

Relevance of the Educational Approach of the Sokoto Caliphate in Promoting Self-Reliance Among Muslims in Sokoto State

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Abstract

This study examines the relevance of the educational approach of the Sokoto Caliphate in promoting self-reliance among Muslim youth in Sokoto metropolis. The research highlights the growing issues of idleness, begging, unemployment, and associated negative activities such as crime and drug abuse among youth in Sokoto. Despite Islamic teachings discouraging begging except in extreme cases of necessity, many youth resorts to this practice due to limited economic opportunities and inadequate education. The study employs a mixed-method approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, including questionnaires administered to 500 respondents across key Local government areas. Findings reveal that the educational principles of the Sokoto Caliphate historically fostered economic independence and self-reliance, which remain relevant today. The research advocates for integrating these teachings into contemporary curricula, establishing vocational centers, and organizing awareness campaigns to combat youth unemployment and dependency. Recommendations emphasize collaborative efforts among government bodies and religious leaders to leverage Sokoto Caliphate's educational models for sustainable youth empowerment and socio-economic development. Summary and conclusion were also made.

Introduction

Sokoto Caliphate had been centers of bustling economic activities for self-reliance for centuries, prior to the emergence of the caliphate there were various types of economic activities. The main preoccupation of the people was farming, which was extensively done during the rainy season. A part from seasonal farming, a reasonable form of irrigation was also practiced. Both food and cash crops were cultivated side by side, especially guinea-corn, millet and other agricultural products for keeping youths self-reliant. A part from farming Sokoto Caliphate noted for active participation commercial activities. J.H Yola (2004). People of the Caliphate were engaged in long distance of trade(fatauci) which usually took them to different parts of Africa in general and Sokoto caliphate in particular, for the purpose of exporting their goods and importing other

products from those areas which were outside their traditional areas such as gwanja, timbuktu, borno and the jukun markets, which is observed that this business transaction easily helped the economic growth and self-reliance to the people of the caliphate in particular. They also engaged in internal trade (kasuwanci), this was especially the case with merchants with small scale capital for the self-reliance of the general masses. This has resulted people of the caliphate to be conversant with trading in different commodities such as [gold](#), ivory, salt, iron, tin, weapons, horses, dyed cotton cloth, kola nuts, glassware and metal. Cities specialised in the manufacture or trade of certain goods, for example, dyes - especially indigo at Katsina and Daura or [Silver](#) Jewellery at Kebbi and Zamfara. The caliphate, which comprises the entire Hausaland, became famous (and still is today) for its finely worked leather goods such as water bags, saddles, harnesses, and sacks to transport goods for the region's trade caravans. Various [crafts](#) were organised into guilds which ensured standards were maintained and prices were kept fair. Hausa agriculture, boosted by such techniques as crop rotation and the use of fertilizers, produced crops which included millet, sorghum, rice, maize, peanuts, beans, henna, tobacco, and onions. In addition, fishing and hunting were carried out and goats raised (important for ritual sacrifices) and donkeys bred (the principal form of transport). Each city had its own markets where both men and [women](#) sold their wares, and many cities also had international trade markets where merchants sold in bulk. Goods were exchanged in kind although salt, cloth, and slaves were often used as a standardised form of commodity-currency this entire struggle made for essential self-reliance of the people. Thus, major economic activities in Hausa land include agricultural activities, production industries and other commercial activities.

Statement of the Problems

Islam encourages self-reliance and avoidance of redundancy. This made the mission of the sokoto caliphate to uphold and enshrine all the teachings of Islam. In view of this, the caliphate not only encourages seeking for knowledge and moral purification but has equally made trading, farming, and other forms of businesses as integral aspects of the religion. In the same vein, the caliphate introduced certain skills and made it a curriculum in their studies to buttress the significance of self-reliance. This brought the economic independence of the caliphate and as well individuals. Sokoto caliphate operated its activities and attained all economic and political prowess appear to be downgrading and mostly attributed to economic and political retrograded. Perhaps the obvious reason could be attributed to change of attitude when materialism is prioritizing over productivity and when redundancy preferred over self-possession. The mischievous attitude of some youth who consider certain business activities as inferior after attaining to western education qualification and decide to remain idle is a great miscalculation. The majorities among the youth, who do not value education or not opportune to have access to western education and decide to earn their livelihood through mischievous means as either political vanguard or beggars, not only hamper the economic growth but open to all crimes and setback, which clearly contravene the guidance of the Sokoto caliphate. Of course, there are clear unemployment challenges in the contemporary north-west but the expansion of human needs have open to much availability of business activities even though they may look degrading in the sight of many. Nevertheless, no matter how inferior or degrading a business activity is, it has surpassed begging and redundancy, which are sources of enslavement. Of course, Islam viewed all legal means to meet the demands of livelihood as better to begging. The value of education is not attached to material acquisition but for safeguarding integrity and emancipation from slavery. Perhaps it may not be in the interest of some well-to-do members of the society to see the youth

independent, which may not allow manipulation of them for their political benefits and likewise the government may not be serious in engaging the youth into productivity or attainment to quality education for the mission of dominance. Hence, the economic empowerment programs are either selective or unfeasible. Nonetheless, are there excuses for a physically healthy and mentally fit to choose the life of redundancy? Or do we consider the guidance of the Sokoto caliphate on the promotion of self-reliance as outdated?

Objectives of the Study

1. To appraise the educational approach of the Sokoto Caliphate to the promotion of self-reliance among youths.
2. To examine the relevance of educational approach of the Sokoto Caliphate in the promotion self-reliance among youth in Sokoto state

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the educational approach of the Sokoto caliphate to the promotion of self-reliance among the youths?
2. To what extent the educational approach of the Sokoto Caliphate is relevant to the promotion of Self-Reliance among Muslims in Sokoto state Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study could not be overemphasized due to the fact that it is an attempt to address the most disturbing issue among the youths and community at large. Therefore, the significance is highlighted in the following points: The position of Islam on self-reliance and absence of redundancy will clearly be stated, and this may change the attitude of the Muslim youth who deliberately chosen to be idle and depend on others. The highlight from the teachings of the Sokoto caliphate on the promotion of self-reliance not only portrays their scholarship capacity but has equally presents the essence of the Caliphate which clear doubt about the authenticity of the Jihad that was responsible for the establishment of the caliphate.

Review of Related Literature

It is without doubt that the issue of self-reliance in Islam is very important and has a wide range of scope. Different scholars have written extensively on one aspect of self-reliance or the other, but to the best of this research no one among the contemporary researchers has written on this topic. Given this as an impetus, this research therefore, attempts to bridge the gap in the concern of previous researchers. Geographical location of Sokoto. Sokoto is a major city located in the extreme Northwest of [Nigeria](#), near the [confluence](#) of the River and the [Rima River](#). As of 2006 it has a population of people over 427,760. Sokoto is the modern-day capital of [Sokoto State](#) was previously the capital of the north-western state. The name Sokoto (which is the modern/anglicized version of the local name, sakkwato) is of Arabic origin, representing sooq, 'market' in English. It is also known as Sakkwato, Birnin [Shaihu](#) da [Bello](#) (Sokoto, the city of [Shehu](#) and [Bello](#)). The seat of the former [Sokoto Caliphate](#), the city is predominantly Muslim and an important seat of Islamic learning in Nigeria. The Sultan who heads the caliphate is effectively the spiritual leader of Nigerian Muslims. Opeyemi (2021)

Sokoto state economic life:

Sokoto state in the present form came into being in October 1996 then Zamfara state was created by the then head of state commander in chief of the arm forces general Sani Abacha .over eighty 80 percent of inhabitants of Sokoto state practice one form of agriculture or the other they produce crops, such as millets, guinea-corn, Tabaco and vegetable for cash local craft such as blacksmithing weaving, dying, carving and tether works also pay an important role in the economic life of the people of the state. (Tukur (2012)

Sokoto state natural resources:

Sokoto State is equally endowed with natural and mineral resources. Agro-allied industries using the following materials: Cotton, Groundnut, Sorghum, Maize, Rice, Wheat, Sugar cane, Cassava Gum Arabic and Tobacco. As raw materials can be established in the State. Large-scale farming can also be practiced in the State using irrigation water from Goronyo Dam, Lugu, Kalmalo, Wamakko and Kwakwazo lakes among others. Minerals such as Kaolin, Gypsum limestone, literate, Red mills, Phosphate, both yellow and green shade clay, sand etc. are available in the State in commercial quantities. Mineral based industries, using these raw materials could be established in the State. The Tsetse-free-open grassland has made animal husbandry a very lucrative venture in the State. There are all kinds of animals both wild and domestic in the State. Sokoto ranks second in Livestock production in the country with animal population of well over eight (8) million. The availability of these economic potentials provide good investment opportunities, particularly in aggro-allied industries such as flour mills, tomato processing, sugar refining, textiles, glue, tanning, fish canning, dairy etc. That is why the 23 Local Government Headquarters in the State have been connected to the National grid. (internet source)

Recent economy growth and challenges encountered by Sokoto states

Sokoto State has been seeing growth in its agriculture sector, particularly in the production of crops such as rice, maize, and wheat. The state government has been implementing various agricultural initiatives to boost productivity and reduce food insecurity in the region. However, Sokoto State still faces challenges such as high poverty rates, inadequate infrastructure, and low levels of education. These factors have hindered the state's overall economic development.

According to Merriam Webster:

“Self-reliance simply as ‘reliance on one’s own efforts and abilities’, which doesn’t quite do the concept much justice, either. Economists defined self-sufficiency or self-reliance as the state of not requiring any aid, support, interaction or trade with the outside world. It is generally believed that Self-reliance is a myth if it means a country depend on itself for all economic activities and thereby shut out the rest of the world”. webster (1831)

It is defined as a condition in which a nation makes free and voluntary choices in the disposition of its resources and output and in setting its economic and political priorities. This state of affairs is totally distinct from a situation where decision making is constrained by a political or economic situation dictated by external compulsions. It should be very clear that self-reliance signified the capacity and capability of the country to face any crisis on the basis of internal strength. This is only possible if the economy can maintain equilibrium on the basis of commercial transactions including trade and capital movement. In short, it implies self-confidence and the capacity for autonomous goal-setting and decision-making, rejecting all forms of dependence, invited or imposed. (Godfrey 2008)

Importance of Self-Reliance in Islam

Self-reliance in Islam is an integral aspect of Islamic faith. The essence of self-reliance could therefore be viewed in the following points: It leads to a great reward and hence attainment to everlasting blessings of Allah. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ يَدْخُلُ بِالسَّهْمِ الْوَاحِدِ ثَلَاثَةَ نَفَرٍ الْجَنَّةَ صَانِعُهُ
يَحْتَسِبُ فِي صَنَاعَتِهِ الْخَيْرَ وَالرَّامِي بِهِ وَمُنْبَلُهُ

Indeed, Allah admits three people into Paradise because of one arrow: the one who makes it, seeking good in its making; the one who shoots it; and the one who hands it to the archer. (al-Tirmidhi, 1637)

- 1- It safeguard from begging and humiliation. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) says:

لَأَنْ يَأْخُذَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَحْبَلَهُ فَيَأْتِيَ الْجَبَلَ، فَيَجِيءُ بِحِزْمَةِ حَطَبٍ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ، فَيَبِيعُهَا فَيَسْتَعْنِ بِثَمْنِهَا، خَيْرٌ لَهُ
مِنْ أَنْ يَسْأَلَ النَّاسَ أَعْطَوْهُ أَوْ مَنَعُوهُ

For one of you to take his rope, go to the mountain, bring back a bundle of firewood on his back, sell it, and hereby make himself self-sufficient with its price is better for him than asking people, whether they give him something or refuse him. (al-Bukhari, 1471)

In other sayings of the Prophet (may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him)

مَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَسْأَلُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَيْسَ فِي
وَجْهِهِ مَرْغَةٌ لَحْمٍ

:

“A man continues to ask people (for charity) until he comes on the Day of Resurrection with no piece of flesh on his face. (al-Bukhari, 1474)

- 3- It leads to attainment of everlasting joy in paradise after death. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) says:

مَنْ تَكَفَّلَ لِي أَنْ لَا يَسْأَلَ النَّاسَ شَيْءًا فَاتَّكَلْتُ لَهُ بِجَنَّةٍ

Whoever guarantees for me that he will not ask people for anything, I will guarantee for him Paradise. (Abi Dawud, 1643)

Reasons encourages Muslim to be Self-reliant in future:

In his teens, prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessing be upon him) accompanied his uncle on Syrian trading journeys to gain experience in commercial trade. Islamic history states that when Muhammad (may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him) was either nine or twelve years while accompanying the *Makkaans'* caravan to Syria, he met a Christian monk or hermit named [Bahira](#) who is said to have foreseen Muhammad's career as a prophet of Allah. (Ahmad(1913).

In addition to that the below listed reasons are among the above history:

1. You can solve problems and make decisions by yourself.
2. This is critical as people grow older and learn to live independently
3. Allows you to feel happy by yourself, in yourself, and about yourself without needing to

rely on others;

The word “Youths”

Youths generally period started from childhood and adulthood. The term youth is defined by oxford dictionary (7th edition) as the time of life when a person is young, especially before a child become an adult. The united states general assembly sees the youths as those people between the age of 5 and 24 years. Youth qualities are seriously needed in the past, Present and in the next coming future, for achieving noble object of the society. Every sector of the human endeavor must need the function of youths religiously socially politically and economically. Youth in Africa generally are about one point two billion people, while more than that living in the world, this estimation concluded that every one person in five is between age of fifteen 15 and 24 years a 18% of the world population are youth and children five to fourteen years comprises of about 14%. However, the total global population of the youths which is likely decrease or increase as decided by world analyst by 2.6 by the 2025. This estimation has no doubt gave birth to the critical thinking of some African countries in struggling to educate their young people and let them be self-reliant, while also anticipating substantial growth in the number of youths. These countries will be doubly challenged in their efforts to assure universal high-quality education which comprises moral education, productive employment and decent work for all especially if necessary, action of making them productive is not been taken. (P.F (2017)

According to Robert Kennedy: (2014)

“This world demands the quality of youths not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will a quality of imagination a predominance of courage over timidity of advantage over the life of ease.”

Research Methodology

The Research Design was conducted via mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative). The research investigated relevance of educational teachings in promoting self-reliance in sokoto caliphate among Muslim youth. Qualitative approach was used to provide a comprehensive understanding of how educational teaching in Sokoto Caliphate promotes self-reliance among Muslim youth. The approach of this study is divided into three chapters, the first two chapters employed a qualitative research design, while in chapter four quantitative approach will be used. Qualitative design was used to explain some concepts related to relevance of educational teachings in promoting self-reliance in sokoto caliphate among Muslim youth, which enables to gather in-depth insights on the topic. And the data were gathered from different sources include books, journals, unpublished Dissertations and Theses, conferences, paper presentations, and other documents that were acquired through web databases. While, quantitative approach was used to confirm theories related to relevance of educational teachings in promoting self-reliance in sokoto caliphate among Muslim youth, which enables establishment of generalization of facts about the topic. And this required questionnaire for data collection and compilation. The population of this study was the whole Muslims youth in Sokoto Caliphate. This is needed in accepting generalization and conclusion of the study. Sampling procedure for this study is purposive sampling procedure and non-probability sampling. This sampling procedure was used because, the current study is undertaken for exploratory purposes. The researcher selected a sample of 500 respondents from Sokoto state. The basis for the selection of these states was because of the higher number of Muslims youth as well as Islamic Scholars teaching in those

states, which are the target of the study. Purposive sampling was used in order to get good prospects for accurate information about the relevance of educational teachings in promoting self-reliance in sokoto caliphate among Muslim youth. The instruments used for the collection of data in this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to some Muslims youth and some Scholars, which have relationship with either the teaching or learning in promoting self-reliance in sokoto caliphate. According to Abu Abdussamad (2000:93) "... questionnaire should be used because of the economy it offers in terms of time and effort and its availability to demand for data in a uniform manner from all the respondents." The questionnaire was designed based on the objective of the study and it was written in English language. But research assistants was employed to assist and guide in the distribution, filling and retrieving of the questionnaires. The validity of the instruments used in this research, the questionnaire was drafted and copies was given to the supervisors and other specialists on matters of questionnaire for vetting and validation. While the reliability of the instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot testing to evaluate its reliability before conducting the main study. A small sample of respondents, representing the target population, was selected to fill in the questionnaire. The pilot testing phase allowed the researcher to identify any potential issues, ambiguities, or inconsistencies in the instrument and make necessary modifications. The results of the pilot testing indicated the reliability or otherwise of the instrument. The researcher used a structured questionnaire for the collection of data, and research assistants was used to help in the distributing and retrieving the questionnaires, in order to save time, money and energy of the researcher, since the distribution of all the questionnaires would be difficult for the researcher to carry it alone without getting assistance from other people. This is because of the time factor of the program and energy it may take. The researcher distributed 500 questionnaires, where 476 were retrieved. The researchers distributed 150 questionnaires in Sokoto North, but 142 were retrieved. 150 questionnaires were also distributed in Tambuwal, but 139 were retrieved. 100 questionnaires were distributed in Kware, but 98 were retrieved. In Sabon Birni, 100 questionnaires were distributed, but 97 were retrieved. The researcher used statistical tool for social science to compute simple percentage and frequencies to analyse the data collected. These tools were used to support the research analysis of the sources and to better fulfill the goals and objectives of the study.

Result and Discussion

Research Question one:

What were the educational teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate and their roles in promoting Self-Reliance among Muslims in the then society?

Table 1: Number of respondents that have an idea of the educational teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate and their roles in promoting Self-Reliance among Muslims in the society

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Educational teachings during the Sokoto Caliphate encouraged economic independence among Muslims.	337	70.8
Islamic scholars in the Sokoto Caliphate taught the importance of self-employment as a means of livelihood.	96	20.2

Islamic education under the Sokoto Caliphate contributed to the establishment of skilled labor and local industries.	43	9
Total	476	100

Field study 2026

Table 1 presents the number and percentage of the respondents in which four hundred and seventy-six (476) questionnaires retrieved out of which 337 (70.8%) indicated that educational teachings during the Sokoto Caliphate encouraged economic independence among Muslims, while, 96 (20,2%) of the respondents indicated that Islamic scholars in the Sokoto Caliphate taught the importance of self-employment as a means of livelihood. 43 (9%) of the respondents indicated that Islamic education under the Sokoto Caliphate contributed to the establishment of skilled labor and local industries.

Research Question two:

Are the educational teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate relevant in promoting selfreliance among youth in the contemporary North-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

Table 2: Highlighted on the relevance of the educational teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate in promoting self-reliance among youth in sokoto state Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage
The principles of self-reliance in the Sokoto Caliphate can still be applied to today's educational system.	59	12.40
The Sokoto Caliphate's teachings are suitable for solving youth dependency in today's North-West Nigeria.	137	28.77
The teachings of the Caliphate can promote entrepreneurship among present-day Muslim youth.	82	17.23
Reviving the Sokoto Caliphate's educational values could help address modern youth unemployment.	96	20.17
The integration of Sokoto Caliphate teachings into contemporary curriculum can enhance youth self-reliance.	68	14.29
The educational teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate is not relevant in promoting self-reliance among youth in the contemporary in Sokoto state, Nigeria	34	7.14
Total	476	100

Field study (2026)

Table 2 presents the number and percentage of the respondents in which four hundred and seventy-six (476) questionnaires retrieved out of which 59 (12.40%) indicated that the principles of self-reliance in the Sokoto Caliphate can still be applied to today's educational system, while, 137 (28.77%) of the respondents indicated that the Sokoto Caliphate's teachings are suitable for solving youth dependency in today's North-West Nigeria. 82 (17.23%) of the respondents indicated that the teachings of the Caliphate can

promote entrepreneurship among present-day Muslim youth, 96 (20.17%) of the respondents indicated that reviving the Sokoto Caliphate's educational values could help address modern youth unemployment. 68 (14.29%) of the respondents indicated that the integration of Sokoto Caliphate teachings into contemporary curriculum can enhance youth self-reliance, while 34 (7.14) of the respondents indicated that the educational teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate is not relevant in promoting self-reliance among youth in Sokoto state, Nigeria

Findings

This research titled "Relevance of the Educational Teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate in Promoting Self-Reliance among Muslims in Sokoto state, Nigeria" was able to establish the following findings.

1. The research found out that, the educational teachings during the Sokoto Caliphate encouraged economic independence among Muslims.
2. The research also found out that, Sokoto Caliphate principles of self-reliance can still be applied in our contemporary period.

Discussion of Major Findings

These findings show a strong link between the educational ideas of the Sokoto Caliphate leaders and the empowerment of today's youth. The high level of awareness about these teachings indicates that past contributions to education and self-reliance continue to affect current discussions about learning.

1. The research found out that, the educational teachings during the Sokoto Caliphate encouraged economic independence among Muslims. This indicates that the Sokoto Caliphate's educational system historically encouraged economic self-reliance, fostering skills and attitudes conducive to entrepreneurship and local industry development. Such findings suggest that these teachings could be relevant in contemporary efforts to reduce youth unemployment and dependence on external aid.

Reviving or integrating these principles into current educational frameworks can potentially promote economic independence among youth.

2. The research also found out that, Sokoto Caliphate principles of self-reliance can still be applied in our contemporary period. This demonstrates a predominantly positive perception of the relevance of Sokoto Caliphate's educational principles in modern contexts, especially as solutions to youth dependency and unemployment. The data supports the idea that traditional Islamic educational values still hold potential in addressing contemporary socio-economic challenges. However, a minority remains skeptical, indicating the need for contextual adaptation and integration.

Conclusion

The teachings of the Sokoto Caliphate provide a rich source of guidance for contemporary educational reform and youth empowerment strategies. The findings demonstrated that by integrating historical values focused on self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and community involvement into current educational frameworks, modern leaders and educators can help foster a resilient and self-sufficient generation. The interplay between historical context and present challenges underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to youth empowerment that reflects the significance of cultural heritage in contemporary society.

Recommendations

1. There is a need for the government and religious scholars to incorporate the educational principles and self-reliance values of the Sokoto Caliphate into modern school and religious curricula for financial independence to students.
2. There is also need for the scholars to organize seminars, workshops, and media campaigns to increase awareness of the historical contributions of the Sokoto Caliphate's educational system, highlighting its relevance to current youth empowerment and economic development.

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