to work, hawk or save on costs.

Child Labour

It has been observed that the most prevalent types of child labour appear to be domestic and household-related duties for girls and agricultural labour for boys. Observations have shown that this sort of labour does not necessarily, in most cases, impede educational access. However, studies indicate that forms of child labour create pressure on a child's time. For instance, children who combine work with school, depending on the nature and volume of work, can have erratic school attendance, regular school absences.

Bereavement and Orphanhood

Bereavement amongst family members and in particular parents often makes children more vulnerable to non-enrolment, dropout, late enrolment and slow progress. Orphanhood often complicates the financial situations of poor households and increases the demand for child labour, thereby necessitating either non-enrolment or dropout. Some countries have designed targeted support to assist orphans in accessing education. In a nutshell, studies have identified child labour, poverty, lack of sponsorship and adverse cultural challenges as some of the factors militating against access to child education in Nigeria.

Impact of Islamic Education towards Addressing the Problems of Out-of-School Children

Islamic education plays a compensatory role: where formal systems fail to reach children (cost, distance, cultural mismatch), Islamic institutions fill the gap. They are particularly effective at bringing marginalized children into supervised learning environments, imparting values, and offering social protection [38]. To translate access into long-term human development outcomes, however, bridges are needed: recognition frameworks, quality improvements, teacher training, and alignment with national curricula. Out-of-school children are a pressing issue in the world today, where millions of children are deprived of their right to education. Islamic education has become an integral part of the schooling system in the majority of Muslim nations, and it is an alternative solution to addressing out-of-school children.

The Problems of Out-of-School Children

Out-of-school children face numerous challenges, including poverty, school exclusion, cultural restrictions, and conflict. These challenges cross-cut, and it becomes difficult for the children to get a quality education. In the majority of Muslim societies, these challenges are further compounded by scarce resources, poor infrastructure, and socio-cultural restrictions against educating girls. Several challenges need to be overcome despite the benefits provided by Islamic education. One of the main challenges is that there are not enough available resources and money for Islamic schools and programs. This affects the quality of education and the ability to offer diversity in programs. Another challenge is integrating Islamic education into formal education. But this can also be a chance for integrating Islamic education into formal education, which can provide a wide range of learning for students.

The Role of Islamic Education

Islamic education has been a cornerstone of Muslim society for decades, empowering children with good Islamic values, knowledge, and skills. Islamic schools and institutions impart a unique means of education where the development of the whole human being - spiritual, intellectual, and moral - is their sole concern. In the provision of a caring atmosphere that combines the acquisition of learning with Islamic teachings, Islamic education can reverse the issues of out-of-school children.

Benefits of Islamic Education

Islamic education has several benefits that can be used to mitigate the issue of out-of-school children. Firstly, Islamic schools and programs are able to provide learning opportunities for children who would otherwise be unable to access formal schools. This is particularly the case in poverty-stricken or rural areas where access to formal education may be questionable. Second, Islamic education can be tailored to meet the religious and cultural needs of Muslim children and render education more potent and effective. To this end, Islamic education emphasizes community and civic responsibility, imparting values such as empathy, compassion, and respect for others.

Successful Models and Initiatives

There are also numerous successful models and programs which have shown the power of Islamic education in overcoming out-of-school children's problems. It has been observed, for example, that some Islamic schools have successfully integrated Islamic values with stringent scholastic standards to provide students with a good education. In addition, extracurricular activities such as after-school, weekend schools, and Qur'anic learning can augment other aspects of the conventional education outside the school day. Not only that, accelerated school programmes that combine Islamic education with formal education can also help out-of-school children move forward in their education.

Table 2. Summary of Key Concepts and Findings

Theme	Core Ideas (Very Concise Summary)
Concept of Education	Education develops knowledge, skills, attitudes, and social competence; lifelong, holistic, and transformative; essential for national development.
Islamic Education	Holistic system integrating tarbiyyah, ta'dib, and ta'lim; focuses on moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social development; rooted in Qur'an and Sunnah; aims to form righteous individuals for this world and the hereafter.
Concept of Out-of-School Children	Children of school age who are not enrolled, dropped out, or do not attend regularly; caused by poverty, fees, labour, bereavement, cultural barriers, and weak educational systems.
Causes of Out-of-School Children (Nigeria)	Poverty, high cost of schooling, income shocks, child labour, orphanhood, lack of political will, corruption, insecurity, and weak child rights enforcement.

Role of Islamic Education	Provides alternative access to learning, especially in poor/rural areas; offers values-based education, community support, and moral formation.
Benefits of Islamic Education	Low-cost, culturally relevant, flexible schedules; supports spiritual growth; provides safe learning spaces; reduces dropout risk.
Successful Models	Integrated schools (Islamic + national curriculum), Qur'anic circles, weekend/madrasa programs, accelerated learning pathways.
Impacts on Out-of-School Children	Increases enrollment, improves religious and basic literacy, strengthens identity and resilience, supports learning continuity during crises.

Impacts of Islamic Education on Out-of-School Children

The impact of Islamic education on out-of-school children is significant. Through providing an opportunity for learning and satisfying the religious and cultural aspirations of Muslim children, Islamic education has the potential to increase access to education and decrease the number of out-of-school children. Islamic education can also provide an environment that is conducive to the learning of one's religion alongside academic excellence.

It has been observed that Islamic education has played a significant role in increasing access to education for children who may not have had access to traditional schools. The data shows that a substantial number of out-of-school children have been enrolled in Islamic schools and programs, providing them with a second chance at education.

Not only that, but it has also been observed that Islamic education has contributed to improved learning outcomes for out-of-school children. The holistic approach of Islamic education, which emphasizes spiritual, intellectual, and moral development, has helped children to develop a strong foundation in Islamic values and knowledge. It also highlights the importance of Islamic education in addressing the cultural and spiritual needs of Muslim children. The data shows that Islamic education has provided a supportive environment where children can learn about their faith while achieving academic excellence.

According to Muhammad Yahaya, Islamic education often provides lower-cost and geographically closer options, increasing access for children whose families cannot afford formal schools or who live far from government schools. In addition, Qur'anic circles and community madrasahs usually serve children who would otherwise be out of school, especially in rural and marginalized urban neighbourhoods [39].

Ustaz Hamza Isma'il avers that on the issue of flexibility in schedule, i.e. evenings/weekends, seasonal admission, and strong community accountability tend to improve retention for marginalized children. And that, however, some Islamic schools permit irregular attendance when families need to work, children, which can compromise continuous learning [40].

Islamic education provides strong outcomes in religious literacy, which encompasses Qur'an recitation and memorization, and other aspects of Islamic religious knowledge. Mallam Bello Ahmad states that there are mixed outcomes in integrated Islamic schools that teach national curriculum subjects and show better basic literacy and numeracy. It has been observed that Islamic schools frequently provide social networks, mentorship, and moral instruction that contribute to children's resilience, identity formation, and reduced risk behaviours. During crises (floods, displacement), mosques and madrasahs often act as community hubs for relief, helping maintain children's learning continuity [41].

CONCLUSION

Islamic education is a powerful, contextually legitimate vehicle for reaching many out-of-school children. Its strengths lie in accessibility, community trust, and social protection. To maximize its impact on reducing out-of-school children and improving life outcomes, policymakers should pursue pragmatic integration: recognize and validate Islamic providers, raise quality for secular learning, professionalize teaching, and ensure gender equity. When aligned with national learning goals and supported through targeted policies, Islamic education

can be a durable partner in achieving inclusive basic education. Overall, Islamic education has the potential to positively address out-of-school children's issues. Through the provision of access to education, catering to cultural and religious demands, and emphasizing overall development, Islamic education has the potential to enhance access to education and reduce the number of out-of-school children. This is accomplished by addressing challenges facing Islamic education, including a lack of resources and integration with regular schooling. With cooperation, we can ensure Islamic education becomes the foundation for quality education for all children, regardless of whether they are Muslim or not.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all Persons who have assisted in the course of writing this research, including the anonymous reviewers, for providing valuable input on this paper.

Author Contribution

Umar Alhaji Umar: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Article administration. Mohammed Alhaji Bukar: Literature review, Methodology, Investigation, Editing, and Article administration.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- [1] M.-N. N. Mohammed, K. A. Quadri, and H. Yoshifumi, "Examining the fragments and causes of increasing out-of-school children in Nigeria," *J. African Stud. Dev.*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 66–73, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5897/JASD2021.0628>.
- [2] M.-N. N. Mohammed, K. A. Quadri, and H. Yoshifumi, "Examining the fragments and causes of increasing out-of-school children in Nigeria," *J. African Stud. Dev.*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 66–73, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5897/jasd2021.0628>.
- [3] A. Wan Nailah, Abdullah Syahiza, H. Hasnisah, and A. Rahayati, Ahmad Muhammad, "Influence of Psychological Well-Being and School Factors on Delinquency, During the Covid-19 Period Among Secondary School Students in Selected Schools in Nakuru County , Kenya," *Int. J. Res. Innov. Soc. Sci.*, vol. VII, no. 2454, pp. 1175–1189, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRIS>.
- [4] K. Oyekan and A. Ayorinde, "The problem of out-of-school children in Nigeria," *Right Insight*. pp. 1–9, 2023, https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-RI_2023/058.
- [5] C. N. Okoh, E. John A., A. Doma, and M. O. Akinsola, "Out of School Children: Enhancing Factors and Consequences for Sustainable Development in North Central Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria," *Am. J. Educ. Res.*, vol. 8, no. 10, pp. 804–811, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.12691/education-8-10-10>.
- [6] A. Diana, M. Z. Azani, and M. M., "the Concept and Context of Islamic Education Learning in the Digital Era: Relevance and Integrative Studies," *Profetika J. Stud. Islam*, vol. 25, no. 01, pp. 33–44, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v25i01.4239>.
- [7] R. Saleh and B. M. R. Bustam, "Islamic Education As a Means of Evolving Human Nature," *Ta dib J. Pendidik. Islam*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 17–24, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.29313/tjpi.v12i1.10196>.
- [8] M. Fandy, "Enriched Islam: The Muslim Crisis of Education," in *Survival* 49.2, Routledge, 2023, pp. 77–97. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003420224-4>.
- [9] M. Hafizuddin and A. Alim, "Moral Education for Youth from the Book 'At Tarbiyatul Akhlakiyyah Wa Aathariha Fi Binaai Mustaqbali Syabab,'" in *al-tarbiyatul akhlakiyyah wa anthariba fi binaai mustaqbal syabal. Multidisciplinary International Conference Indonesia*, 2023, pp. 819–824. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-022-0_91.
- [10] M. Chalis and S. Syahril, "Education in the Perspective of Hadits (Analysis of Education in the Dimensions of the Hadith)," in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Social Science, Humanities, Education and Society Development, ICONS 2020*, Tegal, Indonesia, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.30-11-2020.2303686>.
- [11] Muhammad Abdur Rozaq *et al.*, "Development Trends of Multicultural Education for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bibliometric Analysis of the Scopus Database (2010-2024)," *Profetika J. Stud.*

- Islam*, vol. 25, no. 02, pp. 517–532, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v25i02.7326>.
- [12] T. Ressa and A. Andrews, “High School Dropout Dilemma in America and the Importance of Reformation of Education Systems To Empower All Students,” *Int. J. Mod. Educ. Stud.*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 423–447, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.51383/ijonmes.2022.234>.
- [13] A. M. Nita, G. Motoi, and C. Ilie Goga, “School dropout determinants in rural communities: The effect of poverty and family characteristics,” *Rev. Cercet. si Interv. Soc.*, vol. 74, pp. 19–32, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.33788/RCIS.74.2>.
- [14] Elihami and H. Pajarianto, “Sustainable development goals through Islamic education: a literature review,” *J. Educ. Learn.*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 2042–2053, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v19i4.21308>.
- [15] D. Angraini, U. Sulistiyo, E. Haryanto, and A. Pratama, “Project-Based or Problem-Based Learning? Unveiling Islamic University Students’ Preferences and Experiences in Writing Classes,” *Stud. English Lang. Educ.*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 1427–1443, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v12i3.40831>.
- [16] T. Supriyadi *et al.*, “Enhancing Religious Literacy for the Promotion of Tolerance: A Design-Based Approach to Developing an Islamic Education Model in Higher Education,” *Int. Res. J. Multidiscip. Scope*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 310–324, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.47857/irjms.2025.v06i03.05084>.
- [17] S. Rahmi, F. Ismail, M. Umar, and N. S. Jannana, “Humanistic Leadership of School Principals in Promoting Effective Collaboration through Problem-Solving in Madrasah Aliyah,” *Nazhruna J. Pendidik. Islam*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 336–348, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v8i2.202>.
- [18] A. Amirudin, I. A. Muzaki, and S. Nurhayati, “Problem-Based Learning as a Pedagogical Innovation for Transforming Higher Education Students’ Islamic Religious Comprehension,” *Educ. Process Int. J.*, vol. 18, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.18.412>.
- [19] Z. Tashmatov, S. L. Uulu, M. Mamazhusupova, and E. Ergeshov, “Pedagogical Technologies and Trends in the Development of Religious Education in Higher Education Institutions: Gender Aspects and Islamic Educational Tradition,” *Pharos J. Theol.*, vol. 106, no. 3, pp. 1–14, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.3032>.
- [20] R. Kurniawan, S. Bulan, N. Kholis, S. Suryani, and K. Kusaeri, “Cognitive religious alignment in expressive writing: Insights from Islamic schools,” *Read. Writ. (South Africa)*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.528>.
- [21] Suwadi, E. Sulistyowati, Hazrullah, and H. F. Adira, “Development of TPACK Instrument to Measure Teacher Knowledge in Islamic Education for In-Service Teacher Professional Training,” *Educ. Process Int. J.*, vol. 16, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.16.193>.
- [22] A. H. S. Abd, “The Impact of Islamic Educational Foundations on the Success of the Educational Process,” *J. Ecohumanism*, vol. 3, no. 8, pp. 2022–2039, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i8.4883>.
- [23] B. Beisenbayev, A. Almukhametov, and R. Mukhametshin, “The Dynamics of Islam in Kazakhstan from an Educational Perspective,” *Religions*, vol. 15, no. 10, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15101243>.
- [24] R. Sagala and I. Kandedes, “The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Addressing the Negative Impact of TikTok on Teenagers in Lampung, Indonesia,” *Millah J. Relig. Stud.*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 947–990, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol23.iss2.art14>.
- [25] D. Rusmana, D. N. Rosyidin, A. Saefullah, D. Burhanuddin, and G. Bin Zainuddin, “Strengthening Moral Education Values: Sociological Analysis of the Mbah Sholeh Haolan at Pesantren Benda Kerep, Cirebon,” *Ulumuna*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 424–452, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i1.1050>.
- [26] S. Hadi, S. Affani, and M. A. Al-Akiti, “The Challenge of Integrating Science and Religion in Indonesia and Malaysia,” *Teosof. J. Tasawuf dan Pemikir. Islam*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 96–122, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2024.14.1.96-122>.
- [27] R. Tariq, M. T. Khan, A. Afaq, S. Tariq, Y. Tariq, and S. S. Khan, “Malocclusion: Prevalence and Determinants among Adolescents of Karachi, Pakistan,” *Eur. J. Dent.*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 143–153, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0043-1761461>.
- [28] Y. Ichsan, S. Syamsudin, Z. Nuryana, and Sukiman, “Realizing Islamic Education Based on Religious Moderation with the Wasathiyah Islamic Paradigm from the Perspective of the Qur’an,” *J. Pendidik. Agama Islam*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 247–263, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v21i1.9944>.
- [29] Mansur, M. Ikhsan, A. L. Diab, S. Nurfaidah, and S. Darlis, “The Return of Doi Menre’ Ba’da Duhul in Bugis Marriage Law, South Konawe: Islamic Education and Sociology of Islamic Law Perspective,” *El-Usrah*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 480–500, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v7i2.25574>.
- [30] Muzakkir, R. A. A. Rauf, and H. Zulnaidi, “Development and validation of the Quran – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (Q-STEAM) module,” *STEM Educ.*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 346–363, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.3934/steme.2024020>.
-

- [31] B. Beisenbayev and A. Almukhametov, “The Current State and Ways of Improving Islamic Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan,” *Pharos J. Theol.*, vol. 105, no. 3, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.315>.
- [32] Sabarudin, M. N. Mubin, M. Kim, and A. Fauziah, “Cluster-Mentoring for Sustainable Competency: A Case Study of PTK Training for Islamic Education Teachers in Junior High Schools,” *J. Pendidik. Agama Islam*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 51–65, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i1.6720>.
- [33] A. Bakar, Fitriani, and A. Amin, “Management of Educator and Education Staff in The Islamic Education Management Study Program Faculty of Tarbiyah IAIN Bone,” *Munaddhomah*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 620–633, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v4i3.496>.
- [34] Z. Abidin, “Meta-analysis of postgraduate student thesis for enhancing better research quality management in Islamic higher education,” *Perspekt. Nauk. i Obraz.*, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 746–759, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.32744/pse.2023.3.45>.
- [35] A. Khanif, “Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategy for Alpha Generation: A Case Study at Darul Qur’an School Elementary School Semarang City,” *Ascarya J. Islam. Sci. Cult. Soc. Stud.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 36–45, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.53754/iscs.v3i1.461>.
- [36] S. A. Nugraheni *et al.*, “Implementation of Premarital Counselling Description in Grobogan District, Central Java, Indonesia,” *Amerta Nutr.*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 70–78, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.20473/amnt.v7i1.2023.70-78>.
- [37] Busahdiar, U. Karimah, and S. Tamin, “Total Quality Management (TQM) and Basic Education: Its Application to Islamic Education in Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools,” *J. Pendidik. Agama Islam*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 215–232, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i2.8015>.
- [38] M. Smagulov, T. Zhalmukhan, K. Kurmanbayev, and R. Mukhitdinov, “Some Trends in Islamic Education Forming Spiritual and Cultural Values of the Youth under the Influence of COVID-19 (the Experience of Madrasah Colleges in the Republic of Kazakhstan),” *Eur. J. Contemp. Educ.*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 1410–1421, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.13187/ejced.2023.4.1410>.
- [39] Z. A. B. Siregar, “Principal leadership styles in improving the quality of education in Lhokseumawe Aceh, Indonesia,” *Hum. Resour. Manag. Serv.*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.18282/hrms.v5i1.3340>.
- [40] D. Wanto, J. A. Jamin, and R. Ali, “Asserting Religiosity in Indonesian Muslim Urban Communities through Islamic Education,” *J. Islam. Thought Civiliz.*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 116–135, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.122.09>.
- [41] A. R. Assegaf, H. S. Zainiyah, and M. Fahmi, “Curriculum Innovation for the Internationalization of Islamic Education Study Program at Higher Education Institutions in Surabaya, Indonesia,” *Millah J. Relig. Stud.*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 671–706, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol21.iss3.art3>.