

The contribution of Islam to the development of education in Kakamega County, Kenya: A case study of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, 1983–2023

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ABSTRACT

This study is set to examine the contribution of Islam to the development of education with special reference to Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, Kakamega County, Kenya. This study cramped itself to a period between 1983 and 2023; 1983 marked the establishment of the school, as it provides a logical starting point for examining its historical development. The 40-year span allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the school's growth, contributions, and challenges over time. Ending in 2023 captured the most recent developments and ensured the availability of reliable data from the school records, policy documents, and living witnesses. What prompted the documentation of this study was the limited understanding of how Islamic education shaped educational progress in Kakamega County. While tracing the historical foundations of the school, the study was guided by the following objectives: to trace the historical development of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, to examine the contribution of Islam to the development of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, and lastly, to assess the impacts of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School alumni on the community. This study was guided by policy historiography by Trevor Gale, as it helped to examine how historical and socio-political contexts shaped education in KMSS. This research also employed a historical research design, which was a qualitative approach. Due to the historical nature of this research, it employed both primary and secondary sources of data collection in order to get firsthand information. This research, however, relied on primary sources that included document analysis and interview guides that were done orally, as this helped to provide valuable insights into the role of religion in shaping the institution by emphasizing the importance of community support, religious values, and leadership in fostering the development. The target population involved the community, parents and students, the alumni, and the school administration, who were sampled using purposive sampling. These data collection processes were used to comprehend the Islamic teachings in influencing moral and ethical education by showing how the curriculum inculcated with Islamic values provided not only secular and religious education but also, in addition, the role of Muslim organizations such as religious endowments and charity donations in promoting growth and development of the school. Archival data were produced by the method of thematic analysis. This allowed to confirm information gathered via interviews by eyewitnesses. The verified data was then analyzed and presented qualitatively under themes with special reference to study objectives. In conclusion, this research demonstrated that the contribution of Islam to the development of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School played a pivotal role in ensuring its success as a center of both academic and religious learning, benefiting the local Muslim community and beyond. From the findings, the study recommends the Ministry of Education, the Muslim community, and the school administration ensure that they preserve the Islamic culture while teaching IRE, encourage active community involvement, preservethe school's Islamic heritage, and provide government recognition and support for faith-based institutions in national education.

Keywords: Educational Development, Islamic Education, Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, Kenya

I. INTRODUCTION

Education has consistently been recognized as both a tool of personal empowerment and a driver of social transformation. In Kenya, education has historically reflected the country's encounters with diverse cultural and religious influences African indigenous systems, Christian missionary schooling, colonial policies, and, importantly, Islamic traditions (Sifuna, 1990; Bogonko, 1992; Otiende & Sifuna, 1994). Each of these systems has shaped not only how knowledge was transmitted but also how values, identities, and aspirations were cultivated across generations. Yet within scholarly and policy discourse, the contribution of Islamic education has often been underexplored, particularly in regions such as Western Kenya where Christian missionary dominance and state policy overshadowed Muslim

initiatives (Nasimiyyu, 2000; Isaack, 2018). Islam places an unparalleled emphasis on learning, considering it both a spiritual duty and a social responsibility. The first Qur'anic command to "read" (Qur'an 96:1) highlights the centrality of knowledge in Islamic life, while prophetic traditions affirm that seeking knowledge is obligatory for every believer (Brown, 2013; Maidugu & Sadeeq, 2024). Historically, Islamic education has not been limited to religious instruction. It has embodied a holistic vision, integrating spiritual, intellectual, and moral growth through systems such as madrassas and Qur'anic schools, which became vital institutions across Africa (Hall, 2011; Kane, 2016). In this sense, Islamic education resonated with African indigenous systems, which also prioritized moral training, community responsibility, and oral traditions of knowledge transmission (Mashic, 2009; Ocitti, 1966).

The spread of Islam into Africa from the seventh century reshaped cultural and educational landscapes. In West Africa, trade networks linked Islamic scholars with local rulers, leading to the establishment of renowned centers such as Timbuktu (Reese, 2014; Sanneh, 2015). Islam reached East Africa on the Swahili coast by at least the eighth century, and later spread inland from the influence of commerce, migration, and cultural interaction among individuals (Nobili, 2020; Mazrui, 2014). In Western Kenya, Nabongo Mumia of the Wanga kingdom was at the center of welcoming Muslim traders and, in the process, opening the way for the addition of Islam among local societies (Osogo, 1966; Mulaa, 1981; Oded, 2000). The historical pattern thus underlines that Islam was not merely a religious importation but a cultural movement that overlapped with indigenous regimes and colonial contact. The colonial period greatly disturbed the balance between Islamic and other school cultures. Christian mission schools, with the aid of colonial government, became the leading dispensers of official education (Anderson, 2005; Sheffield, 1973). Their education focused on literacy, Christian instruction, and European value systems, sometimes sidelining indigenous and Islamic practices (Wanjohi, 2011; Porter, 2004). In spite of the Muslim protest against aspects of missionary education due to the pursuit of maintaining identity, they simultaneously began to update madrassas by including secular disciplines in order to keep up in the rapidly changing world (Isaack, 2018). The period thus spurred the development of Islamic education in Kenya from Qur'anic schools of an informal nature to integrated schools combining religious and secular education (Adan, 2013; Møller, 2006).

After independence in 1963, Kenya's education system underwent reforms aimed at fostering national unity, expanding access, and aligning education with socio-economic development (Republic of Kenya, 1964; 1986). The introduction of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) into the national curriculum and the recognition of faith-based schools reflected an acknowledgment of Kenya's religious diversity (Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013; Inyega et al., 2021). Yet, while Christian-sponsored schools often benefitted from greater visibility and resources, Islamic institutions still struggled with policy neglect and resource disparities (Isaack, 2018; Nasimiyyu, 2000). Within this context, the establishment of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School (KMSS) in 1983 represented a significant milestone for the Muslim community in Western Kenya. KMSS is the creation of local Muslims, which is formed based on practical and cultural requirements. On the one hand, Muslim children were denied access to quality secondary education because of their religion, which excluded them in denominational schools (Ochola, 2001). On the other hand, the increasing need in integrated curricula, uniting national standards and the Islamic values, demanded institutions capable of offering both academic quality and moral growth (Adan, 2013; Isaack, 2018). Through developing KMSS, the community aimed to secure continuity among graduates of primary Muslim schools, as well as aligning with the national vision of education as an instrument of development (Lelei & Weidman, 2012; Mackatiani et al., 2016).

KMSS story describes how the Islamic education has assisted Kenya to enhance its general education. KMSS is not only a learning institution but also a cultural heritage, moral teaching, community empowerment as a faith-based institution. The example of its curriculum reflects the idea of integrated learning, which combines secular and religious courses to raise all-round people ready to face national examinations and spiritual duties (Isaack, 2018; Maidugu & Sadeeq, 2024). With the help of communal assistance, beyond the classroom, the school has also received community support in terms of zakat (almsgiving), endowments, and alumni donations, as an example of how Islamic values of charity and solidarity can be used to sustain educational institutions (Bakari & Yahya-Othman, 1997; Ahmed, 2010). On a theoretical level, exploring the concept of KMSS in the light of the ideas of policy historiography by Trevor Gale makes it possible to understand the ways in which educational policies interrelate with social, cultural, and religious dynamics. According to Gale (2001), policies are not sets in stone but historically embodied discourses that are influenced by power, ideology and community reactions. Using this lens to analyze KMSS, it is possible to note that Islamic education has adapted to and opposed state policies to guarantee survival and relevance in the environment of structural inequalities (Creswell, 2018; Tracy, 2019). KMSS story explains how Islamic education has helped Kenya to improve its overall education. KMSS is not just a learning institution but a cultural heritage, moral teaching, community empowerment as a faith-based institution. The example of its curriculum reflects the idea of integrated learning, which combines secular and religious courses to raise all-round people ready to face national examinations and spiritual duties (Isaack, 2018; Maidugu & Sadeeq, 2024). With the help of communal assistance, beyond the classroom, the school has also received community support in terms of zakat (almsgiving), endowments, and alumni donations, as an example of how Islamic values of charity and solidarity can be used to sustain educational institutions (Bakari & Yahya-Othman, 1997; Ahmed, 2010).

On a theoretical level, exploring the concept of KMSS in the light of the ideas of policy historiography by Trevor Gale makes it possible to understand the ways in which educational policies interrelate with social, cultural, and religious dynamics. According to Gale (2001), policies are not sets in stone but historically embodied discourses that are influenced by power, ideology and community reactions. Using this lens to analyze KMSS, it is possible to note that Islamic education has adapted to and opposed state policies to guarantee survival and relevance in the environment of structural inequalities (Creswell, 2018; Tracy, 2019). Despite its contributions, KMSS remains under-documented in educational scholarship, particularly compared to missionary-founded or elite state schools. This absence creates a gap in understanding how religious communities shape education in ways that complement, challenge, or transform national systems. By tracing KMSS's historical development from 1983 to 2023, this article seeks to address this gap. It examines three central questions: What were the historical factors that led to the establishment of KMSS? How did Islam influence the school's development over four decades? And what impact have its alumni had on the wider society? In exploring these questions, the article argues that Islamic education in Kenya, as exemplified by KMSS, has been integrative rather than oppositional, transformative rather than peripheral. KMSS illustrates how religious values, community agency, and national policies intersect to produce institutions that serve both local needs and national development goals. Far from being marginal, Islamic education has contributed significantly to academic achievement, moral development, and social cohesion in Kakamega County and beyond.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Kakamega Muslim Secondary School has been in existence since 1983 and has played an important role in promoting education grounded in Islamic values. Yet, despite its impact on learners and the wider community, its contributions have not been well documented in either local or national educational records. In Western Kenya, public and Christian-sponsored schools tend to receive more visibility and government support, while Islamic institutions such as KMSS often operate with limited resources and little policy attention. This lack of recognition has made it difficult to fully appreciate how Islamic education has shaped the character, academic growth, and social contributions of learners in the region. Simultaneously, a significant portion of research about education in Kenya has failed to consider the impact of religion, in particular, Islam, on the development of schools and learner results. A lot of the work is conceptualized by secular or western theories, which cannot explain the lived experiences, cultural meaning, and values embedded in the institutions such as KMSS. However, the school narrative indicates that Islamic education has been the focus of academic success, moral instructions, and societal growth. This research paper thus attempts to address this gap by developing an interpretivist study methodology using Trevor Gale's policy historiography to trace the progress of KMSS through its historical, social, and policy contexts.

1.2 Research Objective

To explore the role of Islam in advancing education in Kakamega County, with reference to Kakamega Muslim Secondary School.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was based on the concept of policy historiography proposed by Trevor Gale (2001), which offers an idea of how the education policies develop and how they are influenced by broader social, cultural, and religious forces. Gale warns against perceiving policies as official texts but rather he presents them as historically contextualized forms of discourse that are influenced by power relations, ideological conflict and community bargaining. The view was especially applicable to the study of Islamic education in Kenya, and more specifically in the case of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School (KMSS). Within the policy historiography, the research followed the way the government policies, religious beliefs, and local efforts interplayed in the formation of Islamic education. The framework also demonstrated how institutions like KMSS reacted to the state policies at times by means of adjusting to them, at other times by defying or redefining them in both the colonial and postcolonial setting. Using the method of Gale, the research could question the construction of education at KMSS in terms of policy discourses, community agency and local interpretation. It also brought into focus the dynamics of inclusion and marginalization, raising critical questions about whose voices influenced educational development, how Islamic perspectives were either accommodated or excluded, and how Muslim communities in Western Kenya sought to reshape national education agendas in response to these pressures.

2.2 Empirical Review

Education in Kenya has been shaped by diverse historical, cultural, and religious forces, yet the role of Islamic institutions has often been underexplored. Several studies trace the broader history of education, showing how colonial and post-independence reforms shaped access and equity. Sifuna (1990), Bogonko (1992), and Otiende and Sifuna (1994) emphasize that colonial education privileged Christian-sponsored schools while marginalizing Islamic and indigenous approaches. Sheffield (1973) and Anderson (2005) similarly note that missionary institutions dominated the education landscape, with Muslims often excluded or compelled to establish parallel systems of learning.

Empirical studies on Islamic education in Kenya highlight efforts by Muslim communities to integrate secular and religious knowledge. Adan (2013) records the case of the Islamic integrated schools in Garissa whereby they accommodated the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) alongside national curricula. Isaack (2018) follows the history of Islamic education since the colonial times to the current era without omissions in its endurance due to the lack of state appreciation and encouragement. Nasimiyu (2000) demonstrates the contribution of the Islamic institutions in Western Kenya that did not ruin the identity of the community because they promoted literacy as well as moral education. Such works demonstrate that Islamic schools like Kakamega Muslim Secondary School (KMSS) are a part of the wider trend in which Muslim communities seek the means to ensure that they are able to acquire education without having to sacrifice their religious beliefs and values. At a broader African level, Hall (2011), Kane (2016), and Sanneh (2015) demonstrate that Islamic education has a long history of intellectual tradition in West Africa and Mazrui (2014) and Nobili (2020) believe that Islamic scholarship has always adapted to different socio-political conditions. These findings provide some information on the Kenyan case, in which Islamic schools too must negotiate between modernity, tradition, and state policy.

The Kenya education reforms after independence studies illuminated further on the fate of minority faith-based institutions. According to Muricho and Chang (2013) and Inyega et al. (2021), there is the scope of how many reforms provided access but not based on the needs of Muslim students. Despite the fact that the outcomes continue to depend on political factors, curriculum reforms and resource allocation to the disadvantage of Islamic schools, the role of the Islamic education in the developments of Kenya is given little emphasis by Lelei and Weidman (2012) and Mackatiani et al. (2016) in general and KMSS in particular. This is a huge gap considering KMSS has delivered generations of graduates in the course of having served professional sectors, religious leadership and community development. The paucity of empirical research on KMSS has curtailed the knowledge of the role of Islamic values in influencing not just individual learners but also the entire society. The study addresses this gap by writing about the four-decade experience of KMSS and introducing a contextualized insight into the Islamic education literature in Kenya. Adan (2013) records the case of the Islamic integrated schools in Garissa whereby they accommodated the teaching of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) alongside national curricula. Isaack (2018) traces the history of the Islamic education since the colonial days to the present without missing any part of its survival because the state did not value and support it. Nasimiyu (2000) indicates the role of the Islamic institutions in Western Kenya which did not limit itself to promoting literacy and moral education at the expense of obliterating the community identity. These sources demonstrate that Islamic schools including Kakamega Muslim Secondary School (KMSS) are part of a larger trend of Muslim communities to ensure that they access the benefits of education without compromising their beliefs and values. Hall (2011), Kane (2016), and Sanneh (2015) reveal that Islamic education has a long intellectual tradition in West Africa, and Mazrui (2014) and Nobili (2020) argue that Islamic scholarship has always been able to adapt itself to different socio-political circumstances. The results provide us with some clues to the Kenyan situation, where Islamic schools are also forced to juggle between tradition, modernity, and state.

Research on education reforms in Kenya since independence illuminated more on the situation of the minority faith-based institutions. The scope of reforms to open access and not take the needs of Muslim students into account is also presented in Muricho and Chang (2013) and Inyega et al. (2021). Lelei and Weidman (2012) and Mackatiani et al. (2016) underline that the results continue to be dependent on political factors, curriculum restructure and resource allocation, which discriminate against Islamic schools.

Although these studies have emphasised the role of the Islamic education in developing Kenya, there is little emphasis on Western Kenya in general and KMSS in particular. This is a huge gap considering KMSS has delivered generations of graduates in the course of having served professional sectors, religious leadership and community development. The paucity of empirical research on KMSS has curtailed the knowledge of the role of Islamic values in influencing not just individual learners but also the entire society. The study addresses this gap by writing about the four-decade experience of KMSS and introducing a contextualized insight into the Islamic education literature in Kenya.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The type of historical research design was used in this research to retrace the role of Islam in development of education in Kakamega County, and the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, KMSS in particular. History design was suitable as it enabled the reproduction of past events and processes, and offered an understanding of how Islamic education influenced the development and the personality of the institution within forty years (Creswell, 2018). This method placed more emphasis on qualitative interpretation and was influenced by the policy historiography of Trevor Gale (2001), which places educational developments in the context of their broader historical, cultural, and political environments.

3.2 Targeted Population

The participants of the study were individuals that are directly related to the development of KMSS and its operations. These comprised school administration members, school alumni, teachers, parents and the Muslim community representatives. These groups were deemed necessary as they understood the historical development of the school, challenges that faced the school and how it has contributed towards the development of the Islamic based education in Kakamega County.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The participants were identified through purposive sampling focusing on those who are knowledgeable and had hands-on experience with KMSS. The selection was made to guarantee that the interviewees would be able to offer credible information about the historical institution, input, and community influence of the school. School administrators, community leaders, long-serving teachers were key informants, and alumni and parents were used to give their views on the wider societal impact of the school.

3.4 Data Collection

Secondary and primary sources of information were used. Oral interviews and document analysis comprised the primary sources of data. The unstructured interview guides allowed the participants to explore themselves and to document the lived experiences of the people who were interested in the school. Secondary data consisted of archival records, school report, policy documents, and other literature. These sources were used in combination to provide triangulated information on the growth and role of KMSS.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected. Oral interviews were transcribed, matched with archival documents, and coded into themes based on the study objectives. The six steps of thematic analysis process used by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used to identify recurrent patterns and come up with coherent stories. The method facilitated corroboration of oral testimonies with documentary data, and thus reliability and accuracy of the history in the contribution of KMSS.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 The Historical Development of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, 1983–2023

Islam reached Western Kenya between 1870 and 1885 through traders, gaining influence in towns such as Mumias and Kakamega, where Chief Nabongo Mumia embraced the faith with the support of Muslim allies (KNA: DC/KNG/2/8/13; O.I. Hesbon Omollo, 07/04/2025). As the Muslim population grew, the need for educational institutions rooted in Islamic values became more pressing.

Kakamega Muslim Secondary School (KMSS) was established in 1983 by the local Muslim community, with support from organizations like the Bilal Muslim Mission and the Muslim World League. Its creation responded to two key challenges: discrimination against Muslim learners in Christian-sponsored schools and the absence of nearby Islamic secondary schools. Previous Islamic institutions like the Mumias Muslim School (1946), the Maragoli Muslim School (1950), and the Gambogi Muslim School (1954) were well outside Kakamega town, restricting access by the locals (KNA: ED/25/7/1/16340). Such founders as Hamisi Maalim Gaziti and Mwanji Akida Jesh thought of KMSS as a school that would offer combined education, i.e. teaching secular courses along with Islamic Religious Education (Isaack, 2018). During its initial years, KMSS shared with Kakamega Muslim Primary School, although, with community mobilization and organizational assistance, KMSS established its own buildings, which consisted of classrooms, dormitories and mosque.

Islamic organizations played a vital role in providing financial aid, such as funding building libraries e.g Bilal Muslim Mission and offering scholarships in 2022 under the support of local mosques. This teamwork has seen KMSS become a reputable institution that provides a holistic education based on academic excellence and Islamic values. Below is a table showing funding from Islamic organizations to the school.

Table 1
Funding from Islamic Organizations to the School

Year	Organization	Contribution	Purpose
2000	Bilal Muslim mission	Ksh 500,000	Construction of School library
2002	African Muslim Agency	Ksh 200,000	School latrine construction
2010	Muslim World League	Ksh 1,200,000	Classroom construction
2022	Local Mosques	Ksh 300,000	Student bursaries

4.2 Contribution of Islam to the Development of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, 1983-2023

Islamic education is uniquely different from other types of educational theory and practice at large because of all the encompassing influence of the Quran. The Quran served as the comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society and as a primary source of knowledge. Basic Islamic education took place in mosques and this type of education emerged in response to disseminating and deepening the learners knowledge of Islamic faith (Adan, 2013).

The growth and development of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School was greatly influenced by the Islamic faith and denominational impacts. According to the September report of education 1997 the Kenya Muslim Charitable Society (KMCS) was one of the key instrumental organizations that was in support of educational initiatives across Kenya and all Muslim schools benefited under the organization including the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School. The main aim of the organization was to provide accessible education to all Muslim communities and their children at large thereby fostering both a religious and well integrated curriculum. This was also provided on the annual report on education of 1990 (KNA: EDU/3/4/7; O.I. Khadijah Abdul, 10/04/2025).

One of the beneficiaries of KMCS and is currently a teacher of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and History at Ichinga Muslim Secondary School in Mumias added that secular and religious education was inseparable at the school and that the main aim of education was to enhance a total way of life in mankind as this words were commonly said by madam Amina Rajab. These words were so neutral to every student and madam Amina helped us to even understand the Islam as any other denomination in that it was not only based on Quranic teachings but also helping one to enhance their total way of life (O.I. Gladys Oduor, 10/04/2025; KNA: MOE /2/17602).

In addition to what Gladys pointed out, Khadijah said that Madam Amina Rahab was one of the best teacher and students loved her so much. She was a role model to most of the girls in the school because of her unique teaching tactics in Islamic Religious education which made the students to love her subject and even posted good results and her subject was always among the best. Every time she was in class students were happy and excited because it was not a boring class. She associated well with students and encouraged them also to emulate good morals and follow the teachings of Prophet Mohamad (O.I Khadija Abdul, 10/04/2025; KNA: MOE/2/17602).

Islamic Religious Education was offered as part of the curriculum that enriched students' spiritual understanding and giving Muslim Students a strong identity. The Quranic studies, Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and Hadith studies were also incorporated to complement the national curriculum by reinforcing Islamic education alongside secular subjects (KNA: ED/1/3/9; O.I, Naomi Mbayi, 09/04/2025)

The school facilitated Islamic practice by having a mosque and prayer facilities holding regular jumu'ah prayers and Scheduling school activities to align with prayer times and religious obligations. During Ramadhan, students were supported in fasting and special programs such as Tarweed prayers or Quranic competitions were organized (O.I. Gladys Oduor, 10/04/2025).

**Plate 1**

This was the first Mosque that was used by students to do their evening prayers, on the left at the entrance is where they washed their feet before going in the Mosque

Source: School Records 23/10/2001

The school also emphasized on education for both genders and encouraged the inclusion of Muslim girls in schooling. The school provided a safe environment for Muslim girls to learn while observing Islamic dress codes (Buibui) and boys (kanzus), they were also allowed to participate in school life which helped at large in increase of the school's enrollment rates over time (O.I. Gladys Oduor, 10/04/2025; KNA: MOE /2/17610). Therefore, this study finding suggest a deeper connection between religious identity and educational advancement than previously acknowledged.

4.2.1 Islamic Educational Philosophy and Its Impact on Kakamega Muslim Secondary School

The philosophy of Islamic education looked at the principles and concepts that were underlying education and Islam, it analyzed and criticized, deconstructed and disintegrated the existing educational infrastructure and strived to produce new concepts continuously. The educational Islamic philosophy seek to the distinct role of human beings which is reform and construction of human life. This concept of life based on fundamental concepts as individuals, society and the world and education worked together to find a balanced relationship and equitable between the parties and to this equation which were based on a relationship characterized by a mutual and integration so one party cannot survive without the other (Ahmed, 2010).

The Islamic educational philosophy had a significant impact on the foundation, development and operational culture on many Islamic based schools. The Islamic Philosophy played a transformative role in shaping Kakamega Muslim Secondary School. This philosophy was rooted in the belief that knowledge was both a spiritual and an intellectual pursuit aiming at developing the whole person physically, morally and spiritually (KNA: ED/1/3/9). The philosophy fostered a value based learning environment where academic excellence was harmonized with spiritual growth by ultimately contributing to the holistic development of students and a broader Muslim community in Kakamega (KNA: ED/1/3/9; O.I. Abbas Sheikh 13/04/2025).

At the core of Islamic philosophy was (Taw heed) which meant oneness of God, and implied that all knowledge came from Allah and it was a must that it was to be used to serve him and humanity. At the school the principle was evident in both secular and religious knowledge and both were taught with equal importance. The integration of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) into the national curriculum ensured that students grew with an understanding that all knowledge was interconnected and purposeful (O.I. Hesbon Omollo, 10/04/2025). Bakar Mohamed added that the same Islamic philosophy viewed education as a means of Tarbiyya which meant nurturing individuals, spiritually, intellectually and physically, he said that it was a common virtue taught at the mosque by Mr. Sheikh Idris. The school also emphasized on discipline, moral conduct and character building and nurtured students who were not just academically competent but also socially responsible and morally upright. This was evident through programs like

Quranic recitation, school wide prayers and community service learning (O.I Bakar Mohammad, 11/04/2025; KNA: ED/25/7/1/1/16340).

Adan (2013) highlighted that, during early years, the concept of Ilm as Ibadah (knowledge as worship) taught that acquiring knowledge was an act of devotion to Allah. At the school students were encouraged to seek education not just for employment but for spiritual fulfilment and service to the community. These enabled learners to foster a strong work ethic, motivation and a higher sense of purpose as well. It was evidently seen by students being committed for the Sunna prayers which were done in the evening at the mosque. Some of the activities that they engaged in to ensure that they kept the concept of Ilm as Ibadah was having time of reading and contemplating the Quran which was considered as the act as worship and seeking knowledge about Gods word, the studying of Islamic jurisprudence, theology ,history and other related fields enhanced an individual's understanding of faith and also teachings and sharing of knowledge with others was a form of worship as it contributed to the spread of knowledge and understanding (KNA: MOE /2/17; O.I. Swabrina Amina, 10/04/2025).

With reference to the Education Annual Report of 1985, the outcomes of this educational approach were clearly evident in the school's performance and conduct of many learners who are the alumni of the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School. Many of them are holding respectable positions in the society both in professional and religious spheres like Gladys Jumah who is a teacher of Ichinga Muslim Secondary school in Mumias and Abbas Abdul-Aziz who once served in the Ministry of Education in Kakamega County (O.I Hesbon Omollo 07|04|2025). Their success was often attributed to the balanced education they received that was grounded in faith and enriched with academic excellence. The school became a model of how Islamic principles were harmonized with education to provide capable conscientious citizens (O.I Bakar Mohamed, 11|04|2025; KNA: MOE/1/2/17).

4.2.2 Islamic Community Support on Kakamega Muslim Secondary School

According to Nobili (2020), Abdinur the Islamic community played a pivotal role in the development of infrastructure and resources at many Islamic integrated schools across the country including the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School. This was seconded by Dr. Amina Yusuf, a former student of the school that they received the support through the collective efforts and religious obligation that is members of the Islamic faith provided significant financial support that enabled them as a school to construct and renovate of essential school facilities. In addition, various Islamic organizations like the Bilal Muslim Mission which helped the school in construction of the school library the African Muslim Agency which helped the school in construction of school latrine and Muslim World League which helped the school in construction of classrooms. Furthermore, some contributions often came in form of Zakat (Obligatory alms) Sadaqah (voluntary charity) and Waqf (endowments). These were deeply rooted in Islamic teachings on community development and social responsibility (O.I. Dr. Amina Yusuf, 11/04/2025; KNA: MOE /2/17729).

Bakar Mohamed who was a classmate to Dr. Amina Yusuf added that, he also benefited from the Islamic donor agencies more specifically the Bilal Muslim Mission, which provided funds that were used in improving the school's infrastructure and also provided the learning materials like books, pens and portable chalk boards which at large helped them to have a good access with the learning materials as back they were not enough. He also added that the same organization assisted the school in building prayer center in honor of Allah which was used by the students especially during the evening prayers. The organization also provided the school with science equipment's. Their contribution not only enhanced the physical environment of the school but also enriched the learning experience (O.I. Bakar Mohammed, 11/04/2025; KNA: DC/KMG/2/8/5).

Mr. Musa Andako, who was one of the Board of Management members at the school in 2005, noted that the Islamic community contributed largely to the school, especially in terms of human resource development by supporting the recruitment of qualified teachers, offering poor students scholarships and offering training opportunities for its staff. The local Muslim leaders and scholars also engaged students with the mentorship programs, religious guidance and motivational talks which at large played a key role in shaping student character and academic discipline (O.I Mr. Musa Andako, 11/04/2025; KNA: DC/KMG/2/8/5).

To add on that, the school also benefited from strong partnership with local mosques and Islamic centers which helped to mobilize support for fundraising and promote volunteerism among community members. This close relationship between the school and surrounding Muslim community ensured continued support for the school growth thus leadingng to a sustained improvement in infrastructure and education resources. Ultimately, the support from the Islamic community not only contributed to the physical expansion of the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School but also strengthened its identity as a center of both academic excellence and spiritual development (O.I Mr. Hesbon Omollo, 11/04/2025; School records, 06/07/2007).

4.2.3 The Socio-Cultural Impact of Islam to Kakamega Muslim Secondary School

The socio-cultural impact of Islam on the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School was profound and far reaching in such a way that it was rooted in Islamic values and the school's foundation was greatly influenced by moral and ethical teachings of the religion (KNA: MOE 1/2/17729). The Islamic principles such as honesty, discipline, respect and

modesty were installed in students' daily practices, religious instruction and strict adherence to the Islamic dress codes. The values shaped not only the character of students but also the overall environment of the school, fostering a culture of responsibility and spiritual awareness. The development of Kakamega Muslim Secondary School was strongly supported by the local Muslim community and from its inception, members of the Muslim community in Kakamega came together and contributed land that was used by the school, financial resources and manpower. This communal effort demonstrated the Islamic spirit of Ummah (community) where by the collective responsibility and support for education were deeply valued. The school became a center of hope and pride for Muslims in the region over time by offering a safe and culturally appropriate learning space, particularly for the Muslim children who were often underserved in the mainstream institutions (O.I Abbas Sheikh 11/04/2025 KNA: DC/KNG 2/8/13,).

Islam also played a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural identity within Kaka-mega Muslim Secondary School. The curriculum incorporated Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Arabic which helped students connect with their religious and cultural roots. Celebrations of Islamic holiday such as Eid-al-fitr and Eidal-Adha along with observance of Ramadhan reinforced a sense of identity and belonging among students. These activities were not only religious but also social occasions that brought together students, teachers and parents and broader community at large (O.I Abbas Sheikh, 11/04/2025).

Furthermore, the school contributed to the enhancement of social cohesion and mutual respect in the wider Kakamega region. The Islamic teachings of peace, justice and charity encouraged students to engage in acts of community service and interfaith dialogue. The school participated at large in joint community initiatives with other schools and religious institutions, promoting tolerance and peaceful co-existence. This helped to bridge the gap between Muslims and non-Muslims in the region hence fostering unity in a diverse society (KNA: DC/KMG/2/8/48).

The influence of Islam extended to the governance and management of the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School where by, the Islamic leaders were actively involved in the school's Board of Management, ensuring that decisions made were clearly aligned with religious values. Policies related to student behavior were also shaped by the Islamic principles. Through these significant contributions, they at large influenced by both the structure and spirit of the Kakamega Muslim Secondary School, enabling it to grow into a reputable institution that not only provided academic knowledge but also nurtured moral and cultural development of the learners (O.I Bakar Mohammed, 12/04/2025).

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The results have revealed that KMSS has been central in the provision of integrated education since its foundation in 1983 that incorporates both secular education and Islamic values. The evolution of the school was not a mere coincidence but a result of community mobilization, the long-term contributions of Islamic organizations, and the willingness of local leaders to break down the historical marginalization of the school within the mainstream Christian-funded organizations. KMSS has expanded to be a well-known secondary school with its own facilities, discipline reputation, and have produced graduates who have made a significant impact in the fields of education, business, healthcare and religious leadership over the last forty years. The history of the school is used to show how Islamic education when incorporated into the national systems can also add value to the other parts of the educational system through its ability to foster moral discipline, excellence in academics and solidarity of the community. As the example of KMSS reveals, Islamic education in Kenya cannot be regarded as peripheral, but as an essential ally in the national development. The school has demonstrated that it is possible to produce holistic learners who are both academically competent and ethically based with the integration of faith and modern curricula.

5.2 Recommendations

It is on the basis of these findings that this research proposes that the Ministry of Education, the Muslim community and the school administration should liaise more to maintain and ensure the distinctive work of KMSS. First, the Ministry must consider and give support to faith-based institutions like KMSS not only with inclusion in the policy but also with fair distribution of resources to enhance infrastructure and teacher training. More so, the school administration ought to maintain their Islamic background but keep pace with the reforms of the national curriculum so that learners can be provided with both academic and moral education. Moreover, the Muslim community must also be actively involved to offer financial and moral assistance, enhance alumni organizations, and maintain collaboration with the international Islamic organizations in an effort to increase scholarships and infrastructural investments. Lastly, promoting partnership between KMSS and other education stakeholders may facilitate knowledge exchange and make faith-based schools play a more visible role in achieving the educational objectives in Kenya.

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