

## Leadership Perspectives (A Qualitative Analysis of Islamic School Principals in Gambia and Burkina Faso)

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### ABSTRACT

Islam is the most widespread religion in the world, and Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of seeking knowledge. As a result, Muslims are eager to provide educational opportunities for their children. Islamic schools in countries such as West Africa continue this tradition in modern times. This study aimed to explore the experiences and obstacles encountered by Islamic school leaders in The Gambia and Burkina Faso. It used a qualitative approach, specifically a case study methodology. Five principals from The Gambia participated in the first case study, while three principals from Burkina Faso participated in the second case study. The study revealed several significant findings. It showed that both countries' Islamic schools achieve better educational outcomes than public schools. Additionally, Islamic schools need more support related to funding and low teacher salaries. Both countries also need stronger administrative staff in Islamic schools. Based on the results, the paper presented several recommendations to improve the situation of Islamic schools in The Gambia and Burkina Faso.

**Keywords:** Islamic schools in West Africa, education in Gambia, education in Burkina Faso, Islamic schools.

## I. Introduction:

The education systems in Burkina Faso and Gambia face significant challenges, including low school enrollment rates, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic barriers to quality education (Blimpo et al., 2015; Jabbi, 2015; Unesco, 2024; Unicef, 2024). In Burkina Faso, a lack of resources hinders schools from providing basic educational materials and facilities, while in Gambia, rural areas continue to struggle with unequal access to education despite improvements in urban regions. Research into the educational systems of these countries should focus on how these challenges are being addressed and the progress made in educational development. Reforms in both countries aim to improve school enrollment and educational outcomes. In Burkina Faso, initiatives such as building more schools in rural areas and providing financial support to low-income families have been introduced. In Gambia, efforts have been made to train teachers and enhance educational materials. Despite these measures, achieving universal education remains a significant challenge. Therefore, a detailed analysis of these initiatives and their impact on school enrollment rates is necessary to assess educational equity and quality progress in Burkina Faso and Gambia (Blimpo et al., 2015; Jabbi, 2015; Unesco, 2024; Unicef, 2024).

Islamic education, deeply rooted in the cultural and educational fabric of Burkina Faso and Gambia, is a testament to the profound influence of Islam in these West African nations. In Burkina Faso, Islamic education is primarily delivered through Quranic schools and madrasas, which not only provide religious instruction but also basic literacy and numeracy skills. These schools, despite their significance, often operate with limited resources and face challenges in integration with the formal education system. To fully comprehend the role and impact of Islamic education in Burkina Faso, it is crucial to delve into its historical development, current practices, and efforts to align religious education with national educational objectives. In Gambia, Islamic education is deeply ingrained, with a significant portion of the population attending Quranic schools and madrasas from a young age. These institutions are instrumental in imparting religious knowledge and values and often serve as a gateway to further education. The Gambian government, recognizing the importance of Islamic education in the social and cultural fabric of the country, has taken significant steps to integrate it into the broader educational framework. However, challenges persist in terms of resource allocation and curriculum development, underscoring the complex nature of this integration process (Al-Fayez & Dabo, 2021; Korkan, 2021; Tonkar & Al-Juhani, 2013; Boyle, 2018; Nasir, 2024).

## II. METHOD

The primary goal of this study is to explore the experiences and obstacles encountered by Islamic school leaders in The Gambia and Burkina Faso. The study seeks to accomplish two main objectives:

1. To understand the actual situation of Islamic schools in Gambia and Burkina Faso from the schools' perspective

2. To identify the challenges confronting the leadership of Islamic schools in Gambia and Burkina Faso from the leaders' viewpoint

### Study questions

What are the perceptions of Islamic school principals in The Gambia regarding the reality and challenges of the schools they manage?

What are the perceptions of Islamic school principals in Burkina Faso regarding the reality and challenges of the schools they manage?

The study sample comprised eight leaders from Islamic schools in Gambia and Burkina Faso. In 2023, semi-structured interviews were conducted with these participants, using the local language to facilitate communication. The interviews were carried out through remote communication programs. The study adopted a qualitative approach, specifically a case study methodology (Bingham, 2023). The first case study delves into the perspectives of Islamic school leaders in The Gambia, while the second case study focuses on the views of Islamic school leaders in Burkina Faso.

### Case Study One: The Gambia

The first case study sheds light on the realities and challenges faced by Islamic schools, as perceived by the principals of these institutions. This case study included five male participants, all serving as principals of Arab Islamic schools in The Gambia. Participant number one presides over a school with 536 students across primary, middle, and secondary levels, with eleven years of experience. Participant number two oversees a school with 722 students enrolled in kindergarten, elementary, and middle school levels. Participant number three manages a large school with over 1,800 students spanning primary, middle, and secondary levels, with more than ten years of administrative experience. Participant number four supervises 1,655 students across primary, middle, and secondary levels, possessing over eight years of experience. Participant number five, with over a decade of experience, leads a school serving approximately 1,500 students across primary, middle, and secondary levels.

### Case Study Two: Burkina Faso

The second case study presents the perspectives of three highly experienced leaders from Islamic schools. The first participant, a general supervisor, has been serving a major Islamic school catering to more than 1,700 male and female students for over 24 years. The second participant, also a general supervisor, has been leading a large Islamic school with over 1,400 students for around 20 years. The third participant, the principal of a small school, has over 22 years of experience and manages a school with fewer than 300 students.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

#### **The result of the case study of Islamic schools in the Gambia**

The analysis outcomes display a strong association between various parts. To facilitate the presentation and understanding of the details, the outcomes were divided into two major themes: educational environment, management and operation. Each theme comprises five sub-themes.

The first theme, the educational environment, includes the following sub-themes:

- Pupils
- Violence issues
- Parents:
- COVID-19
- Facilities and teaching methods

#### 1.1: Pupils:

In the five Islamic private schools in The Gambia, class sizes range from 25 to 45 students per class, a crucial aspect to consider in our analysis. Despite the challenges, the principals of these five schools have shown remarkable resilience. They are moderately satisfied with the academic achievement of their students despite the hurdles they face. They have identified areas for improvement, such as students' need for more interest in studying, school dropouts, frequent absences, and behavioral issues. The principals also acknowledged that some students' lack of motivation and interest affected their academic performance and led to lower test scores. Three principals reported no significant difference when asked about their schools' performance compared to neighboring schools. However, one principal noted that his school's performance was on par with neighboring schools in most years, except the previous year when some neighboring schools outperformed him. Another principal claimed that his school stood out, citing the results of the General Secretariat for Arab Islamic Education in The Gambia.

#### 1.2: Violence issues :

While bullying is a common phenomenon in schools, the five schools studied have taken proactive measures to address this issue. The participants indicated that there are cases of violence among students. However, they are not widespread, and they believe that bullying in their schools is within standard rates. The study revealed that the five schools studied had strict anti-bullying regulations to protect targeted students from bullying. Participant No. 1 stated that one of the school's practices to reduce violence is communicating with the student's parents and ensuring their safety. Students receive general advice during assemblies, such as morning lineups. Suppose a student continues to engage in bullying behavior. In that case, they will receive appropriate punishment, such as watering the school plants or being prevented from coming to school for a week in cases of serious misconduct. Additionally, in some

cases, students who engage in violence towards others may be kept in school after regular hours as a disciplinary measure.

### 1.3: Parents:

The relationship between the school and parents is very essential. The school cannot educate the child alone. The family also plays a significant role in educating children, instilling good values, and raising them correctly. Most participants stated that their relationships with parents are satisfactory, except for one who mentioned strong relationships and constant communication between the school and parents. One of the main challenges for school principals is that some parents need to attend school meetings, and many are absent from parent councils., which is not beneficial for the school and needs to be addressed by the family. Some principals also mentioned difficulties communicating with parents, especially regarding their children's issues. Another challenge raised by the principals is the low educational level of some parents, resulting in less involvement in their children's education. An issue raised was parents' delay in paying required tuition fees, which creates financial problems for the school.

### 1.4: COVID-19

In 2020, studies in The Gambia were disrupted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Principals of private schools in the region shared their experiences dealing with the impact of the pandemic on their schools. They noted that the virus caused significant disruptions to studies and administrative work, leading to the halt of in-person classes except for students in their final year, who could access remote learning through government-prepared television channels. In the second academic year after the pandemic, studies gradually resumed, with students attending on alternate days to comply with health guidelines. However, distance learning was not feasible due to financial constraints and limited communication infrastructure. The schools faced financial difficulties due to the loss of tuition fees, which led to tough decisions such as laying off staff. One of the participants highlighted the importance of diversifying funding sources and suggested exploring endowments to support school activities instead of relying solely on student fees.

### 1.5: Facilities and teaching methods:

School facilities, including the library, restaurants, mosques for Islamic schools, and sports and recreational halls, are crucial for any educational institution. A survey was conducted to assess school administrators' satisfaction regarding educational and non-educational facilities at their respective schools.s. The survey also inquired about the level of maintenance and safety at these schools. The responses indicated an overall below-average level of satisfaction with school facilities. Many schools were found to need more effective educational and non-educational facilities. However, participants reported having the minimum required educational aids and furniture on average. Maintenance of educational facilities was identified as a significant issue, with most participants agreeing that their schools do not employ effective educational methods,

except for one participant who claimed to have effective methods in place at their school. Furthermore, four participants highlighted challenges related to student transportation and buses. In contrast, one participant noted that most nearby residents do not require school transportation services as they live adjacent to the residential neighborhood.

The second theme, management and operation, includes the following topics:

- Managerial hardships:
- Planning and delegation of powers
- Decisions Making
- Crisis management
- Teachers

#### 2.1: Managerial hardships:

The principals of these five schools, who are at the forefront of managing private Islamic education in The Gambia, need more funds to support necessary student activities and programs. They rely heavily on tuition fees as the primary revenue source, and the lack of financial resources hampers their efforts to enhance academic, cultural, and sporting achievements. Despite these challenges, they strive to make a difference, as evidenced by their aspirations to organize competitions in memorizing the Holy Qur'an, poetry, and sports, albeit hindered by financial constraints. The participants noted that the financial difficulties significantly impacted the scope of activities and programs, as well as the motivation of teachers. The schools' limited economic situation led to declining services, such as inadequate facilities, furniture, and modern educational methods. The closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the financial crisis by depriving them of essential income from tuition fees. In addition to financial challenges, three participants cited administrative hurdles related to educational laws and regulations. They indicated these regulations could limit the school principal's ability to introduce new ideas and creative projects. However, one participant acknowledged the usefulness of legislation in organizing work and relationships within the school community while also expressing concerns about its potential to restrict the school principal's creativity and desire for positive change.

#### 2.2: Planning and delegation of powers:

When the study sample was asked about the extent of delegation of administrative work to teachers and administrators working in the school, the study concluded that principals tend to be hesitant to delegate powers to the administrative staff or teachers. Participants expressed in general that administrators in the school need more skills and experience, leading managers to generally not trust these employees. Additionally, it was concluded that managers tend to adopt a bureaucratic management style. Participants stated that teachers do not want to work in administrative roles mainly due to weak financial incentives, as salaries are low given the significant responsibilities and tasks. Two participants also indicated that there

needs to be more governance principles in schools, particularly the lack of transparency, is one of the reasons teachers are not interested in administrative work or leadership positions in community schools in The Gambia.

### 2.3: Decisions Making :

The study underscores the pivotal role of the school principal in decision-making, an essential aspect of managing private Islamic schools in The Gambia. Participants emphasized the importance of consulting with administrative and educational staff to ensure well-accepted decisions. They also highlighted the use of modern applications to facilitate communication, management, and decision-making. Furthermore, they stressed the significance of reviewing and analyzing data before making decisions, citing examples such as analyzing test results and records.

### 2.4Crisis management

Ensuring the safety of students, administrative staff, and teachers in schools is a top priority for every school principal. There is nothing more important than people's health and safety. The answers varied when participants were asked if their schools had emergency plans. Two participants stated that their schools had plans to respond to fires if needed. However, two other participants reported that their schools had no fire response plans. One manager mentioned that while they do not have specific plans for fires, some corridors and exits are only opened in emergency cases.

### 2.5: Teachers:

The participants in the study reported that they had moderately excellent and friendly relationships with the administration. The teaching positions in the five schools ranged from 9 to 12 teaching periods per teacher per week. There were concerns about teachers' discipline and punctuality. Strategies have been implemented to address the performance issues of poorly performing teachers, including specialized training programs and seeking help from experienced teachers. However, there are challenges in training these teachers, including a lack of motivation due to low salaries. These are the main problems faced by Arab Islamic schools in The Gambia.

## **B- The result of the case study: Islamic schools in Burkina Faso**

The study results reveal a strong connection between various elements. To simplify the presentation and comprehension of the information, the results were categorized into two main themes: educational environment, management, and operation. Each theme consists of five sub-themes.

The first theme, the educational environment, includes the following sub-themes:

- - Covid-19 Pandemic
- - Educational services
- - Facilities
- - Safety
- - Parents

### 3.1: Covid-19 Pandemic

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2021, the principals of three private schools in Burkina Faso, notably Islamic private schools, shared their experiences. In a unique approach, these schools managed to continue studies without interruption, unlike many other educational systems that shifted to online learning. They achieved this by implementing health protocols such as distancing and mask-wearing to ensure the safety of students and staff. However, they also faced challenges such as financial constraints, lack of modern communications infrastructure, and limited internet access, which hindered students' and parents' transition to remote learning.

### 3.2: Educational services

Based on participant feedback, the average class size is significant in the three schools in Burkina Faso. The study revealed that two out of three schools had an average class size of 75 students, considered a large number. In one school, the class sizes ranged from 17 to 25 students. None of the schools had students with disabilities. Despite the large class sizes, school principals reported being highly satisfied with the students' academic achievements. Participants expressed that Dar Saham stands out in providing educational services compared to neighboring schools, particularly in Arabic, French, and Sharia specializations. One participant mentioned that the school's outcomes were excellent, citing students' success in general cultural competitions and teaching performance. Another participant expressed satisfaction with the educational services at their school, highlighting students' achievements in cultural competitions, participation in scientific events, and a high number of graduates progressing to higher education institutions both within and outside the country. According to the participant, this indicates the quality and success of the school's outcomes.

### 3.3: Facilities

The study results indicate that participants are moderately satisfied with their schools' educational and non-educational facilities. One participant mentioned that the school has a library, mosque, and bathrooms but lacks equipped playgrounds. Another participant reported that the school has a library, bathrooms, and a mosque but lacks playgrounds and canteens. Overall, there is average satisfaction with the school's general facilities and furniture, and no issues with electricity were reported.

Nevertheless, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the outdated educational resources, attributing it to financial constraints. Notably, the schools in Burkina Faso do not offer transportation services, which reduces their managerial workload. The schools don't have their own restaurants but allow vendors to sell food on the premises. Participants also commented that maintenance for facilities like libraries and restrooms is good, with dedicated workers performing their duties diligently.

### 3.4: Safety

The study revealed that all three schools prioritize the safety of students and teachers. They have measures to prevent violence and bullying, and students who engage in violent behavior face consequences according to school regulations, including possible expulsion. Additionally, the schools have unique plans to handle crises like fires, including emergency protocols, alarm systems, fire extinguishers, and evacuation training for students and teachers. The schools also highlight cleanliness, proper electrical installations, and monitoring of food sold in the cafeteria to prevent the spread of diseases and ensure everyone's safety.

### 3.5: Parents

The three participants stressed the importance of the school's relationships with parents and highlighted the school administration's average satisfaction level with these relationships. One participant discussed initiatives implemented by their school to actively involve parents in their children's education, such as activating the parents' committee, organizing meetings between parents and school representatives, and facilitating direct communication for parents to inquire about their children's academic progress. The school also prioritizes consistently sending messages about the importance of communication between school and home, improving students' academic performance.

However, the participants also identified challenges in the school's relationship with parents, particularly parents' lack of interest in their children's education and their disregard for school communications. These challenges are often related to the child's poor academic performance or behavioral problems requiring family intervention. The lack of parental attendance at parent-teacher meetings was also highlighted as a missed opportunity for beneficial communication between the school and families. Furthermore, the participants expressed concerns about many parents being late in paying tuition fees, leading to financial challenges for the school and disrupted funding for important student programs.

The second theme, management and operation, includes the following topics:

- - Teachers
- - Challenges in managerial work
- - Decision making
- - Quality
- - Partnerships

### 4.1: Teachers:

The average teaching hours for most teachers in the three private schools in Burkina Faso ranged between 15 and 25 lessons per week. Overall, the school principals were generally satisfied with the teachers, except for a few who did not meet performance expectations. The principals confirmed using traditional methods like signature books to monitor teacher attendance and dismissals. They also stated that tardiness and

absenteeism are addressed through a progressive discipline process, starting with a verbal warning, then a written warning, and finally, a deduction from the monthly salary. However, most teachers demonstrate high levels of regularity in their work. The principals believe that the teachers are satisfied with their job evaluations, which are conducted based on established procedures and standards. One participant mentioned that teachers' satisfaction with their job evaluation is attributed to the evaluation's focus on their commitment and performance in carrying out their duties. The principals also highlighted the positive relationship between teachers and the administration, emphasizing that the administration values teacher input by involving them in planning and decision-making. This approach promotes a sense of organizational loyalty among the teachers. Participant (A) mentioned that they offer numerous professional development programs for teachers and conduct various activities and training sessions throughout the year to enhance the performance of teachers. One of the principals stated that choosing a well-equipped training venue, preparing training materials, selecting teaching methods, and providing ongoing support for teachers are essential for practical teacher training. However, three teachers expressed that they face challenges in providing professional development for teachers, particularly for new and underperforming teachers. The findings suggest that lack of training experience and financial constraints are obstacles to providing quality teacher training.

#### 4.2: Challenges in managerial work:

The study found that Islamic school principals in Burkina Faso face several challenges in terms of administration. All three participants mentioned that the schools have funding problems, which have led to the abandonment of various activities to manage expenses. One participant noted that schools heavily rely on student fees to finance their activities and programs. However, many parents must pay their children's dues due to financial constraints, leading to an embarrassing situation for the school administration. Participants also highlighted that the administrative staff in schools lack the required qualifications, leading to disruptions in the schools' functioning. Despite these challenges, good relations were noted between the administration and the staff, and no significant problems were found in the division of tasks or the organization of schedules among teachers. The three schools enhance overall quality and promote a quality culture among teachers and administrators. However, the study also noted the need for more significant partnerships between the schools and other for-profit or non-profit organizations.

Additionally, a lack of modern computer applications was identified as another administrative issue, depriving the schools of practical management tools. Despite these challenges, good relations were noted between the administration and the staff, and no significant problems were found in the division of tasks or the organization of schedules among teachers. The three schools focus on improving overall quality and promoting a quality culture among teachers and administrators. However, the study also noted the need for more significant partnerships between the schools and other for-profit or non-profit organizations.

#### 4.3: Decision making:

Making decisions is considered one of the most essential tasks of school principals, and it can have a significant impact, whether positive or negative, on students and teachers. In Burkina Faso, the school principals have strong relationships with the administrative and educational staff in the three schools. They participate in decision-making along with the staff and follow a democratic style. One participant said, "Decisions are collectively made in the school, and therefore, teachers need to be involved, which leads to their ideal response to management decisions.." The results also indicated that managers should have used data to make decisions.

#### 4.4: Quality:

Quality has become a crucial element in all organizations, including educational institutions. Participants were questioned about the importance and implementation of quality in the schools where they work. They unanimously agreed on the significance of quality in education and administrative activities, seeking to instill a quality culture in all school-related tasks. One participant highlighted various quality standards established by the school, encompassing student commitment, faculty qualifications, curriculum relevance to the job market, administrative practices, and school budget specifics. Another participant emphasized the school's administration's belief in the philosophy of quality and its positive impact on the institution and its outcomes. They provided examples of quality practices in the school, such as having a dedicated quality team, conducting lectures and workshops on quality in teaching and administrative areas, and offering a course in quality management. Moreover, there is a focus on enhancing spending efficiency, especially considering the school's financial challenges.

#### 4.5: Partnerships:

All participants mentioned that the relationship between the school and the neighbors is good and mostly based on cooperation. Participants A and B mentioned that their schools always warn and deal firmly with students who tamper with the properties of the houses adjacent to the schools. In turn, the school also carries out its educational role by complaining about some commercial establishments that witness human gatherings, such as cafes and bars, which emit noise that affects the conduct of teaching as required. According to participant (A), these schools do not have soundproof materials. Some schools also provide services to neighboring residents. Participant (B) mentioned, "The school's relationship with neighboring homes is based on mutual respect, and the school also provides residents with free services such as watering." It is concluded from the participants' statements that there is no real cooperation between the school and its neighboring residents, whether in holding social or cultural activities for the residents, and the results did not indicate that the parents provide financial support to these schools. As for the issue of partnerships between schools and profit or non-profit organizations, there are no partnerships between the three private schools in Burkina Faso and charities or health centers, and

this is something that must be worked on by officials of private schools in that country.

### **A comparison between Islamic schools in the two countries**

This section summarizes the similarities and differences between the case studies of Islamic schools in the Republic of The Gambia and the Republic of Burkina Faso.

#### **A: Islamic schools in Gambia**

After analyzing the results of the five Islamic schools in the Republic of The Gambia, the most prominent findings are as follows:

- The level of satisfaction with students' academic achievement was high.
- The level of violence and bullying is within normal levels, and there are regulations in place to reduce such behaviors.

The main difficulties Islamic schools face in The Gambia are related to insufficient financial resources, which lead to insufficient funding for programs, improving the economic conditions of teachers, and the inability to purchase advanced educational aid.

Islamic schools rely mainly on student fees for funding, and partnerships and endowments are not activated to finance the schools.

- Some educational and administrative staff need more motivation due to low salaries and incentives.
  - The school administration consults with teachers when making decisions and planning.
  - There are challenges in dealing with some parents and delays in paying tuition fees.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted studies, increased learning loss, and caused financial problems for Islamic schools in The Gambia.
- Participants are generally dissatisfied with the quality of educational and sports facilities in the schools they manage.
  - There is a moderate level of satisfaction with the performance of most teachers in the five Islamic schools in The Gambia.

#### **B: Islamic schools in Burkina Faso**

Key findings from the analysis of three Islamic schools in Burkina Faso are as follows:

- In-person studies in Islamic schools continued during the COVID-19 pandemic following the health authorities' guidelines.
- The performance of teachers in the Islamic schools is moderately satisfactory.
- There is a high student-to-teacher ratio in the classes of the Islamic schools.
- Financial challenges are prevalent in the Islamic schools in Burkina Faso.
- Democratic administrative practices are observed in the school administrations.
- The quality of facilities in the three schools is moderately satisfactory.
- The administrations prioritize comprehensive quality issues in the Islamic schools.

- Participants feel that the school environment is very safe.
- Financial challenges are exacerbated by many parents' delayed payment of tuition fees.
- Strong partnerships between schools, charities, and civil society organizations must be improved.

### **C- Similarities**

The results of the first case study on Islamic schools in The Gambia align with those of the second case study on Islamic schools in Burkina Faso in most areas. The findings show that students in Islamic schools achieve better academic outcomes compared to those in public schools in both countries. The results of the first case study on Islamic schools in The Gambia agree with the results of the second case study on Islamic schools in Burkina Faso in most points. The study showed that Islamic schools in two West African countries performed better academically and provided a safer environment with lower rates of violence and bullying compared to public schools. However, there were concerns regarding teacher salaries and the need to improve communication between schools and parents. Additionally, partnerships with organizations and community relations were not seen as a priority for Islamic schools in these countries. One common challenge for Islamic schools in The Gambia and Burkina Faso is financial dependency on student fees, but this does not currently threaten the schools' continuity.

### **D-Differences**

The study discovered slight differences between the practices followed in Islamic schools in Gambia and Burkina Faso. One of the differences is the higher density of students in classrooms in Islamic schools in Burkina Faso compared to those in Guinea. Additionally, there were slight differences in the management and organizational approaches between schools in the two countries. The study also revealed that Islamic schools in Burkina Faso and Guinea had different procedures in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The study's findings align with several other studies. It revealed that teachers' wages in Islamic schools in Burkina Faso and Gambia are low, which is consistent with the findings of Alfayez and Dabo (2021) and Korrrkan (2021). Additionally, the study highlighted that academic achievement in Islamic schools surpassed that of public schools, consistent with Tonkar & Al-Juhani (2012). Moreover, it found that some parents are not actively involved in their children's education, as supported by Alfayez and Dabo (2021), Adams et al. (2012), and Korrrkan (2021). Lastly, the study highlighted the significant financing challenges faced by Islamic schools in both countries, which aligns with the findings of Korrrkan (2021) and Tonkar & Al-Juhani (2012).about monitoring their children's education in schools and do not cooperate with the school in the required manner. This result is consistent with the study (Alfayez and Dabo,2021;Adams et al., 2012;Korrrkan, 2021). The challenges in financing Islamic schools were among the biggest challenges facing Islamic schools

in both countries, and this result is consistent with (Korrrkan, 2021; Tonkar & Al-Juhani, 2012).

In light of the results of this qualitative study, there are some recommendations to enhance the condition of Islamic schools in Gambia and Burkina Faso.

1. Diversify the sources of funding for Islamic schools in Gambia and Burkina Faso, and avoid relying entirely on tuition fees.
2. Strengthen relations and partnerships between Islamic schools in Gambia and Burkina Faso with profit and non-profit organizations.
3. Hold annual conferences for Islamic schools in the African continent to discuss challenges and exchange experiences.
4. Establish a peer-reviewed scientific journal specializing in Islamic schools and schools around the world.
5. Intensify scientific studies on education in The Gambia and Burkina Faso, especially qualitative studies that provide in-depth information.

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