EXPLORING TIMBUKTU MANUSCRIPTS FOR AN AFRICAN CHILDREARING MODEL

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Abstract

This descriptive study is exploring Timbuktu manuscripts for an African educational method of childrearing. Its main objective thereby is to incite researchers to discover the prodigy of Timbuktu manuscripts in order to vulgarize their content and make use of it in daily life. The importance of this study resides partially in spreading out the information enclosed in Timbuktu manuscripts and pointing out the personality of African scholars through their works. Few are literature authors who tackled African ways of childrearing. The qualitative method that we adopted in this study consists in presenting the data without any quantitative implication. The stinginess of the data to be reported and the scarcity of research works in the domain inspired the choice of this method. This research has found out that the manuscript under study is appealing for a hybrid model of childrearing grounded more in Islamic model of child education. The manuscript makes of this mission of childrearing a personal responsibility of the father and proposes starting the process before the child's birth, whereas, besides being parental, it is communal or national in African societies
***Key words**: African; Childrearing; Education; Timbuktu Manuscripts; Wellbeing.*

Résumé

Cette étude descriptive vise à parcourir les manuscrits de Tombouctou afin d'y dénicher une méthode africaine pour élever les enfants. L'objectif principal en est d'encourager les chercheurs à explorer les manuscrits de Tombouctou en vue de vulgariser leur contenu et en faire usage au quotidien. L'importance de cette étude réside partiellement dans la diffusion des informations que contiennent ces anciens documents et la mise en exergue la personnalité des savants africains à travers leurs œuvres. Rare sont les auteurs de la littérature qui ont accordé un intérêt aux méthodes des

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Africains dans l'éducation des enfants. La méthode qualitative que nous avons adoptée pour cette étude consiste à présenter les données sans aucune implication quantitative. La rareté des données à rapporter et l'insuffisance des recherches en la matière sont pour quelque chose dans ce choix. Cette étude a trouvé que le manuscrit, objet de cette étude, appel à un modèle hybride basé sur le modèle islamique pour élever les enfants. Le manuscrit fait de cette noble mission une responsabilité personnelle du père et propose de commencer ce processus avant la naissance de l'enfant.
***Mots clés** : Africain ; Bienêtre : Education ; Elever ; Manuscrits de Tombouctou*

Introduction

Human being is characterized by a natural complexity that singles him out in the realm of living beings. This complexity is made up of several dimensions, including physical, physiological, emotional, and psychological aspects of a human being. This natural intricacy has imposed an educational rhythm and method for rearing a human child. It is different from all the other processes of growing up or adaptation for animals. This may be one of the reasons why we should call this natural process ''Education'' for human beings, and ''Adaptation'' for animals. Animals' adaptation is not as lengthy as human education process. Except for breastfeeding, a cow's ''adaptation" for its calf may be restricted to the only moment of its birth when it licks off its body the blood and mucus that can blur its eyes and provoke other inconveniences for its wellbeing. Observation has found out that it would take a turtledove only fifteen days to feed and fly its hatchlings. Some animals, such as snakes and frogs would not need one minute of care to send them out. This is not the case with a human child. It will take him years of education to be able to conform to the complex culture, traditions, customs, and moral rules of a human society. This operation has always been the concern of human parents. Sometimes, it necessitates the interference of the communal or national authorities as the child advances in age.

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The typology of this educational operation has differed according to continents, countries, communities, and families. Scholars and researchers have delved in the domain and produced invaluable works thereof. However, the problem is that little is documented about the methods of childrearing in Africa. Africa is an old continent, peopled with nations of different cultures and invaluable values that have shaped Africans throughout the ages. Nonetheless, other nations' teachings and moralities in education are subjugating African mind today. Besides modern Western education system and directives, Arabs' and Judeo-Christian precepts of education are cramming schoolbooks in Africa and encrusting social conduct. This implies that Africans have nothing of the kind, which is shocking. In West Africa, more precisely from the thirteenth century to the start of colonization in West Africa, scholars documented their opinions about childrearing. Some of these ideas are hemmed in the barely exploited thousands of manuscripts that are bedecking the shelves of Timbuktu manuscript libraries today. The objective of this study is to probe into this rich unexploited human legacy in Africa to pinpoint some of African scholars' contribution to child parenting literature in order to uncover new horizons in the domain. The research question that directs this study is: How is childrearing tackled in the manuscripts of Timbuktu?

To answer this question, our choice fell on a work by Abdullah Mohammad Fodio, corrected through its different manuscripts, documented and edited by Mahmoud Mohamed Dedeou, nicknamed Hammou. The manuscript copies that he worked on are Manuscripts 34119 and 36186 MA of Mama Haidara Manuscript Library of Timbuktu. This research is a qualitative study because of the absence of any quantitative implications, and the rarity of sources in the domain. Because of the versatility in many fields of the manuscript we are working on, our methodology consists in dogging the information about

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childrearing throughout this edited version of the manuscript. Though it encloses other information about other things, our interest scope is childrearing. We will hold to referring to the page of the book whenever we retrieve information thereof. Alongside displaying the content of the manuscript, we will keep on commenting, if necessary, and comparing it with similar or dissimilar viewpoints of other scholars. However, before exploring the work of the researcher, we will have a tour through the literature generated by the efforts of other researchers about African civilization, including African education and childrearing. As we alluded at it above, little have been documented about African childrearing. Most of the writers who delved into it are Africans. However, some other researchers and Websites have had some interest therein, making of it a domain calling on more research efforts and interest to fill the gap that the civilization of a whole continent and race has left owing to human stereotype and prejudges. This will lead us to adopt the following plan for this study.

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Childrearing in Timbuktu Manuscripts
- Conclusion

1. Literature Review

The scholars that have contributed to the literature about childrearing in Africa tackled the issue in three broad aspects: the environment in which African child's corporal growth, personality enhancement, and health promotion take shape; the cradle phase in childrearing or babying; and the childrearing practices after this babying phase.

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1.1. Environment of Childrearing in Africa

In Africa, the role of child's own family can never be overlooked in childrearing, because the responsibility of providing the first necessities of life and health for rearing a child is operated through it (J. Degbey, 2012). This responsibility is fulfilled through four major styles of parenting, according to D. Baumrind (1967): authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, permissive parenting, and uninvolved parenting. K. Cherry (2012) thinks that these styles differ owing to some factors that include personality, parental background, education level, socio-economic status, family size and religion.

However, childrearing in Africa was not the responsibility of only the family of the child. There were other agents through which childrearing and education was completed.

Traditional education in Africa is a life-long process that is family and communally engendered, culturally based, nature-centered, and personally relevant (Iro Foundation, 2023). In Africa, as K. Gyekey (1996, pp. 3-7) puts it, family means extended family not a nuclear one. An African extended family include many generations and a number of joint, compound, elementary and nuclear families that comprise cousins, uncles, and aunts living in a simple compound or communicated compounds (J. Degbey, 2012; E. Adinlofu, 2009). J. Degbey (2012) believes that this system provides moral and social norms. It protects traditions, material and spiritual customs. It also cherishes role model that prepares child for adulthood. In this system, the elders have a strong agent of social control on child education. The specificity of this system resides in childrearing responsibility in Africa. It is not the responsibility of only the biological parents of the child. It is the responsibility of all the members of the extended family. J. Degbey (2012) backs this assertion with an African proverb that says, ''a single hand cannot nurse a child''. K. Gyekye (1996, pp.3-7) points out

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another specificity of the extended family. In Africa, child lives in his parents' house, and may leave after he gets married. After marriage, parents do not relinquish the responsibility of advising their children and offering them guidance until they believe their children have enough experience to fend for themselves. This practice is grounded in the belief that the adults have more experience than their children have, at any time (P. Amos, 2013). According to WeChronicle website (n.d.), the support network of extended family provides children with a sense of identity, belongingness and security. The members of the extended family pass down cultural traditions and values to the younger generation. This develops a strong connection with their cultural roots and an appreciation for their community.

Another aspect of this communal participation in childrearing in Africa is the support and the implication of neighbors in raising and protecting children. This passes through mentorship and serving as role model, supporting and guiding children when their parents are busy or unavailable. This kind of communal support creates in children a sense of responsibility and accountability. It allows them to respect and value the opinions and guidance of their elders even if they are not from their family. Thus, they become more responsible members of the community and for the community (WeChronicle, n.d.).

The social and cultural environment in which an African child is reared has also a tremendous impact on shaping his personality and wellbeing as a human being. Before colonization, for an African child, ''life was school, and school was life''. Children learned everything necessary for the different dimensions of their growth at the feet of their elders and at their homes, yards, gardens, in the forest, at the market, and other places in their communities. There were some structured schooling aspects, but they were reserved for initiation to guilds and secret societies, rites of passage, and priesthood training (Iro Foundation, 2023). A. Wanjohi (2013)

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believes that these social norms and values influence childrearing in Africa. As childrearing is a process that involves raising and educating a child, from birth or even before to adulthood, P. Amos (2013) asserts that this process implies taking care of a child during this period emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually.

It is also worth mentioning that African childrearing is rooted deeply in venerating communal relationship, whereupon the responsibility thereof was communal too (WeChronicle, n.d.). This communalily implication represents one of the preponderant aspects of childrearing in Africa. It ensures that children are exposed to a wide range of experiences and perspectives through his relationship with community members, which helps shape their worldview .The elders have a great role in educating the younger generation through transmitting cultural norms, values, and traditions. They also guide and counsel the younger generation and pass on their wisdom and knowledge (WeChronicle, n.d.).To understand this socio-cultural environment, let us quote here the definition of culture by E. Tylor (1958, p.1). According to him, it is ‘‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, moral custom, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.’’ (P.1). P. Amos (2013) believes that though all cultures share many human cultural traits, different cultures have developed other specific traits and ways of expressing these aspects of culture, and parenting is one of these ways. Infallibly, culture aspects are handed down from generation to generation since the adults are those who have witnessed the practices and know how they are carried out. This transmission is completed through children’s exposure to experiences and practices in their communal relationships, and through adults, giving role model to young generation.

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1.2. Babying

The second aspect that interested the authors of literature is the baying one, so to say, in African childrearing process. The measures that African parents take for their children in babyhood aim to keep them in good health and security until the buck of raising is passed over to another person in the extended family or the community.

In most ancient African communities, the newborn was introduced to the ancestors. The way of doing that differed from a community to another. For instance, in Eastern Cape, South Africa, the infant is introduced to ancestors through a ceremony called ‘’imbeleko’’. The ceremony is held in the presence of the members of the extended family and the community where the family live (A. Berg, 2012). This practice may justify the popular belief in the Beng community of the Ivory Coast. In this community, it is believed that an infant is an incarnation of an ancestor. This belief makes adults respect him. When he is unhappy for no obvious reason, people believe that he is trying to communicate a spiritual need, which push the adults of the community to consult de diviner (A. Gittlieb, 1998).

In African communities, the first measure applied to a newborn is cord cutting. In ancient times, home delivery was practiced in African communities. Nowadays, it is still in vogue in rural areas where healthcare services are not accessible, affordable or of quality. This home delivery is carried out by traditional mid-wives or mothers in law. They cut cord with blades or knives before applying cow dung on the baby’s cord for quick healing purpose. During this period, some mothers apply saliva on the cord on the belief that it quickens healing (A. Wanjohi, 2013).

Breastfeeding is also one of the practices of African mothers for raising their children. According to A. Wanjohi (2013), breastfeeding constitutes a nutritional safety and security for the

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child. He can have access to food at his convenience, night and day. This connection between the child and his mother is grounded in the belief that the ambient environment is polluted and the infant is vulnerable to this polluted environment. His health could be affected by the polluted environment if he is exposed to the bigger world (A. Berg, 2012).

In this phase of child's life, folk medicine practices are also of crucial importance. According to A. Wanjohi (2013), herbal medicine are very common among many African cultures. These medicines help children clean their body system. They are administered to help children support the ordeal of teething and counter diarrhea, believed to be provoked by teething.

Another aspect of child babying is carrying the baby on the back. This practice enables mothers to be close to their children and ensure their wellbeing. It also allows having free hands to work (A. Berg, 2012). J. Voges et al (2019) reported some studies about attachment between mothers and children conducted in Africa that confirmed that the rates of secure attachment ranged from 53% to 90%. This means that, according to J. Voges et al, the majority of African mothers had the ability to create a safe environment for their infants amidst adversity and unpredictability. They were also able to secure a healthy development of their children.

Sleeping beside children in bed constitute another aspects of babying in Africa. This stage is of great importance. It is known in the isiXhosa tradition as Mdlezana phase. African mothers are not anxious beside their infants in bed. In African tradition, children sleep beside their parents until they can feel insurance to sleep with elder siblings. The place next to mother in her bed is the safest space for the infant (A. Berg, 2012).

1.3. Educational Practices in African Childrearing

We can observe in the literature shaped around childrearing many features of educational practices.

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One of these features is story telling called folktales (P. Amos, 2013). According to D. Emery (2012) in P. Amos (2013), a folktale is an anonymous traditional narrative handed down orally. This practice permitted the infusion of good conduct into children and passing on moral values and local culture in general. It is introduced in African childrearing when elders start telling stories to the young. Generally, these stories evolve around social values and personal behaving such as generosity and caring for one another, the drawback of selfishness, and so on. These stories help shaping the younger generation. Parents are not the only storytellers. Any responsive adult can impart good morals and values to children through story telling (P. Amos, 2013). Proverbs are also utilized to highlight and extrapolate life lessons for children (Iro Foundation, 2023).

Besides designed framework for practical education in ancient Africa, an African child's life experiences were meant to facilitate his growth and development. Every experience was an opportunity to transmit information, and there was not specific time for that. There were no separated sets of experiences designated as purely educational. The education activity was children's participation in the daily play and the activities in the religious and sociopolitical institution of the community. Their contribution to the survival and the development of the community constituted an aspect of their education and training (Iro Foundation, 2023). Thus, all the competences that an African individual needed for his participation in building the nation and maintaining the community were first acquired through participation in the family and the community activities (K. Akoto & A. Akoto, 2021, pp. 10-18). This participation in daily life made children responsible for something. They were given small tasks at the size of their physical and mental development, which helped facilitate their development and understanding of themselves and their role in the family and society (Iro Foundation, 2023). They were not kept busy to keep

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them out of the way. Working was a vehicle for teaching and training. Some scholars summarized it in four vehicles: Word (stories, proverbs, songs, etc.) for knowledge transmission; Work (physical activities) for wisdom and knowledge transmission; Ritual (sacred ceremonial actions) for spiritual development; and Experience (utilization of constructed and non-constructed engagements) for the reinforcement and application of previous knowledge and skills (Iro Foundtion, 2023; K. Akoto, 202, pp.10-18).

African education also puts stress on moral education consisting in teaching children to respect their elders, to be humble and prioritize community's need over individual desires. This is completed through the same different vehicles of transmission (WeChronicle, n.d.).

The literature we visited for this research was broad about African childrearing but not comprehensive. African continent is composed of different ethnic groups. Each group seems to have some private ways of childrearing. The aspects that we brought above seem to be a general hue of African childrearing and education. However, the specificities that characterize communities, including bad practices viewed as good in some communities, make it, somehow, impossible to touch on all the aspects of all African communities.

We bring forth, as an example of the aspects that have not been reported, the traditional bride kidnaping in some West-African communities where young people demonstrate their manhood and virility by kidnapping young women, which ends up with them marrying them. This practice is a way of infusing values of valor and temerity. Values as such are difficult to inculcate through peaceful and conventional education means. Rather, they are learned through tradition observed by everybody in the community. No adult or parent would tell his child to do it, but socially it is tacitly accepted. Therefore, no

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storytelling or role model would teach children such 'bad-good' practices.

Some educational practices that have not been reported consist in setting up hard situations that the experience thereof could not be learned through practical participation beforehand. As African education was essentially based on practice, wars were occasions to infuse bravery. However, as wars were not of everyday practice, some other ways in peacetime were explored to instill bravery to children. "Do-bo" in some Bambara communities of Mali is one of those ways. It consists in stranding young men in jungle to make them suffer from every kind of hardship through natural challenges and fabricated hurdles. It was a way of making them brave and enduring, something similar to Spartan military education in ancient Greece.

The diversity of ways to infuse values in African children spurs the necessity of exploring more grounds for more ways of childrearing. This accounts for our exploration of Timbuktu manuscripts for some ways of African childrearing.

2. Childrearing in Timbuktu Manuscripts

Timbuktu manuscripts are ancient documents dating back to the thirteenth century, for the most ancients, and the eighteenth century for some. These documents include those in the city of Timbuktu and in the surrounding towns and villages. They are the result of the scientific efforts of many scholars in the Arabic-Islamic world. Mostly written in Arabic, some of them are written in local languages. These manuscripts tackle many themes in diverse fields of knowledge (A. Coulibaly, 2023, p. 13). Unfortunately, few of them have been edited and put at the disposal of the public. Abdullah Mohammad Fodio's manuscript is part of that.

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2.1. The Author and his Manuscript

The author of this manuscript is Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Osman bin Saleh, the great Fulani erudite of Sokoto in the 19th century. He was born in 1766 and was known as « The Professor » because of his wide knowledge in different disciplines. He is the brother of Osman bin Mohammad Fodio, one of the Sultans who ruled over the Islamic State of Northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century. He was one of the most prolific writers of his time (M. Bello, 1996, pp. 307-308). His brother entrusted him with the reign of the south-western region of the empire over which he ruled until his death in 1829 (M. Dedeou, 2021, pp. 9-11).

The manuscript under study is one of the manuscripts of Mama Haidara Library for Manuscripts, a member of ONG SAVAMA DCI, under the registration number 36186. It was revised and corrected by the researcher Mahmoud Mohamed Dedeou of Timbuktu in 2021. The title translation of the manuscript in Arabic is Human Being's Physical and Spiritual Wellbeing. The researcher Hamou rendered it in French as *Intérêts humains liés a la religion et au corps*. He admitted that he did not proceed to any scientific authentication of the manuscript. He just corrected copyists' mistakes and commented some information therein. The manuscript is of medium size and encloses information displayed in form of recommendations. The content is akin to human physical and spiritual wellbeing. This includes method of education, rights of human being, live or dead, medicines and treatments of some diseases, virtue of foods, virtue of drinks, and some issues related to religious practices.

2.2. Childrearing in Manuscript 36186 MA

Abdullah Mohammad Fodio did not discuss much about the actions to be taken in order to rear children. His

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recommendations can be likened to the root of a tree planted in a good soil, which would guarantee a wellbeing for the tree. The mother is the good soil in which the child will be grounded. He believes that care for a child should start by wedlock and continue through the period of inception. This necessitates taking into account every action happening to child that could affect his life in both childhood and adulthood. Some of the actions that the author decries are akin to the hygiene and the bad practices and traditions in African societies that might harm child or his mother. The life of the mother is of extreme importance in that it determines the wellbeing of the child. Therefore, the mother is the first element in caring for a child.

Abdullah Mohammad Fodio sees that wedlock should not be acted for the simple end of appeasing one's lust or bragging about the number of children. Childrearing objective should be the continuation of family, and hence humanity in general (p.31). This noble objective should push fathers to better prepare the coming of a child into this world. According to the author, this necessitates a wise choice of the woman to bear and rear the child, a responsibility is assigned to the father of the child (p.32). His condition for a good child bearing woman is good character. A wife should be of good conduct who respects her religious precepts and educational principles. The author's concerns here might be the education that the child would receive in the hands of the mother. She is the first person to have contact with the child, and she is his first teacher and instructor. A woman with no education is like an incompetent teacher. This view is in harmony with the saying that goes, ''if you educate a boy, you have educated one person. If you educate a girl, you have educated the world.'' This also aligns with the main practice in Bamabara communities that should precede any marriage. In these communities, the families of both bride and groom undertake actions to know each other directly and indirectly through other people who know respective families. They also

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check about the kind of education in the families. These phases are preceded by the acquaintance with the woman to be married who may force a personality that is not hers in order to raise the groom's spirits for marriage.

The wellbeing of the child is another concern of the author. The importance that the author ascribes to the wellbeing of the newborn made him go as far as to ban bad practices and traditions during wedlock ceremonies (p.32). His care for the mother is so great that he delivers a recipe for the first copulation between the newly-weds from which a child may come (P.33). Amid the notions to be observed is the hygiene and neatness measures. The couple should take bath before intercourse. The act should be initiated with introductory caresses and soothing words. Some sexual therapists nowadays corroborate this undertaking. It is considered an enriching element of sexual connection between man and woman. It also helps them in moving beyond any negative or ambivalent attitude (L. De Villers, 2013, pp. 87-97). However, Abdullah Mohamed did not mention any effect of such measure on the life of child.

According to Abdullah Mohammad Fodio (p.34), the precise moment of childbirth is very decisive in the child's future life. This involves some measures to be observed. First, the father should hire the service of an experienced midwife whose practice and method in the art are neat and safe. She should not feed the mother in travail with any soiled food in order to ease her pains. To ascertain that the midwife is of knacks and good character, the father should hold a kind of interview or pre-conference with her to know about her habits and experiences in the matter. He should warn her not to smear the newborn with blood on the belief that this blood is good for his wellbeing. The first cloth to wrap the child in should be clean, preferably belonging to somebody whose role model is known in social reconciliation (p.35). Here, the author decries a habit that is in vogue until now. Some women are used to putting the knife with

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which they cut the baby's cord by his head whenever they want to leave him. The author deems that false and lacking in reason (p.38-39). As for the first food of the child, Abdullah Mohammad Fodio thinks that it should be from the hands of somebody who is blessed and honored. He suggests it to be of dates according to the tradition of the Prophet Mohammad. He abhors feeding the newborn with something unhealthy or dirty because this can affect his heart functioning (p. 37).

The advent of a human being in the world is an event worth celebrating. Abdullah Mohammad Fodio recommends paying homage to God for the success of the childbirth. One should kill a ram on the seventh day to welcome the newborn. This is similar to the tradition of "imbeleko" of some ancient communities in Eastern Cape in South Africa where the newborn is introduced to the ancestors in a ceremony held in the presence of the members of the extended family and the community, as indicated above in the literature.

According the author, the name that the child receives should be adorable and enviable (p.43). This measure would save the child from the inconvenience that he might encounter during his lifetime because of the oddities related to his name. This implies that names can have negative or positive impact on a human's personality. Regardless of the mocking children undergo from their classmates or age groups, names might impress people before seeing their bearers.

Another recommendation for the wellbeing of the child is circumcision. Abdullah Mohammad Fodio is in line with the tradition of the Prophet. According to this tradition, circumcision purifies the child (p. 44). This purification might involve the removal of the foreskin of the penis with the dirt and germs that it might enclose. When this manuscript was written, circumcision was of trend or a good practice. Nowadays, some research works have proven circumcision beneficial (A. Tobian & R. Gray, 2011, p. 80). According to the manuscript,

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circumcising a child when he is seven is recommendable (p. 43). This is on the reverse of the practice of some communities in Africa. Some communities of West Africa prefer circumcising children at a belated age. Some children may pass through this experience just few months before their marriage. The wisdom behind this is strengthening the awareness of the child of pains and its meanings, and the absorption of the lessons that are bestowed upon the circumcised child by the mentors during this period and experience. Too young children can hardly retain lessons or draw teachings from an experience at such a young age.

2.3. Kindergarten Schooling

Abdullah Mohammad Fodio does not indicate a precise age for children going to traditional schools. However, he puts stress on the character and the conduct of the instructor. He also stresses the pedagogical aspects of educational operation in this phase of child's life. Because of the delicacy of his mind and emotional susceptibility, the author proposes pairing instructional activity with practice. He gives muezzin's call for prayers and ablution performance system as examples thereof. He recommends a progressive teaching owing to the weak capacity of child's mind (pp. 45-46).

2.4. Formal Schooling

Abdullah Mohammad Fodio splits the educational period of a child into three stages. The first stage is that of the mother. The second is that of the scholastic instructor. The third is that of the schoolteacher. According to him, the third stage is the most crucial one and necessitates intensive care for the child and the operation itself. In this stage, the child is more mindful and aware of what he does. He is able to analyze and accept or reject what he sees and hears. Therefore, his teacher should be one of the knowledgeable and role model teachers. In this stage, the

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author suggests initiating the child to lessons of moral instead of Arithmetic, Logic and flirting poems. He justifies that with the tender nature of the child at that time. The child's mind is so mild that any print is workable on it. It is worthwhile printing it with the moral precepts at this stage. This would constitute a bedrock for the assimilation of the other subject matters or behaving undertakings to come (p.47).

2.5. Marriage

According to the author (p.49), getting a wife for the son and choosing a husband for the daughter is the last act a father is supposed to execute for his child in parenting. After this stage, the child is left to himself for his own personal and professional development. The criterion of choosing a wife for the son is the family of the woman to wed. The reference is the father. This one must be known for his religious character and conduct. This criterion might be justified by the fact that a father is the usher of the family. He is supposed to inculcate good conduct principles in his children. A father who is lacking in good conduct cannot provide his child with any. Consequently, a girl of a good father is a good girl. This is applicable to husbands as well. A boy is the heir of his father. Furthermore, beauty or good looking is also recommended in both wife and husband. Other physical traits that fascinate men and women, and spark love and affection between wife and husband are also recommended (p.49). This instruction goes on the reverse of the traditional African practice of taking care of children and counseling them even after their marriage, as indicated in the literature above.

If we go after the ideas of Abdullah Mohammad on education in this manuscript, we see that he looks at the matter through a different lens than that of the literature we visited about African childrearing in some aspects.

In the manuscript, the role of the father overshadows that of the community, and more surprisingly the role of the mother is

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not specifically determined and it is barely mentioned. Implicitly, we may infer from the author's principles of choosing a good wife that the mother has to infuse her good character into children. Nonetheless, the way of doing this is not spelled out. In most African communities, education was the responsibility of the community as indicated in the literature, not only the father's. This communality in education had its positive impact on child's physical and spiritual wellbeing. It had also an impact on social bonds and cohesion in the community. Its sociological values are not to be glossed over. It portrays the sociological personality of African societies and singles them out as a unique specificity in sociology. This aspect of tremendous importance in childrearing is lacking in the childrearing model of Abdullah Mohammad. The author assigns this buck to the instructor of the child. Here, we can observe the influence of modern and Islamic teachings in the field of education and schooling. The complexity of human society has led to the privatization of childrearing and education. This privatization has finally led to an individualistic trend that bar people from correcting other people's children in the society. Thus, education became restricted to parents and formal schools. Tribunals have been erected for those who trespass parents' rights over their children.

Another point of clash is the author's denunciation of some practices in African education. In the manuscript, we did not go through all the practices deemed bad by some people. What we want to draw attention to is that the author may be right in some of his assumptions such as concerns the first food given to the child. However, some practices in African societies have some unexplained reasons that the denunciation of detractors did not succeed in pushing some African populations to give them up or give their reasons. This may be due to their worry about the violation of the practices that they think necessary for the community. It is worthwhile here to evoke the realities of societies. Each society has its own realities that may differ from

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those of others. Taking someone else's practice as a unit of measurement for others may be doomful. Many practices in African education or childrearing system may be harmful to the infant. However, decrying them should be grounded in convincing reasons and proposing alternatives to fill the gap they are supposed to fill. The principle that consists in throwing away everything traditional leads only to a monocolorization of human civilizations, thus, effacing an important legacy of the products of human beings' intellect, instinct, and genius. The negative stereotypes that have enveloped everything African have prevented the world from benefiting from a heritage that had kept societies and communities in peace and harmony, and individuals in moral equilibrium and safety, something lacking in many modern societies today. Science and researchers of psychology, sociology, and education have refurbished some of those values that had been rejected and deemed regressive. Some of them are breastfeeding and sleeping with infants in the same bed.

Finally, one can notice the Islamic hue that characterizes the author's principles of education. This is forcibly imputed to the ruling regime in his country of the time. Northern Nigeria was part of the Islamic State erected by Osman Dan Fodio. Education was inspired by the teachings of Coran and the Hadith of Prophet Mohammad. Moreover, the movement of Dan Fodio dawned on the community as a revolution against everything traditional in Africa. This might push some researchers to conclude that the teachings of the author are eccentric to Africa, which could demote the prestige of the manuscripts in their claim of enclosing documented African knowledge and sagacity. If we probe into the measures the author advises or deplores, though sometimes hybrid, we can see that they reflect some African values and traditions in behaving children and infusing human values in them. Choosing a good wife, though advised by Islam, is an antique value in many African communities in West Africa.

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It is rooted back in history. The blessing that Sunjata Keita, the Emperor of Mali Empire of the thirteenth century, obtained for the success of his conquest of Sosso and his battles against Sumanguru is supposed to have come from the choice of his mother Sogolon Kuruma, an ugly and crook-backed woman. In addition, the women's and midwife's practices that the authors denounces are purely African. His rejection of them has little to do with Islam. Some of these practices are still in use in some traditional communities. The author was somehow scientific when he justifies his rejection of some of them, such as concerns the first food of the child. He said it affects the child's heart functioning.

Though the author opposes the literature in some aspects of childrearing in Africa, his scientific personality in this manuscript stands out. The work is more revolutionary than conventional in African parenting principles. It is also Islamic, but after all, it is human.

Conclusion

We can conclude that the child-rearing model proposed by Abdullah bin Mohammad through manuscript 36186 MA is hybrid and revolutionary at the same time. Though it covers all the phases of child moral evolution, from birth, or even before that, to marriage, it bears the recommendations of Islam in rearing children. It stresses the moral aspect of child education. The instilment of the moral precepts through school should be progressive. This schooling in itself is revolutionary in the field of African childrearing. The process, as elaborated in the literature and revealed in practice in many African communities, is a typical life-long process of African childrearing. The African model comprises exercises that develop the three dimensions of a human being: spiritual, intellectual, and physical dimensions. To keep up these three dimensions, no one

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is designated as the only teacher or responsible for the actions to be undertaken thereof. No place is designated as the only venue propitious for the procedure. Every scene of human society is a classroom, and every event is a lesson. Every adult in the society is a teacher and mentor. Every father is everybody's father, and every mother is a source of care for all children in the community. This is not the case in Abdullah's model.

On the contrary, the model of Abdullah Mohammad is more individualistic. The buck of rearing children is assigned to the father who takes care of the child to a certain age before delegating it over to another person known for his intellectual competences. The kind of education therein is specified and delimited, or even censored. Here, we can infer thereupon that Abdullah Mohammad's model fails in modeling a complete human that has fully the three dimensions for the wellbeing of a human being.

Another groundbreaking revolutionary aspect in the model of Abdullah Mohammad is the opposite side he took of some African practices in child rearing or education. Though the denunciations thereof are justified and defensible, the principle is impedimental to African values.

Another important point to be mentioned is the limitation of parental involvement in childrearing. In African way of childrearing, the community intervenes in the process even after marriage. No ear is too old to listen to advice, as it is said in Africa. The involvement of the family has been a factor of alleviating tensions in African families. It is also a factor of maintaining wedlock and preventing divorce. Individualistic couples have only the night to counsel them. Sometimes, this does not work. In Africa, it is believed that as long as you did not give birth to yourself, and you did not feed yourself to this level, you are subjected to other people's help and advice as you needed their care and food in your childhood. No wealth can take this part from your life. No matter how big one is he was one

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day the frail and feeble infant of an affable woman. This is the background to African continuous interference in the life of their ground-up children. Abdullah's model sets the boundary of parental involvement at the premarital phase in the life of the child, which is revolutionary and reformistic.

To sum up, child rearing in Abdullah Mohammad Fodio's manuscript is revolutionary in African context and more about moral and intellectual education than physical building aspect that completes the African model's dimensions in child rearing. The latter takes into account the three dimensions as it is observed in African communities and revealed by the literature visited.

Some social utilities can be drown from both the literature and the manuscript teachings. The promotion of the values evoked in the literature and the educational advice of the manuscript could result in revamping child rights in Africa and around the world. The authors stress the right of children to good health and acquisition of knowledge and experiences, intellectually, socially, and professionally. The psycho-affective aspect in child rearing is also underscored through the right of child to good name and the implications that the contrary might bear. The teachings also implies that child rights upkeep should not be the responsibility of only organizations or UN and State institutions. They should be part of normal social system that are worked out daily and naturally.

If we put into practice the teachings of the manuscript in building wedlock on good conduct in families, we would eventually succeed in behaving children and inculcating in them social and moral guidelines. Every family would work earnestly to shape its children according to the societal values that are easily traded in the market of wedlock. The trend would be that having good-mannered daughters means guaranteeing them marriage.

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Finally, the literature is proposing us a remedy to the negative social phenomena that are ruling in Western societies, such as severe emotional disorder, suicides, dementia, stress, divorce, and youth delinquency. These phenomena are produced by the individualistic trends that characterize most societies in the West, and the gap that is not filled by sociability and adequate human interactions in these societies. African model of childrearing and social system allows everybody to be listened to and receive advice that could prevent him or her from taking his or her life, proceeding to divorce, rolling over to dementia and emotional disorders. It can also alleviate stress and infuse love for living. In the West, people pay thousands of their currencies to have the assistance of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in order to curb such problems.

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