

## The structure of madrasa education in nigeria and government initiatives

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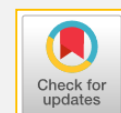
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### ABSTRACT

This research discusses the role and dynamics of madrassas in Nigeria, starting from the background of the development of Islamic educational institutions rooted in local traditions and historical influences of the Sokoto Caliphate, to reveal the structure, types, curriculum, and challenges faced by traditional and modern madrassas in the North and South. This study aims to determine the structure in madrassas in the country and government initiatives in madrassas. Qualitative methods are used through interviews and field observations, combined with analyzing library documents and sources. The results of the study show that there are significant differences between madrassas in the North that emphasize Islamic and community-based education, and madrassas in the South that prioritize integrated education between religion and the public, as well as obstacles such as limited resources, inequality of facilities, and modernization demands. Strengthening governance, curriculum integration, and government support are key to optimizing madrassas as relevant educational and social institutions in Nigeria.

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### Introduction

Madrasas in Nigeria are an essential foundation in the development of Islamic education and play a significant role in shaping the country's cultural, spiritual, and educational landscape. Historically, these institutions emerged from Islamic missionary activities and have continued to adapt to the population's diverse needs. This institution is firmly rooted in Islamic traditions that have been present for a long time, primarily through the path of da'wah and the spread of Islam in the West African region. Over time, madrassas have transformed to answer the community's diverse needs, ranging from religious aspects to the demands of formal education. In its development, the structure and operation of madrassas varied across the region, reflecting the unique socio-economic, cultural, and religious contexts of Northern and Southern Nigeria (Khalid, 2020). This difference demonstrates how Islamic education is processed according to the needs and realities of the local community, so a madrasa model is not uniform but rich in functions.

Traditionally, madrassas such as the Almajiri system in northern Nigeria emphasize Qur'an memorization and Islamic jurisprudence, primarily catering to underprivileged families who rely on community support for education (Osayomi et al. 2021). This model

emphasizes the memorization of the Qur'an, teaching the fundamentals of religion, and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). This madrasa is a place for spiritual guidance and strengthening Islamic identity. However, since most students come from low-income families, the Almajiri madrasa relies heavily on community support and donations from the surrounding community to operate. These institutions often serve low-income families, who are heavily dependent on community support (Adamu 2015)

In contrast, southern Nigeria's madrassas system integrates Islamic studies with formal education to address the demands of urban and modern society, reflecting a transformation to meet changing contexts and aspirations. Madrasas in Southern Nigeria tend to use an integrated approach. This system combines Islamic education with formal mathematics, science, and language curricula. This integrative model emerged as a response to urban communities' more complex social conditions and the need for modern competencies. Thus, madrassas in the southern region not only focus on religious education, but also prepare students to compete in the world of work and contemporary life. This is reflected in the Nigerian government's policy of formalizing Almajiri education and integrating Western education without neglecting Qur'an learning so that students become relevant and valuable in modern society (Jimba 2021).

Overall, madrassas in Nigeria exhibit a distinctive diversity in the Islamic education system. Traditional madrassas in the north emphasize spiritual and social aspects, while integrated madrassas in the south prioritize a balance between religion and general education. This difference is one of the riches of education in Nigeria, and it is a challenge to build an education system that is inclusive, relevant, and adaptive to the needs of today's society. Although the integration program faces various obstacles, such as a shortage of qualified teachers, limited infrastructure, and inconsistencies in government policies, it is a significant effort to bridge the gap between traditional madrassas and formally integrated schools that are more suited to the needs of urban and modern societies (Teke, Khalid, and Katami 2022).

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the development of madrassas in Nigeria, which play an essential role in Islamic education while facing various modernization challenges. The striking differences between madrassas in the North and South regions, in curriculum, management systems, and government support, show interesting dynamics to study.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative approach to explore the structure and dynamics of madrassas in Nigeria. It provides an in-depth understanding of the types of madrasas, curriculum, operational frameworks, and their impact on education and society. Primary data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as madrasa administrators, teachers, students, parents, and government officials, to get first-hand perspectives on madrasa operations, challenges, and achievements in various regions. Field visits to selected madrassas complemented the interviews with direct observation of the facilities, teaching methods, and student interactions, thus enriching the analysis and capturing the nuances of madrasa education, particularly the regional variations between Northern and Southern Nigeria.

In addition, secondary data is collected from scientific articles, government reports, publications of non-governmental organizations, and library collections, both print and digital, to strengthen and expand the study. Library sources play an essential role in providing relevant information and supporting the validity of findings through data triangulation. The sample selection used purposive techniques, covering traditional, integrated, private, and public institutions in urban and rural areas in Northern and

Southern Nigeria. With this approach, the research can present a comprehensive picture of madrassas' structure, contributions, challenges, and potential in improving the quality of education in Nigeria.

## Result and Discussion

### The Emergence of Madrasas in Nigeria

The education system in Nigeria does share some similarities with neighboring countries in West Africa, such as Niger, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. However, there are significant differences due to the influence of colonialism's history and socio-cultural context. The structure is generally divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, similar to the 6-3-3-4 system in Nigeria, where students spend 6 years in primary school, 3 years in junior high school, 3 years in high school, and 4 years in higher education (Abdul Hamid Alhassan et al. 2025). One of the striking differences lies in the language of instruction in education. Niger, which was under French colonial influence, uses French as the official language of education, while Nigeria uses English (Fosu et al. 2022).

Correspondingly, education policies in Nigeria often adopt foreign models without always considering the local context. This is in contrast to the approach that countries such as Ghana and Rwanda are beginning to implement that place more emphasis on integrating local needs in education, for example, with teaching in local languages and the development of relevant vocational training (Fatusi, Adedini, and Mobolaji 2021). In the context of religious education, neighboring countries in the region also have traditional and modern madrassas that integrate religious education with general education. However, the level of formality and integration of this curriculum varies according to the socio-cultural context of each country (Igbokwe, Ejoh, and IHEME 2025). Thus, while there are similarities in the structure of the education system, differences in approaches, language of instruction, and educational policies reflect each country's historical and cultural diversity.

The emergence of madrassas in Nigeria is closely linked to the spread of Islam in West Africa, which began in the early 11th century through trade routes across the Sahara Desert. As Islam established its presence in Nigeria, especially in the north, there was an increased need for structured religious education. This led to the development of madrassas, which initially focused on teaching the Qur'an, Islamic law (*Fiqh*), Arabic, and other spiritual sciences (Khalid, 2020). Initially, madrassas were informal community-based institutions usually located in mosques, where clerics, known as *ulama*, would teach students in Qur'an reading, memorization, and the basic principles of religion. This early madrasa was not a structured school in the modern sense but rather an informal learning center that met the local community's needs (Olaniyi 2018).

Over time, the madrasa system in Nigeria became more formal, especially with the emergence of the Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century. Under Uthman Dan Fodio's and his successors' leadership, madrassas were instituted to spread Islamic knowledge throughout the Caliphate. They began to adopt a more structured curriculum that included religion and some secular subjects such as literature, philosophy, and arithmetic, which were taught in conjunction with Islamic studies (Adamu 2015). The influence of the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria gave birth to a spiritual and practical education system, making madrassas the intellectual center and the foundation of religious education in Nigeria.

### The First Madrasas in Nigeria

The origins of the first madrassas in Nigeria are difficult to determine due to the informal nature of early Islamic education. However, many historical records highlight Kano, located in northern Nigeria, as one of the earliest cities where madrasa education was officially established. Kano is a prominent city in the Sokoto Caliphate, the center of Islamic scholarship in the region during the 19th century (Khalid 2020). During the reign of Uthman

and Fodio, madrassas were systematically developed to educate future scholars and leaders. The establishment of madrassas in Kano marked a shift from informal Qur'anic education in mosques to more structured educational institutions that could better serve the region's growing Muslim population (Ahmed 2017). This formalization process also marked the beginning of the widespread establishment of madrassas in other parts of the Sokoto Caliphate, such as Zaria, Katsina, and Sokoto.

One of Kano's earliest and most influential madrassas was the Kano Qur'an School, which became a major center of Islamic learning. Schools play an essential role in providing Qur'anic education while incorporating broader academic subjects, thus influencing the structure of future madrassas throughout the region (Adamu 2015). The success of the Kano Qur'an School and other similar institutions contributed significantly to the spread of Islamic education in Nigeria, particularly in the northern region. Although it is difficult to identify the first madrassas with certainty, the emergence of madrasa education in Kano in the early 19th century marked a significant milestone for the formal establishment of Islamic educational institutions that later became a significant part of the Nigerian education system.

### **Madrasas in Northern and Southern Nigeria**

Madrasas in Nigeria have flourished over the centuries and have been shaped by regional, cultural, and historical influences. These educational institutions play an important role in Muslim communities' religious, artistic, and intellectual life in Northern and Southern Nigeria, albeit in different forms and structures. The nature of madrassas in this region reflects the historical prominence of Islam in the north and the relatively recent spread of Islamic education in the south. This section explores the structures, roles, and challenges madrassas face in both parts of Nigeria.

Madrasa education in Nigeria shows significant regional gaps, especially between the northern and southern regions. In Northern Nigeria, Islamic education systems, including Tsangaya and Almajiri, have strong historical roots but have recently faced challenges, mainly due to violent extremism spread by groups such as Boko Haram, which strongly opposes the Western educational paradigm (Atoi Ewere 2022). Boko Haram's actions manifest an ideological rejection of an education system that they consider "un-Islamic", which leads to widespread disruption in educational institutions (Babajide and Orji 2023).

In contrast, the southern region tends to adopt a more integrated approach to education, balancing Islamic teachings with Western educational frameworks. The increasing relevance of Islamic social finance is essential to improving access and quality of education in both regions, especially to creating a sustainable funding structure for these madrasas, which is crucial in both cultural contexts (Muhammad and Al-Shaghdari 2024). This branching educational landscape requires targeted interventions to promote equitable quality of education across Nigeria.

### **Madrasas in Northern Nigeria**

Madrasas in Northern Nigeria have a historical background significantly linked to Islamic heritage, with their roots traced back to the beginning of the spread of Islam in the region. While some records point to the arrival of Islam in the Hausa area around the 11th century, others highlight the establishment of schools such as the Tsangaya system in the 16th century (Ibn-Mohammed, Suleiman, and Eikojonwa 2021). These institutions have become the center of religious and intellectual life in Northern Nigeria. Initially, the primary focus of his learning was the Qur'an, Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and Arabic studies. The madrassas are primarily developed in the northern regions, particularly in states such as Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Zamfara, and Bauchi. Over time, their curriculum has grown rapidly (Danzaria, Frances, and Ibrahim 2023). The traditional education system, exemplified by the Almajiri model, was initially designed to provide Quranic education to

disadvantaged children. However, concerns have arisen regarding its informal nature, lack of modern curriculum, and unfavorable living conditions faced by students (Bolu-Steve and Okesina 2023).

In recent years, the Almajiri system has attracted attention due to its socio-economic implications and the increasing number of school dropouts in Northern Nigeria, which, according to reports, reached about 10.2 million in 2022 (Nwoke, Oyiga, and Cochrane 2024). The interaction between Almajiri education and socio-political instability has positioned it as a controversial topic within education reform and social justice, especially in states such as Kano and Sokoto, where such schools are widespread (Fahm et al. 2022). There is a growing recognition around the need to integrate Islamic education with the formal education system as a potential strategy to address these challenges (Dukawa, Usman, and Gwandu 2023).

Madrasas in Northern Nigeria generally focus on memorizing and reciting the Qur'an, with some schools adding subjects such as fiqh, hadith, and Arabic grammar. At the same time, the integration of formal education is still limited. In recent years, governments and non-governmental organizations have attempted to reform the Almajiri system by incorporating formal education, vocational training, and social services. Under former President Goodluck Jonathan, the Nigerian government launched an initiative to integrate the Almajiri education system with formal schools. These initiatives include constructing new schools and providing teachers trained in Islamic and secular education. However, challenges remain, including insufficient funding, overcrowding, and the reluctance of many parents to send their children to formal schools (Armet Suleiman 2018).

#### **Madrasas in Southern Nigeria**

In contrast to the North, the presence and development of madrassas in Southern Nigeria is relatively recent, reflecting the spread of Islam in the region. Southern Nigeria has experienced a slower but steady increase in madrassas over the past century. The growth of madrassas in the area is often attributed to the expansion of Islam through migration, interfaith marriages, and the growing number of Muslim communities in major southern cities such as **Lagos, Ilorin, and Ibadan**. Madrassas in the South are generally more integrated into the wider education system. Unlike the Almajiri system in the North, madrassas in Southern Nigeria often offer religious and secular education, focusing on subjects such as English, mathematics, science, and Qur'an studies. This madrasa aims to equip students with skills that enrich spiritually and practically in the modern world (Olaniyi 2018).

In Southern Nigeria, many madrassas are private institutions run by Muslim individuals or organizations. The integrated madrassas model in Nigeria, especially in the urban areas of Southern Nigeria, combines Islamic religious education with a formal curriculum to be more compatible with national education standards (Jimba 2021). Madrassas in the southern region of Nigeria generally run side by side with public schools and offer alternative education for Muslim children who want to get a religious and formal education. The curriculum is more flexible than madrassas in the north because it combines religious studies with conventional subjects, so that it is more in line with national education standards. For example, madrassas in Lagos have integrated Arabic and the Qur'an with social studies, history, and basic literacy to prepare students for the national education system.

One of the essential characteristics of madrassas in the South is the diversity of students. While Northern madrassas cater mostly to Muslim children, Southern madrassas often cater to Muslim and non-Muslim students, reflecting the more diverse and urban demographic composition of Southern Nigeria (Teke, Khalid, and Katami 2022). Many parents in the South choose to enroll their children in madrassas to ensure that they receive

religious education in addition to formal schooling. However, some parents still prioritize secular education, especially in more urbanized areas (A. Suleiman 2018). Although madrassas in the South are proliferating, they still face challenges in providing facilities, trained educators, and funding, especially in private madrassas. As a result, some madrassas in this region have been unable to match the quality of infrastructure and education of those in the North.

### **Main Differences Between North and South Madrasa**

Some key differences between madrassas in Northern and Southern Nigeria are mainly shaped by each region's historical and cultural context.

#### **1. Curriculum**

Northern madrassas, especially in rural areas, focus heavily on Qur'anic education, emphasizing Islamic studies. In contrast, madrassas in the South tend to integrate secular subjects such as English, mathematics, and social studies alongside Islamic teachings, more aligned with Nigeria's national educational standards and provide a well-rounded education (Ibn-Mohammed, Suleiman, and Eikojonwa 2021). With this curriculum integration, madrassas in Nigeria also serve as centers for religious development and general education, providing the academic skills and competencies necessary for national development (Mufid, Nugraha, and Shobaruddin 2024). This shows the alignment between the development of madrassas in Nigeria and the direction of Islamic education globally, which emphasizes the importance of a balance between religious education and modern science (Butt, Sadaqat, and Shear 2023). Therefore, madrassas are strategic locations in educating a generation that is not only religious but also highly competitive in the era of globalization (Zuhri 2023).

#### **1. OS**

The Almajiri system in the North operates informally and has faced substantial criticism over overcrowding and inadequate facilities, as well as its lack of structure (Fahm et al. 2022). In contrast, Southern madrassas typically function as private institutions with a more structured approach, often combining formal education with religious teachings, thus ensuring that children receive a comprehensive educational experience (Auwal 2021).

#### **2. Government Support**

The government has invested more in reforming the Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria, recognizing the urgent need to integrate these students into the formal education system (Bolu-Steve and Okesina 2023). In Southern Nigeria, although the madrasa system does not face the same level of scrutiny, there is still an ongoing need for government support to improve infrastructure and provide resources to ensure the quality of education compared to public schools (Dukawa, Usman, and Gwandu 2023).

### **Types of Madrasas in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, madrassas vary in structure, function, and curriculum based on geographic location, level of formalization, and target community. The main madrassas in Nigeria can be classified into traditional, modern, and government-supported madrasas. These institutions offer different curricula, and their hours of operation depend on local norms and the level of formal education they provide. Below is an in-depth overview of the types of madrassas in Nigeria, their curriculum, and their hours of operation.

#### **1. Traditional Madrasa (Almajiri School)**

These institutions primarily study the Qur'an and Islamic jurisprudence, often reflecting historical practice. They usually operate within an informal framework and emphasize memorization of the Qur'an and basic Islamic teachings without much integration of secular subjects. This model is particularly prevalent in Northern Nigeria, distinguishing its educational approach from the more formal system (Nwoke, Oyiga,

and Cochrane 2024). Traditional madrasas, particularly the **Almajiri** system prevalent in Northern Nigeria, focus primarily on Qur'anic education. The *traditional Almajiri education system* in Nigeria emphasizes Islamic religious learning with a curriculum that focuses on the recitation of the Qur'an (tajweed), which is the teaching of reading the Qur'an with the correct pronunciation according to the rules, accompanied by encouragement for students to memorize (hifz) the entire content of the Qur'an. The Almajiri education system in Northern Nigeria shows similarities to traditional madrasas in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which specifically focus on Qur'an memorization and *fiqh* study without significant integration of secular science. In contrast, madrasas in Egypt and Indonesia have undergone profound reforms and integrated into the national education system, including a religious curriculum and modern subjects (Suriyati et al. 2023).

In addition, students also study the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH which emphasizes Islamic ethics and traditions, *Islamic fiqh* or jurisprudence which is usually focused on personal rituals such as prayer, fasting, and zakat, Arabic grammar to support the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an, and Islamic history which includes the early stories of the Muslim community and the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The traditional Almajiri system generally does not focus on modern subjects such as math, science, or language studies, although some attempts to integrate those subjects are increasingly being made. Regarding learning time, *Almajiri* schools are usually open from 5:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., followed by around 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a learning structure focusing on memorization and reading. After formal study hours, students generally engage in community activities, assist teachers, or attend additional classes if available.

## 2. Modernization Madrasa (Integrated Madrasa)

In Southern Nigeria, madrasas are increasingly established as formal educational institutions incorporating religious and secular subjects into their curriculum. These modern madrasas often function alongside the public school system, providing a comprehensive education that includes English, math, and science subjects. This hybrid model aims to equip students with the skills necessary for contemporary society while balancing religious education with formal academic subjects (Auwal 2021). Modern madrasas in Northern and Southern Nigeria have begun to integrate religious and secular subjects to prepare students in Islamic knowledge and academic disciplines to contribute to national development. The madrasa system in the southern part of Nigeria has transformed following the global trend of Islamic education that integrates religious curriculum with secular disciplines, similar to the existing model in Indonesia and other countries. This change reflects the transition from madrasas as institutions that focus only on religious teaching to formal educational institutions relevant to the needs of the 21st century (Asari et al. 2024).

The modern madrasa curriculum includes religious studies (the Qur'an, Hadith, *Fiqh*, *Nahu*, and Islamic history), Arabic for Qur'anic understanding and communication, as well as secular subjects such as mathematics (arithmetic, algebra, and geometry), science (biology and computers), English and language arts with an emphasis on literacy, and social sciences that include national history, geography, and citizenship. In addition, some madrasas also offer vocational skills, such as carpentry, sewing, or computer literacy, to equip students with practical skills that can support independence. From an operational perspective, modern madrasas implement a more formal education system, similar to public schools. Learning activities usually start at 07.30 to 08.00, starting with the reading of the Qur'an before moving on to secular subjects, and end around 15.00–16.00. Throughout the day, students follow a structured

schedule with a balanced division of time for religious and academic studies, accompanied by breaks for prayer and meals. In contrast to traditional madrasas, this institution emphasizes the organization of the schedule and the balance between religious education, academics, and practical skills, so that it is better prepared to facilitate students to face national exams and the challenges of modern life.

### 3. Government-Supported Madrasa (Almajiri Integrated School)

Government initiatives aimed at educational reform, particularly in integrating traditional madrasa students into the formal education system, supported the madrasa. These programs focus on reducing educational gaps and improving the quality of education by aligning madrasa curricula with national education standards, thereby ensuring a well-rounded education that maintains Islamic teachings (Fahm et al. 2022). Government-backed madrasas, such as those established under former President Goodluck Jonathan's Almajiri Education Program, integrate Qur'an study with formal schooling.

Madrasas in modern Nigeria typically implement a hybrid curriculum that combines religious education with formal national education. The curriculum includes Islamic studies such as reciting and memorizing the Qur'an, *fiqh*, and hadith; Arabic for comprehension and communication; and general subjects such as mathematics, science, English, and language arts. In addition, civic education, social studies, and health and vocational skills are also taught to equip students with practical skills relevant to the needs of society. The madrasa is designed not only to strengthen the fundamentals of Islam but also to help integrate the school-going children of Almajiri into the formal education system so that they can compete in both the context of religion and secular life.

Operationally, government-supported madrassas usually follow formal school hours with a structured schedule, starting between 07.00–09.00 and ending at 16.00–18.00, with breaks for prayers and meals. These institutions generally have more modern infrastructure and function as a bridge between traditional madrassas and formal schools. Traditional madrassas, such as the Almajiri system, still focus on memorizing the Qur'an with less structured learning patterns. In contrast, modern and private madrassas have integrated general subjects in a neater system. With its varied purpose, curriculum, and operations, each type of madrasa in Nigeria is vital in shaping the educational landscape, particularly in Muslim communities, prioritizing a balance between religious science and general knowledge.

### Registration System in Madrasa in Nigeria

At the global level, madrasa registration systems are increasingly organized, with many institutions, such as those in Singapore and Saudi Arabia, implementing online and manual registration. This process often includes entrance exams and official registration, with strict deadlines and specific administrative fees, which reflect improvements in their education management system (Sarifah et al. 2023). Many madrassas are also adapting digital technology to facilitate the registration and selection process, which aligns with the progress and national education policy (Alawiy and Suprianto 2024). The registration system in madrassas across Nigeria is influenced by several factors, including the region, the type of madrassas (traditional, modern, or private), and the degree of integration with the formal education system. The application process varies, with each madrasa adopting different practices depending on its goals, funding, and management structure.

Below is a general registration system in different types of madrassas in Nigeria.

#### 1. Traditional *Madrasa* (Almajiri School)

In traditional Almajiri madrasas, the registration system occurs informally and is generally determined by local community leaders or clerics. Children are usually



enrolled by their parents or guardians with the primary motivation for religious and Qur'anic education, especially for families with limited socio-economic backgrounds. There is no administrative process or official documentation like conventional schools. However, it is enough to take the children to a Qur'anic school where they are immediately accepted by the responsible scholars (mallam). Children can start entering as early as the age of five. However, enrolment age often depends on the family's financial condition and the child's readiness, and the system is generally only for boys.

## 2. Modernized *Madrasa* (Integrated *Madrasa*)

Modern madrassas combine the study of the Qur'an with formal education and usually follow a more structured registration process than traditional madrassas. This registration process is similar to conventional schools, where prospective students with parents or guardians must fill out an official form that includes personal data, age, and previous educational background, sometimes accompanied by proof of religious affiliation. In this stage, parents actively visit schools, ask about the curriculum, and ensure its suitability with the child's educational goals. The age range for enrollment generally ranges from 6 to 12 years old, although some modern madrassas also open opportunities for older students to continue their education or deepen their Islamic knowledge. The curriculum used is dual, including religious education such as Qur'an, hadith, *fiqh*, and Arabic, as well as secular subjects such as mathematics, English, and science. Some madrassas even require entrance exams to assess students' basic abilities in both fields.

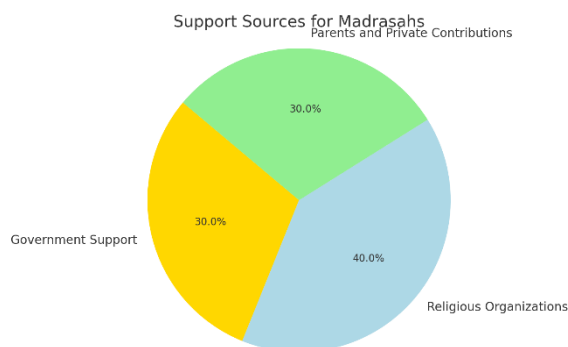
In addition, there are administrative requirements such as using school uniforms and paying tuition fees. However, these costs are usually lower than those of secular private schools. These funds are used to support school infrastructure and finance teaching staff. Over time, modern madrasa enrollment trends show a significant increase, especially in urban areas. This is due to the increasing number of Muslim parents who consider that madrassas with a dual curriculum can provide a balanced education—combining modern academic competencies with Islamic values—so their children can actively participate in society while maintaining their religious identity.

## 3. Government-Supported *Madrasa* (Almajiri Integrated School)

The government-backed madrassas in Nigeria are part of a national initiative to integrate Quranic education with formal education, aimed explicitly at Almajiri children who have been marginalized from the public school system. The registration process is carried out formally through a system managed by the Ministry of Education, where students are registered by including personal data such as age, background, and previous learning experience. Parents or guardians are required to submit supporting documents, such as birth certificates and sometimes old academic records, to ensure the legality and completeness of the data. These madrassas usually accept students aged 6 to 18 years, but in some cases, older children who have never attended formal school are also allowed to enroll.

In terms of curriculum, government madrassas implement a hybrid model that combines the study of the Qur'an with formal subjects such as English, mathematics, science, and social studies in accordance with the national education system. This integrated approach aims to provide a balanced education, so that students not only gain an understanding of religion, but also relevant academic skills to continue to higher education or enter the workforce. Although there is a slight variation in the curriculum in different regions, the primary focus of this madrasa is to ensure that the children of Almajiri have well-rounded educational opportunities that can improve their quality of life.

Picture  
Achievements and Support (Pie Chart Analysis)



### Management and Administration of Madrasa in Nigeria

The management and administration of madrasahs in Nigeria face increasingly complex challenges. This institution is required to improve efficiency while maintaining the quality of education per national and global standards. Information technology, including digital systems for administration, is also needed to support more efficient and transparent management (Imaniar and Hidayanti 2023). Therefore, madrasahs need to develop in various sectors to achieve academic and religious educational goals (Setiawan et al. 2020). The management applied, both in traditional and modern madrasahs, plays a vital role in determining the effectiveness of academic institutions. The administrative structure and processes that are carried out will significantly affect the quality of learning, resource allocation, and student learning outcomes. Although there are differences between traditional, modern, private, and government-supported madrasahs, the management system generally includes leadership, organization, financial management, management of educators, and integration between religious and secular education.

The management structure is informal and community-based in traditional madrasahs, especially in the Almajiri system. Schools are usually headed by a cleric or religious leader, a central figure, known as Mallam (or Alhaji). Mallam is not only responsible for spiritual guidance, but also the primary teacher, caregiver, and manager of school activities. In some cases, older students are responsible for helping younger students or taking care of simple administrative tasks.

The operation of the Almajiri school is highly dependent on the surrounding community's support. Local religious, family, and community leaders typically contribute by providing students with basic needs, ranging from food to shelter. Parents also support by sending their children to school and helping with school maintenance. However, lacking a formal administrative framework often poses various obstacles, such as overcrowded classrooms, non-uniform teaching quality, and weak accountability. In addition, resource limitations are a serious problem. Without formal financial support from the government, the sustainability of madrasahs is highly dependent on donations from the community or wealthy individuals. This informal financial system is often unstable, lacking infrastructure, teaching materials, and adequate educational facilities.

In contrast to traditional madrasahs, modern madrasahs in Nigeria generally implement a more formal management system, especially in urban and semi-urban areas. This type of madrasa is usually led by a principal or director responsible for academic and administrative management. The principal is assisted by staff who handle student admissions, financial management, class scheduling, and communication with parents. In addition, some modern madrasahs have supervisory boards or foundations that set policy

directions, provide financial support, and ensure that schools continue to run according to the educational mission.

The main feature of modern madrassas is the integration between religious education and secular education. Modern madrassas in the 21st century prioritize integration between religious education and secular education, with a focus on the holistic development of students. In various countries, this paradigm seeks to create a curriculum that includes religious sciences and general subjects such as science, mathematics, and technology (Beisenbayev and Almukhametov 2024). In addition, modern madrassas emphasize the importance of character and moral education based on Islamic teachings. Research shows that character education in madrassas is vital in shaping students' behavior and attitudes based on religious beliefs (Ashfaq 2022).

In modern madrassas in Nigeria, the curriculum is structured to be balanced, including lessons in the Qur'an, hadith, and *fiqh*, as well as general subjects such as English, mathematics, and science. Teachers are recruited based on competence in religion and academics, while the curriculum implementation is monitored periodically to maintain the quality of education. In terms of financing, modern madrassas usually charge tuition fees but rely on support from philanthropists and Muslim organizations. However, reliance on external funding often poses challenges, especially when economic conditions decline. In addition, the availability of teaching staff who can master the religious and secular fields is also an obstacle. Many modern madrassas form advisory boards of spiritual leaders, the community, and donors to ensure continuity and credibility. This board plays a vital role in strategic planning while ensuring schools remain oriented towards the Islamic vision and balanced educational goals.

## Conclusion

The development of madrassas in Nigeria shows the complex dynamics influenced by the history of the spread of Islam, as well as the striking regional differences between the Northern and Southern parts of the country. In the North, madrassas are rooted in the Almajiri and Tsangaya traditions that focus on Qur'an memorization and religious studies, despite facing serious challenges such as limited facilities, social instability, and a lack of integration with the modern curriculum. Meanwhile, madrassas are developing more integrated with the formal education system in the South, offering a mix of religious and secular education per national standards and the needs of a more diverse urban community. In addition to religious functions, madrassas in Nigeria also serve as social institutions that reflect the cultural differences and needs of the community. However, management challenges are still significant, where traditional madrassas rely on community support and informal systems, while modern madrassas are beginning to adopt professional management focusing on transparency, curriculum integration, and character development. Government policies through the integrated Almajiri school program seek to bridge this gap, although it is still constrained by funding, teaching staff, and infrastructure. Nigeria's madrassas' future depends heavily on balancing Islamic tradition and modernization demands to produce a religious, knowledgeable generation that contributes to national and global development.

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