



Assessing the attitude of Mallams towards integration of *Almajiris* into formal education system in Katsina State, Nigeria

Olutola A.T.^{1*}, Olatoye R.A.¹ and Adamu G.K.²

¹Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria.

²Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the attitude of Mallams (Arabic teachers of out-of-school children) towards integration of Almajiris (Out-of-school children in non-formal Arabic schools) into formal education system in Katsina State, Nigeria. In this study, the researchers adopted descriptive survey research design. Sixty-five (65) Mallams were purposively selected from twelve (12) Almajiris schools in Katsina State. A researcher-designed questionnaires titled: "Attitude of Mallams towards Almajiris Education Questionnaire (AMTAEQ)" and "Motivational Strategies for Integration of Almajiris into Formal Education System (MSIAFES)" with test-retest reliability coefficients of 0.91 and 0.89 respectively were used to collect data for the study. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze research questions 1 to 3 while Chi-square statistical tool was used to analyze research questions 4 and 5 in the study. Findings revealed that: The Mallam-Almajiris ratio is approximately 1: 26 and, many Mallams (75.6%), are aware that the Federal Government has built formal Almajiris schools in Northern Nigeria. Most Mallams (81.5%) indicated that Almajiris learn other skills apart from Arabic studies like Trading, Carpentry and Tailoring. Moreover, there is significant influence in the attitude of Mallams (Almajiris teachers), motivational strategies and successful integration of Almajiris into the formal education system in Katsina State. Based on these findings, it is recommended that government should provide adequate motivational strategies especially free education for successful integration of the Almajiris into the formal education system in Katsina State. In addition, Orientation programmes that will change the attitude of Mallams should be given so as to encourage Almajiris to go to formal schools.

KEYWORDS: *Attitude, Integration, Almajiris, Formal education system, Mallams, Motivational Strategies*

1. INTRODUCTION

All children, no matter where they live or their circumstances, have the right to quality education. Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world and one in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria (United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF 2019; *Ishaku & Oraka 2019*). In comparison to other countries within and outside Africa, Nigeria rates the highest. Nigeria has 8.7 million out-of-school children of primary school age, followed by Pakistan (5.6 million), India (2.9 million), Sudan (2.7 million), Ethiopia (2.1 million) and Indonesia (2.0 million). These six countries (including Nigeria) are home to more than one-third of all out-of-school children in the world, according to UIS data. Now, Nigeria has 13.2 million out-of-school children, and, 45 percent of out-of-school children in West Africa which is worrisome (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2018; *Adedigba 2018*).

According to the United Nations, out-of-school children are defined as those kids 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 (UNESCO 2018). It is important to note that *Almajiris* (out-of-school children in non-formal Arabic schools) belonging to this category are mainly found in Northern part of Nigeria. Katsina state, which is the focus of this study is one of the states in Northern, Nigeria. *Almajiri* system refers to a traditional method of acquiring and memorizing the Glorious Quaran in

Hausa/Fulani land where children especially boys, at their tender ages are sent out to seek for Islamic knowledge. The *Almajiris* school system is a variant of private Arabic and Islamic schools which cater for the religious and moral development of Muslims. The Mallam's purpose is to teach the children the basics of Islam and how to write and recite the Arabic alphabets (Oladosu 2012). These days, a typical *Almajiri* can be spotted by his unsavory appearance - dressed in tattered clothes, disease afflicted, and armed with a plastic plate, he roams the streets begging for alms. Socially regarded as nuisance, the *Almajirai* are often chased away by decent people. They hang around restaurants, markets, shops, petrol stations, and houses, most times sleeping on disused pieces of cardboard or bare floors. The street urchins bemoan their fate as they watch other privileged children enjoy life with their parents (Olagunju, 2012; Loimeier 2012).

Moreover, the integration of *Almajiris* into formal education system is not negotiable. Integration involves teaching Qur'anic school learners (*Almajiris*) with formal education curriculum which does not affect their Arabic studies. Integration in the context of this study can be described as a means of diversifying the curriculum introduce secular subjects at the Qur'anic school level. (Yusha'u et al. 2013) noted that integration is to strengthen the ability of the learners to read, write and memorize the Qur'an in a conducive learning atmosphere and to introduce secular subjects thereby making the products

literate, numerate and to enable them acquire manipulative and survival skills in the modern formal system of education. Currently, Nigeria has a 9-3-4 system of formal education: compulsory basic schooling takes nine years, senior secondary schooling takes three years, and most courses in the university (except engineering, law, and medicine) run for four years. In addition to this, a non-formal system of education is operational among Muslims, and includes the Quranic, Islamiyyah, and Almajiri schools (Oladosu 2012). The integration of Universal Basic Education and qur'anic schools will perhaps help the Almajiris to have access to basic education, and as well equip them with skills necessary for self-employment upon graduation.

It is worth noting that essential school subjects like English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Nigerian Language(s) are excluded from the syllabus of Almajiri Arabic and Islamic Schools, The Almajiris system is lacking in many respects. Its characteristic weaknesses include the myopic scope of its aims and objectives since these are no more than the ability to read and write the Glorious Qur'an along with some knowledge of Tafsir, Hadith, Tawhid and other branches of Islamic Studies for students who continue their studies to the advance level. The shortcomings also include the narrow content of the Arabic and Islamic studies programme since the curriculum does not cater for the acquisition of science-oriented courses and modern entrepreneurial skills. In fact, the term Almajiri now interchanges easily with a beggar, as pupils of the system are often seen literally begging from one place

to the other and doing menial jobs (Oladosu 2012).

Formal Education which is classroom-based and normally anchored by trained teachers using well-equipped classrooms and good teaching environment are not available to many out-of-school children attending Islamic schools in the Northern part of Nigeria including Katsina State. The policy framework of the Federal Government of Nigeria on integration of Almajiris into formal education that focuses on rationalization of the existing traditional system of Islamic education with the view to addressing existing problems and challenges, consolidating achievements and expanding the opportunities for the growth and development of the system has not been embraced. Also, the Almajiri education models which seek to integrate effectively Islamic disciplines with conventional school subjects and instill values and morals in these out-of-school children have not been implemented. Despite the efforts of Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to integrate the Almajiris into the formal educational system, many parents have refused it. Almajiri education is a practice that a former Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan described as 'dangerous to national development'. It is a worrisome situation to see a large number of children of the ages 6-11 who are supposed to be in the school, roaming about the streets begging for food, clothes and money. This worrisome situation must be addressed because it has affected the overall rating of literacy level in Nigeria and has affected our dear country in different ways. Since, Nigeria has the

highest number of out-of-school children in the world, there is an urgent need for a study like this, especially in Katsina state to serve as a pilot study for other Northern states in Nigeria in order to eliminate or reduce the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Therefore, this study assessed the attitude of Mallams (Arabic teachers of out-of –school children) towards integration of *Almajiris* into formal education system in Katsina State, Nigeria. In addition, the motivational strategies that can lead to successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State were also investigated.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the attitude of Mallams (Arabic teachers of out-of –school children) towards integration of *Almajiris* into formal education system in Katsina State, Nigeria and also to find out the motivational strategies that can lead to successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State.

This is an important study, which needs urgent attention for Katsina State to develop in all sectors especially the educational sector.

Specifically, the study sought to find out the:

1. Vocational skills learnt by *Almajiris* apart from the learning of Islamic and Arabic studies.
2. Attitude of Mallams (*Almajiri* teachers) to the integration of *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State.

3. Motivational strategies that can lead to successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State.

1.2. Theoretical Framework for the Study

Incentive theory of motivation is relevant to this study. According to this theory, people are pulled toward behaviours that offer positive incentives and pushed away from behaviours associated with negative incentives (Bernstein 2011). Incentive theories proposed that behaviour is motivated by the "pull" of external goals, such as rewards, money, or recognition (Hockenbury & Hockenbury 2003). Incentive theory of motivation is relevant to this study because the integration of *Almajiris* into the formal school system should be accompanied with rewards and incentives that can attract them to embrace formal education.

1.3. Research Questions

The following questions were asked and answered in the study:

1. What is the ratio of Mallams to *Almajiris* in the Arabic schools?
2. Are Mallams (*Almajiri* teachers) aware that the Federal Government has built some *Almajiris* schools in Northern Nigeria?
3. Is there any vocational skill learnt by *Almajiris* apart from the learning of Islamic and Arabic studies?
4. Does the attitude of Mallams (*Almajiri* teachers) significantly influence the integration of *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State?

5. Do motivational strategies significantly influence successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted descriptive survey research design for the study. The population of the study consisted of all *Almajiris* Mallams in Nigeria, while the target population was made up of *Mallams* in Katsina State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. Firstly, all the Local Government Areas in Katsina State were divided into three, using the existing geopolitical zones (Katsina Zone, Daura Zone & Funtua Zone). Secondly, purposive sampling technique was used to select two (2) Local Government Areas from each zone, because the *Almajiris* education system is more pronounced in some Local Government Areas than in the others. Thus, Local Government Areas that are severely affected were chosen. Thus, sixty-five (65) *Mallams* (Daura Zone 24, Katsina Zone 18 & Futua Zone 23) from twelve (12) *Almajiris* schools (Arabic schools) purposively selected participated in the study. A researcher-designed questionnaire titled: “*Attitude of Mallams towards Almajiris Education Questionnaire (AMTAEQ)*” and “*Motivational Strategies for Integration of Almajiris into Formal Education System (MSIAFES)*” were used to collect data for the study.

Both AMTAEQ and MSIAFES were designed for the *Mallams* to collect relevant data for the study. AMTAEQ consists of two sections. Section A consists of personal information of the *Mallams*, such as name of LGA, Zone, gender, age and so on, while Section B contains Attitude of Mallams Towards Almajiris Education Questionnaire (AMTAEQ). AMTAEQ contains twelve (12) items and all items in AMTAEQ were answered using a 2-point Likert scale format (YES or NO). MSIAFES also contains eleven (11) items and all items in MSIAFES were answered using a 2-point Likert scale format (YES or NO). Two experts in educational measurement and evaluation ascertained the face and content validities of the instruments (AMTAEQ & MSIAFES) while test-retest reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Reliability coefficients of 0.91 and 0.89 were respectively obtained for the instruments. This shows that the instruments are reliable for the study. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze research questions 1 to 3, while Chi-square statistical tool was used to analyze research questions 4 and 5 in the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: What is the ratio of Mallams to *Almajiris* in the Arabic schools?

Table 1: Percentages Showing Numbers of Mallams and *Almajiris* in each *Almajiris* school selected for the study.

School	Number of <i>Almajiris</i>	Number of Mallams
School 1	83	4
School 2	125	6
School 3	162	4
School 4	275	4
School 5	165	6
School 6	50	5
School 7	32	4
School 8	240	9
School 9	60	5
School 10	55	5
School 11	319	8
School 12	150	5
Total	1716	65

The names of Arabic schools used were not written based on ethical reasons.

Table 1 reveals that, there are eighty-three (83) *Almajiris* and four (4) Mallams in school one; one hundred and twenty-five (125) *Almajiris* and six (6) Mallams; One hundred and sixty-two *Almajiris* (162) and six (4) Mallams; two hundred and seventy-five (275) *Almajiris* and four (4)Mallams; One hundred and sixty-five (165) *Almajiris* and six (6)Mallams; fifty (50) *Almajiris* and five (5)Mallams; *thirty-two* (32) *Almajiris* and four (4)Mallams; two hundred and forty (240) *Almajiris* and nine (9)Mallams; sixty (60) *Almajiris* and five

(5)Mallams; fifty-five (55) *Almajiris* and five (5)Mallams, three hundred and nineteen (319) *Almajiris* and eight (8)Mallams *and* one hundred and fifty (150) *Almajiris* and five (5) Mallams from school two to school twelve respectively. The number of Mallams in the sampled schools is 65 while the number of *Almajiris* is 1716. The Mallam-*Almajiri* ratio is approximately 1: 26

Research Question Two: Are Mallams (*Almajiri* teachers) aware that the Federal Government has built some *Almajiris* schools in Northern Nigeria?

Table 2: Percentages Showing *Mallams’ Responses on Almajiris* schools in Northern Nigeria built by Federal Government

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	75.6
No	16	24.6
Total	65	100.0

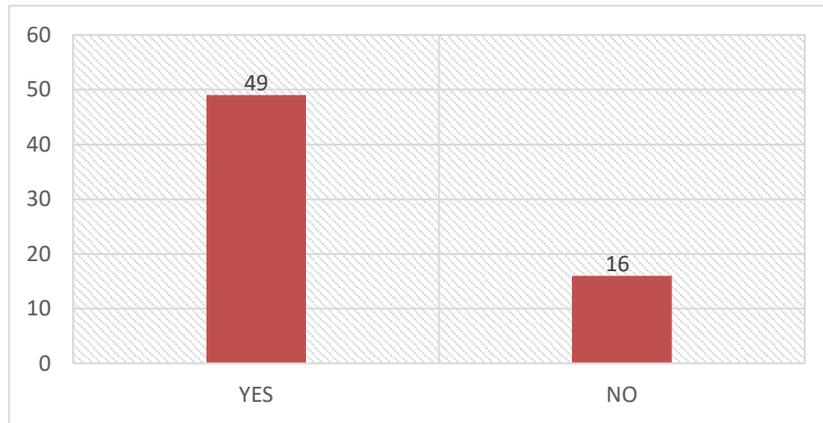


Figure 1: Bar chart showing the frequencies of Mallams' Responses on *Almajiris* schools built by Federal Government in Northern Nigeria.

Table 2 and figure 1 reveal that 49 (75.6%) of the Mallams are aware that the Federal Government has built some *Almajiris* schools in Northern Nigeria while 16 (24.6%) are not aware.

Research Question Three: Is there any vocational skill learnt by *Almajiris* apart from the learning of Islamic and Arabic studies?

Table 4: Percentages Showing Mallams' Responses to vocational skills learnt by *Almajiris* apart from the learning of Islamic and Arabic studies

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Trading	38	58.5
Carpentry	12	18.5
Tailoring	15	23.0
Total	65	100.0

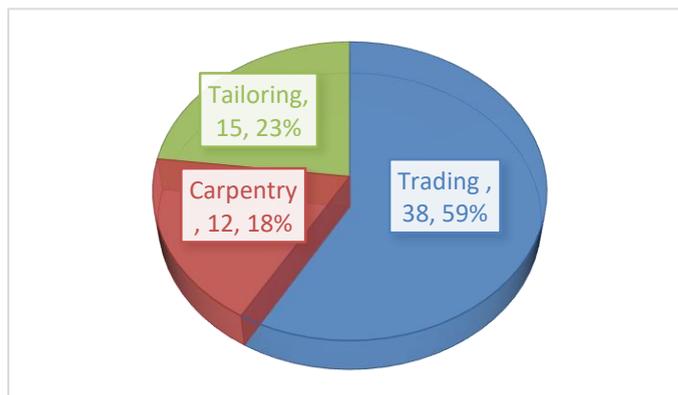


Figure 3: Pie chart showing Mallams' Responses to vocational skills learnt by *Almajiris* apart from the learning of Islamic and Arabic studies.

From table 4 and figure 3, 38 (58.5%) of the Mallams responded that Almajiris learn trading apart from the learning of Islamic and Arabic studies; 12 (18.5%) of the Mallams responded that Almajiris learn carpentry, while 15 (23%) of the Mallams responded that Almajiris learn tailoring. From the results, it implies that the *Almajiris* are not only learning Arabic

but they are exposed to trading and other skills.

Research Question Four: Does the attitude of Mallams (*Almajiri* teachers) significantly influence the integration of *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State?

Table 4: Item-by-Item Chi-square showing the attitude of Mallams towards Integration of *Almajiris* into the Formal Education System

S/N	STATEMENTS	Yes	No	Chi-square	P-value	Remark
1.	Formal education is against my religion	5 (7.7%)	60 (92.3%)	46.538	.000	Significant
2.	I will allow <i>Almajiris</i> to go to formal school	9 (13.8%)	56 (86.2%)	33.985	.000	Significant
3.	I hate formal education because it teaches <i>Almajiris</i> immoral acts	9(13.8%)	56 (8.2%)	33.985	.000	Significant
4.	I hate formal education because it is against Islamic teachings and doctrines	14 (21.5%)	51 (78.5%)	21.062	.000	Significant
5.	I do not like formal education because it is a form of slavery	9 (13.8%)	56 (86.2%)	33.985	.000	Significant
6.	To me, formal education is useless	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
7.	I know that formal education is for the infidel	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
8.	I like formal education	1 (1.5%)	64 (9.8%)	61.062	.000	Significant
9.	I trust formal education teachers	6(9.2%)	59 (90.8%)	43.215	.000	Significant
10.	Formal school is nice, but is not for <i>Almajiris</i>	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
11.	Islamic religion teaching is better than formal education for <i>Almajiris</i>	22(33.8%)	43 (66.2%)	6.785	.009	Significant
12.	Formal Education does not have enough Islamic teachings/contents	51 (78.5%)	14(21.5%)	21.062	.000	Significant

Note: Significant (p<0.05); Degree of freedom (df) =1

Table 4 indicates that the calculated chi-square values for the twelve items were significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, there is significant influence of attitude of Mallams (Almajiris teachers) on integration of Almajiris into the formal education system in Katsina State.

Research Question Five: Do motivational strategies significantly influence successful integration of the Almajiris into the formal education system in Katsina State?

Table 5: Item-by-Item Chi-square showing the motivational strategies that can lead to successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State

S/N	STATEMENTS	Yes	No	Chi-square	P-value	Remark
1.	Free education for <i>Almajiris</i> by the government	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
2.	Good classrooms for <i>Almajiris</i>	9 (13.8%)	56 (86.2%)	33.985	.000	Significant
3.	Free feeding for <i>Almajiris</i> in formal school	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
4.	Clear relationship between Islamic teaching and formal education	10 (15.4%)	55 (84.6%)	31.154	.000	Significant
5.	Free school uniform for <i>Almajiris</i>	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
6.	Conducting free evening classes for <i>Almajiris</i>	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
7.	Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities to make lives comfortable for <i>Almajiris</i>	9 (13.8%)	56 (86.2%)	33.985	.000	Significant
8.	Availability of career guidance counsellors to help the <i>Almajiris</i>	9 (13.8%)	56 (86.2%)	33.985	.000	Significant
9.	Adequate sensitization at all levels by government on the importance of formal education to <i>Almajiris</i>	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	61.062	.000	Significant
10.	Eradication of child abuse to allow <i>Almajiris</i> to go to formal schools	2 (3.1%)	63 (96.9%)	57.246	.000	Significant

11.	Eradication of early marriage to allow <i>Almajiris</i> to go to formal schools	2 (3.1%)	63 (96.9%)	57.246	.000	Significant
12.	Cordial relationship between Mallams (<i>Almajiris</i> teachers) and formal school teachers	9 (13.8%)	56 (86.2%)	33.985	.000	Significant

Note: Significant ($p < 0.05$); Degree of freedom (df) = 1

Table 5 indicates that the calculated chi-square values for the twelve items were significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, there is significant influence of each of the motivational strategies on successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina. However, the twelve motivational strategies for the successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina listed in table four are not in place in *Almajiris* Arabic schools according to their Mallams (*Almajiris* teachers).

3.1. Discussion of Findings

The researchers discovered that the number of Mallams (Arabic Teachers) is not sufficient to handle the huge number of *Almajiris*, no wonder they are always on the streets roaming about begging for food and money. This finding is supported by findings from other studies which noted that many *Almajiris* roam on the streets for the purpose of getting alms and also engage in some form of labour to earn a living (Adamu & Mohammed 2006) & (Abubakar-Abdullateef, Adedokun & Omigbodun 2017). Furthermore, *Mallams* responded that *Almajiris* learn other skills

apart from Arabic, like Trading, Carpentry and Tailoring, and majority of *the Mallams*

are aware that the Federal Government built some *Almajiris* schools in Northern Nigeria.

The results from table four reveal that there is a significant influence of attitude of Mallams (*Almajiris* teachers) on integration of *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State. There are many issues that affect the attitude of Mallams (Arabic teachers) in the integration of *Almajiris* into the Formal Education System in Katsina State. This should be addressed as a matter of urgency if sincerely Government wants the *Almajiris* to acquire formal education. (Adeyemi 2017) noticed that most of Arabic Teachers' attitude towards the subject is not encouraging. In addition, the causes of lack of education to the *Almajiris* have been attributed largely to parental influence, poverty and religious fanaticism (Olagunju 2012).

The results from table five show that there is significant influence of motivational strategies on successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina. The findings from table five reveal that all the twelve (12) motivational strategies that can lead to successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal

education system in Katsina State examined are not in place in Almajiris Arabic schools, according to the Mallams (Almajiris teachers). This makes the integration to be difficult for the government. This finding is supported by incentive theories which proposed that behaviour is motivated by the "pull" of external goals, such as rewards, money, or recognition (Hockenbury & Hockenbury 2003). Both the Mallams and Almajiris should be motivated in order to successfully integrate them into formal education system.

4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the socio-cultural factors affecting the integration of *Almajiris* into formal education system in Katsina State, Nigeria. Generally, the findings of this study showed that there are no sufficient motivational strategies in place that can lead to successful integration of the *Almajiris* into formal education system in Katsina State and the attitude of Mallams towards the integration of the *Almajiris* into formal education system in Katsina State is not encouraging. The results of this study need serious attention in order to eradicate *Almajiris* system in Katsina State. The following recommendations are made based on the results of this study:

1. Government should provide adequate motivational strategies that can lead to successful integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State

2. Government should train the Mallams and help them to understand the importance of integration of the *Almajiris* into the formal education system in Katsina State.

Orientation programmes that will change the attitude of *Mallams* should be given so as to encourage *Almajiris* to go to formal schools.

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