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Ilorin Emirate Scholars of Nupe Origin's Role in The Educational Curriculum of The Emirate

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
<i>Received:</i> 30.04.2025	Education is the basis of uprightness, morality, credible and reliable technology, and security, which are essential for life sustenance. The foundation of standard education lies in a sound curriculum. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the University of Timbuktu in the defunct Songhai Empire of West Africa competed successfully with European Universities in all spheres of knowledge. However, in the twenty-first century, none of the West African universities possessed the quality attained by their counterparts in the industrialized countries. This indicates that many things went wrong in our universities' evolutionary trends and development. This study examined the historical contributions of Nupe scholars alongside other ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba, and Fulani) of Ilorin Emirate origin to the educational development of the geographical entity, to enable the reform of our educational system for positive growth. The paper adopted a historical research method, which involved a case study approach, using archival materials, oral interviews, text content analysis, comparative analysis, and internet materials to assess the causes and courses of the dysfunctional educational system in the Ilorin Emirate. The study concluded that the scholars of Nupe extractions from the Ilorin Emirate contributed immensely to the enrichment of the academic curriculum of the Emirate. Although this was sustained, there was a slow pace in its further development, which adversely impacted the educational development of the Ilorin Emirate.
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, as an integral aspect of their social, economic, cultural and political life, it is obvious that nations across the globe are indigenously (at their respective pace) involved in education either formally or informally since it is their goal to achieve a better future for their young ones and the incoming generations. The mechanism adopted by each nation to accomplish such educational goals is described as the curriculum in the context of this work. However, the academic curriculum comprises all the institutional strategies, which are referred to as creative teaching (Aiyetoro et. al., 2024), adopted by the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth Ilorin scholars.

When the Western educational curriculum was introduced to African nations, especially Nigerian nations, some of the existing aspects of the nations' indigenous curricula were eradicated, some were amended, and some were absorbed. Every nation of Nigeria-the Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Idoma, Itsekiri, Uhrobo, Ibiobio, Igala, Clabari and Ijaw-virtually sustained a peculiar traditional pattern about their educational curriculum, before the advent of Europeans. The three fundamental African pillars of educational centres, the family, school and community, were modified to suit the educational interest of the Europeans' cognitive and psychomotor domains at the expense of the targeted African educational affective domains (Buseri, 2017). Over time, the Western educational curriculum, which was introduced, became an imposition, while the indigenous curricula for education were forced to deteriorate, disintegrate, and collapse to aid the Western curriculum, in some cases.

This work examines the involvement of Nupe scholars of Ilorin Emirate towards establishing their educational curriculum, based on the geographical classification of the Emirate metropolitan areas, which comprises Oke Imale borough, Aafin borough and Isale Gambari quarters. The areas are among the locations where the Emirate Nupe extractions have been aboded and co-exist with other ethnic groups of the cosmopolitan Emirate. Therefore, in Oke Male, several Nupe scholars had become indigenous to the place. Ditto, in Gambari/Isale Gambari and Aafin quarters.

The oral interview conducted by the District Officer (D.O.) of Pategi-Lafiagi Division with Rani, a Nupe descendant, gave an account of the list of Etsu Nupe who had reigned for the last two hundred years in Bida. An Arabic manuscript brought to

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Pategi by Etsu Idris Gana, who was in turn brought to Pategi by Sir William Wallace from Bida, corroborated the account and indicated that the Nupe had been well-educated before they migrated to Ilorin. The then Etsu Pategi had the manuscript. The manuscript, which gave the name of each Etsu Nupe's length of reign and place of death, was said to have been written by a Bida Mallam, probably either during his (Idris Gana) lifetime or that of his father, Maazu (Muazu).

The growth and development of the Ilorin Emirate Educational Curriculum spanned across two epochs, which involved the period of pure learning of Al-Qur'an/Hadith and that of a combination of Al-Qur'an/Hadith learning with Western academic knowledge. It is imperative to mention that Ramadan *Tafsir* classes have been held across the epochs to date. It is a forum for thoroughly explaining Al-Qur'an/Hadith, which provides insight into fields related to humanity, spirituality, morals and sciences. Scholars attend *Tafsir* as associates, companions, comrades and fellows. The knowledge that was useful for individual scholars' academic curriculum classes was tapped from several *Tafsirs*. However, such knowledge was not put into a general formal consensus among the scholars on writing documents for the curriculum. Three prominent *Tafsir* fora operated in Ilorin before the establishment of its government in 1823. These included Solagberu's *Tafsir*, Imam Gambari's (Nupe descent) *Tafsir* and Sheikh Alimi's *Tafsir*.

## 2. GENERATIONS OF NUPE AND OTHER ILORIN EMIRATE ETHNIC SCHOLARS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

Ilorin scholars in pre-Alimi times preserved Arabic language learning as a reservation for Islamic education. The scholars also categorized the Arabic language as a formal means of documentation, while still reckoning with informal native instincts of keeping their records. Historical analytical viewpoint suggests that the scholars of the pre-Alimi Ilorin environment factored in the documentation of several local domestic occupational activities, which involved farming, services, smelting, pottery, and trading with a view to knowledge that was acquired from Arabic language learning. The conduct of Islamic and educational affairs by the pre-Alimi scholars, which included Sheikh Alimi, his contemporaries and compatriots, was predicated on the above scenarios and regarded them as the first set of generations on the Ilorin Emirate educational curriculum.

The arrival and relations of Sheikh Alimi with earlier scholars of Ilorin gave rise to a desire for advancement in Arabic language learning with a focus on the propagation of Islam, among the earlier scholars and Sheikh Alimi, ditto, those that arrived in Alimi's time and after his demise. This work concedes that the scholars of Ilorin made steady progress, onward in motion with the polity and socio-cultural purview of the community. The acknowledged scholars on the curriculum reigned at specific historic epochs of the Ilorin Emirate; therefore, the scholars, among whom the Nupe extractions featured, were grouped into generations with their contributions.

### 2.1. The First-Generation Scholars on the Curriculum

#### *Sheikh Salihu Alimi*

Sheikh Alimi was a Fulani man. He migrated to Ilorin with the motive to propagate Islam. The arrival of Sheikh Alimi and his relationship with the scholars that he met in Ilorin is of great value to Islam, Arabic language learning and education. His presence united the existing scholarly ideas among the first-generation Ilorin scholars. For instance, it was stated that Sheikh Abdul Rahman Danbafu (Koro Tapa), Sheikh Abdul Mumeen (Imam Gambari), Sheikh Nuhu Alakuko and Abdullahi Kijan, all of whom were of Nupe extraction, Sheikh Tair Solagberu—a Kanuri of Oke Suna related directly with Sheikh Alimi to reform the existing pattern of teaching, for it was said that Sheikh Alimi introduced an open space sermon, which comprised Arabic language learning as a means of reading Al-Qur'an and acquiring 'formal' education.

#### *Sheikh Abubakar as-Sunni*

Sheikh Abubakar as-Sunni was a Borno descendant who migrated to the ancient Oke Suna (Jimba, 2015) where he was a compatriot of Sheikh Tair Solagberu of Kanuri extraction. It should be reiterated that Arabic/Islamic classes have been in existence in Oke-Suna quarter of Solagberu, who reigned as an Islamic scholar and teacher before the advent of Sheikh Alimi in Ilorin. The attendees of Solagberu's classes included, but were not limited to, the Nupe ethnic group of Ilorin. Mentions were made that the Nupe people were among the travelers who sojourned Oke-Suna in the days of Solagberu. According to oral interview with Umar Lawal in 1994, Nuhu and Abdullahi, Nupe descendants of Ilorin Kijan's family, showcased their interest in attending Solagberu's *Ilimi* (Islamic Philosophical Knowledge) school. While Abubakar as-Sunni earned income through copying religious and Arabic grammar books, teaching Al-Qur'an recitations and Islamic elementary knowledge, Solagberu's classes taught rhetoric, law, Arabic language and literature as components of *Ilimi*. Nuhu and Abdullahi had learnt the basis of *Ilimi* right from Bida in Nupeland yet they related with Solagberu as his students before they migrated to Baboko area of Ilorin.

#### *Sheikh Nuhu Alakuko Oke-Apomu (Nupe)*

Sheikh Nuhu, with his brother, Abdullahi Kijan was in Oke-Apomu at the emergence of Emir Abdul Salam, the first Emir of Ilorin. He was preoccupied with the elementary teaching of Al-Qur'an. The teaching of Al-Qur'an by Sheikh Nuhu was restricted

to his and his brother's children and view neighbor's. Such restriction became imperative since Sheikh Nuhu and Abdullahi were not yet proficient in the spoken of Yoruba language. He was said to have enforced writing/copying of Al-Qur'an alongside its studying, a style considered onerous among his learners. He planned to ensure that the students memorized the writing of Al-Qur'an alongside its recitative memorization. The brothers lived among many other ethnic groups of Yoruba, Hausa, Malian, Agades and Sudanese; of course, they were the minority in the area. Yoruba was commonly spoken among the then-people of Oke-Apomu. the second Qur'anic/Arabic learning school was established by Alfa Gani of Ile Iya Ehin Odi (Iya Ehin Odi compound). This class later accommodated the majority of pupils and adults because it used the Yoruba language to teach. Over time, the descendants of Sheikh Nuhu and Abdullah later joined the Iya Ehin Odi compound's class. Yet, Sheikh Nuhu School still existed as an option for adults interested in learning Al-Qur'an through the Nupe language.

### ***Imam Gambari of Ilorin***

Abdul Mumeen and Aminullahi were said to be Nupe brothers who migrated to Ilorin from Bokani, in Nupeland. When Abdul Mumeen and Aminullahi were migrating to Ilorin, they sojourned at Lima in Moro Local Government Area (L.G.A) of Kwara State. At Lima, [Now in Moro (L.G.A) of Kwara State], they established Al-Qur'an school, (Madrasat/*Ile Kenu*) where elementary and secondary aspects of Al-Qur'an were taught. Oral interview conducted with Ahmed Ishola in 2018, revealed that "Aminullahi was so gifted in Al-Qur'an knowledge that he taught his pupils off-hand and enforced memorization of Al-Qur'an as a basis for the acquisition of both Islam and Qur'anic knowledge." The scholars furthered their migration, and the school was extended to the Ilorin metropolis.

### ***Sheikh Yahya Danbanfu (Koro Tapa)***

The Danbanfu corridor has existed in the Ilorin metropolis since the early Nineteenth Century. The Dabanfu of Ilorin originated as a replica of the original place name in the Nupeland. Sheikh Yahya was the ancestor of the Nupe descent of Ilorin Danbafu. He arrived in Ilorin around 1817-18. Since his presence in Ilorin, Sheikh Alimi, the ancestor of the Fulani dynasty in Ilorin, has established a Ramadan Tafsir (explanation of Al-Qur'an and Hadith), and Sheikh Yahaya was among the reputed scholars who attended Sheikh Alimi Tafsir classes. He attended Sheikh Alimi's Tafsir classes not as a student but listener and a yokefellow. He was an Islamic scholar, reputed in Al-Qur'an and Hadith. While Sheikh Yahaya was attending the annual Ramadan lectures of Sheikh Alimi, he established an Al-Qur'an class in Danbanfu. The class existstodate in Dabanfu of Ilorin.

### ***Sheikh Muhammed Sadiu (Kòkèwu kòbèrè)***

Sheikh Sadiu was of Nupe extraction. His father's name was Muhammad Sanusi. Through the oral interview conducted with Mahmud Kokewu-kobeere in 2019, it was said that Sheikh Sadiu was born in 1799 in the Nakofu area of Bida before migrating with his father to Ilorin in 1812. His curriculum style combined traditional pharmacology with the studies of Al-Qur'an. This, according to Mahmud Kokewu-kobeere in 2019 is predicated on the fact that he had learned *Ulumu l'Quran* (The Science of Quran) from Sheikh Ali of Pataki area of Gambari, now in Ilorin East L.G.A. of Kwara State. Sheikh Sadiu used *Waka*, (Ilorin Indigenous typical form of literature and figure of speech-proverb, poem, lyrics and songs) first as a teaching methodology, thereafter, he applied it to preaching to propagate Islam beyond the Emirate as far as Ajase, Cotonou in the Benin Republic (Jimoh., 1994). His nickname was phrased *Kòkèwu kòbèrè...* ('He/She that did not learn Al-Qur'an and did not bother to ask', the clause that completes the phrase is *alai mankan ni*, meaning 'is an ignoramus') originated from his teaching methodology of challenging the psyche of whoever does not have a thought for Al-Qur'an learning. His family compound name was known as Nakofu, a place name of one of Bida villages-before it was later widely known as *Ile Kòkèwu kòbèrè*, (*Kòkèwu kòbèrè* compound). He embarked on Islamic propagation across the Ilorin Emirate, Ibadan, Oyo, Ogbomosò, Abeokuta, Lagos and Cotonou in the Republic of Benin from the reigning period of Emir Shitta to the period of eight Emir of Ilorin, AbdulKadir, and in the latter's reigning period returned to teaching in Ilorin until the occurrence of his death in 1935 (Suleiman, 2021).

### ***Sheikh Muhammed at-Takuti bn Abu Bakar bn Ibrahim bn Adam bn Abubakar Nupe***

Sheikh Muhammed at-Takuti's contribution to the educational curriculum in Ilorin cannot be treated in isolation from Sheikh Abubakar Bube, who was Hausa of Gobri extraction. Sheikh Abubakar Bube's scholarly achievement is treated in consonance with Sheikh Muhammed at-Takuti because both were contemporaries and 'rival' compatriots and associates. Before his arrival at Ilorin, Sheikh at-Takuti was said to have been vigorously involved in searching and collection of manuscripts across the Niger areas through the trans-Sahara trade routes from Central Sudan, which included Kanem Borno and Maiduguri, where he was trained in Arabic linguistics, lexicography, collation of manuscripts, Islamic science with marked interest in jurisprudence and literature (Al-Awwal, 2015). Also, Sheikh at-Takuti spent a great time in Zaria, where he underwent academic training with reputed scholars. History states that at-Takuti was invited to Ilorin by Emir Shitta (c. 1836-c. 1861). Sheikh at-Takuti was said to finally move to Amule-Iya in Yerefu (Nupe area) of Ilorin after he had sojourned at Ita-Goma and Apalando quarters of Ilorin. At his initial locations, Sheikh at-Takuti established traditional elementary schools where he trained children, young and old people from near and far in Islamic knowledge and missions. His Islamic scholarship also endeared spiritual learning and thought. History accounts that Sheikh at-Takuti moved to Ilorin with manuscripts loaded on a camel. The manuscripts and the one he drafted in his lifetime were not jealously preserved, for scanty materials of his own were recovered after his demise. The

poetry he wrote to defend his ethnicity is still available to date. It was recorded that Sheikh at-Takuti taught *al-Arude* (Arabic prosody), Arabic language and literature, and Islamic law and jurisprudence. He used Hausa and Nupe languages to teach. When it was imperative for him to reach out vigorous explanations to his Yoruba learners, he implored the service of one of his students, “Sheikh Musa Atere, who was the pioneer of a combination of evening and daytime learning sessions” (Al-Awwal, 2015). Sheikh Musa Atere combined Arabic/Islamic teaching with Al-Qur’an memorization. Sheikh at-Takuti’s prominent students who later became icons of the educational curriculum in Ilorin were: Sheikh Musa Atere, of Kankatu-Ojuekun-Adangba corridor; Sheikh Salman Jeje Okekere; Sheikh AbdulQadri Afunso of Oke-Apomu, who had many students in Lagos; Sheikh Khalleellullah, the grandfather of Alfa Nda Salaty; Imam Bature bn Ibrahim; and Sheikh Busayry Badru-deen of Oloyin compound, Ita Elepa (Abdullah, 2006).

### ***Sheikh Abubakar Bube***

Abubakar Bube was a Hausa of Gobri extractions. He was more prominent among Ilorin Nupe descendants than his Gobri’s counterparts, ditto, “he established his Quranic School for advanced Islamic studies in Koro Afoju (blind people’s alley) of Gambari quarters” (Suleiman, 2021). He collaborated with Sheikh at-Takuti in educational curriculum motives, such that the classification of traditional Arabic education was reformed into an elementary section and for adult section (Jimba, 2015).

### ***Sheikh Hassan Gbodofu***

Sheikh Hassan was of Nupe origin from Gbodofu, the area of Nupeland. He specialized in writing and teaching monotheism books. One significant issue about Arabic and Islamic classes and schools of the Emirate is that they close for the holiday in the month of Ramadan, yet learnings continue in the Ramadan sermon across the nooks and crannies of the Emirate. Sheikh Hassan took the lead in translating Ramadan lectures to the audience in the Nupe language at the Gambari area mosque.

## **2.2. The Second-Generation Scholars on the Curriculum**

### ***Sheikh Ahmed bin Abubakar Ikokoro***

Scholars who were taught and/or completed their academic training by the compatriots of Sheikh Alimi are regarded as Second-Generation scholars on the Ilorin Emirate curriculum. Sheikh Ahmed bin Abubakar Ikokoro was of Fulani origin. He started his education from his father, from whom he completed the elementary studies of Al-Qur’an. He advanced to several scholars of different ethnic backgrounds, such as Fulani, Nupe, Hausa, Yoruba and English. As a result of this, he became multilingual in his academic career. A great contribution of Sheikh Ahmed to the Ilorin Emirate academic curriculum was that he was the pioneer in combining Arabic language learning with English language learning. He died on April 1, 1936.

### ***Sheikh Sa’ad Oninahwu***

Sheikh Sa’ad Oninahwu was born in Ilorin in 1870. He was the biological son of Sheikh Abubakar as-Sunni. Sheikh Sa’ad saw it as imperative to reputedly reform the Ilorin educational curriculum by duplicating, documenting and keeping Islamic and Arabic texts in custody, which subsequent Ilorin scholars later used to impart knowledge to their young ones. He was said to have duplicated *Ajrumiyyah*, *Tafsir Jalalayn*, *Sharhu Qatrin-nada* and some books of supplications, which are still in the custodianship of Iman Mustapha Sakariyya, one of his descendants (Jimba, 2015). During and after the lifetime of his father, Sheikh Sa’ad’s household name in the Kuntu area of Ilorin was known as Ile Alfa Sunna. Meanwhile, his commitment, specialisation and excellence in the knowledge of *Nahw* (Arabic Syntax) accorded the change of the family house name to *Ile Oninahwu* (Nahwu compound) by the then Ilorin Emirate community. Sheikh Sa’ad indicated an index of selective undesigned educational curriculum in the Emirate by sitting on a pulpit and accommodating students to be taught in his informal Islamic school, which he operated from morning till evening, with breaks at the hours of Islamic canonical prayers (Jimba, 2015). He died in 1931.

### ***Sheikh Muhammed Jami’ Al-Labeeb Tajul-Adab***

Sheikh Tajul-Adab, born in Ilorin in 1887, is categorized among the second generation of Ilorin Emirate scholars in the educational curriculum. He was of Malian ancestors. He transformed the orthodox Ilorin Educational curriculum by introducing a curriculum pattern, which characterized the modern Arabic/English method of learning. The pattern involved: periodization of the academic program with stipulated time for admission and graduation; introduction of published textbooks; introduction of paper materials and wooden chalkboard in place of the use of wooden slate; granting authority to graduates for self-sustenance through the propagation of Islam within and outside the Emirate; and award of honorific academic titles to graduates on the completion of their academic (Jimba, 2015). It should be noted that Sheikh Tajul-Adab’s designed students’ graduation permitted them academic self-improvement and exposure to critical scholarly views on Arabic literature and science. Relating to experimentation of theoretical analysis, although Sheikh Tajul-Adab and his students faced a lot of physical and spiritual destructive criticism among the orthodox Ilorin educational curriculum scholars, his method later became prevalent in the

presence of the Ilorin orthodox scholars until the beginning of the twenty-first century, when the orthodox methodology was about to exit. In c. 1914, Sheikh Tajul-Adab established Arabic Islamic College, *Az-Zumratul-Adabiyyah*, which still exists as a basis, virtually for all Arabic Islamic colleges in the Emirate to date. The c. 1914 as the year of the establishment of his college coincided with the year 1914, when the Government Secondary School Ilorin (G.S.S., the first established premier school in Northern Nigeria) was established. This signifies, perhaps, that Sheikh Tajul-Adab had contact with the Europeans and Arabs. As a practical aspect of his curriculum, Sheikh Tajul-Adab authored books: *Durarul-Mujan* (poem on the science of morphology), *Al-Manzumah al-Nawaiyyah* (53 verses on syntax written in 1920); and *Asb-Shagrab* (a 55-line poem on classical Arabic lexicon). He died in 1924.

### ***Sheikh Muhammed Awal (Alfa Banni)***

He was of Nupe extractions from Bida, which is the state capital of present Niger State of Nigeria. He specialized in preliminary Arabic and Islamic teaching of children at the initial stage of his tutorship. He used the Yoruba language as a means of teaching. It was reported that Alfa Banni had learnt from different scholars in Bida before advancing to Ilorin, where he studied under Alfa Musa Atere. Alfa Banni embarked on a confrontation approach with the Heathens in the Banni area of the Emirate. This led to attacks on his residence at two times, and many of his documents were set ablaze. At an advanced age in his life, Alfa Banni accommodated old people in his classes. He died in 1947.

### **2.3. The Third-Generation Scholars on the Curriculum**

#### ***Sheikh Sa'ad Abubakar (Alfankoro)***

Sheikh Sa'ad Abubakar was a Nupe man whose ancestors migrated from Bida to Oke Suna, Ilorin, in pre-Alimi time and finally settled at *Ile Kijan* (Kijan Compound), where his father, Abubakar, relocated to Idi Banni (Koro area of Oke-Apomu), presently in Ilorin West L.G.A of Kwara State. Sheikh Sa'ad established Arabic classes and spanned the reigning periods of Emir Suleiman, Abdul Kadri and Sulkarnein of Ilorin. He studied under Alfa Awal of Banni, a Nupe descendant and Alfa Ojibara of Oke-Apomu. In 1975, Sheikh Sa'ad established a modern Arabic school with the use of the chalkboard. By 1980, when the Sheikh died, his son, Abdullahi Qudus, at Oke-Apomu, reformed the Sheikh's school into a modern standard with an opulent building, which contains a Mosque and school library. At this juncture, it is imperative to mention that it was Sheikh Muhammed Kamaldeen who first introduced the usage of tables, chairs and chalkboard into the Ilorin Emirate educational curriculum, meanwhile, Sheikh Sa'ad was among the early adopters of the latter's brilliant educational curriculum approach. Between the second half of the twentieth century and this first quarter of the second decade of the twenty-first century, Arabic/Qur'anic classes and schools in the Ilorin Emirate have incorporated Western educational curriculum style into their educational curricula.

### **3. PLACES OF LEARNING AS INDEXES OF EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM**

Indigenous architectural designs of the Nupe extended family's home comprise the construction of *Saure* (entrance tier) within the compound enclaves. The Nupe introduced the architectural style of the *Saure* building to Ilorin in the Nineteenth Century. The style was adopted by other ethnic groups of the community. *Saure* is called *Sá'rè* by the Yoruba ethnic of the community. As a result of the long co-existence among Fulani, Hausa, Yoruba, and Nupe origins, the inclusion of the Nupe *Saure* preoccupied Ilorin architecture building pattern in the Nineteenth Century. It is imperative to mention that the condition, position and locations of places of learning always contribute to the success or failure of the educational curriculum.

*Saures* were in distraction-free areas of houses in the Ilorin community in the Nineteenth Century. *Saures* were ventilated with two basic doors and a minimum of two windows. Sizes of *Saures* determine an extra number of windows, which a *Saure* may contain. Opening spaces of doors and windows facilitated light into *Saures* in the broad day. About two or three places of the *Saures'* walls were opened in triangular forms to place indigenous *Fitila* (oil light clay lanterns). In some cases, a portion of the *Saures'* walls was constructed to thrust out to serve as the lantern stands. The lanterns were useful for classes that were held at night. Learning also took place under the shade of big trees that were located near the scholars' houses. In the *Saures*, pupils and students sat on mats to acquire learning in Ilorin in the Nineteenth Century. The teachers usually stand or sit in the corners of *Saures* to instruct the learners. In the Nineteenth Century, the Ilorin *Saure* learning pattern became general, although historical appraisal of *Saure* informed this study of the source of *Saure* as a learning class to the Ilorin community.

#### **3.1. Comparison Of Ilorin And English Learning Procedure**

A critique analysis of the adopted learning procedure is important in locating the contributions of the Nupe scholars to the growth and development of education in the Emirate. Jimoh, (1994) contended that "the Ilorin Nupe scholars contributed to the general learning procedure that was adopted by the entire Ilorin Emirate scholars, c. 1790s" (p.3).

The 1790s *Ilimi* classes of Solagberu could be seen as a high learning centre like that of Timbuktu Sankore's mosque classes. Sankore's mosque classes started becoming a University under Mansa Musa in the fourteenth century, and advanced to a proper

University in the sixteenth century, during the reign of Askia Muhammed Ture of the Songhai Empire. This was because of its academic links with the University of Fez in Morocco, Cairo in Egypt and Baghdad in Persia.

Ilorin had not appeared in the thirteenth century, when nineteen universities had spread across European nations, of which the universities of Salerno and Paris specialized in the production of competent physicians and theologians, respectively (Roe, 1993). Advanced Educational learning procedures that took place in Europe in the thirteenth century did not happen in Ilorin until the eighteenth century. Then in Europe, all learning activities took place in shallow rooms, where learners sat on the bare floor to take notes from the lectures delivered by their professors, and learners at Oke-Suna were sitting under trees to acquire knowledge (Roe, 1993). Formal learning activities were concurrently delivered with guild practices since the European professors combined the theory of disciplines they handled with craft (Roe, 1993). Suleiman (2021) attested that “in the eighteenth century, Ilorin did not combine guild exercises with formal learning procedures, yet the guild centre was in the Awodi area, where Dose, a Nupe descendant who later became the first commissioned military general, was leading several apprentices” (p.273).

A critique of the synopsis above is analyzed below. The award of certificates to European students to enable them to gain civil service work or to become a teacher in their respective disciplines was emphasized in the European curriculum from the thirteenth century, while there was no formal duration to end the course of studies under Solagberu’s and early Nupe scholars’ classes. It should be noted that the need for trained theologians, physicians, teachers and other professionals in European society prompted several European citizens to attend academic classes. Such needs did not arise in Ilorin civil society until the nineteenth century. From the fourteenth century, the European administration of the universities was placed under the surveillance of the Vice-Chancellors and the Deans, who superintended the faculties’ affairs. Since the seventeenth century, European civil society has endorsed inquisitiveness and scientific enquiries. For instance, Anthony Van Leeuwenhoek produced electron microscopes/lenses, which were used to discover microorganisms (Samuel et al., 1979). The invention provided a leeway for the European scholars. Leeuwenhoek was a civic draper, yet his invention was incorporated into the European Educational Curriculum by the Royal Society of London after making him a fellow. His innovation later aided the process of the scientific approach for investigation and explanations to solve several scientific/human problems. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, unlike their European counterparts, African scholars and/or craftsmen failed to translate their spiritual knowledge into scientific proof and empirical evidence; likewise, the Ilorin Emirate scholars, especially the Nupe scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

#### 4. USES OF ARABIC LETTERS IN THE CURRICULUM

Between the 1780s and 1840s, Arabic letters were a fundamental symbol of the academic curriculum among the Ilorin scholars. The period between the 1780s and 1840s suggests that some Nupe, Fulani, Kanuri, Yoruba and Hausa scholars of the community were yet to be proficient in the spoken languages of one another. However, the Yoruba later became the general language. It is worth mentioning that the Hausa took the lead in the first step of domesticating Arabic letters through the Hausa indigenous language descriptive style. Subsequently, the Nupe and Yoruba scholars used their respective indigenous languages to describe, pronounce, identify and master each of the Arabic letters for efficient and effective learning.

##### 4.1. Hausa-Nupe Indigenous Language Descriptive Style of Arabic Letters

Katibi (2013) tabulated the Hausa indigenous language descriptive style, which the Hausa adopted (right from their pristine environment) as a method to simplify the then-difficult learning of Arabic letters. The style was later adopted by the Ilorin ethnic groups using Yoruba language modification. However, the Nupe also strictly used her indigenous language learning description to domesticate Arabic Letters, with little modifications to the Hausa indigenous language descriptive style of Arabic Letters. The early Nupe immigrants in Ilorin adopted their indigenous language to encode Arabic Letters from the existing Hausa indigenous language descriptive style of Arabic letters. This was an effective method to ease the process of learning among the early Nupe settlers who were yet to be proficient in the spoken of other Ilorin cosmopolitan languages, especially the Yoruba, which later became the lingua franca. The teaching method adopted by the Nupe to facilitate effective learning among their subjects is described with illustrations of some of the Arabic letters below:

Table 1: Hausa-Nupe Indigenous Language Descriptive Style of Arabic Letters Table

S/N o.	Arabic Name	Character	Sound	Hausa Sound	Nupe Sound	Hausa Name	Nupe Name	Nupe Feature of the Letters
1	Alif	ا	/a/	A	A	Alefi	Alefi	Corrupted original Arabic was retained
2	Ba	ب	/b/	B	B	Ba	Nadenuwani chikinbo na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning /b/ the one that has water one under the ground there

3	Tau	ت	/t/	S	T	Ta	Nadenuwani guba tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning /t/ the one that has water two on top there
4	Tha	ث	/ths/	S	Sa	Sa	Nadenuwani guta tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning /ths/ the one that has water three on top there
5	Jinm	ج	/j/	J	J	Jimu	Jinkare	Corrupted original Arabic,
6	Hau	ح	/h/	A	A	Ha keremu	Hakare	Corrupted original Arabic
7	Khau	خ	/kh/	A	A	Ha meruwa	Hakare nadenuwoni tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning Hakare, the one that has water one on top there
8	Dal	د	/d/	D	D	Dali		Corrupted original Arabic
9	Dhal	ذ	/dh/	s, z	S	Sali	Nadenuwoni tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning the one that has water one on top there
10	Ra	ر	/r/	R	R	Ra		The corrupted original Arabic was retained
11	Zain	ز	/z/	Z	S	Sinra	Zasira, nadenuwoni tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning the one that has water one on top there
12	Sin	س	/s/	S	S	Sin		The corrupted original Arabic was retained
13	Shin	ش	/sh/	S	S	Sin meruwa	Sasin, nadenuwon guta tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning 'sasin', the one that has water three on top there
14	Soḍ	ص	/s/	S	'L' S	Sadi	Sodi	The corrupted original Arabic was modified
15	Dhad	ض	/dh/	L, d	'T' L	Ladi	Lodi	Corrupted original Arabic
16	Tau	ط	/t/	't	'S' T	Tami saanu	Todi	Name from physical features meaning Tau that raises its hand, modified
17	Dhau	ظ	/th/	Z	S	Sa me saanu	Lualodi, nadeluwoni tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic, meaning the one that has water one on top
18	'Ain	ع	/'a/	A	A	Ain Bakiwofin	A'ambakiofin	The corrupted original Arabic was modified
19	Ghain	غ	/g/	G	G	GhainBakinw ofin	Ga'gambakiofin, nadenuwoni tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic was modified with the meaning that the one that has water one on top there
20	Fau	ف ro ف	/f/	F	F	Fa	Fa'fa, nadenuwoni tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic was modified with the meaning that the one that has water one on top there
21	Quf	ق	/q/	Q	K	Qameruwa	Koḥare, nadenuwoni guba tafitio na	Corrupted original Arabic was modified with the meaning that

								the one that has water two on top there
22	Kaf	ك or ك	/k/	K	K	Kaflaansa	kaolansan	Corrupted original Arabic was modified
23	Lam	ل or ل	/l/	L	L	Lamu	La	The corrupted original Arabic was modified
24	Mim	م or م	/m/	M	M	Mimu	Mijai	The corrupted original Arabic was modified
25	Nun	ن	/n/	N	N	Nu ara	Nu	Corrupted original Arabic
26	Hau	ه or ه	/ha/	H	H	Hau buba		Similarization from the common scene meaning big 'Hau'
27		'ه'	/ih/	I	A		Aliaza	Corrupted original Arabic
28	Wau	و	/w/	W	W	Woo	Wawo	Corrupted original Arabic
29	Yau	ي or ي	/y/	Y	Y	Yiara	Yawo, nadenuwon guba chikinbo na	Corrupted original Arabic with meaning that the one that has water two under the ground there

The table above indicates the original Arabic Letters, adopted and domesticated by the Hausa and Nupe in their language descriptive style. Column one contains the Arabic numeral list. Column two contains the Arabic name of the letter. Column three involves the Arabic character. Column four indicates the phonetic sound of the letters. Column five indicates the phonetic sound in Hausa, and column six indicates the phonetic sound in the Nupe language. Columns seven and eight indicate how the letter was pronounced in Hausa and Nupe indigenous descriptive languages, respectively. Column nine indicates how Nupe completely domesticated the Arabic Letters, either by remodifying the Hausa style or giving a complete description of the original Arabic letters. It should be noted that between 1780 and 1840, the Yoruba, like Hausa and the Nupe, adopted their indigenous language to describe the Arabic letters as a method of teaching their subjects. It however, imperative to mention that all the ethnic groups eventually acquired the Yoruba language for teaching purposes.

## 5. USAGES OF CULTURAL MATERIALS IN THE CURRICULUM

Interviews conducted across several areas of Ilorin people of Nupe origin revealed that, in the elementary stage of Al-Qur'an learning, the scholars/teachers passed definite instructions to their pupils/students on the skills to be adopted in the learning process. The pupils and the students were taught and charged to, first of all, memorize the Arabic alphabet. Subsequently, they were taught how to join two, three, and four-letter words and beyond.

The next stage was to inscribe the words on the wooden slate, which involved the use of indigenous ink and *kalam*, a cut-edge sharpened stock of the coconut tree. At the initial stage of using the wooden slate, the Nupe teacher shouldered the responsibility of writing for the learners. When the learner has completed learning word formation, he/she begins to be exposed to self-writing skills, and the learner usually starts with the opening chapter of the Al-Qur'an. The teacher sat on separate animal skins while the pupils/students' used others. The teacher selected *Juz'* (divisional portions) of Al-Qur'an for the learner, who inscribed it on the slate. The other ethnic groups, especially the Yoruba, are fast learners who are apt and fluent at memorizing the portion to wash the inscription on the plate and advance to the next portion. Washings were made in a bowl and meant for several spiritual purposes. In the Nupe context of the work scheme, no learner was allowed to advance individually to the next portion; in other words, the group of learners on a particular portion must be moved at the same time. This scheme's context slowed many brilliant learners from completing their elementary studies of Al-Qur'an. Some of them were even frustrated and withdrew from the schools.

### 5.1. Remuneration

The Nupe and other Ilorin Emirate ethnic teachers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were remunerated through traditional procedures, which involved *owo alaruba* (Wednesday payment), *owo taasi* (Ramadan holiday payment), periodical gifts and menial services. *Owo alaruba*: This is the stipend, which is given to the teachers by the learners' parents or the learners themselves. No specific amount is stipulated. In case of default, the teachers were not, by tradition, permitted to send the learners away from class. They would rather persuade them. Most teachers were poorly remunerated, while some were not paid. *Owo taasi*: This is the money that the teachers charged. It is paid when the learners are about to go for the Ramadan holidays, which last between 35 and 40 days. The payers paid based on the amount that they were able to afford. However, it is worth

mentioning that some teachers received worthy gifts from some well-to-do parents of the learners. Menial services: The majority of Ilorin Emirate Nupe teachers combined farming, embroidery, and tailoring with the teaching profession. Their grown-up students usually support them for credible productions. Research shows that most of the Hausa teachers of the Emirate were traders, while the Yoruba were mostly found in healing services and trading.

The ethnic scholars of the Emirate adopted similar discipline techniques, which included whipping, disgracing, hunger measures, and movement restrictions on juvenile and recalcitrant students. A misbehaved pupil is lashed with a whip, subjected to disgrace, or set to hunger to put him under control, while he/she is in the custody of the teacher. Truants and recalcitrant students were usually tied down for some days to instill the expected degree of obedience in them.

The lesson periods used by Ilorin Emirate ethnic scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were morning, evening, and night. Out of the above-listed periods, the scholars picked two periods to operate their classes daily. In the morning period, the class started at 9:00 am and ended at noon. The evening class runs between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm, while the night class takes place between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm.

The findings were that:

- i. The early Yoruba, Nupe, Hausa, Malian, Kanuri, and Fulani forms of domesticating Arabic letters have almost gone into extinction;
- ii. The Nupe ethnic group participated in the Emirate educational curriculum activities;
- iii. The Nupe Arabic letter pronunciations are like Hausa's with view exceptions;
- iv. The early Nupe immigrants were able to retain their indigenous language in Ilorin for learning in the Ilorin Quranic institution, and this scenario suggested one of the factors that aided them in settling down in Ilorin;
- v. All the ethnic groups eventually acquired the Yoruba language for teaching purposes;
- vi. The curriculum did not provide an avenue to explore theories through experiments to facilitate concentration on empirical research.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the style of the educational curriculum, which was adopted by the Ilorin Emirate scholars in the precolonial and colonial periods. With a critique analysis of the learning procedure adopted by the Ilorin Emirate at different stages of her educational development, the work was able to dissect the origin of the technological backwardness of Africa, using the Ilorin Emirate as a case study. The work presented a logical comparison of the Ilorin learning procedures and the English learning procedures as relevant to this study, since Ilorin is a subset of African thought. The research found that the various ethnic groups, which are Fulani, Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba, Malian, Kanuri, and Baruba, actively contributed to the establishment of the educational curriculum, which was used in the Ilorin Emirate. The Nupe significantly annexed her cultural heritage, Islamic scholarship, and linguistic expertise to integrate the Ilorin Emirate educational curriculum with diversity and depth. The Nupe interacted and deeply related with all Ilorin ethnic groups that were mentioned above to foster a unique blend of Islamic and Western education (in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods) that produced a distinct Ilorin Emirate identity. Ilorin Emirate Scholars of Nupe Origin have played a significant role in the growth and development of the educational curriculum within the Emirate. Their contributions can be traced through history, showcasing how these scholars have influenced the educational landscape. The Nupe scholars introduced various educational traditions and practices, which were instrumental in shaping the curriculum. They introduced new subjects and methods that enhanced learning and promoted a broader understanding of local and global contexts. Through their efforts, the educational institutions in Ilorin evolved, integrating traditional knowledge with modern educational frameworks. Such modern educational frameworks modified the creativity of the individual Ilorin Emirate scholars for a redefinition of the curriculum in the twenty-first century (Aiyetoro, et.al, 2024). This fusion not only enriched the curriculum but also catered to the diverse needs of the Emirate's population, fostering a culture of learning and intellectual growth. As a result, the legacy of these scholars continues to be felt in the educational systems of Ilorin, emphasizing the importance of their historical contributions to curriculum development. Their impact remains a crucial part of the Emirate's education narrative today.

### Research and Publication Ethics Statement

This study collected information based on the respondents' consent to provide feedback. No names or other personally identifiable information were gathered, so no identities are disclosed in this paper. An objective analysis was conducted based on the information collected and the defined study objectives.

### Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

The authors were responsible for the compilation and processing of this work.

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## Statement of Interest

The authors did not receive support from any organization for the submitted work. The authors, as a result of this declared no competing interests. The authors have no financial or proprietary interests in any material discussed in this article.

## Ethics Approval

This is an observational study. The University of Ilorin Research Ethics Committee has confirmed that no ethical approval is required.

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