



Perception of Female Islamiyah School Students on Sokoto Caliphate Literature: Insights from Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study examines the perception and awareness of Sokoto Caliphate literature among female students in Islamiyah schools, focusing on Gwadabawa Local Government, Sokoto, Nigeria. The research aims to assess the students' knowledge of Sokoto Caliphate literature and its historical contributions, particularly the works of Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo. The findings indicate a low level of awareness, with only 13.8% of respondents able to articulate Shehu's contributions to Islam in Hausaland. However, 93.75% of the participants expressed a strong interest in learning more about this intellectual heritage. These results underscore the need for strategic educational interventions to enhance the dissemination and integration of Sokoto Caliphate literature within the curriculum of Islamiyah schools, particularly for female students. This study contributes to the discourse on Islamic education and historical literacy, emphasizing the role of structured learning initiatives in preserving and promoting indigenous Islamic scholarship.

Keywords: Islamiyah schools, Sokoto Caliphate, Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo, Islamic education, historical awareness.



1. Introduction

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of education, as reflected in the Qur'an, where Allah (SWT) commands humanity to seek knowledge. Allah SWT says:

“O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature his mate, and from them twain scattered (seeds) countless men and wen.....”¹

Islam places no limitations on the spiritual relationship between individuals and God, beside the piousness. That is why Prophet SAW emphasizes on education and its spread to both males and females. His wife Aisha is an example of intelligent, diligent women-folks who are followers of Muhammad SAW. These lead to the evolution of Muslim women who acquired and disseminate. However, nowadays, Islamiyah schools are among the most important avenues of learning in Muslim societies and nearby². Additionally, Allah SWT disclosed in the Qur'an that:

“Say o Muhammad: This is my way, I call to Allah upon certain knowledge I and those who trace me. I declare Allah SWT free and far removed from all that they associate as partners with Him, and I'm free of those who worship anything else along with Him”³

Sokoto jihad had occurred as a result of the outputs contributed by the leaders (Shehu and disciples). The jihad leaders therewith, contributed in writings, and teaching, as well as preaching on the path of Islam according to Sunnah⁴. The literature of that period has really blessed the Hausaland and spurred in causing transformations. The Sokoto jihad was a tremendous transition blessed with writings that are applicable in religious and other endeavors of human life⁵. The writings, otherwise known as Sokoto Caliphate literatures are the manners, refined culture, and decency, that were confined into writings or manuscripts in one language or the other provided by the sokoto jihad leaders, such as Usmanu Danfodiyo. The Sokoto Caliphate literature is indeed a name given to the entire works such as books or manuscripts (prose and poetical writings) in Arabic or Hausa or Fulbe, and other languages prepared by Sokoto Caliphate people^{6,7}.

There are several reasons spurring the emergence and utilization of Sokoto Caliphate literatures. Firstly, the literatures shed light to reform the Islam being practiced by the citizens of Hausaland. Majorly, the Sokoto Caliphate literature intend to expiate the disbelief practices of sacrifice to rocks, stones, trees, and other forms of shirk. The literatures try to reform Islam and purify it from the filths of polytheism being practiced

by people^{8,9,10}. Secondly, Sokoto Caliphate literatures tried to expiate innovations that were intruded in Islamic practices, because the time when the literatures were conceived the environment of Hausaland was full of imported innovations, customs, traditions; and the then scholars were ineffective in dealing with the situation. For instance, *Nurul Albab*, *Ihyaussunah*, *wasiqatul Ikhwan* are written to discard the forms of polytheisms and innovations in the prevailing environment. Thirdly, the Sokoto Caliphate literatures also tried to resolve the issue of women and also struggled to protect the rights of children deprived by the past regimes during the 19th century period. The literatures are aimed at providing the rights to inheritance, right to education, right to proper food (food security), etc that were been denied by the past regimes. Before the coming of the Shehu's jihad, women and children were denied proper education, proper food provision, inheritance, and care; therewith, the pronouncements in Sokoto literatures are trying to solve these problems^{11,12}. Fourthly, the attempt of Sokoto Caliphate literatures also meant to address the issue of corruption and maladministration (injustice) perpetrated by the elites against the common people in the Hausaland¹³.

However, some of the jihad people are concerned with the development of Islamic sciences to facilitate development and advancement of education. The basic fields among the Islamic sciences taught by Sokoto literatures are diverse, but, surely, the science of Quran (covered by books such as *Fara'idul jalila*, *Diyauttawil*, *Kifayatu Du'afa'u*), sciences of hadith (such as *Alfiyatul Usul*, *Fathul Iglaq*), Arabic sciences (covered by *Tazyinul waraqat*, *Albahrul Muhid*), medicine (covered by *Hisnul afham*, *Tambihul khisam*), the law, and other related writings declare the vast and prosperous nature of Sokoto Caliphate literatures^{14,15}. Thus, the objective of this paper was to determine the perception of some Islamiyah school female students pertaining the Sokoto Caliphate Literature: a case study of Gwadabawa Local Government, Sokoto, Nigeria.

2. Materials and Methods

This study is a cross-sectional survey that collects data (information) in a given time. The instrument utilized to gather data for this work is a structured questionnaire consisting of subsections. The subsections consist of demographic characteristics, awareness (knowledge) about Shehu's contributions to Islam, Sokoto literatures read by the respondents, source of information about Sokoto Caliphate literatures, reasons for lack of awareness about Sokoto Caliphate literatures, and level of interest about Sokoto Caliphate literatures. The questionnaires were 160 in number returned by the female stu-

dents of Islamiyah schools in Gwadabawa. The collected information was analyzed using frequency and percentage (descriptive statistics) and presented in tables.

3. Results and Discussion

The results for this study was shown in Tables 1-6.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
19 years old	4	2.5
20 years old	80	50.0
16 years	16	10.0
15 years	60	37.5
Sex		
Male	0	0.0
Female	160	100.0
Religion		
Islam	160	100.0
Tribe		
Hausa	96	60.0
Fulani	64	40.0

Table 1 shows that, the demographic characteristics of the respondents in this work are slightly diverse. They are all females (100.0%), majority Hausa (60.0%), and others (40.0%) are Fulani. The age of the respondents ranges from 15-20 years old. 50.0% are 20 years old, 37.5% are 15years old, 10.0% are 16years old, and 2.5% are 19years old.

Knowledge about Shehu's contributions to Islam in Hausaland

Table 2: Knowledge about Shehu's contributions to Islam in Hausaland

Knowledge about Shehu's contributions to Islam in Hausaland	Frequency	Percentage
He was a jihadist (who reformed Islam in this region)	22	13.5
I only heard about his name	34	21.3
Having any form of information	60	37.5
I don't know	44	27.5
Total	160	100.0

Table 2 shows the awareness of the female respondents about Shehu's contribution (Sokoto Caliphate) to the Islam in Hausaland. Only 13.8% were able to state the contributions of Shehu as a jihadist or reformer, 37.5% had "any form of information about Shehu," 21.3% heard about Shehu's name, and 27.5% said "I don't know." Islamiyah schools widely acceptable in Nigeria, more especially in the Northern part, they are supported by all and sundry relatively more than the *Tsangaya* or *Almajiri* system (schools) or western (secular) schools that are abhorred by some traditions¹⁶ therefore they are playing a vital role in many societies. The schools serve as finest avenue to impart the knowledge embedded in Sokoto Caliphate literature to the female students, who are mothers of tomorrow to help them in playing vital roles in the society, such as becoming a good Muslims, and proper parenting (when they are finally married)¹⁷. The Shehu himself had made several submissions in his books amounting to importance of educating the females¹⁸. In this vein, Shehu's daughter Nana Asma'u had established the largest mobilization movement ever in the history of Africa that is concern with knowledge, education, economic, and social investment in the women folk¹⁹. However, according to the finding (in the Table 2), there was poor knowledge about the contributions of Shehu to Islam in Hausaland. Shehu's reformation in Hausaland had spurred transformation or amendment that transmogrified then Hausaland (states) such as Kano, Kebbi, Katsina, Gobir, Zazzau, etc and culminated to positive changes in education, increased security, economic improvement, etc. Therefore, there are a lot of lessons supposed to be tapped by the contemporary world in general^{20,21}. May be the poor knowledge shown by the participants in this study is due to inordinate curriculum. The

problem of curriculum was similarly found by another similar study in other Parts of Nigeria as reported in²².

Types or names of Sokoto literature read by the respondents

Table 3: Types or name of Sokoto literature read by the respondents

Types or name of Sokoto literature read by the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Wasiqah</i>	10	6.3
<i>Nurul Albab</i>	2	1.3
<i>Nothing</i>	148	92.5
Total	160	100.0

The Table 3 shows the level of practice, that is, the type of Sokoto Caliphate literature read by the female Islamiyah Schools students. The books listed are *Wasiqah* (6.3%), *Nurul Albab* (1.3%), and “Nothing” 92.5%. From this finding, it shows that, there is some level of awareness about Sokoto Caliphate literature among the female Islamiyah students; however, the awareness is appearing to be very constricted because only few of the respondents (minority of 92.5%) could be able to list some Sokoto literatures (and the books listed are produced by Shehu only). There are other books that span areas such as health, history, economics, scholarship, governance, etc with specific emphasis or specialties that are supposed to be learnt by the young, adults, men and women to tap lessons. The books are simple, relevant, organized, truthful, and practically avail the needs of the people²³. However, this time around, and the era of eruption of Sokoto Caliphate literature are similar, therefore, the literature is very important source of information to the cotemporary societies. The common factors affecting the old Sokoto (Hausaland) and today include, the widespread of religious misconceptions, polytheism, misapplication of Islamic knowledge, poor knowledge among many, practice of non-Islamic values, corruption, practicing rituals in deviant from Islamic laws for worldly gain, economic exploitation by the ruling class, aggrandizement by scholars and leaders, social inequalities, political misadministration, and a gang-up of elites to prevent any resistance to the status quo, etc. the use of Sokoto Caliphate literature through teaching, preaching, and learning will invariably help in solving many of the

problems facing our society today, similar to what had occurred in the 19th century Sokoto (Hausaland)²⁴.

Source of information or awareness about Sokoto literature as submitted by the of respondents Islamiyah students in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria

Table 4: Source of information or awareness about Sokoto literature as submitted by the of respondents Islamiyah students in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria

Source of information or awareness about Sokoto literature	Frequency	Percentage
Islamiyah teachers	15	9.4
Home	28	17.5
School	13	8.2
None	104	65.0
Total	160	100.0

Table 4 shows the source of information about Sokoto Caliphate literatures that reached the participants. This work shows that, majority (65.0%) of the participants had not received information about Sokoto Caliphate literatures. This finding shows poor awareness about Sokoto Caliphate literatures among the female Islamiyah students in Gwadabawa. The strongest weapon to ignorance and lack of awareness is the intervention through teaching and preaching as utilized by the Shehu to conquer ignorance that overwhelmed Hausaland in the then 19th century²⁵. Therefore, to provide information about Sokoto Caliphate literatures to females at Islamiyah schools, there is need for teaching and preaching to be carried out by Islamiyah teachers for instance, parents, secular schools teachers, *Tsangaya* teachers, and utilization of social media, and other forms of instructions to ginger the public about the significance of Sokoto Caliphate literatures in resolving contemporary issues facing our societies.

Reasons/ factors for lack of awareness about Sokoto Caliphate literature among the female Islamiyah students in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria

Table 5: Reasons/ factors for lack of awareness about Sokoto Caliphate literature among the female Islamiyah students in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
No one taught us	89	55.6
I don't know	18	11.3

We are overwhelm with learning Qur'an	53	33.1
Total	160	100.0

The Table 5 indicates the reasons for lack of awareness about Sokoto Caliphate literatures among the female respondents. 55.6% said no one taught them, that is why they are not reading Sokoto literatures, 33.1% said they are still learning Qur'an, so as tradition of Hausaland, a student starts with learning Qur'anic letters and learn how to read before going further to learn other books dealing with *Ibadat*, and 11.3% said they don't know. However, there is need to channeled the energy of the students and staff in learning about Sokoto Caliphate, because it is a major historical thing that ever happened to Hausaland. Several important lessons could be leant from Sokoto literatures²⁶. The Sokoto Caliphate had its own literatures drawn from Qur'an and other sources of Islamic Sharia that are intellectually versatile, and affecting sociopolitical dimension of the people²⁷. The literature originating from Sokoto jihad is a product from learned men and women aimed to preserving the Islamic culture and legacy of the people in the Hausaland. Similarly, the literature will guide the female about their role in the society, particularly, the marriage affairs among others²⁸. Ibrahim²⁹ disclosed that, in the Hausaland there were roles performed by the women, such as crop gathering, collection of water, fuel collection, caring for small livestock or homestead, caring for children, restricted trading, foodstuffs preparation, etc. However, the important role played by the Sokoto Caliphate teachers (including females) were teaching, learning instigating social and political reform, and transforming the young knowledge seekers³⁰

Interest/ attitude in learning about Sokoto Caliphate literature among the female Islamiyah students in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria

Table 6: Interest/ attitude in learning about Sokoto Caliphate literatures among the female Islamiyah students in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria

Interest	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	150	93.75
No	10	6.25
Total	160	100.0

Table 6 shows the result of interest assessment concerning Sokoto Caliphate literatures; therewith, majority (93.75%) are interested to learn or be taught about Sokoto Caliphate

literatures; while, 6.25% are not interested. The results here indicated that, the female students have positive interest or attitude pertaining Sokoto Caliphate literatures. Thus, this could be triggered to actions, by using interventions to incite students to learn more about Sokoto Caliphate and put the knowledge to actions. Interest is an important factor that instigate development of any aspect of human endeavor³¹. The interest spur students to select, and follow a zeal or dream to fruition³². Females have numerous lessons to learn from Sokoto Caliphate indeed; Shehu's mother, grandmother, daughters were eminent scholars, many women serving as teachers were recorded in that historic struggle³³. Women and girls should be taught, in order to make "learned society" because educated women teach children and youngsters, for instance³⁴. The interest of the females when aroused could be a stirring force that can incites them to learn at least major aspects of Sokoto Caliphate, including monotheism, justice, scholarship, history, human rights, ethics, and trading³⁵. On the other hand, scientifically, interest of female student could be gingered towards taking right actions and practicing values of Sokoto Caliphate, Indeed, interest is an interpersonal thing that make or mar behavior change³⁶.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the perception of female Islamiyah school students regarding Sokoto Caliphate literature in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, Nigeria. The findings revealed a poor awareness of Sokoto Caliphate literature among the respondents, with only 13.8% able to state Shehu's contributions to Islam in Hausaland. However, a significant majority (93.75%) expressed interest in learning about Sokoto Caliphate literature. The study highlights the need for interventions to promote awareness and education about Sokoto Caliphate literature, particularly among female students in Islamiyah schools. By doing so, we can tap into the rich intellectual legacy of the Sokoto Caliphate and promote a more informed and enlightened society.

¹ Qur'an, 4:1

² Aliyu, GM., & Ganiy, A.A.(2013). The contribution of Islamiyyah schools to the development of education in Nigeria. *Development of Arabic language and literature in Nigeria*, 1(1), 26-32.

³ Qur'an,13:108

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