

The Educational Impact of Al-Azhar University in South Western Nigeria: A Case Study of Arabic-Islamic Schools in Yorubaland

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the impact of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt on Arabic-Islamic schools in the Yorubaland, Nigeria. This is done through investigation of its curriculum, scholarship, and sending of Al-Azhar's delegates to teach in Arabic-Islamic schools in Yorubaland, Nigeria. It discusses Islamic religious affairs and the role played by the Nigerian Muslim scholars in general and in the South Western Nigeria in particular. Furthermore, it addresses the argument bothering on the need to pursue religious education within and outside the country. This study also examines the difference between Al-Azhar educational system and the Nigerian Arabic-Islamic educational system and investigates the need for continuation or otherwise of Al-Azhar's venture in the Nigerian Arabic-Islamic Schools. This study is both historical and analytical in nature. It used data gathered via primary and secondary sources and utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings from this study revealed the suitability of Al-Azhar educational system for Nigeria. It also showed the continuous need to pursue Al-Azhar education by Nigerians. The need to introduce some Western courses into Al-Azhar educational curriculum to facilitate easy fitting of the graduates into Nigerian educational system also emanated from this study. The study recommends the completion of secondary education in Nigeria by intending Nigerians seeking Al-Azhar education in order to facilitate their usefulness in the Nigerian western-oriented educational system upon their return.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:

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1. Introduction

The age of al-Azhar University is now a thousand and forty-eight years, (1048). The third oldest university in the world. It includes 359 academic programs in various science and religious and humanitarian knowledge, scientific and medical. AL-Azhar University has three main branches; the first in Cairo, the second in southern Egypt and the third in northern Egypt, it includes 87 colleges. AL-Azhar University has 23 University cities. AL-Azhar University has 17 thousand members of a teaching authority. AL-Azhar University has 14 thousand employees and employees. AL-Azhar University has five University hospitals present in various provinces of the Republic. The University of al-Azhar is taught by students of science in the current school year about 650 students and students, and more than 33 students and students from the different countries of the world, representing 107 countries of the world. AL-Azhar University is now a lot of its 87 colleges with accreditation from the national authority to ensure quality and accreditation. AL-Azhar University has no geographical surroundings and does not have the provinces and territories but spread on the land of Egypt all east and west and from Alexandria to aswan but stretch outside the Egyptian Diameter.¹ Look at this quotation:

¹Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed el-Tayeb, the current Grand Imam of al-Azhar and former president of al-Azhar University. He was appointed by the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, following the death of Mohamed Sayed Tantawy in 2010. He is from Luxor Governorate in Upper Egypt, and he belongs to a Sufi family.

Al-Azhar University concerns itself with the religious syllabus, which pays special attention to the Qur'anic sciences and traditions of the prophet, on the one hand, while on the other, university teaches all the modern scientific fields of science. Thus, the university has not only fulfilled its obligations in these two fields of study but also fulfilled its obligations towards the Arabic language which is the language of the Holy Qur'an²

The quotation above delineates the generosity of Al-Azhar University. Specifically, it reveals that Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt deals with religion and modern beneficial studies as well. But sadly in Nigeria, Al-Azhar University has been perceived as only for Arabic and Islamic studies. In Yorubaland in particular, the education of Al-Azhar University and its impact on Arabic-Islamic schools in the region has become a controversial issue to the extent that the identity and image of old and current students of Al-Azhar University have negatively been perceived. Furthermore, there is a common belief in Nigeria particularly in Yorubaland that anyone who studied in Al-Azhar University cannot be considered as a good and useful product for the society due to the lack of Islamic ethics. Nonetheless, there is no conclusive evidence to prove and claim exactly what is wrong in Al-Azhar's

²<http://www.rohama.org/en/content/23>

education than to say Al-Azhar students habitually are Devils (*Faraohs*) and their knowledge is a waste.

In a bid of finding a clear knowledge for this problem the researcher, who is an old student of a well-known Arabic school in Yorubaland in Nigeria the so-called Arabic Institute of Nigeria which is situated in Medina Elekuro Ibadan Oyo State and a graduate of Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt, who stayed for more than a decade in Cairo and familiars with the environment wishes to make an attempt through this study to investigate the educational role played by Al-Azhar in South Western Arabic-Islamic schools in Yorubaland Nigeria. It is anticipated that a research must be done on this topic which would expectantly be useful for Nigerians, especially the Yoruba people who always focus on sending their children to Arabic schools in Nigeria and upon graduation are sent to Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt as well in furtherance of their study.

Additionally, this study also delved into how Arabic-Islamic schools in this area were initiated and how they were influenced by Al-Azhar's curriculum and the way its system is adopted by Nigerian Arabic-Islamic founding fathers. In other hand, in order to have a clear knowledge about the problem of Al-Azhar University, this work investigates the reason for the establishment of Madrasas in Nigeria in which it focuses on the role played by Nigerian great Muslim Scholars who devoted their entire lives for propagating Islamic knowledge and completely concerned about preservation of Islam and Muslims.

According to Umar Baffa and his colleagues in the book entitled Muslim educational reform in Nigeria, it became evident that before the arrival of the British into Nigeria, Muslims had a well-established system of education that blends revelation and reason to transform man and his environment and enable him to worship the Creator, the Lord of all creations. But, the modern system of education, which rest on secularism, was and still is, being influenced by Western conception of Knowledge.³ In addition to the forgoing information, the advent of colonialism in Nigeria was a precursor of Christian missionary activities and consequent relegation of Islamic education. Also, little support was given to the Islamic intellectual heritage and Islamic education was left to stagnate with no policy guide, quality control and future prospects. Additionally, modern education was given more prominence, support and official backing and this resulted in envy between the competitive opportunities opened to the two system of knowledge. With the strong support it became more profitable in the modern sense for a person to pursue Western styled scholarship than Islamic education⁴.

Consequently, the secularized curricula that have permeated and dominated the National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria de-emphasized the religious and moral components of education, which are

³Umar Baffa Aliyu, Shehu Salisu, and Malumfashi, *Muslim Educational Reform Activities in Nigeria*, (Kano Nigeria: Benchmark Publisher Limited, 2005), 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3

essential in molding the Islamic personality, which Muslims greatly cherish. For the Muslims who pass through the modern educational system, many are trained and turned into confused and deluded hybrids largely, because the knowledge they have gained is bereft of spirituality that blends revelation and reason⁵. Details about the British effect on Islamic education in Nigeria can be seen in the following paragraph.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Impact of British Colonialization on Islamic Education in Nigeria

When the British arrived in Northern Nigeria they found that Islamic education was widespread and well developed. Arabic was the official language of communication in royal courts, offices and legal courts. Hausa and Fulfulde languages were both being written in the Arabic alphabets. But with the imposition of the new modern system of education, the English language, written in the Roman alphabet, replaced Arabic as the official language of the Islamic leadership. Gradually, Western education became the yardstick for determining formal literacy. Islamic education was thus neglected and the new system continued to receive support to the loss of the other for several decades.⁶

The arrival of the British into Nigeria has changed the Islamic education in Nigeria. Details have been given by the above quotation which has

clearly shown that it was the arrival of the British into Nigeria that Islamic education lost its power. Not only in Nigeria the same thing happened to the Muslim of Pakistan, many problem faced Indians through the British governments when a new system of education was introduced to them which was completely secular and materialistic in nature. This system was against the existing one in which it was only concerned with how to make a living not how to live and the new environment changed the school from a social and religious institution into an economical one which is totally opposed to Muslim ways of living⁷. It is worthy to mention that during the period of the British rule in Nigeria students were thought Bible at schools without been concerned whether they are Muslims or not. They were under control to study Christianity through the school's curriculum.

Friday was the only Muslims' day to propagate their religion, in most schools it is difficult to find Islamic teachers; may be only one teacher can be found or two who teach Islamic Religion Knowledge (IRK). There was the suppressed fear of continuous doubt, lack of concern and psychological defeat. There was an obvious crisis in cultural identity and disposition as Muslims were made to downgrade their educational system and embrace secular education, which negates God as the creator of knowledge. This sparked off the desire for educational reform within

⁵ Ibid., 7

⁶ Ibid., 11

⁷ Sultan Talat, *Muslim Education and Community Development: An Analytical Case Study of Pakistan*. (Makkah Al-Mukarramah: Umm Al-Qura University, 1991), 15.

the purview of Islam⁸. Finally, after all these sufferings Muslims then, realized that there is no other way to protect themselves from the West than to promote their modern schools where Muslims will get the useful and relevant knowledge. That is how the idea of establishment of *madrasah* came into being.

2.2 The Reformation of Muslim Education in Nigeria

After the fall of Muslim educational identity in Nigeria through the new superseding of British curriculum the Muslim Scholars of then realized that Islamic education needs to be reawaked in order to be relevant in Nigerian society again like it used to be before the British arrived. Also, because change is a constant phenomenon in human society, for education to be relevant reform is necessary and they started the reformation.

In a book entitled "*Muslim Educational Reform Activities in Nigeria*", details were given on the reformation of Muslim education. The establishment of an Islamic state, which lasted up to the beginning of the twentieth century when the British conquered it and ushered in colonial rule and 'Western' education, is the outcome of the reform⁹. It therefore implies that, the seriousness of the Yoruba Muslims in the pursuance of Muslim Education was demonstrated by their strong adherence to the programme, without fear of the sophisticated manner and cunning approaches used by the missionaries to

attract them into embracing Christianity and attending Christian schools.¹⁰

Consequent on what happened in India after the British conquered them. Historically, Shah Waliullah had impacted on the thought of huge Muslim scholars and the different movements of Muslims of the sub-continent. But unfortunately for the *Ulamas* instead of them to stand on their faith they were compelled and locked the doors of their schools to the new ideas brought by Western culture, while other section of Muslims submitted themselves at the doorsteps of the British schools. Thus, the spirit of creativity and dynamism for Islamic renaissance was again reduced to a flicking point¹¹. Moreover, in another quotation, an explication was given saying that in the nation's educational set-up, Arabic and Islamic Studies have undergone some reforms consequent upon the coming of the Christian missionaries with the western system of education. The systems of education brought by the missionaries exposed the Muslims to absolutely opposed system of education, as they could not afford to give up this new system, most especially with the hint given by the Prophet (S.A.W) that knowledge was a stray camel of the believers which they should hold wherever it was found¹².

Since it is known by Muslims that conscious of the fact that the acquisition of knowledge is crucial, and that enrolment in the conventional schools could make them lose their Islam, which was more valuable to them; so, two prominent methods were therefore

⁸ Ibid

⁹Umar Baffa Aliyu, Shehu Salisu, and Malumfashi. 2005, p.17

¹⁰ Ibid., 131

¹¹ Sultan, Talat, 1991, 17

¹² Ibid., 15

adopted by the them with a view to integrating the Islamic and the western systems of education to suit their consumption. The first method is the introduction of some non-religious subjects into the existing Arabic-Islamic institutions, while the second is the introduction of Arabic and Islamic Studies into the curriculum of western education.¹³ By this, knowledge had been classified into two broad areas; which are termed - conventional and religious. The outcome of these intellectual reawakening globally and in Nigeria was the establishment of more schools and Islamic organizations along the Islamization of Knowledge agenda.

2.3 The Inception of Arabic-Islamic Schools in Yorùbáland, Nigeria

Aisha Lemu, in an article entitled "*Religious Education in Nigeria - A Case Study of Islamic Educational Trust, Nigeria*" explained that the notion behind the establishment of Arabic-Islamic schools in Nigeria is a response to the British administration that superseded Islamic education in Nigeria. She furthered explained that the Southern Muslims were threatened and persuaded to embrace Christianity through their studies because the school curriculum was designed by the British.

Christian missionaries were allowed by the British colonial power to set up mission schools in the south from the early days, and Government schools also were generally Christian-oriented. Any Muslim student in these schools

would be forced to study Bible Knowledge and in most cases attend church. Conversion was frequently a condition for admission. No teachers were provided for Islamic Studies. Muslim parents had a difficult choice - to allow their children to get a modern education at the risk of losing their faith, or to keep their faith and to lose the opportunity to be raised high in Government or the modern administrative system. This gave rise to the establishment of private Islamic schools for Muslims in the southwest. However, their medium of instruction was usually Arabic, so their products were equally unable to join the mainstream of higher education unless they went to Arab countries for further studies. For these reasons the Christian missionaries and their students in the southwest went far ahead of the Muslims in western education, and tended to look down on the Muslims as backward. There was, and in some cases, still is, serious abuse of their educational and religious rights and marginalization of Muslims in national development¹⁴.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴Aisha Lemu, *Religious Education in Nigeria: A Case Study of Islamic Educational Trust*,
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In addition, Sheikh Abdul Wahab Adebayo Ahmad¹⁵ in an interview conducted with him, said that, the so called *Ansaru-dīn*, *Nawaru-dīn* Muslims society of Nigeria, and other societies like them established Islamic schools after the arrival of the British into Nigeria. Muslims were learning Islam by studying Qur'ān, Hadiths and other religious books with the aim to protect their children from being westernized. Unfortunately, after many years their attentions were dramatically distracted from learning Islamic further and gradually they started withdrawing their children from the schools due to long - period of studying with little achievement. For this reason another group of well-civilized Nigerian scholars of then decided to change the then Islamic schools into Arabic-Islamic schools like schools in Arab countries where students will be able to have advanced Arabic and religious knowledge in a short period of time¹⁶.

3. Methodology

This study depends on primary and secondary data in which it combines both qualitative and quantitative methods a mode of data collection¹⁷. For the qualitative methodology, historical with an extensive

Nigeria (Oslo Coalition on freedom of Religion, 2002), 65

¹⁵ Sheikh Abdul Wahab Adebayo Ahmad, the former principal of Arabic Institute of Nigeria and one of the great Muslim scholars in Ibadan Oyo State Nigeria

¹⁶ An interview with Sheikh Abdul Wahab, 2013

¹⁷ Amiruddin, A., Nurdin, N., & Ali, M. (2021). Islamic Education Teacher Communication Strategy in Increasing Students' Learning Interest. *International Journal of Contemporary Islamic Education*, 3(1), 41-61.

literature review through library search such as books, journals, interviews, magazines, and internet are used¹⁸. Interviews were conducted in Nigeria among founders of Arabic-Islamic schools and some of Al-Azhar old students to complete the literature search. For quantitative methodology, questionnaires are distributed among the Nigerians, who are studying at Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt. SPSS version 20 software was used to analyze and run questionnaires to come up with the accurate and standard result.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1 The Nigerian System of Education

For Nigeria is a diversified country with different religions and different patterns of education, therefore its educational system is divided into two major groups namely: Western and Islamic schools. For the Western schools, their curriculum was designed by the British during the period of colonialization of Nigeria. These schools are fully controlled by the Nigerian governments. There are many Private Western schools in Nigeria but still their curriculum is the same like that of government schools. On another hand, there are lots of Islamic schools established by the Nigerian great Muslim fathers. These are Non-governmental schools and they are initially financed by their founders and later some of them are sponsored by Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and others. These schools' curriculums are different from government schools. Among the Islamic schools some of them are also controlled by the Nigerian government.

¹⁸ Nurdin, N. (2017). To Research Online or Not to Research Online: Using Internet-Based Research in Islamic Studies Context. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 7(1), 31-54.

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Moreover, the Islamic schools are also divided into two groups namely; traditional and modern Islamic schools and modern Islamic schools are also divided into another two types, the affiliated and non-affiliated Islamic schools. The affiliated schools are those that are affiliated to the Universities in Arab countries such as Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, University of Madinah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and others. These schools adopted the curriculum from Arab schools and they are also supplied by lecturers and they send their students to the schools they are affiliated to for the furtherance of their studies. Furthermore, the nonaffiliated schools are considered as full independent schools because they are free from any outsider and everything is controlled by their founders. They have their own syllabus; especially they are more concerned about native books written by the ancient Islamic scholars. For example, books of Imam *Mâlik*, Imam *Shâfi'i*'s book of poem, and others.

4.2 Western Curricula Schools and Their System in Nigeria

At this junction, the research focuses on systems brought by the British into Nigeria through colonial administrations. What is common in Nigerian society is that whenever government school (GS) is mentioned it refers to Western Curricula Schools (WCS) and anytime government school is mentioned in this study it refers to Western Curriculum Schools. In government schools mostly Western curriculums are studied and some religious subjects like Islamic religion knowledge (IRK) and Bible knowledge (BK). Also, government schools in Nigeria are divided in three major categories: Primary, Secondary, and University levels. Initially, 6.5.4 system of education (that is to say, six years in primary school, five years in secondary school, and four years in University) was used in Nigeria

until the end of 1989 under both the military rulers of Obasanjo and Babangida respectively.

It was in 1990 that the system was changed into the new system known as 6.3.3.4 system of education (that is, six years in primary school, three years in Junior Secondary school (JSS), three years in senior secondary school (SSS), and four years in University).¹⁹ In other circumstances, after the completion of secondary schools, some students need to seat for Jamb examination (JE) before they can proceed to University. While others need to study for two years in Polytechnic before University. Anyway, the normal educational system is 6.3.3.4 as it was explained. Therefore, throughout the period of studies, students learn subjects from Western curriculum like: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Social Studies, Economics, Business method, Commerce, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Physical Education, History, Accounting, Marketing, Agriculture, Religious Studies, etc. However, religious study is not well-recognized like other subjects especially Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) and also, more privilege was given to Bible knowledge than Islamic knowledge.

Moreover, lecturers are paid by the Nigerian government even not only lecturers including teachers are beneficiaries of the government payment scheme. There are lots of advantages in social and political lives for graduates of government schools in Nigeria. Students who graduate from government's schools in Nigeria get job easily under the Nigerian government. Even there is a tendency for those who studied politics at school to become Nigerian leaders in the future. These students are mostly the needed people in Nigerian society among them are

¹⁹ Idris Jibril, *The New Nigeria School Curriculum Review: Alienating Arabic and Muslim Students*, (Article retrieved on 4/12/2013 from <http://www.gamji.com/article/8000/news8889/htm>)

Educationists, Lawyers, Engineers, Doctors, Politicians Journalists, and others. (This is a brief about Western system of education in Nigeria).

4.3 Islamic Schools in Nigeria

Islamic schools in Nigeria have different curriculum from the government schools. In these schools religious subjects are the main courses taken. Mostly these schools are controlled by Muslims, with little chance given to the Nigerian government. According to Ajijola Adeleke Dirisu, Islamic schools are places to train the sensibility of pupils in such a manner that their attitude to life, their actions, decisions and approach to all kinds of knowledge are geared towards Islamic Ideals of being the vicegerent of God on earth. In these schools students are trained and mentally disciplined for the acquisition of knowledge not merely to satisfy an intellectual curiosity or just for material worldly benefit, but to develop them to become rational, righteous beings and also to enhance their spiritual, moral and physical development including enabling them to enhance the welfare of their families, their people, their country and mankind.²⁰ There are two types of Islamic schools in Nigeria: Traditional and Modern Islamic schools.

Traditional Islamic Schools

In Nigerian Islamic educational system, there is a system called traditional Islamic schools. According to Ajijola Adeleke Dirisu in his book entitled *Re-structuring of Islamic education* it is elucidated that the establishment of Muslims educational institutions was a response to one of the prophetic tradition that says "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave". This is what motivated the Muslim traditionally to establish three types of

educational institutions. Namely: Qur'anic school, the Madrasah, and the Mosques²¹.

Qur'anic Schools

The first education received by the Muslim children is the one gotten from the Qur'anic school. These schools are often called "*Kutub* or *m'seyyid*" or *MakaratanAllo*" in Northern states of Nigeria and "*IleKewu*" in Southern parts of Nigeria. In these schools children whose ages ranges between four or five years learn to read and write, and sometimes, they are taught modern subjects as arithmetic and local languages. The full course of such a school sometimes culminates in the complete or partial memorization of the Qur'an.²²

Madrasah or Maktab

According to Ajijola Adeleke Dirisu the Madrasah in Nigeria was actually more of a residence than a place of study, since instruction was given in the Mosque itself with students sitting around the teacher. The Madrasahs were responsible for the education for children in that they may be able to understand Islam. Among the Madrasahs, the children were given proper education which put them in a position to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. Therefore, the Madrasahs are Islamic educational institutions where basically the tenets of religion are taught or inculcated into students²³.

Mosques

Although Mosques are primarily meant for offering prayers, it has been also been used to render great services in respect of expansion of education. Also, mostly in some mosques during the early times in Nigeria even in the Muslim Worlds, there were even today *Maktab*s that are properly

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid,

²³ Ibid 51

²⁰Dirisu Ajijola Adeleke, P49

instituted. In this *Maktabas* is laid upon religious education. It was in the Mosque that "*IlmiMajÉlis*" used to be held during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods of Islamic history and as such the Mosques were attached libraries and Bookshop where books could be produced by the students.²⁴ The early history of education under the Islamic state speaks of the fact that the *Maktabas* of the Mosques were "*Masjid Qazis*" whose lectures were regarding meaning and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. They led the prayers and at the same time imparted useful instructions to the believers.²⁵ The same thing happened during the establishment of Al-Azhar in Cairo. It started from the Mosque during the year 970 A.D. when a *Fātimid* general started to construct al-Azhar to serve as the assembly mosque where Islamic educations would be taught. Initially, it started from the Mosque it was later, after many years that it was developed and changed from Mosque to Madrasa and it kept changing from one system to another until its present status today²⁶.

4.4 Arabic-Islamic Schools In Yorùbáland

Arabic-Islamic schools are considered as Modern Islamic schools in Nigeria due to the modernization of their system. These schools are totally different in methods of studies than traditional Islamic schools. Traditional schools only focus on religious studies while Modern Islamic schools are considered as integration between Traditional and government schools.

As aforementioned, Arabic-Islamic schools are independent and controlled by their founders. Their syllabi are different from those of governments. There are two types of these schools namely; the affiliated and non-affiliated, meaning to say some of

these schools are affiliated to Al-Azhar University in Egypt and other Islamic Universities in Arab Countries, while some are not and also some are affiliated to Al-Azhar institutes in Egypt while others are affiliated to Al-Azhar University in Egypt. The Islamic schools affiliated to Al-Azhar University, the students directly enroll to Al-Azhar University to complete four years period of education which is known as first degree. But unfortunately for the affiliated schools to Al-Azhar Institute in Cairo, students of this schools after they have graduated from the schools they still need to re-enroll into secondary level in Al-Azhar institute in Cairo to re-sit for three years of education

The followings are among of Arabic-Islamic schools in Yorùbá land in Nigeria. Institute of Arabic and Islamic Training Centre established by illustrious scholar Sheikh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory, 1952²⁷, Arabic Institute of Nigeria-Madinah Elekuro Ibadan established by the distinguished scholar Sheikh Murtadha Abdus Salam, 1958, Centre for Islamic and Arabic Studies-Ikirun by Holistic Preacher Sheikh Yūnus Sunūsī, 1961, Islamic Institute-Ede by Sheikh Salaudin Adedokun Olayiwola, Centre for Muslim Youth-Iwo by Sheikh Muhalli Bukhārī, 1962, The Islamic and Arabic Training Centre- Ilorin by Late Sheikh Yahyā Murtadha, 1965, Light of Islam Arabic School-Agege by Master Dā'ud Abdul Majīd, Alufanla. 1966, Assembly of preaching and propagation-Isolo by Sheikh Mustapha Zoglool Sunūsī, 1970, Islamic Cultural Centre- Iwo by Sheikh Abdul Razāq Abdur-Rahmān, The Islamic and Arabic Training Centre-Zaki by Sheikh Ya'qūb Abdullah Al-

²⁷ This school was not affiliated to Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt during Sheikh Adam's life. It was later affiliated by Sheikh Habībullah; the son of Sheikh Adam. But Sheikh Adam himself had a good relationship with Al-Azhar throughout his life (may his soul rest in perfect place)

²⁴ Ibid, 54

²⁵ Ibid 68

²⁶ Dirisu Ajjola Adeleke, p, 87

Ilory, and Centre for Arabic-Islamic Studies-Ejigbo by Master Mu'izudin Salmān, 1986. Details are given below in comparison between the affiliated schools and Non-Affiliated schools.

4.5 Comparison Between the South Western Affiliated and the Non-Affiliated Arabic- Islamic Schools to Al-Azhar University.

In Nigeria, there are many Arabic-Islamic schools affiliated to Azhar while others are not affiliated. Different opinions, beliefs and way of perceiving things are what motivated many of Arabic-Islamic Schools' founding fathers to affiliate their schools to Azhar while others are not. Some have optimistic thought about Azhar while others have pessimistic belief. On the other hand, self-independent or self-confident is what discouraged some of the then founding fathers from affiliation. Like Sheikh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory from historical perspective Sheikh's school initially was not affiliated to Azhar based on his self-confident.

He believed that there is no need to affiliate his school to Azhar saying knowledge he had was enough. In one of his public lectures he said reporting his experience during his journey to Cairo Egypt: he had intention to travel to study at Azhar but unfortunately for him he couldn't stay there because after he arrived there it was discovered that there is no need of Al-Azhar knowledge and he returned back to Nigeria in the same year.²⁸ Consequent on this point of view Sheikh 'Ādam decided not to affiliate his school to Azhar. Also, no lecturer was received by his school from Azhar and students from his school were not sent to study at Azhar throughout the period of Sheikh's life. However, everyone with his own reason, after the death of Sheikh, his

son Sheikh Habibullah 'Ādam who was in charge of the school's supervision changed his father's opinion and affiliated his father's school to Azhar.

Generally speaking, in Nigeria today, there is an obvious difference between these two groups. This can be seen from different aspects such as: Quality of Education, superiority of Lecturers, Students, and Exposure. The affiliated schools are well-known in Nigerian society by their quality of education and exposure as well. Through the qualification of lecturers qualified students were produced. For the Non-affiliated schools their products are not totally poor but not well-recognized in the society because of being the local and lack of civilization. It was explained by Mustapha Ahmad Ghazali, a graduate of Madrasah Raodah Islamiyyah Ikirun and a graduate of Al-Azhar University (1994-2002)²⁹ Faculty of Education, and department of Islamic Studies that, the difference between the affiliated schools and non-affiliated schools in Yoruba land in Nigeria is obviously clear. He pointed out that Azhar graduates have a clear knowledge, they always play tangible role such as teaching students in most schools through their exposure and they possess a better understanding of Islamic knowledge. He totally opposed the idea and how people perceive the education of Al-Azhar i.e. the belief that studying at Azhar spoils students' lives. He has made mentioned that this is an unreliable view; i.e. baseless view, unless strong evidence can be provided.

4.6 The Major Achievements of Al-Azhar Graduates in South Western Nigeria

The roles of Al-Azhar graduates have great impact on the members of the society. They have enormously contributed to the

²⁸An interview with Khalid Sunūsi, the son of Sheikh Yūnus Sunūsi, 2013.

²⁹An interview with Alhaji Mustapha Ahmad Ghazali, 2013.

development of religious movements in Yorùbáland. In South West of Nigeria today Al-Azhar graduates are heading major posts whether in politics, social life and in Nigeria Universities as lecturers. Although, it has been said in the beginning of this study that Al-Azhar graduates are not well-recognized in Nigerian society, but still there are many countless achievements for them in South Western Nigeria. In Nigeria today, most of Arabic-Islamic Schools in Yorùbáland have been upgraded to have Diploma from secondary level under Nigeria governments through the efforts and performances of these graduates. That is why in Nigeria recently graduates of Al-Azhar are the only people who are heading most of the Islamic organizations. With their intelligence they are considered as most suitable and capable graduates who are eligible to run any Islamic or religious program. For example Sheikh Luqman Olalekan Busaerī was the Chairman for Muslim Pilgrimage board in Oyo State Nigeria and Alhaji Mudathir is now *Mufasir* of Ikirun Osun State Nigeria, both of them are graduates of Azhar University.

5. Conclusion

In sum, this research on the Al-Azhar education and its impact in Yorùbáland has yielded certain essential facts in terms of creating awareness of degree of Al-Azhar education. As well as it provides a clear understanding about the causes of the lack of integration of Arabic-Islamic Studies with the Nigerian academic Society. We can conclude that the role that Al-Azhar plays in civilizing and integrating Nigerian students is very considerable and recognized. Although, there must be a governmental linkage to the ways and methods students are admitted there; the Nigerian government must have a selfless role to play in the

study lives of her citizens at Al-Azhar institutions.

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