



Islamic Scholarship in West Africa: An Action Research Study on Senegal's Historical Development

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Abstract

Islamic scholarship in West Africa has a rich history, particularly evident in Senegal where Islamic traditions have deeply influenced cultural and intellectual development. An ethnographic approach was employed, involving interviews with local historians and scholars, archival research, and community consultations. The study focused on Senegalese oral traditions and written records to trace the development of Islamic scholarship over centuries. A significant theme emerged regarding the influence of Sufi orders in shaping religious practices and educational institutions across different regions of Senegal. This was evident in both urban centers and rural communities, where local leaders played a crucial role in preserving and adapting Islamic teachings to local contexts. The research underscores the interplay between Islamic scholarship and broader social structures in Senegal, highlighting the continuity and adaptability of these traditions over time. Further interdisciplinary studies are recommended to integrate historical perspectives with contemporary issues such as educational reform and cultural preservation. Community-based initiatives could also be encouraged to support the transmission of traditional knowledge.

Keywords: *African geography, Islamic studies, historiography, ethnography, qualitative inquiry, cultural anthropology, oral traditions*

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