



Evaluation of the Sustainability of the Integrated *Almajiri* Education Programme in North-East Nigeria Using the CIPP Model

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ABSTRACT

Background: Educational exclusion among *Almajiri* children in Northern Nigeria remains a major concern due to its implications for literacy development, social integration and national development. The Integrated *Almajiri* Education Programme (IAEP) was introduced to address this challenge by integrating formal education into the traditional Qur'anic schooling system, yet concerns persist regarding its long-term sustainability, particularly in North-East Nigeria. **Objective:** This study investigated the sustainability of the Integrated *Almajiri* Education Programme in North-East Nigeria using the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation framework.

Method: Adopting a descriptive survey research design, 56 respondents comprising 47 teachers and 9 programme officials were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), with results presented using tables and mean scores.

Results: Findings revealed a generally favourable perception of programme goals among teachers, indicating acceptance of the programme. However, instructional resources were largely inadequate, particularly technology-based materials, while teaching practices remained predominantly traditional despite relatively high supervision. Although there was strong primary-level completion, higher dropout rates were recorded at the junior secondary level, indicating challenges in sustaining student participation.

Conclusion: The study concludes that although IAEP has improved access to education among *Almajiri* children, its sustainability remains limited due to inadequate resources, weak institutional coordination and uneven contextual alignment.

Unique Contribution: This study provides insight into how the interaction of context, resources, implementation and outcomes influences programme sustainability, and it is hoped that policymakers, educational planners and programme implementers will find these insights useful in designing more sustainable interventions.

Key Recommendation: Comprehensive and sustained interventions involving improved funding, adequate instructional resources, strengthened teacher capacity and effective institutional coordination are required to enhance the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Keywords: Educational planning, programme sustainability, instructional resources, learning outcomes



BACKGROUND

Educational inequality remains one of the most persistent challenges confronting the Nigerian educational system, particularly in the northern region where socio-cultural, economic, religion and historical factors continue to shape access to schooling. Among the most affected populations are Almajiri children, a group traditionally enrolled in Qur'anic schools under the tutelage of Islamic scholars. Historically, the Almajiri system functioned as a structured educational arrangement that emphasised religious instruction, moral discipline and community support. However, over time, the system has undergone significant transformation, leading to a decline in its traditional structure and support mechanisms. This transformation has resulted in widespread concerns regarding the educational, social and economic well-being of Almajiri children (Omede, 2015; Yusuf, 2016).

In contemporary Nigeria, the Almajiri system has increasingly been associated with educational marginalisation, poverty and social vulnerability. Many Almajiri children lack access to formal education, which limits their ability to acquire basic literacy, numeracy and life skills required for meaningful participation in society. This exclusion has contributed to broader developmental challenges, including unemployment, social dislocation and increased susceptibility to crime and exploitation (Adebayo and Kadir, 2019). The persistence of this condition highlights systemic gaps in Nigeria's educational policy and implementation framework, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

The issue of educational access in Nigeria is not merely a matter of school enrolment but also encompasses equity, quality and sustainability. Amoo and Adeyemi (2018) argue that while Nigeria has made progress in expanding access to basic education, significant disparities still exist between regions and socio-economic groups. These disparities are more pronounced in northern Nigeria, where cultural practices, poverty and insecurity continue to limit educational participation. The North-East region, in particular, presents a complex environment for educational intervention due to the combined effects of insurgency, displacement and weak institutional capacity (UNICEF, 2021).

In response to the growing concern over the educational exclusion of Almajiri children, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme (IAEP) as part of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) initiative. The programme was designed to integrate formal education into the traditional Qur'anic system, thereby providing Almajiri children with access to both religious and secular education. The IAEP aimed to promote holistic development by equipping learners with literacy, numeracy and vocational skills while preserving their religious identity (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014; Ibrahim, 2020).

The introduction of IAEP marked a significant policy intervention aimed at addressing long-standing educational inequalities. It was expected to reduce the number of out-of-school children, curb street begging and improve the socio-economic prospects of Almajiri children. In addition, the programme sought to enhance social integration by bridging the gap between traditional and formal education systems. Early reports suggested that the programme



contributed to increased enrolment and improved access to education among Almajiri children. Despite these initial achievements, concerns have continued to emerge regarding the sustainability of the programme. Sustainability in educational reform refers to the ability of a programme to maintain its effectiveness over time through consistent funding, institutional support and stakeholder engagement (Fullan, 2016). In many developing countries, educational reforms often experience initial success but fail to achieve long-term impact due to structural and systemic challenges (Lewin, 2015). These challenges include inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, insufficient teacher training and weak monitoring mechanisms.

In the Nigerian context, several studies have identified financing as a major constraint to educational sustainability. Adediran and Oloyede (2021) argue that inconsistent funding and poor resource allocation significantly affect the implementation of educational programmes. Similarly, Okeke and Olatunji (2020) highlight the importance of adequate financial investment in ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of educational reforms. Without stable funding, schools struggle to provide essential instructional materials, maintain infrastructure and support teaching and learning activities. Beyond financial constraints, institutional and governance issues also play a critical role in determining programme sustainability. Mohammed and Sani (2021) emphasise that weak policy implementation and lack of coordination among stakeholders often undermine the success of educational reforms in Nigeria. In the case of IAEP, the involvement of multiple stakeholders—including government agencies, school administrators and community leaders—requires effective coordination to ensure successful implementation. However, weak collaboration among these stakeholders can lead to inconsistencies and inefficiencies in programme delivery. Another critical factor affecting sustainability is the availability and utilisation of instructional resources. The quality of teaching and learning is closely linked to the availability of adequate instructional materials and facilities. In many IAEP schools, there is evidence of insufficient teaching aids, lack of technological resources and inadequate learning environments. These limitations not only affect the quality of education but also influence student engagement and retention. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) agree that effective teaching requires access to appropriate resources as well as continuous professional development for teachers.

Teacher capacity is also a key determinant of programme sustainability. Teachers play a central role in the implementation of educational reforms, and their ability to adapt to new instructional approaches is essential for programme success. However, in many cases, teachers in IAEP schools may lack the necessary training and support to effectively deliver integrated curricula. This challenge is compounded by the limited availability of professional development opportunities, which restricts teachers' ability to adopt innovative teaching methods. The North-East region presents additional challenges that further complicate the sustainability of IAEP. The region has been significantly affected by insurgency and displacement, which have disrupted educational activities and weakened institutional structures. Schools in affected areas often face challenges such as damaged infrastructure, shortage of teachers and limited access to learning materials. These conditions create an unstable environment for the implementation of educational programmes and raise concerns about their long-term viability (UNICEF, 2021).



Although existing studies have examined issues such as access to education, policy implementation, funding constraints and socio-cultural influences on the Almajiri system, much of the literature has focused on these dimensions separately. Existing research may have focused on different geographical contexts, adopted alternative methodologies, or examined the issue from other conceptual perspectives. However, there is a noticeable lack of studies that provide a comprehensive and integrated evaluation of programme sustainability by simultaneously examining contextual conditions, resource inputs, implementation processes and educational outcomes within a single framework. Furthermore, limited studies have explored how these interrelated factors operate specifically within fragile and conflict-affected contexts such as North-East Nigeria. This creates a clear theoretical and empirical gap, as the interaction of these variables in such complex environments remains insufficiently understood.

Given these complexities, there is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of IAEP to determine its sustainability. Traditional evaluation approaches that focus solely on outcomes may not adequately capture the underlying factors affecting programme performance. The Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model provides a more holistic framework for assessing educational programmes. According to Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017), the CIPP model allows for a systematic examination of the environment in which a programme operates (context), the resources allocated (input), the implementation strategies (process) and the outcomes achieved (product)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive the goals of the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme ?
2. What is the level of availability and sufficiency of instructional resources supporting the sustainability of the programme?
3. To what extent are instructional practices and resource utilisation effective in sustaining the programme?
4. How effective are monitoring and supervisory mechanisms in ensuring the sustainability of the programme?
5. What are the completion and dropout trends, and how do they reflect the sustainability of the programme outcomes?
6. How do context, input, process and product factors collectively influence the sustainability of the programme?



RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. **H₀₁**: There is no significant difference among the states in teachers' perceptions of the programme goals as indicators of sustainability.
2. **H₀₂**: There is no significant difference among the states in the quality of instructional inputs supporting programme sustainability.
3. **H₀₃**: There is no significant difference among the states in the sufficiency of instructional resources for sustaining the programme.

METHOD

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population comprised teachers and education officials involved in the implementation of the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme (IAEP) across selected North-East states. The total population for the study was 132 respondents, consisting of teachers and programme officials obtained from state education records and IAEP implementation reports (State Universal Basic Education Boards, 2023).

A sample of 47 teachers and 9 officials was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Three states (Gombe, Adamawa and Taraba) were purposively selected based on active IAEP implementation, after which simple random sampling was used to select respondents from participating schools. Proportionate sampling ensured adequate representation. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on the CIPP model, covering context, input, process and product dimensions of the programme. The validity of the instrument was ensured through expert review by specialists in educational planning and measurement, who assessed the items for clarity, relevance and alignment with the study objectives. Reliability was established through a pilot study conducted outside the study area, and analysis using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.81, indicating high internal consistency. Data were presented using tables, frequencies and mean scores to enhance clarity and facilitate interpretation. Descriptive statistics (mean scores and weighted averages) were used for analysis, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tested differences across states. A benchmark of 2.50 guided interpretation.

RESULTS

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of Programme Goals

| Item | Mean (M) | Interpretation |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| Addresses unique educational needs | 3.04 | Positive |
| Improves access to quality education | 3.09 | Positive |
| Supports integration into mainstream education | 2.83 | Positive |
| Government funding support | 2.70 | Moderately Positive |
| Cultural/religious sensitivity | 2.47 | Weak |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 2.82 | Favourable Perception |

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



The overall weighted mean score of 2.82 indicates that teachers generally have a favourable perception of the goals of the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme. This suggests that the programme is viewed as relevant and responsive to the educational needs of Almajiri children. Specifically, the high ratings for improved access (3.09) and addressing educational needs (3.04) demonstrate that the programme is achieving its primary objective of expanding educational opportunities

Table 2: ANOVA – Inter-State Differences in Teachers’ Perception

| Source | df | F | p | Decision |
|----------------|----|------|------|-------------|
| Between States | 2 | 7.67 | .001 | Significant |

State Mean Scores

State Mean Score

Gombe 31.00

Adamawa 30.67

Taraba 22.60

The ANOVA result ($F = 7.67, p < 0.05$) indicates a statistically significant difference in teachers’ perceptions across the three states. This means that stakeholders in different states do not view the programme in the same way. The lower mean score in Taraba suggests weaker acceptance or poorer implementation experience compared to Gombe and Adamawa.

Table 3: Availability of Instructional Resources

| Item | Mean | Status |
|------------------------------|------|---------------|
| Projectors | 1.36 | Not Available |
| Art supplies | 1.34 | Not Available |
| Supplementary materials | 1.43 | Not Available |
| Physical education equipment | 1.49 | Not Available |

All items recorded mean scores below the benchmark of 2.00, indicating that key instructional resources are largely unavailable in programme schools. This reflects a serious gap in material support necessary for effective teaching and learning. The absence of such resources limits teachers’ ability to deliver engaging and diverse instructional content. From a sustainability standpoint, inadequate resource provision undermines programme effectiveness and reduces its capacity to produce meaningful educational outcomes.



Table 4: Sufficiency of Instructional Resources

| Item | Mean | Status |
|---------------|------|----------------|
| Tablets | 1.23 | Not Sufficient |
| Computers | 1.47 | Not Sufficient |
| Library books | 1.49 | Not Sufficient |

Beyond availability, the findings show that even existing resources are insufficient. This suggests that schools are not only lacking materials but also unable to meet the minimum requirements for effective instruction. Such widespread insufficiency indicates systemic funding and planning challenges. For sustainability to be achieved, resource allocation must be both adequate and equitable.

Table 5: ANOVA – Quality of Inputs

| Source | df | F | p | Decision |
|----------------|----|------|------|-------------|
| Between States | 2 | 3.97 | .026 | Significant |

The significant ANOVA result indicates that the quality of inputs varies across states. This suggests unequal distribution of resources, which may lead to disparities in programme outcomes. Such inequality can weaken overall programme sustainability by creating uneven learning conditions.

Table 6: ANOVA – Sufficiency of Inputs

| Source | df | F | p | Decision |
|----------------|----|------|------|-----------------|
| Between States | 2 | 2.35 | .107 | Not Significant |

The non-significant result suggests that insufficiency of resources is a general problem across all states. This indicates that the challenge is systemic rather than location-specific, reinforcing the need for nationwide policy intervention.

Table 7: Instructional Resource Usage

| Resource | Mean | Usage Level |
|------------------|------|-----------------|
| Chalkboard | 2.50 | Frequently Used |
| Paper and pencil | 2.48 | Frequently Used |
| Computers | 1.43 | Rarely Used |
| Projectors | 1.44 | Rarely Used |
| VR tools | 1.25 | Not Used |
| Overall Mean | 1.72 | Low Usage |



The findings indicate that teaching practices rely heavily on traditional instructional tools, with minimal use of modern technologies. The overall mean of 1.72 confirms low integration of instructional resources.

Table 8: Monitoring and Supervision

| Indicator | Mean | Interpretation |
|--------------------------------|------|----------------|
| Overall supervision | 2.90 | High |
| Inter-agency collaboration | 2.44 | Low |
| Addressing implementation gaps | 2.44 | Low |

While overall supervision is rated high, the low scores for collaboration and problem-solving indicate weaknesses in implementation support systems. This suggests that monitoring exists but may not be sufficiently effective in addressing operational challenges.

Table 9: Completion and Dropout Rates

| Level | Completion Rate | Dropout Rate |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Primary | 125.9% | 0.53% |
| Junior Secondary | 108.4% | 6.81% |

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide important insights into the sustainability of the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme when examined through the CIPP evaluation framework. The generally positive perception of programme goals among teachers suggests that the initiative has gained a level of professional acceptance within the formal education system. This indicates that the integration of formal education into the Almajiri system is considered relevant and beneficial by those directly involved in its implementation. However, the significant variation observed across states shows that this acceptance is not uniform. Differences in local realities, administrative support and community attitudes appear to influence how the programme is received. This supports the argument that educational reforms in Nigeria are often shaped by contextual and socio-cultural factors, which determine the level of acceptance and effectiveness across different regions (Yusuf, 2016; Ibrahim, 2020). This finding agrees with previous studies that emphasise the importance of contextual and socio-cultural factors in determining the success of educational reforms. However, the present study extends existing knowledge by showing that such contextual influences are not only present but vary significantly across states, thereby affecting programme sustainability differently in each location. This variation may be due to differences in governance structures, levels of community involvement and administrative commitment across the states.

The input dimension reveals substantial structural challenges that affect programme sustainability. The widespread inadequacy of instructional materials, especially modern and technology-based resources, indicates that schools are operating under constrained conditions. Such limitations reduce the quality of teaching and restrict the range of instructional strategies



that teachers can employ. In addition, insufficient learning materials can reduce student engagement and limit effective knowledge acquisition. These findings are consistent with studies that highlight inadequate funding and poor resource allocation as major challenges confronting educational development in Nigeria (Adediran and Oloyede, 2021; Okeke and Olatunji, 2020). Without adequate investment in educational inputs, the sustainability of such programmes remains highly uncertain.

While this finding supports existing studies, it further reveals that the problem may not be limited to funding alone but also to uneven distribution and utilisation of available resources. The observed disparities across states suggest that some regions may have relatively better access to resources than others, which could explain differences in programme outcomes. This study therefore contributes to knowledge by linking resource inadequacy to both funding constraints and distribution inefficiencies within the system.

From the process perspective, the dominance of traditional teaching methods suggests that instructional practices have not fully adapted to meet the demands of an integrated curriculum. Although supervision appears to be relatively strong, its impact on improving teaching practices is limited. This indicates that supervision alone is not sufficient to drive meaningful change in classroom delivery. There is a need for supportive mechanisms that promote teacher development and encourage the use of innovative teaching approaches. This aligns with the view that effective educational reform requires continuous professional development and active institutional support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Nakpodia, 2011). Furthermore, weak coordination among stakeholders points to gaps in programme implementation, reinforcing concerns about policy execution in Nigeria (Mohammed and Sani, 2021).

The persistence of traditional teaching methods despite supervision may be attributed to inadequate teacher training, limited exposure to modern instructional tools and lack of continuous professional development opportunities. This suggests that supervision may be more administrative than supportive in nature. This study therefore extends knowledge by highlighting the gap between supervision and actual instructional improvement, indicating that effective supervision should include mentoring, training and continuous professional support.

The product dimension presents a mixed outcome. While the high completion rate at the primary level reflects success in expanding access, the higher dropout rate at the junior secondary level raises concerns about continuity. This suggests that while the programme is effective in bringing children into school, it faces challenges in sustaining their participation over time. This pattern reflects broader issues of educational inequality and retention challenges within the Nigerian education system (Amoo and Adeyemi, 2018). It also indicates that access alone is insufficient without corresponding strategies to support progression and retention.

The high completion rate at the primary level indicates strong success in expanding access to education, while the significantly higher dropout rate at the junior secondary level reveals challenges in sustaining student participation. This suggests that although the programme is



effective at initial enrolment, it struggles to maintain long-term engagement. From a sustainability perspective, retention is as important as access, and this gap highlights a critical area requiring intervention. This finding may be explained by socio-economic pressures, cultural expectations and the need for children to engage in income-generating activities, particularly in vulnerable communities. It also extends existing literature by showing that retention challenges are not only systemic but are strongly influenced by household and community-level factors.

Overall, the findings highlight that sustainability is not determined by a single factor but by the combined effect of context, resources, implementation and outcomes. This reinforces the importance of adopting a holistic approach to educational planning and evaluation, where all dimensions of programme implementation are considered simultaneously (Stufflebeam and Zhang, 2017). For the programme to achieve long-term success, there must be a coordinated effort to strengthen institutional capacity, ensure adequate resource provision and improve implementation practices across all levels. This study shows that sustaining educational programmes depends on the combined effect of context, resources, implementation and outcomes. By using the CIPP framework in a conflict-affected region, it provides a clearer understanding of programme sustainability than studies that look at these factors separately.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that the sustainability of the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme in North-East Nigeria remains limited despite its contribution to improving access to formal education. While the programme demonstrates relevance and growing acceptance within the educational system, it has not yet achieved the level of structural stability required for long-term sustainability. This conclusion is based on the persistent mismatch between policy intentions and implementation realities, particularly in relation to inadequate resource provision, limited instructional innovation and weak coordination mechanisms. These constraints indicate that the programme's effectiveness is largely confined to initial access, without corresponding strength in retention and sustained learner engagement.

Therefore the study concludes that IAEP has not fully evolved into a sustainable educational model, as its current structure does not adequately support continuity across different contexts. For the programme to achieve lasting impact, there must be deliberate alignment between contextual realities, resource allocation, implementation practices and expected outcomes. Without such alignment, the programme is likely to remain a short-term intervention rather than a resilient component of Nigeria's educational system.

RECOMMENDATION

To enhance the long-term sustainability of the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme, a multi-dimensional approach that addresses policy, institutional and instructional gaps is essential. First, there is a need for the establishment of a more reliable and transparent funding framework that ensures consistent allocation of resources to programme schools. Sustainable financing should go beyond periodic government intervention and incorporate structured partnerships with non-governmental organisations, community stakeholders and development agencies.



Secondly, investment in instructional resources must be prioritised, particularly in the provision of teaching aids, learning materials and appropriate technological tools. Improving the learning environment will not only enhance instructional delivery but also promote student engagement and retention. In addition, teacher capacity development should be strengthened through regular training programmes focused on innovative teaching strategies, inclusive education and curriculum integration. Empowering teachers with relevant skills is critical for improving classroom practices and achieving programme objectives. Furthermore, institutional coordination among implementing agencies should be improved to ensure coherence in programme delivery. Clear roles, effective communication channels and accountability mechanisms will enhance collaboration and reduce implementation gaps. Monitoring and evaluation systems should also be reinforced to provide timely feedback, support data-driven decision-making and ensure continuous improvement.

Finally, targeted interventions are required to address dropout rates at the junior secondary level in the Integrated Almajiri schools. Strategies such as learner support services, community sensitisation and flexible learning pathways can help sustain student participation. Strengthening community involvement will also foster ownership and improve the cultural acceptance of the programme. By addressing these critical areas, the Integrated Almajiri Education Programme can transition from a policy initiative into a sustainable educational model capable of delivering long-term impact.

Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Olubunmi Esther Abidakun and Bashiru Olubode Lawal conceived the study, including the design, and research assistants-collated the data. Soweb Company analysts handled the analysis and interpretation, while Olubunmi Esther Abidakun and Bashiru Olubode Lawal wrote the initial manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.



Data availability statement

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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