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ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL CHOICE:
ISLAMIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
IN FLORIDA

by

FERYAL Y. ELKHALDY

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Educational Foundations
in the College of Education at
the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
1996

Major Professor: Marcella Kysilka

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover and interpret reasons Florida parents enrolled their children in Islamic schools. A selection of 30 parents from 3 different schools in Florida were interviewed by the researcher using a semi-structured interview guide which used both oral and written responses. The sample was matched according to the gender of parents interviewed - 15 mothers and 15 fathers were interviewed. The sample was matched according to the gender of the referent child. Out of 30 referent children, 15 were female and 15 were male. The researcher included children of all grade levels. Fifteen were from primary grades (1-5) and 15 were from secondary grades (6-12).

The researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection. Data were summarized and reported in a descriptive format addressing each research question. Results indicated that the first reason for choosing Islamic schools was religious; the second reason was sociocultural and the last reason was academic. Many parents who enrolled their children in Islamic schools strongly envisioned the need to create schools where children could pursue the Islamic knowledge, preserve Islamic identity and develop the Islamic personality. Parents wanted to guard and shield

their progeny from the negative influence (violence, drugs, promiscuity, prejudice, etc.) of the public schools. The academic concern was not a major reason for the majority of responding parents. A significant finding affirmed that Islamic education does not separate between religious and social factors.

Findings indicated that parents were more attracted to Islamic schools than dissatisfied with public schools. Muslim parents were concerned with retaining their children's identity and religious commitment. At the same time, they wanted them to learn in a safe environment which galvanized them against negative effects of the dominant culture, and be able to survive the tide of assimilation, secular pressure and moral deterioration.

This study is humbly dedicated to God for all his favors He has bestowed upon me. A special dedication to my beloved husband, Dr. Monzer ElKhaldy, who loved me and empowered me to move forward without ever looking back.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the various stages of production of this study is due, in large measure, to the support and faith of those listed below. My deepest gratitude to each can never be expressed, but thanks are given here in a small way.

To my loving husband, Dr. Monzer ElKhaldy whose encouragement inspired me to begin this program in the first place. My deepest appreciation and affection goes to him whose love, support and sacrifice helped to sustain me through the completion of this dissertation.

To my advisor, Dr. Marcella Kysilka who truly has been my inspiration and whose insight enabled me to see the sunshine beyond the clouds. Without Dr. Kysilka's support and assistance, this dissertation would still be an intention. To the members of my committee, Drs. Carl Balado, George Pawlas, Ernest Gibbs and Sharon Hiatt for their invaluable suggestions and sincere support.

To my children, Kholoud, Homam, Shovouk, Reen and Noor for their patience, faith and support. A special thank you to my daughter, Manar who helped type this dissertation and for her patience and love for many hours devoted to this project. To my son-in-law, Khalid Ayesch and my

granddaughter, Layla, "The Sunshine of my Life." Finally, in memory to my father, Yunis Rashid, who taught me never to give up and to be determined and to my mother for her love and sacrifice.

To all the members of my family. To my brothers, Dr. Fuad Younis Rashid, Faisal, Fathri, Fawzi, Shaker and their wives. To my brothers-in-law, Dr. Khalil and Muhammad ElKhaldy. To my sincere friends, Glenda Sultan, Mary Ann Shubaily, Nahla, Marai Yaw, Suzi Marie, Nadia Mashhour, Catriona Barbato, Zyad and Hana Bakroon, Catherine Meyer, the late Dr. Jane Fuller and Rose Pacey.

To my friend, Eileen Atkinson for her sincerity, encouragement and invaluable help.

To all school administrators and parents who helped in the research. Special thanks to Muhyiddin Atiyya, Dr. Taha Jaber, Dr. El Kadij, Rose Patsy and all my teachers at the University of Central Florida. Finally, most especially, with genuine humility I appreciate your help and grace, O, God! With all my heart, I thank you God for your guidance, love, mercy, forgiveness, compassion and bountifulness.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

At an ever-increasing rate parents are turning to private religious education as an alternative to public education. Parents' choice of schools has become one of the leading ideas for improving American education, and polls show that a clear majority of the public endorses the idea that parents should be allowed to choose the schools their children attend.

According to Elam (1994), Levin believed that debate ranging over choice will test a basic tenet of democracy. He said:

Education lies at the intersection of two sets of competing rights. The first is the right of parents to choose the experiences, influences, and values to which they expose their children, i.e., the right to raise their children as they see fit. The second is the right of a democratic society to use the educational system as a means to reproduce its most essential political, economic, and social institutions through a common schooling experience. (Elam, 1994, p. 51)

In the 1981 Gallup Poll on Public Schools, 49% of those sampled said that the increasing number of nonpublic schools is good; 30% said that it is bad. When only public school parents were surveyed, 44% said the increase is a good

thing, as compared with 36% who said it is a bad thing (Gallup, 1981).

In the 1987 Gallup Poll on public schools, respondents were asked about increasing parents' choice with regard to the local schools their children attend, 7 of 10 Americans think that parents should have the right to choose. Asked more specifically if they would favor a voucher system to enable parents to choose among public, parochial, or private schools, respondents supported the idea by a narrow margin, as they have since 1981 (Gallup & Clark, 1987).

The 1995 Gallup Poll on the Public Schools showed a strong support for choice within the public schools; however, choice, whereby students attend private schools at public expense, was opposed. Approximately two-thirds of the public opposed such choice (Elam & Rose, 1995).

The 1981 Gallup Poll uncovered the fact that the most important problem facing the public schools was drug use (or abuse). In 1987, drug use was again the number one concern, and the percentage of the public mentioning it increased from 28% to 30%. Four other problems increased by 3% each in frequency from 1986 to 1987: Lack of proper financial support, 11% to 14%; difficulty in getting good teachers, 6% to 8%, and pupils lack of interest/truancy, 3% to 6%. Lack of discipline was cited by 22% of the respondents and remained the number two problem with which Americans felt the public school must deal (Gallup & Clark, 1987).

The 1995 Gallup Poll on Public Schools revealed that lack of discipline was judged to be the biggest problem faced by local public schools. Fifteen percent of all respondents identified discipline or lack of student control, while 9% mentioned fighting/violence/gangs as major problems. In the 1994 Gallup Poll, fighting/violence/gangs was mentioned by 18%, tying with discipline. Lack of proper financial support came in second as a problem in 1995; it was mentioned by 11% of respondents. Financial problems topped the list twice, in 1971 and in 1993. Drug abuse headed the list from 1986 through 1991 (Elam & Rose, 1995).

John I. Goodlad (1979) in his book, What Schools Are For, said,

when a Gallup Poll year after year shows discipline to be at the top of the list of parents' concerns about the schools, one wonders what this means regarding parental feeling of confusion, helplessness, and frustration in their own parenting role. The educating role of schools makes traditional aspects of family and church authority less 'sacred.' Much of what were once parents' inalienable rights or conditions attributed to God's will have become subject to critical inquiry. Schools that truly educate threaten long-standing mores and beliefs. (pp. 18-19)

Every educational system has goals which help to form the curriculum to develop a vision of an educated person, whether one openly admits it or not. According to Goodlad (1979):

the U. S. has looked to its educational system as a major contributing factor to its progress. Its public school system has been expected to provide the human resources for economic development as well as to prepare individuals who are capable of

assuming many roles. Education and schooling have been equated, but in the process, education and training have been confused. (p. 18)

Bloom (1989) in his best seller, The Closing of the American Mind, said:

Every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain and that informs its curriculum. It wants to produce a certain kind of human being. This intention is more or less explicit, more or less a result of reflection; but even the neutral subjects like reading and writing and arithmetic, take their place in a vision of the educated person. In some nations the goal was the pious person, in others the warlike, in others the industrious. Always important is the political regime, which needs citizens who are in accord with its fundamental principle. Aristocracies want gentlemen, oligarchies men who respect and pursue money, and democracies lovers of equality. Democratic education, whether it admits it or not, wants and needs to produce men and women who have the tastes, knowledge, and character supportive of a democratic regime. Over the history of our republic, there have obviously been changes of opinions as to what kind of man is best for our regime. (p. 26)

Islamic education is simply the remembrance of God in all that one thinks, learns and does. The fundamental goal of Islamic education stems from the fact that the Quran is the most important and reliable source for many fields of knowledge. Islamic education endeavors to help students acquire different aspects of knowledge within the parameters of Islam. The ultimate goal of Islamic schools is to produce the righteous Muslim who promotes righteousness.

Some Muslim parents, as other parents in the United States of America, realize that the goals and objectives of public education have changed through the years. Some

parents find their own personal goals for their children to be at odds with those of public schools. Some parents' dissatisfaction with public schools has prompted a growing number of people to seek alternative forms of schooling for their children, including private, parochial or home schooling.

Since 1950, there has been a continuous flow of Muslim immigrants to America from various countries in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa. The size of the Muslim community in the United States is now estimated to exceed 6 million. The influx of Muslim immigrants into America has become steady in the last decade, a development which raises the need for full-time Islamic schools.

Muslim parents are confident that "the alternative no choice" in education is incompatible with the United States ideals. They know also that America is among the most tolerant countries in the world with respect to freedom of expressions and religious practice. Their choice for Islamic full-time schools in North America, is the alternative to public schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the reasons some parents in Florida enrolled their children in Islamic schools.

The following is a concise summary of this study's purpose:

1. To uncover and explain the reasons Florida parents enrolled their children in Islamic schools.
2. To provide basic demographic data to describe the characteristics of those parents who enrolled their children in Islamic Schools.
3. To analyze the reasons for parents' dissatisfaction with public schools.

Research Questions

In order to determine why parents enrolled their children in Islamic schools, six research questions were asked:

1. What are the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the parents in Florida who choose to send their children to Islamic Schools?
2. Do parents in Florida enroll their children in Islamic Schools mostly because they are attracted to these schools or because they are dissatisfied with public schools?
3. Are there any specific events which caused parents to enroll their children in Islamic schools?
4. Are there any specific reasons parents change their children's enrollment from public schools to Islamic schools?

5. What are the sources of information about public schools and Islamic schools?
6. Who participates in the decision-making process of choosing Islamic schools as an alternative to public schools?

Methodology

The researcher used a survey/interview format to obtain data about each of the research questions. Parents of children enrolled in Islamic schools in Orlando and Tampa were the subjects of this study. A selection of 30 parents from 3 Islamic schools in Florida was interviewed by the researcher using a semi-structured interview guide which used both oral and written responses. Data were summarized and reported in descriptive format addressing each of the questions of the study.

Significance of the Study

Muslims intend to practice Islam in America and to establish an Islamic society which is served by institutions that function under the pale of Islam. Educational systems occupy a critical position in any viable society. Close examination of both current and past trends in American Muslim communities shows the disruptive impact of public schooling on Islamic culture. (Ali, 1984, p. 132)

As the population of Muslims has grown, it seems necessary to find an alternative to public schooling. Full-time Islamic schools are those alternatives. The results of this study on why parents in Florida choose

Islamic schools might provide valuable data to those seeking Islamic Education as an alternative to public education.

Islamic education in the United States is a new phenomenon. Only recently have parents focused their attention on developing full-time schools. In Florida, the first Islamic school was "Islamic Community School" in Panama City. Started in 1986 as an experimental model school, the school has since closed.

This study might be relevant because:

1. Scholarly research related to Muslims in North America is very scarce.
2. Writing about the full-time Islamic schools is very limited.
3. No research was conducted which directly addressed the question of why parents enroll their children in Islamic full-time schools.
4. Knowing why parents are choosing Islamic schools might help the schools as they develop their religious and academic curricula.
5. Knowing more about the parents and their reasons for sending their children to Islamic schools might help those working at schools to understand the needs of Muslim children in American Schools.
6. Examining reasons parents stated for enrolling their children in Islamic schools might provide data which

can be used to explain successes and/or failures of Islamic schools.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was restricted to a limited population of only those parents who chose to send their children to Islamic Schools in Florida and who also took part in the interview. These parents may or may not be representative of the major cross section of Muslim parents in America. It may be reasonable to generalize the findings of this study to the Islamic schools in Florida, but it is certainly not reasonable to generalize beyond the borders of Florida.
2. The study was limited to parents who were residing in Florida at the time of the 1995-1996 study. They also were sending their children to a Islamic school within the state of Florida.
3. The study was limited by the dearth of information about Islamic schools.
4. The study was limited to full-time Islamic schools in Florida which were a fairly recent development. These schools were a new phenomenon in the United States in general and in Florida in particular, thus many of them were in initial development stages.

5. Another limiting factor of this study was geographical location. The schools and parents involved were located in Orlando, Florida and Tampa, Florida. There was one Islamic school in Orlando and two in Tampa.
6. Respondents were selected according to the researcher's criteria of availability and willingness to participate. Accordingly, more parents were interviewed from Muslim Academy of Central Florida in Orlando where the researcher was an assistant principal at the time of the study.
7. The last limiting factor was related to researcher bias. At the time of the study, the researcher was an assistant principal in one of the Islamic Schools surveyed in this research and the only researcher to interview, collect and analyze data. It was possible that data collected from the interviews lacked objectivity. It was also possible that interpretations and conclusions were skewed in the direction of the researcher expectation.

Definitions

Islamic Terms

Sources of deriving the explanation of terms were Towards understanding Islam, The Concise Encyclopedia of

Islam (Mawdudi, 1979) and What Should Everyone Know about Islam (Haneef, 1985).

Allah--The name of the divine majesty; the one and omnipotent creator; the God without any equal partner. It is the Arabic name for God.

Eid Ul Adha--Adha from adhia, literally "sacrifice," the commemoration of readiness of part of Prophet Abraham and his son, Prophet Ishmail to accept Allah's will to submit in sacrifice. The festival of Muslim people at the time of Hajj is called Eid Ul Adha.

Eid Ul Fitr--Muslim celebration of fast- breaking at the end of the month of Ramadan.

Hajj--Literally "the travel" or "journey" for a specific purpose; the answer to the call of Allah (SWT) to visit His blessed House at Mecca, combined with the performance of specified acts of piety and worship on the ninth and tenth day of Dhual Hijra, the twelfth month of the Hijri (Lunar Calendar)

Halal--That which Allah (SWT) has made legitimate.

Hijab--Literally "cover," the proper body covering of a Muslim woman. It is required by Islam.

Iman--Faith and security that is generated through possessing the conviction that Allah (SWT) is the one and only God and Mohammed (Pbuh) is His final prophet.

Islam--Submission and obedience to God to be at peace with the creator and His creation.

Jihad--Literally "the utmost effort," struggle or endeavor in the way of Allah.

Muslim--The one who consciously submits to Allah.

Pbuh--The abbreviation for "peace be upon him" this must be said whenever the name of the Prophet is mentioned.

Quran--The revealed Book of Islam, the word of Allah transmitted to Prophet Mohammed (Pbuh).

Ramadan--The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, the Islamic month of fasting.

Salat--The obligatory daily ritual prayers of Muslims.

Sawm--Fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Shariah--The universal and eternal law.

Sunnah--The path and example of Prophet Mohammed (Pbuh) consisting of all that he said, did, approved of, or condemned.

SWT--Abbreviation for the Arabic word "Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala; one who is worthy of Praise and is Transcendentally above all. This must be said whenever the name of Allah is mentioned.

Tawhid--The absolute and untainted unity of Allah (SWT).

Umma--Nation, the community as identified by its ideology, law, religion, and group consciousness, ethic and mores, culture and art.

Wudu--Act of spiritual and physical cleanliness carried out by Muslims before prayers, as specified in the Quran and Hadith.

Zakat--This purification is attained through the obligatory sharing of wealth with the needy in the community.

General Definitions

Parents' reasons for enrolling their children in Islamic schools were categorized as religious, sociocultural or academic. It was necessary to define what was meant by religious, sociocultural or academic education. The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

Religious Education--Religion is an ultimate reality to which allegiance must be given. Parents' reasons for enrolling their children in religious schools are religious if the parents are concerned that the schools teach their children to believe in God. These parents may be concerned about teaching their children The Holy Books and how to behave in life according to their faith.

In Islam, religious education means Islamic education. Islamic education is a clear philosophy derived from the Holy Quran and Sunnah, which is perennial, covering the young and the old, and which is comprehensive in that it cherishes the person integrally, namely physically, mentally, spiritually, effectively, and morally.

Islamic education means the cherishing and up-bringing of the child integrally, namely, physically, mentally,

morally, affectively, and spiritually in the light of Islamic principles, methods and approaches.

Sociocultural Education--Social means "pertaining to, devoted to, seeking or enjoying the companionship or relationship of others; friendly; sociable, gregarious" (The Random House Dictionary, 1987, p. 1810). Parents' reasons for enrolling their children in religious schools are social if the parents are concerned that their children learn how to behave appropriately in association with other persons or groups. Parents who send their children to religious schools, e.g., Islamic Schools want them to learn Islamic behavior and ethics, discipline, citizenship, and work skills. Parents want their children to be in safe environments away from the social ills of the society (Hawdudi, 1995). Sociocultural Goals are:

1. Interpersonal Understandings
2. Citizenship Participation
3. Understanding and Appreciation of cultures different from one's own

Academic Education--Academic means "pertaining to a college, academy, schools, or other educational institution" (The Random House Dictionary, 1987, p. 9). Parents' reasons for enrolling their children in Islamic schools are academic if the parents want the school to teach children academic and intellectual skills. "Academic has to do with training the cognitive mind (Foreman, 1982, p. 14).

According to Goodlad (1984), academic goals are:

1. Mastery of Basic Skills and Fundamental Processes
2. Intellectual Development (p. 51)

Full-Time Islamic Schools in the United States--These are daily schools and they seek to be an alternative to public or private schools. Today, there are more than 100 Islamic schools in operation. These schools offer the American traditional curriculum (math, English, science, social studies). In addition, students are taught the Arabic Language, Quran and Islamic Studies. Establishment of such schools occurred mainly in the 1980s. "This effort has been almost entirely locally organized and community based" (Molook, 1990, p. 126). Islamic Organizations such as the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) or International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) play a role in encouraging moves toward setting up full-time Islamic schools. According to Molook, (1990):

The Muslim Community that endorses full-time Muslim schools hopes that these schools will provide a healthy atmosphere where the coming Muslim American generation can be nurtured in an environment devoid of prejudices, misinformation about Islam, and negative social pressures. In sum, they see the roles of these schools as a nesting ground for a balanced community. (p. 133)

One of the organizations, The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), is an Islamic Organization which serves the Muslims in North America.

Another organization, The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) is an independent, private and nonprofit institution. Founded in the United States in 1981, it was dedicated to promoting academic research on the social sciences from an Islamic perspective broadly outlined as the Islamization of knowledge. Although the Institute's objective is to address the problems pertinent to the Muslim world community through the principles and concepts of Islam, it also aimed to serve all interested scholars regardless of race, religion or national origin.

Islamic Centers--Places where Muslims gather for their daily and weekly congregational prayers and religion-cultural meetings. "It is estimated that there are as many as 600 full-pledged Islamic centers across the United States" (Haddad, 1987, p 1). Many of these Islamic Centers conduct some form of educational activity. Such efforts include supplemental teaching, such as weekend, or Quranic schools, full-time schools (Molook, 1990, p. 2).

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)--ISNA was formed in 1982 as an umbrella organization which sought to meet the needs of both transient students and resident Muslims (Haddad, 1987, p. 3). ISNA works for the pleasure of Allah to advance the cause of Islam and Muslims in North America by actively supporting better schools, organized community centers, and other Islamic programs.

Five professional organizations are currently constituents of ISNA. Each works to advance ISNA objectives with its respective area of professional competence, and each publishes its own professional journal or newsletter. These organizations are: The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), The Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), the Islamic Medical Association (IMA), Muslim American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MACCI), and the Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA).

CISNA was a result of the Islamic education symposium held in 1989. Its mission was to assist existing and emerging full-time Islamic schools in North America. It operated under its own constitution and was governed by a board, of which one seat was held by a member of ISNA Islamic Schools Department.

Sister Clara Muhammad Schools (formerly University of Islam)--These schools were originally organized by Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam in 1934. Catering to an African-American Manifest, which advocated mix of nationalistic and racial supremacy, but was repugnant to the spirit of Islam. In 1975, the system, after adopting new orientation, changed to what is now called "Sister Clara."

Weekend Islamic Schools--The idea of weekend Islamic schools was taken from the 'American' Sunday Schools. Most of the time, these schools are found in the Islamic Centers.

In these schools, Arabic, Quran and Islamic studies are taught.

Summary

The study was designed to determine the reasons that led some parents to choose Islamic schools for their children. The introduction of the study established the need for the investigation. The research questions were formulated and constructed to uncover and analyze the reasons parents sent their children to Islamic schools. The purpose, significance and limitations of the study, as well as summary of procedures and definitions of terms were included.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature related to Muslims in the United States was scarce. There was no literature directly related to the question of why parents enroll their children in Islamic schools. Little scholarly research had been conducted which directly addressed Islamic schools in North America.

Private schools, in general, and religious schools in particular have been the object of limited scholarly research. Chester E. Finn, Jr. (1981) stated, "Data on nonpublic education are not readily available. Information is especially poor for the faster-growing sector of private education, the fundamentalist Christian Schools" (p. 14).

In his study on parents' choice of Protestant schools in Oregon, Foreman (1982) stated that "Most research-minded educators ignore Christian schools, while most Christian-school educators ignore scholarly research" (p. 23).

The challenge of the present study was the dearth of information about Islamic schools in both Islamic and American literature. Since this study's primary focus was to determine parents' perceptions regarding the importance of Islamic schools in North America and to explain the

reasons for the recent increases in the number of parents choosing Islamic schools, the researcher thought it was important to examine some of the more significant forces which have contributed to the general dissatisfaction with public schools.

The review of literature is presented in two general areas: Literature about the Condition of American Schools and Literature about Islamic Education in North America.

Literature about the Condition of Education in North America

Literature about the condition of Education in North America included literature about public, private and religious schools. Elam (1984) summarized American attitudes toward education:

Most Americans are deeply committed to the belief that education is the most important service rendered by government. They continue to feel according to the poll, that public education contributes more to the national strength than either industrial might or military power. They consider education the key to personal success. Thus the heavy critical attention being paid to education today may be a blessing in disguise. (p. 5)

In the 1984 Gallup poll, it was reported that "The public schools represent one of the two or three American institutions which have held the respect and confidence of a majority of citizens in a period of widespread cynicism and disillusionment" (Elam, 1984, p. 4).

As the 1970s and 80s unfolded, public confidence in America's schools was eroded by a series of reports indicating alarm over public education. Lockerbie (1980) made a statement regarding public education:

Now what do we find? The little red school house has swollen into a complex of modern buildings boasting, sophisticated hardware and certified personnel. But in spite of fancy facilities and high powered educators, something seems to be missing in many American schools. The Bible certainly and, in some supposedly progressive schools, the dictionary too for some reason, there are worms in the apple. (p. 43)

Harris (1988) credited the educational system in the United States with producing a nation of massive adult illiteracy, youth with no backbone, and a generation in which parental authority had been destroyed along with confidence in America's free market system. He went on to say that "public educators have had their chance and they have failed the test" (p. 19).

The early 1950s, a back-to-basics movement was fueled by books with such doleful and fearsome titles as Why Johnny Can't Read (Flesch, 1955), and Crisis in Education (Howard, 1990). In his book, Why Johnny Can't Read, Flesch (1955) riveted public attention on our serious educational problems and the critical need for reforms. Flesch's attacks of 1950 were against the incompetence of administrators and those who train teachers especially in the field of reading. In his book, Why Johnny Still Can't Read, Flesch (1981) sounded

the same alarm of public school failure for a new generation of parents.

According to Ravitch (1981), the report written by James S. Coleman (1981) entitled Public and Private Schools fueled a nationwide controversy and enraged friends of the public schools. Although Ravitch acknowledged that the book contained much that would dismay the public, it also contained surprisingly good news. For 15 years, since the appearance of the original Coleman report in 1966, educators were reminded repeatedly that "schools don't make a difference" and that family background heavily determines educational achievement. The new Coleman report dramatically reversed this pessimistic conclusion and found instead that "schools do make a difference, regardless of family background of students" (Ravitch, 1981, p. 7). In his 1981 report, Quality and Equity in American Education: Public Schools and Catholic Schools, Coleman contended that private schools educate better than public schools.

Table 1 presents Ravitch's synopsis of Coleman's report of 1981. It summarizes the premises underlying the policy debate as Coleman identified them.

Coleman's (1981) report was followed by numerous other reform reports which attempted to describe the American condition. The best known was Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983). In 1981, The National

Table 1

Ravitch's Synopsis of Coleman's Findings

Coleman's Findings

1. Private schools produce better cognitive outcomes than do public schools, even after family background factors that predict achievement are controlled.
2. Private schools provide a safer, more disciplined, and more ordered environment than do public schools. This factor was the single strongest difference between public and private schools.
3. Non-Catholic private schools have sharply lower student/teacher ratios than do public schools, although Catholic schools have somewhat higher ratios.
4. Private schools contribute to religious segregation, since 66% of all private school students are in Catholic schools, and more than 90% of the students in Catholic schools are Catholic. (Nonetheless, the great majority of Catholic students are in public schools).
5. Private schools enroll a smaller proportion of blacks than do public schools, but there is less racial segregation within private schools than within public schools.
6. Private schools do not provide the educational range that public schools do, particularly in vocational and other non-traditional programs. Some of the non-catholic private schools have limited academic offerings; for example, 44% of the students who attend non-Catholic private schools are not offered a third year of any foreign language.
7. Students in Catholic and public schools participate in extracurricular activities to the same extent. But students in other private schools participate more actively than do those in either catholic or public schools.
8. Students in private schools show more self-esteem and "fate control" than do those in public schools.

Note. From The Meaning of the New Coleman Report by D. Ravitch, 1981, Kappan, 63(10), p. 718)

Commission on Excellence in Education was created by Secretary of Education T. H. Bell and was directed to present a report on the quality of education in America by April of 1984. In this report, the following data were cited:

- Average achievement of high school students on most standardized test is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched. (p. 9)
- Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, spelling, and computation. (p. 9)
- Business and military leaders complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial, educational, and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation. (p. 9)
- There was a steady decline in science achievement across the U. S. 17 year olds as measured by national assessments of science in 1969, 1973 and 1977. (p. 9)
- Many of the 17 year olds do not possess the "higher order" intellectual skills we should expect of them. Nearly 40% cannot draw inferences from written material; only one fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one third can solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps. (p. 9)

The paramount importance of public schools was the motive behind the public criticism of these institutions. Pondering the school's sudden fall from grace, Robert M. Hutchins (1972) wondered what had happened to the institution that so recently had been "the foundation of our freedom, the guarantee of our future, the cause of our prosperity and power, and bastion of our society, the bright

and shiny beacon . . . the source of our enlightenment, the public school" (p. 54).

In A Place Called School, Prospects for the Future, Goodlad (1984) expressed concern about the quality of American schools and the well-being of our youth. He reported that "American schools are in trouble. In fact, the problems of schooling are of such crippling proportions that many schools may not survive. It is possible that our entire public education system is nearing collapse" (p. 1).

Goodlad (1984) added:

unfortunately, the ability of schools to do their traditional jobs of assuring literacy and eradicating ignorance is at the center of criticism, which is intense . . . what we need, then, is a better understanding of our public schools and the specific problems that beset them. (p. 2)

Religion and Religious Education

It may be difficult to imagine today that the teaching of religion was required by law in early America. The first teachers were pastors, and the first schools were in churches. The first textbook was the Bible. (Howard, 1990, p. 15)

According to Howard (1990) in his book entitled Crisis in Education - Public Education a Disaster . . . but There's

Hope for Parents:

Christian education does not cost; it pays. It is not an alternative; it is not a luxury; it is not even just a good thing. It is the law of God, it is the law that He commanded His ancient people to obey, and by application He now commands us to obey. It is the Great Commandment. It is God better way. (p. 135)

Howard (1990) said, "I make no apology for telling parents: Christian education is not just a good idea or a preferred option, it is a Biblical imperative" (p. 138).

In her book, Keeping Them out of the Hands of Satan, Rose (1988) affirmed Christian schools' criticism of secular humanism and values clarification in public education, and support of "the basics and moral education" (p. 28)

Rose (1988) indicated that John Dewey's statement, "Education is not preparation for life; it is life itself" (p. 39) is one of the few Dewey beliefs that evangelicals would accept. In general, they reject him as an atheist, evolutionist, and secular humanist. They reject his "progressive" philosophy of education for being child-centered. The following passage by Dewey (as cited in Rose, 1988) is often cited in the Christian literature:

Faith in the prayer-hearing God is an unproved and outmoded faith. There is no God and there is no soul. Hence, there are no needs for the props of traditional religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable truths is also dead and buried There is no room for fixed natural law or more absolutes. . . . (p. 39)

According to Murchison (1994):

The law of the jungle slowly but effectively supersedes the law of God and man. It is time to find another way - a way back . . . moral education, absent religion and its unique understanding of the right and obligations of mankind, becomes merely a matter of shouted claims and counterclaims-what lawyers sometimes call a case of he said-she said-the problem is more than theoretical- it is practical and immediate. (p. 154)

Murchison (1994) further stated:

The larger point surely is this: Morality, if we are to reconstruct it in our time, must be anchored to some base. What base is more fitting than religion? There is such a thing as morality because there is such a thing as religion . . . the theory of man without God is the unhappiest most barren theory human history offers. (p. 176)

Former Chair of the National Endowment for Humanities, Secretary of Education, and Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, William Bennett (1992) stated, "In too many places in American public education, religion has been ignored, banned, or shunned in ways that serve neither knowledge nor the constitution, nor sound public policy" (p. 205). He added:

We should acknowledge that religion--from the Pilgrims to the civil rights struggle--is an important part of our history, civics, literature, art, music, poetry, politics, and we should insist that our schools tell the truth about it" (p. 205). Bennett declared boldly "The extreme to which some will go to deny the place of religion in American life is mind-boggling. (p. 205).

In his 1986 speech, Bennett said:

Have we come to the point where, in school textbooks, it is now considered a secular blasphemy to write the name of God, even if omitting His name does violence to the original text? Have we come to the point where it is now considered a secular blasphemy to acknowledge the name of God at all? Have we come in some bizarre way, full circle, from scrupulous piety to fastidious disdain . . . ? Has the very mention of God's name in public become an offense?" (Bennett, 1992, pp. 205-206)

Bennett (1992) reminded us that John Adams believed that the U.S. Constitution was constructed for a

moral and religious people" and that James Madison insisted that "before any man can be considered as a member of civil society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe . . . from

Samuel Adams to Patrick Henry to Benjamin Franklin to Alexander Hamilton, all of the founders intended religion to provide a moral anchor for our liberty in democracy and all would be puzzled were to return to modern-day America. (pp. 206-207)

Thomas Sowell (1993) discussed how American schools are turning out students who are not only intellectually incompetent but also morally confused, emotionally alienated, and social maladjusted. He said "In short, it is not merely that Johnny can't read, or even that Johnny can't think, Johnny doesn't know what thinking is, because thinking is so often confused with feeling in many public schools" (p. 4). According to Sowell (1993):

A variety of courses and programs, under an even wider variety of names, have been set up in schools across the country to change the values, behaviors, and beliefs of American youngsters from what they have been taught by their families, their churches, or the social groups in which they have grown up. (p. 34)

Howard (1990) affirmed the importance of religious education:

Christian young people are demonstrating that a generation trained with Biblical Principles will make the real world what it ought to be. Rather than conform to humanism, Christian-trained youth use their influence to bring culture into conformity with Biblical values. That's what true education is supposed to accomplish. (p. 80)

Howard (1990) also believed that humanistic thought could account for the despair and failure of the academic world. Humanistic educators should "apologize, for it is their system that is destroying our young people and producing a generation of functional illiterates, confused and violent rebels, and drug 'burnouts' (p. 135).

Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben (1992) asserted the importance of religion when he said "To me, religion is a broad category that includes the striving to make sense out of the difficult moments of life and the struggle to pass on values that will move the world closer to our collected dreams" (p. 13).

According to Rabbi Reuben (1992), Judaism is the unique culture of the Jewish people. It is constantly evolving religious civilization, and like any civilization contains the multiple attributes of language literature, rituals, and costumes, art, music, history, ethics, holiday, group hopes and aspiration, and a common spiritual home land. It is how Jews actually live. (p. 11)

Jews, as any other religious group, want to provide their children with an education that will lead to a Jewish identification and commitment to lead a life based on Jewish values and knowledge. "After World War II, the Jewish Orthodox movement, which had opted mainly for all day schools called Yeshivot (Hebrew, 'to sit and study') continued to expand" (Brown, 1992, pp. 46-47).

Solomon Schechter Day Schools in North America are chartered by the Solomon Day School Association of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. As Brown stated "Most Schechter Schools share a commitment to a progressive, highly individualized, enriched, bilingual and bicultural program. They seek to integrate the secular and religious worlds" (p. 48).

An excerpt from "Hebrew Day School of Central Florida" mission statement is representative of the major components of the Jewish Day Schools in North America:

1. To provide children experiences that will lead to a Jewish identification and commitment to lead a life based on Jewish values and knowledge.
2. To develop an awareness and dedication to the needs of the local and world Jewish community and the State of Israel.
3. To provide children academic and Jewish skills to live a full life in society as Jews and as Americans.
4. To provide children with the ability to read, write and speak Hebrew, the language of prayer, the language of text and the language of the people of Israel.
5. To provide experiences that will allow the child to develop the skills of critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving. The program stresses the acquisition of knowledge, information processing, social interaction and personal development (Menschlichkeit), to live a constructive life in both the secular and Jewish community.
6. To provide a setting for the child to develop, test and define a value structure within a Jewish value system.
7. To involve parents in roles of leadership to develop a commitment to Jewish communal life. (p. 1)

In the United States, there are over 60 Schechter Schools in which the majority of students are in Grades K-8. There are only two official Solomon Schechter high schools, one in New Jersey and the other in New York City (Warner, 1992).

The Catholic Leadership asked parents whose children attended Catholic schools to identify reasons they chose to

send their children to Catholic schools. Table 2 summarizes their responses.

Table 2

Reasons Parents Send Their Children to Catholic Schools

Reasons
1. To get a good academic education.
2. To be in a school where there is effective discipline.
3. To have dedicated, caring teachers.
4. To learn what it meant to establish proper moral values.
5. To learn about God and Religion.
6. To be accepted for what they have to offer.
7. To be safe and happy at school.
8. To learn how to get along with others in a spirit of mutual cooperation.
9. To be a part of a healthy school community.
10. To be taught how to practice their religious beliefs.
11. To learn the Christian values.
12. To have an individualized education.
13. To have a meaningful "say" in the school operation.
14. To belong to a close family type of community.

In his dissertation titled A Critical Analysis of Reasons Iowa Parents Enroll Their Children in Fundamental and Evangelical Christian Schools, Eugene (1989) concluded

that parents chose fundamental and Evangelical Christian Schools primarily for religious reasons, and secondly, for social reasons, and thirdly, for academic reasons. Such a conclusion supported Foreman's (1982) findings in his work on parents' choices in Oregon schools.

Foreman selected 40 parents from 4 Protestant Christian Schools. The results reflected a strong religious-social-academic (R-S-A) pattern in answer to the question of why parents enrolled their children in Protestant Christian Schools.

In the 1981 Gallup Poll on public schools, respondents were asked about increasing parents' choice of private and church-related schools. The reasons in order of times mentioned were:

1. Poor educational standards in the public schools; education in nonpublic schools is superior.
2. Integration/forced basing/racial problems.
3. Greater discipline in nonpublic schools.
4. More attention given to religion in nonpublic schools.
5. Too many drug and alcohol problems in the public schools.
6. Overcrowding in public schools. (Elam, 1984, p. 30)

Islamic Education

Literature which concerns Islamic Education is divided into three sections: Islam and Muslims in North America,

the Principles of Islamic education and Islamic schools in North America.

A number of scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have recently written extensively about Islam. Some of these scholars are: Mohammed Iqbal, Abul A'La Mawdudi, Syed Ameer Ali, Dr. Mohammed Fazul-Rahman, G. W. Chaudhury, Mohammed Ali Alkhul, Abdul Rahman Ben Hammad Al Omar, Suzanne Haneef, Muhaiedeen Attiyah, Dr. Taha Jaber and others. Western scholars are H. A. R. Gibb, F. Schuon, A. J. Arberry, Peter J. Awan, Leonard Binder and others. Arabic literature about Islam is plentiful.

Islam and Muslims in North America

Islam is an Arabic word which means submission to God, peace, purity, acceptance, and commitment. As a religion, Islam calls for complete acceptance of the teaching and guidance of God. Islam is not a new religion, but the same truth that God (Allah) revealed through all his Prophets to every people. Islam is both a religion and a complete way of life. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy, and forgiveness.

"Say:

We believe in Allah and that which was revealed to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and to the Prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them. and to Him we submit" (Quran 3:83)

Islam is based upon the oneness of Allah and complete submission to Him. In his book, Towards Understand Islam, Al Moududi (1990) stated that:

Islam is a world view and an outlook on life. It is based on the recognition of the unity of the creator and of our submission to His will. Everything originates from the One God, and everyone is ultimately responsible to Him. Thus the unity of the Creator has as its corollary the Oneness of His creation. Distinction of race, color, caste, wealth and power disappear; our relation with other persons assumes total equality by virtue of the common creator. Hence forth our mission becomes a dedication to our Creator; worship and obedience to the Creator becomes our purpose in life. (pp. 10-11)

Chaudhury (1981) stated the basic teachings of Islam when he said:

In reality, Islam is basically and fundamentally a religion of tolerance, justice, fair play and universal brotherhood. Islam teaches its followers to show respect for other religions, and the prophets of other religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, are entitled to receive regard and respect from the followers of Islam. (Introduction)

One of the most distinctive marks of Islam and the Islamic community is, as stated by Professor H. A. R. Gibb, "The variety of peoples and races who have embraced Islam. Islam fostered in the heart of those various people a strong feeling of brotherhood and a sense of harmony through a wider and higher concept of community" (Gibb, 1990, p. 72).

Suzanne Haneef (1985) pointed out that "The meaning of the word Islam is 'Submission' and 'peace.' In the course of making an individual Muslim--that is, one who is in a state

of Islam or submission to the One True God--Islam profoundly affects his thinking and behavior" (p. VII).

A Muslim is one who freely and willingly accepts the supreme power of God and strives to organize his life in total accord with the teaching of God. Muslims are over one billion people from a vast range of races, nationalities, and cultures across the globe--from the Southern Philippines to Nigeria--united by the common Islamic faith. About 18% live in the Arab world; the world's largest Muslim community is in Indonesia; substantial parts of Asia and most of Africa's population is Muslim, while significant minorities are to be found in the Soviet Union, China, North and South America and Europe (Moore, 1994, p. 223).

Faith in Islam includes belief in Allah, angels, revealed books, prophets, life after death (hereafter), and the Divine Decree (predestination). Appendix A explains the articles of faith (Principles of Faith in Islam) in more detail.

Central to the Islamic teaching and way of life are various obligatory acts of worship which are often referred to as the "Five Pillars of Islam." These consist of (a) the declaration of faith, "I bear witness that there is no deity except God and I bear witness that Mohammed is the Messenger of God"; (b) the prescribed prayers; (c) fasting during the month of Ramadan; (d) the poor-due; and (e) the

pilgrimage to Mecca" (Haneef, 1985, p. 40). Appendix B explains the Pillars of Islam in more detail.

In the September 1989 issues of The Message International, a publication of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), it was reported that the Muslim population stood at about 6 million (Molook, 1990). Yvonne Haddad, a historian at the University of Massachusetts, claimed that the number of Muslims in America rose dramatically in the last half century through immigration, procreation, and conversion. If the Muslim community continues to grow at the present rate, by the year 2015 Islam will be the second largest religion in the United States (Haddad, 1987, p. 1).

In her article titled "Muslim Commitment in North America: Assimilation or Transformation?" Moore (1994) indicated:

A prevailing misconception held by many in the West and sustained in the western media is that Muslims and Arabs are synonymous. However, American Muslims are not restricted to a particular national origin, for they represent a microcosm of the varied and multinational global community of Islam. An accurate portrait would show that the Muslims in North America come from diverse national origins and cultural backgrounds representing the Arab world as well as South Asia (i.e., Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, the Maldives Islam, and Sri Lanka), Southeast Asia (i. e., The Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia), as well as Europe, Africa, China, Iran, and Turkey. In 1980, moreover, indigenous African American Muslims were estimated to comprise roughly 30% of the total Muslim population in the United States. (p. 225)

According to Molook (1990), there are two groups of Muslims in America, indigenous and immigrants. Immigrants

are all persons who immigrated from other countries which includes students on college and university campuses. Indigenous Muslims are converted African-Americans and Anglos (Haddad & Lummis, 1987).

Haddad and Lummis (1987) divided the movement of the immigrant Muslims into five periods. The first wave from 1875 to 1912, were mostly Muslim immigrants who came from the Arabic-speaking countries of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

The second and third immigration periods were between 1918-1922 and 1930-1938, respectively. These immigrants consisted mainly of relatives, friends and acquaintances of earlier arrivals. Also included were a very small number of immigrants from other parts of the Middle East and Eastern Europe (Haddad & Lummis, 1987).

In the fourth period, from 1947-1960 after World War II, Muslims came from the Middle East and South Asia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and other parts of the Muslim world. They were unskilled or rural. According to Molook (1990), many of these immigrants had been previously exposed to western ideas before entering the United States.

The fifth wave was the largest and it began in 1969 and continues into the 1990s. According to Haddad and Lummis' (1987) study of immigration and census statistics, the number of Muslim immigrants more than doubled in an 18-year period, increasing from 4% of all immigrants in 1968 to

10.5% in 1986. Many of these immigrants came from Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern countries. Haddad and Lummis (1987), like Alfaruqi (1982) claimed that many of the immigrants of the 1960s were educated professionals.

The Principles of Islamic Education

Islam looks upon education as a form of worship.

Islamic education stems from the fact that the Quran is the most important and reliable source for many fields of knowledge. The importance of education in Islam was very clear from the very beginning of the history of Islam. The first Surah of the Revelation that came to Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was a declaration against illiteracy and a statement of encouragement to the people to seek knowledge in all fields. The first words of the Sura were:

Proclaim! (Read!) In the name Of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created. . . Created man, out of A (mere) clot Of congealed blood: Read: And thy Lord is most Bountiful . . . He who taught (The use of) the Pen . . . Taught man that Which he knew not (Quran, 96-1-5)

Education in Islam is the process by which Islam "inculcates knowledge in individuals and knowledge is at the apex of the value system of Islam" (Farhan, 1989, p. 308). The mosque (place of worship for Muslims) was the first school to teach Muslims reading and writing and various kinds of knowledge. Both the Quran and the Mosques preserved literacy among Muslims for many centuries. Tibawi

* (1957) stated, "There is, in fact, nothing more important than seeking and spreading learning except the first article of faith, namely, the belief in the unity of God and the Prophethood of Mohammed" (p. 84).

* According to Ali (1914), "In the domain of intellect the teachings of Islam give every encouragement to the cultivation of the mind, and make the pursuit of knowledge a religious duty" (p. 32).

* The Quran mentions repeatedly the paramount importance of knowledge. The Prophet also emphasizes the value of acquiring knowledge. "The Prophet encouraged Muslims to be unrelenting in their search for useful knowledge and considered the learned person superior to a worshiper" (Rahman, 1994, p. 519). In the Quran, Allah reserved higher ranks for people of knowledge. (Appendix C contains selected verses from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet. These verses and sayings reveal the paramount importance of knowledge and Education in Islam and the nature of Islamic Education.)

* The philosophy of Islamic education is primarily concerned with fulfilling the duty of acquainting the individual with Allah and Islam to direct his/ her behavior to the laws of Allah. Any knowledge should be in harmony with the divine origin. According to the philosophy of Islamic education, Islamic schools should endeavor to help students acquire different aspects of knowledge within the

* parameters of Islam. The ultimate goal of Islamic schools should be to graduate the righteous person who can promote righteousness.

Ashraf (1994) stated that:

Insistence on the study of Quran is the base of Islamic education. The word of God, properly studied, can be relied upon to strengthen the foundations of faith, and once this has happened, the learner can proceed to explore the world with out fear of losing his spiritual bearings. (pp. 36-37)

* The faith in the Oneness of Allah, in Islam and Mohammed (pbuh) is very substantial in education. "And he to whom wisdom is granted receiveth indeed a benefit overflowing" (Quran 1:270).

* Islamic education encourages teaching religious science as basic subjects in all stages of education because they are capable of helping the student to build as well-balanced personality. The Quran is the fountain of all knowledge and it insists that all men are to know, teach and observe the truth. Philip K. Hitti pointed out that "Islam has three main aspects: religious, political and cultural, the three overlap and interact, sometimes imperceptibly passing from one to the other" (as cited in Molook, 1990, p. 60).

* With regard to education in Islam, the principle of unity is very clear. Islam considers all kinds of knowledge as one unity. "Islam does not differentiate between religious education, in the strict sense, and secular

education, they are viewed as complementing and enriching each other" (Farhan, 1989, p. 32).

Saliba and Tomah (1957) explained the principle of unity in Islamic education when they stated:

The general characteristics of Islamic education, however, is that is neither purely religious, as was the case with the Israelites, nor purely secular, as was the case with the Roman, but both at the same time. Many verses are to be found in the Quran and in the Sunnah which indicates that education aims at the realization of happiness in this and the next world, and according to a tradition of the Prophet, 'the best among you are not those who neglect this world for the other, or the other world for this.' He is the one who works for both together. (p. 69)

* In Islamic education, the individual has to fulfill the duty of submission to Allah and adjusting his/her conduct according to the teaching of Islam, he/she also has to be acquainted with other areas of basic sciences as physics, astronomy, mathematics, and all the important works in philosophy, literature, theology, religion, history medicine and law. All areas of knowledge are crucial and essential for the Muslims. Theories of knowledge and science should be governed by the Islamic conception of the cosmos, man, and life. Harmony between science and faith in Allah is an unquestionable fact.

* The principle of balance is very important in Islamic education. Farhan (1989) pointed out "the Muslim should learn what is useful to him as an individual living in this society, and as a person who expects to save his soul in the next life" (p. 35).

Islamic education encourages the individual to acquire knowledge but always make a balance between theory and action. Ramadan (1961) stated "Acquire of knowledge as much as you can afford. But always remember that God's reward comes only with action" (p. 98).

* In summary, the following are statements that highlight the principles of Islamic education. First, the faith in the oneness of Allah and Mohammed is very substantial in education. Second, The Quran and the Sunnah are the most important sources for many fields of knowledge. Third, reason is a significant source for knowledge concerning the universe as well as humans themselves. At the same time, reason interacts with revelation for the reinforcement of knowledge. Fourth, "education is a religious obligatory of every individual in the Islamic society, male or female." Fifth, "education in Islam is a life-time process" (Farahan, 1989, p. 37). Sixth, all members of the Islamic society should have equal educational opportunities. Seventh, Islamic education has holistic Islamic perspective. Eighth, there is harmony between science and faith in Allah. Ninth, Islamic education aims at dealing with the whole individual's personality (cognitively, spiritually, psychologically, physically, and socially). The individual has to have general education about many areas of knowledge besides religious education. Tenth, in Islamic education, instruction and teaching are an act of worship to Allah, if

the rules of Islam are applied and the intention is devoted to gain Allah's satisfaction.

Islamic Full-Time Schools in North America

Education is most challenging to Muslims in North America. Muslims are concerned with retaining their identity and religious commitment. Muslims want to raise a generation who are able to survive the tide of un-Islamic religious and secular pressure, materials and glamour and other temptations. Islamic school planners realize the importance of marshaling the development of full-time, alternative educational facilities which work to achieve religious, educational, social and cultural goals that were valuable to Muslims.

Historically, numerous Muslims arrived in America during the years of European colonization of Africa and the slave trade. African Americans, who were brought to America as slaves, were not permitted to be educated. African Americans risked their lives, sometimes helped by good Caucasians, to seek education as a means of liberation (Muhammad, 1989).

A few of the descendants of the victims of slavery, devoid of their roots, unwelcome in their land, and forcibly stripped of spiritual values of their forefathers, turned to a form of religion which they called "Islam," for an answer. (Udom, 1962, p. 26).

The most notable manifestation of this phenomenon was the creation of "The Nation of Islam" movement in 1932 by Elijah Mohammed. "This version of Islam was, however, totally repugnant to the fundamentals of Islam," (Nyang, 1989, p. 13) because it infused a new "prophet," and also stressed racial superiority (Molook, 1990, p. 32). As Mumtaz Ahmad and Sulayman Nyang put it, "Elijah's religion was a cult-like sect based on elements of mativism and ethnic nationalism . . ." (Ahmad & Nyang, 1989, p. 38).

In 1934, Mohammed University of Islam was established to meet the needs of the African American Muslims in North America. Elijah's doctrines bothered many immigrant Muslims and Muslim Americans who were converts, both African-American and those of European origin. Among such people, who were against Elijah's creed, was Malcolm X (Al Haj Malik El Shabazz) and Elijah's son, Warith (Wallace) D. Mohammed (Haddad, 1987, p. 3).

When Elijah Mohammed died in 1975, his son, Wallace Warith Deen Mohammed assumed leadership. He steered the movement "Nation of Islam", now known as the American Muslim Mission, away from the philosophy of his father and toward mainstream Islam. This transition has been noted by Haddad (1987).

Until 1975, when the leadership of the world community of Islam in the West was assumed by Wallace (Warith) Deen Mohammed, the community was perceived as an American

sectarian religion that contained Islamic trappings but lacked validity. Its doctrines, its worship, as well as racist assertions, were seen as unIslamic. Since 1975, the movement has been accepted as one within the fold of Islam. Its tenets have evolved to agree with the teachings of the Quran (Haddad, 1979, p. 6).

From 1939 to 1975, Mohammed University of Islam served the needs of the American Muslim Community. When Elijah Mohammed passed away in 1975, Mohammed University of Islam was restructured based on Quranic principles and renamed Sister Clara Mohammed Schools. Warith Deen Mohammed renamed the schools in honor of his mother, Clara Mohammed. Sister Clara Mohammed schools are the pioneering model of formal Islamic education in North America.

Zakiyya Mohammed stated that "Today, there are approximately 41 Sister Clara Mohammed schools throughout the United States and Bermuda. They are Quranic based, have knowledgeable teachers and 55 years of experience in independent education" (Mohammed, 1989, p. 31).

In the last decade, the influx of Muslims into America has become steady, a development which raises the need for full-time Islamic schools. The 1980s saw an increase in the number of full-time Islamic schools. In her study, Molook (1990) said:

The number of full-time Muslims schools is still insignificant compared to the estimated six million population of Muslims in the United States. It is likely that almost all Muslim children of school age

are in public schools, since the number of full-time Muslim schools as of early 1990 was approximately 70, of which 41 were Sister Clara Mohammed Schools. (p. 127)

According to the research conducted by ISNA, the number of full-time schools has jumped from about 50 in 1988-1989 to more than 80 in the 1991-1992 academic year (Islamic Society of North America, 1991, p. 79).

Full-Time Islamic Schools

Literature on full-time Islamic schools in America is extremely limited. The most recent study about full-time Muslim schools in North America is by the ISNA Department of Education 1991. The study included 49 full-time Islamic schools. Final comments reported by researchers were:

While this study clearly presents some of the major steps to consider while establishing a full-time Islamic school, this in only one academic effort that needs and require more research. Islamic education is the future choice in North America and more research must be done in all its various aspects. (Islamic Society of North America, 1991, p. 79)

One of the few professional studies on full-time Islamic schools in North America is Molook Roghanizad's doctoral dissertation, Full-time Muslim schools in the United States. Molook (1990) intended to study the factors that contributed toward the development of full-time Muslim schools and the direction Muslim schools were taking in the past 2 decades.

Molook (1990) suggested in her study that the development of full-time Muslim schools came about as a

result of several factors. Among them were dissatisfaction with public schools, the changing social environment and concerns about assimilation. Regarding goals and objectives of full-time Muslim schools, Molook stated that there seemed to be a striking homogeneity in the goals and objectives that the schools have set for themselves. The overall picture was that these schools aimed to achieve the following:

- Develop "God consciousness" among the children.
- Provide an Islamic environment and contact with Muslim peers.
- Preserve and perpetuate the Islamic identity.
- Nurture loyalty to the Islamic faith.
- Stress the transmission of the Islamic way of life, which includes observation of daily prayers, Islamic manners, deity, dress, and Islamic holidays.
- Offer quality academic education in an Islamic framework.
- Galvanize the children against the negative effects of the dominant culture.
- Inculcate a sense of pride in their Islamic heritage so that the new generation may feel at ease in applying the Islamic model to problem solving in this secular environment.
- Include the teaching of the Quran, Arabic, and Islamic Studies. (p. 129)

Kamal H. Ali's (1981) dissertation, Muslim School Planning in the United States: An Analysis of Issues, Problems and Possible Approaches, was a case study of three Muslim schools located in Brooklyn, New York, and Philadelphia. In his article "Islamic Education in the

United States: An Overview of Issues, Problems and Possible Approaches," Ali (1984) also provided analysis of major issues and problems arising out of attempts to implement Islamic educational alternatives to American Public Schooling. He stated that,

Ironically, although the influence of public schooling is seen as an increasingly dysfunctional element in Muslim society, efforts to introduce an Islamic alternative have hardly corrected the situation. Muslim educators are small groups of professional neophytes who find themselves faced with the ominous task of constructing the foundations of a Muslim school system in a country that has no clear Islamic heritage. (p. 130)

Summary

In this chapter, the reviewed literature demonstrated the conditions of public schools and examined several significant forces which have contributed to the general dissatisfaction with public schools. It also provided an understanding of religious education.

Rightly or wrongly, public schools are often blamed for the many ills facing America today. Harris (1988) credited the educational system in the United States with producing a nation of massive adult illiteracy, youth with no backbone and a generation in which parental authority has been destroyed along with confidence in America's free marked system. He went on to say that "Public educators have their chance, they have failed the test" (p. 19).

Howard (1990) believed that humanistic educators are responsible for a system that "is destroying our young people and producing a generation of functional illiterates, confused and violent rebels, and drug burnout" (p. 135). The early 1950s, a back-to-basics movement was fueled by books with such fearsome titles as Why Johnny Can't Read (Flesch, 1955) and Crisis in Education (Howard, 1990). As the 1970s and 1980s unfolded, public confidence in America's public schools was eroded by a series of reports indicating alarm over public education. James S. Coleman report in 1981, Public and Private Schools fueled a nationwide controversy. Coleman's (1981) report was followed by many other reform reports which attempted to describe the American public school's' condition. The best known was Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform (National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983).

This dissatisfaction with the public schools has prompted a growing number of people to seek alternative forms of schooling for their children. Muslim parents, as other parents in the United States realized that the goals and objectives of public education have changed throughout the years. Muslim parents were confident that "the alternative no choice" was incompatible with the United States ideals. They knew also that America is among the most tolerant countries in the world with respect to freedom of expression and religious practice. Their choice for

Islamic full-time schools in North America was the alternative to public schools.

The chapter presented a brief look at the fundamentals of Islamic education. This helped illustrate the underlying currents that propelled the Muslim community towards the establishment of Islamic full-time schools. Islamic education in the United States is a new phenomenon. Only recently have parents focused their attention on developing full-time Islamic schools. The influx of Muslim immigrants to America has become steady in the last decade, a development which raises the need for full-time Islamic schools.

The literature indicated that parents sent their children to religious schools to strengthen their faith, to galvanize them against the negative effect of the public schools and to offer them quality academic education.

Religious and social factors cannot be separated in Islamic education. Nasr (1994) reported that "Islam envisages religion as not just a part of life but as the whole of it . . . it incorporates what we do, what we make, and what we think and what we feel" (p. 3). Religion is a main factor in Islamic education, but not the only one. Islamic education also focuses on social and cultural objectives. Zaman (1985) stated that "The objective of education is the purification of mind and make people cultured and courteous." Islamic education provides the

most harmonious development of body, mind and soul. Husain and Ashraf (1979) stated that "knowledge divorced from faith is not only partial knowledge, it can even be described as a kind of new ignorance" (pp. 37-38.)

Bennett (1992) also emphasized the importance of religion in education when he stated that "In too many places in American public education, religion has been ignored, banned, or shunned in ways that serve neither knowledge nor the constitution, nor sound public policy" (p. 205).

Islamic school planners and Muslim parents realized the importance of marshaling the developing of full-time schools which work to achieve religious, social, cultural and educational goals that are valuable to Muslims.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), the selection of a methodology for a study should be determined by the purpose of the investigation. The intent of this study was to glean information from parents whose children attended Islamic schools in Florida to determine why they chose to send their children to Islamic schools. Chapter III describes procedures and methodology used in this descriptive study.

Research Design

The review of relevant literature proved that research about Islamic Education and Islamic full-time schools was extremely scarce. Relevant research, dealing particularly with parents' reasons for choosing Islamic full-time schools in North America, was found to be nonexistent. Therefore, research was reviewed on a national basis, including studies dealing with the reasons why parents choose parochial schools. Two dissertations were found to be extremely helpful in conducting this particular study.

The first study was conducted in 1982 by Foreman. The focus of the study was parental choice for Christian schools in Oregon. The second study was conducted in 1989 by Eugene. Eugene's study uncovered and analyzed the reasons Iowa's parents enrolled their children in fundamental and evangelical Christian schools.

Eugene (1989) employed the same interview guide as Foreman (1982). This researcher adapted the interview guide used by both Foreman and Eugene as the instrument of this study.

According to Eugene (1989) and Foreman (1982), parents' responses to the question of why they enrolled their children in specific school settings were very complex and difficult to ascertain. Therefore, the formulation of questions must be constructed to uncover and analyze the reasons parents shared with the researcher. Zeisel (1957) called this careful construction of questions, "reason analysis" (p. 33).

Reason analysis is a technique useful in explaining people's behavior. It is the "art of asking why" (Zeisel, 1957, p. 140). The purpose of reason analysis is to "transform the personal and highly individual reasons for a decision into precise knowledge" (Zeisel, 1957, p. 148).

Reason analysis is a method that fits the purpose of the study. This method consists of five steps; however, only four are pertinent to this study:

1. Formulating the problem in terms of specific research purposes.
2. Making topological distinctions, that is, identifying the population so that it reflects the "general" viewpoint of the population.
3. Developing an accounting scheme, that is designing an appropriate instrument to solicit responses.
4. Interviewing for reasons, using a variety of questions to reflect "true" reasons.

Population

The purpose of this study was to discover and interpret the reasons why parents in Florida chose to enroll their children in Islamic schools. The population of the study consisted of parents from three Islamic schools operating in the state of Florida. Parents were selected by the principal or the assistant principal of each respective school. The sample included 30 parents from 3 different schools. One school was in the city of Orlando; the other two were in the city of Tampa.

The researcher matched the groups according to the gender of the parent. The goal was to interview an even number of mothers and fathers in the selected school(s) - that is 15 fathers and 15 mothers. The sample was also matched according to the gender of the referent child. Out of 30 referent children, 15 were girls and 15 were boys.

Finally, the samples were matched according to the grade level of the referent child. It was desired that 15 children attended elementary grades (K-5) and 15 attended secondary grades (6-12).

The schools involved in this study were:

1. Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF) - located in Tampa with a population of 120 students.
2. Universal Academy of Florida (UAF) - located in Tampa with a population of 160 students.
3. Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF) - located in Orlando with a population of 70 students.

This study was restricted to a limited population who chose to send their children to Islamic schools in Florida. In addition, if parents had more than one child enrolled in Islamic schools, the researcher requested that their answers pertain only to the oldest child. An attempt was also made to interview parents who had recently enrolled their children in Islamic schools, as "a more recent transfer would yield more usable information" (Foreman, 1982, p. 36).

Instrumentation

Face-to-face interviews were chosen to be the method of gathering information for the study. It was developed in order to assess three categories of parental reasons for choosing Islamic schools: Academic (A), Religious (R) and sociocultural (S) reasons. The researcher served as the

primary instrument for data collection. A complete answer to the question, "Why did you enroll your child in this Islamic School?" included information from the components of the accounting scheme (see Appendix D).

Developing an accounting scheme means to develop a set of topics to be considered in the inquiry. The accounting scheme has to "transform idiosyncratic reasons into generalized categories" (Foreman, 1982, p. 36).

In keeping with the methodology of the Foreman (1982) and Eugene (1989) studies, "a minimum of four parts to a response must be present to constitute a complete answer" (Gaudet, 1956, p. 429). The four parts are:

1. Old choice or new--Responses to the questions, "Why did you enroll your child in this Islamic school? included reasons for dissatisfaction with the old choice (previous school) and reasons for attraction to the new choice (new school). Somewhere in every complete answer there must be a reason for abandoning the old choice and selecting the new choice.
2. Specific Occurrences--Parents were asked if a specific event or incident precipitated the decision to choose the Islamic school and abandon the old school. This event or incident may be the specific and dynamic element of the parents' decision-making

which goes beyond general dissatisfaction with the old choice attraction to the new choice.

3. Source--"A complete answer should include the source of information whenever possible" (Gaudet, 1956, p. 430). The source of information could extremely influence the parents' decision. If the information was obtained from a significant person, the source of information could have a great impact on the decision. If the information was obtained from a personal experience through observation, the source could be tremendously influential.
4. Cause of Change--"Every answer should include a clue to whether the respondent has learned new facts about his choice or whether his own ideas have changed so as to make the new choice suit better" (Gaudet, 1956, p. 431). Parents could have decided to choose Islamic schools on the basis of new information or they could have experienced a complete change of thinking ideas about schools and education.

In summary, a complete answer to the question, "Why did you enroll your child in this Islamic School?" included information from each of the four components outlined above.

Additional Components

Other questions were added to the minimum four requirements for complete answers from the respondents. The additional parts were: miscellaneous questions about enrollment, participants in the decision, parents' opinion about public schools, parents' opinions about non-public schools and parents' perceptions regarding the possible challenges and problems facing Islamic schools in North America. Parents' responses to the question of why they enrolled their children in Islamic schools were categorized as religious, sociocultural or academic.

In order to accurately discover reasons parents in Florida enroll their children in Islamic schools, it was necessary to know who the parents were that were enrolling their children in Islamic schools. "The question "why" is bigger than it may appear, because "why" includes elements of "who." The elements of "why" and "who" are inextricably intertwined" (Foreman, 1982, p. 34-35). Consequently, descriptive information was an integral part of "why," and the reason analysis could not be done without the descriptive information about the parents.

This study attempted to measure reasons parents cite for enrolling their children in Islamic schools. The study was judged to be valid for three reasons: First, the parts of the accounting scheme, from which the interview guide was taken, appear to cover all parts of the question, "Why do

parents in Florida enroll their children in Islamic schools?" Second, the interview guide was adapted from previous interview guides used in similar studies with parochial schools. Additionally, the interview guide was distributed to a set of parents as a pilot study for their input regarding the format of the questions and length of time to complete. All comments and criticisms were considered. Selected ambiguous phrases and words were changed. The form and substance of the interview were modified in response to the pilot study. The accounting scheme that was used to categorize and analyze information in the study is outlined in Appendix D.

Rationale for the Interview

The central purpose of this study was to discover why parents in Florida enroll their children in Islamic schools. The purpose of the study directed the method of data collection. Methodology revolved around interviewing process.

The data collection procedures selected for this study may be described as a semi-structured interview with a few open-ended questions. In Educational Research, Borg and Gall (1979) reported that:

the semi-structured interview, therefore, has the advantage of being reasonably objective while still permitting a more thorough understanding of the respondents' opinions and the reasons behind them than would be possible using mailed questionnaires. The semi-structured interview is generally most

appropriate for interview studies in education.
(p. 313)

The written questionnaire would not have served the purpose of this study. Drew and Hardman (1988) reported that:

the advantages of an interview (over a questionnaire) are the open-ended questions (those requiring a response of some length) can be used with greater confidence, particular questions of special interest or value can be pursued in depth, follow-up questions can be asked, and items that are unclear can be explained. (p. 99)

Content of the Interview

The interview guide contained 75 oral questions and 81 written questions (see Appendix E). Not all questions were asked of all parents because some questions were conditioned by a specific response to a previous question, and some questions were answered in response to previous questions.

Every question in the interview served one of the three purposes (see Appendix E): Some questions were asked to carry out the interviewing process. Names of the child and school were needed to facilitate the flow of the interview. Specific names also tended to encourage parents to think specifically, rather than in generalities (e.g., not "the Islamic schools" but "Universal Academy of Florida").

Specific questions were asked to solicit descriptive information about parents and children. Other questions were asked to discover why parents enrolled their children in Islamic schools. Questions 21, 24, 25 and 30 were open-

ended. Question 21 queried "Can you tell some of the most important reasons for choosing (name of Islamic school)?" Question 24 queried "If you were dissatisfied with public schools in general, give only the most important reason for your dissatisfaction?" Question 25 inquired "If you were dissatisfied specifically with (name of public school), what was the major reason?" Question 30 was asked as follows: "What is the single most important reason you are attracted to Muslim schools in general, and specifically with (name of Muslim school)? Give only one reason."

Advantages of the open-ended format were considerable. In their book, Asking Questions, Sudman and Bradburn (1987) reported that "In the hands of a good interviewer, the open format allows and encourages respondents to give their opinions fully and with as much nuance as they are capable of" (p. 150).

The 156 questions of the interview guide were intended to closely parallel the outline of the accounting scheme. The interview guide was divided into four parts: 75 oral questions forming the main part of the guide, 38 demographic questions completed in writing by the respondent. The two ranking lists were filled out in writing when Question 31 of the oral interview was asked. Nineteen statements represented the parents' opinions and perceptions regarding possible challenges and problems facing Islamic schools in

North America. The statements were set up on a 5-point scale asking for agreement or disagreement.

The interview guide was designed to uncover, through a number of means, reasons for parents' decisions to enroll their children in Islamic schools. Open-ended questions were designed to re-create the parents' decision-making process in the parents' own words before the parents could be restricted by the interviewer's categories. The free responses of the parents were later categorized as Religious (R), Social (S) or Academic (A). After the open-ended questions were answered, parents were given two lists of reasons to rank. One list presented 12 reasons parents were dissatisfied with public schools. The other list presented 12 reasons that parents were attracted to Muslim schools. In each list of 12, 4 reasons were primarily religious, 4 social and 4 academic. The purpose of ranking was to encourage parents to choose which reasons were most important to them.

Parents were first queried to indicate which 12 reasons they agreed with. If parents did not agree with reasons presented, they were told to leave the line blank. Next, parents were asked to rank order the reasons they agreed with, beginning with 1 as the reason they agreed with most. To score the reasons, 10 points were assigned to the number 1 choice, 9 points to the number 2 choice, with the last choice receiving a 1. Numbers were totaled, and an R

(Religious) score, S (Social) score and an A (Academic) score were calculated for each parent based on the two ranking lists.

Subjects of the Interview

The sample used in this study were from three Islamic schools in Florida. The researcher interviewed a total of 30 parents. The schools that were surveyed, locations and the number of parents surveyed are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Location and Number of Survey Schools and Parents

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name of School</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Parents Surveyed</u>
1	Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF)	Tampa	7
2	Universal Academy of Of Florida (UAF)	Tampa	8
3	Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF)	Orlando	15

At the time of the study, the researcher was an assistant principal in Muslim Academy of Central Florida located in Orlando. By involving fewer numbers of parents from the Tampa schools (Islamic Academy of Florida and Universal Academy of Central Florida), time and travel to conduct interviews were reduced. In their book, Designing

and Conducting Behavioral Research, Drew and Hardman (1988) reported that:

One difficulty related to interview studies is the high costs involved. If the interview is conducted on a face-to-face basis, costs can be extremely high. An interviewer's salary is often considerable and may include travel and lodging expenses.

(p. 111)

The researcher matched the groups according to the gender of the parent interviewed. Fifteen mothers and 15 fathers were interviewed. The sample was also matched according to the gender of the referent child. Fifteen were girls and 15 were boys. The researcher included referent children of all grade levels. Fifteen children attended an elementary school (K-5) and 15 attended a secondary school (6-12).

Conducting the Interview

All interviews were "guided and defined as purposeful conversation between two or more persons, directed by one person to obtain information, and focused on particular topic" (Pape, 1988, p. 62). The interview guide (see Appendix E) provided a plan for systematic collection of data, thereby increasing data comprehension.

The interviewing process began on December 15, 1995. Principals of the two Islamic schools in Tampa were

contacted by telephone and asked to participate in the study. The purpose and procedures of the interview were discussed. The principals were asked to compile a list of potential parents who could be interviewed. The researcher, an assistant principal at the Muslim Academy of Central Florida chose the parents who would be interviewed. In deciding who would be interviewed, the following factors were considered:

1. The availability of the parents.
2. The willingness of the parents to be interviewed.
3. The gender of the parents and the gender and grade level of the referent child.
4. Selection of parents who had recently enrolled children in the school, preferably during the 1995-1996 school year.

Each principal provided the researcher with lists of parents' names and telephone numbers. Admittedly, because the principals selected the respondents according to the researcher's criteria of availability and willingness to participate, the sample may have a bias.

The researcher contacted the parents by telephone and asked them to participate in the study. The times and places for the interviews were arranged to be most convenient for the parents. Eight parents were interviewed in their homes, 12 parents were interviewed at the Islamic Center, and 10 parents were interviewed at restaurants.

Several interviews were audiotaped with the permission of the interviewee. However, the tape recorder was turned off by the researcher if the interviewee discussed private and personal information. The researcher felt it was unethical to record private information. The interviewees were asked if they wanted the interview to be in English, Arabic or Urdu. Only portions of the conversations which answered specific questions were transcribed. The entire interview was not transcribed. A summary of the findings was mailed to parents or principals who wished to learn the findings of the study.

Data Analysis

Since data do not speak for themselves, the role of the researcher included the explanation of data (Pape, 1988). Data which were quantifiable were analyzed through the use of simple statistics. Qualitative data were interpreted in a manner consistent with the operational definitions utilized throughout this study. The results of the study are reported in Chapter IV. The conclusions are offered in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons given by some parents in Florida for enrolling their children in Islamic schools. Six research questions were designed to ascertain reasons parents had for enrolling their children in Islamic schools. In this Chapter, the responses to those questions are analyzed and the findings of the study are reported.

Research Question 1

What are the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the parents in Florida who choose to send their children to Islamic schools?

Descriptions of participants were derived from Parts 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the accounting scheme. Part 7 of the scheme was designed to analyze findings of demographic information relating to parents and their children. Part 8 of the scheme organized parents' information and opinions about public schools. Part 9 of the accounting scheme analyzed parents' information and opinion about Islamic schools. Part 10 summarized parents' perceptions about challenges facing Islamic schools. The entire accounting scheme

appears in Appendix D. Data used in the accounting scheme were derived from the interview/questionnaire responses of the parents.

Demographic and psychographic variables of the parents surveyed in Florida Islamic schools were examined: gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, income, ethnic background, status in America, years of residency in America and religious preference.

The principal purpose of requesting demographic information was to determine characteristics, attitudes, and opinions of the parents who were interviewed. Several questions collected information about the respondent's spouse and referent child. Variables were discussed regarding gender of parents and children.

The sample was matched according to the gender of the parent interviewed. An equal number of mothers and fathers was used. Of 30 interviewees, 15 were fathers and 15 were mothers.

The sample was matched according to the referent child's gender. Of 30 referents, 15 were female and 15 were male. The gender distribution of the parents interviewed is presented in Table 4. Table 5 presents the gender distribution of the referent child.

Table 4

Distribution of Parents According to Gender (N=30)

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Female	15	50.0
Male	15	50.0

Table 5

Distribution of Referent Children According to Gender (N=30)

Gender	Referent Child	Percentage
Female	15	50.0
Male	15	50.0

Parents, including spouses ranged in age from 25-50 years old. Two mothers declined to give their ages. The age distribution of all parents appears in Table 6. Of the 30 parents interviewed, 28 were married and 2 were divorced.

Parents' educational levels for both the interviewee and his/her spouse were placed in four categories: some high school or less; a high school diploma; some college, college degree or more. As shown in Table 7, 8 respondents (13%) indicated they had a high school diploma. Eight parents (13%) reported they had some college but not a 4-year college degree. Forty parents (67%) reported they had earned a 4-year college degree or more.

Table 6

Distribution of Parents According to Age (N=60)

Age	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
30 and under	7	0	7	11.6
31-35	10	4	14	23.3
36-40	7	14	21	36.2
41-45	3	8	11	18.3
46-50	1	4	5	8.3
51 and over	0	0	0	0
Not reported	2	0	2	3.3
Total	30	30	60	99.8

Table 7

Distribution of Parents According to Educational Level
(N=60)

Parent Level	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
Some high school or less	2	2	4	6.6
High school diploma	6	2	8	13.3
Some college	4	4	8	13.3
College degree or more	18	22	40	66.6
Total	30	30	60	99.8

Of 60 parents, 40 were employed. Seventeen mothers were housewives. Two parents were college students and 1 father was unemployed. An alphabetical list of parents' occupations is presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Parents' Occupations (N=60)

Number of Jobs	Jobs	Number of Parents Holding the Job
1	Architect	1
2	Airline employee	1
3	College teacher	1
4	College student	2
5	Computer programmer	1
6	Dentist	1
7	Food service worker	2
8	Housewives	17
9	Health inspector	1
10	Lab technician	1
11	Nurse	1
12	Office manager	2
13	Physician	4
14	Principal	1
15	Private instructor	1
16	Self-employed	13
17	Secretary	1

Number of Jobs	Jobs	Number of Parents Holding the Job
18	School teacher	6
19	Travel agent	1
20	Veterinarian	1
21	Unemployed	1

Total family income for the year 1995-1996 was divided into six categories: Less than \$10,000, \$10,000-\$15,000, \$15,000-\$20,000, \$20,000-\$25,000, \$25,000-\$35,000, and over \$35,000. Only 1 (3%) household reported income of less than \$10,000, 2 households (6.6%) reported incomes of \$10,000-\$15,000, 3 households (10%) reported incomes of \$15,000-\$20,000, 1 household (3%) reported an income of \$20,000-\$25,000, 6 households (20%) reported incomes of \$25,000-\$35,000, and 13 households (43%) reported incomes over \$35,000. Four households (7%) declined to report their income.

Parents reported different ethnic backgrounds. The ethnic backgrounds were placed in seven categories: Asian (Pakistani and Indians), Arabs (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia, Libya, United Emirates, and Saudi Arabia), West Indies (Jamaica, Trinidad, and Guyana), African American, Philippines and Caucasians. Ten parents (17%) reported they were from either India or Pakistan, 28 (47%) indicated they were Arabs, 6 10% reported they were

from the West Indies, 2 (3%) indicated they were African Americans, 2 (3%) reported they were from the Philippines and 12 (20%) reported they were Caucasians. Table 10 presents the distribution of parents according to ethnic backgrounds.

Table 9
Distribution of Parents According to Income (N=30)

Annual Income	Number of Households	Percentage
less than \$10,000	1	3.3
\$10,000-\$15,000	2	6.6
\$15,001-\$20,000	3	10.0
\$20,001-\$25,000	1	3.3
\$25,001-\$35,000	6	20.0
over \$35,000	13	43.3
Not reported	4	13.3
Total	30	99.8

Parents' status in America was divided into four categories: American citizen, permanent resident, student Visa. Forty seven parents (78%) indicated they were American citizens, 9 parents (15%) reported being permanent residents, and 4 (7%) parents possessed student visas. Table 11 presents the parents' years of residency in the United States of America.

Table 10

Distribution of Parents According to Ethnic Backgrounds
(N=60)

Background	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
African American	1	1	2	3.3
Arab	10	18	28	46.6
Asian	3	7	10	16.6
Caucasians	11	1	12	20.0
Philippine	2	0	2	3.3
West Indian	3	3	6	10.0
Total	30	30	60	99.8

Table 11

Distribution of Parents According to Status in America
(N=60)

Status	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
American citizen	23	24	47	78.3
Permanent resident	5	4	9	15.0
Student visa	2	2	4	6.7
Others	0	0	0	0.0
Total	30	30	60	100.0

Table 12 presents the years of residency in the United States of America. Data revealed that none of the parents

lived in America less than 3 years. Six respondents (10%) lived between 3-7 years in the United States, 10 parents (17%) lived between 7-11 years. Seven parents (12%) lived between 15-20 years. Ten parents (17%) lived 20 years, and 15 parents (25%) resided all their lives in America.

Table 12
Distribution of Parents According to Years
of Residency in America (N=60)

Years	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
less than 3	0	0	0	0.0
Between 3-7	4	2	6	10.0
Between 7-11	7	3	10	16.6
Between 11-15	2	10	12	20.0
Between 15-20	1	6	7	11.6
Over 20	2	8	10	16.6
All life	14	1	15	25.0
Total	30	30	60	99.8

With regard to religion, 43 parents (72%) reported they were born Muslims, 12 parents (20%) indicated they were converted Muslims, 3 parents (5%) reported they were Christians, 1 parent 2% indicated she was Jewish, and 1 parent indicated he had other religious preference. Table 13 presents the distribution of parents' religion.

Table 13

Distribution of Parents According to Religion (N=60)

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Born Muslim	15	28	43	71.7
Convert to Muslim	11	1	12	20.0
Christians	3	0	3	5.0
Jewish	1	0	1	1.7
Others	0	1	1	1.6
<u>Total</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Information about the parents' levels of religious commitment is presented in Table 14. Concerning the level of religious commitment among the 60 parents, 28 parents (47%) rated themselves highly committed, 28 parents (47%) rated average level of commitment, 4 parents (6%) rated fair level of commitment. None of the parents rated low level of religious commitment.

To the question about mosque attendance, data reported from the parents indicated that 19 of 60 parents (36%) reported attending the mosque frequently. Thirty five parents (58%) reported sometimes and 6 parents (10%) reported never (Table 16). Fourteen parents (23%) interviewed reported they had been members of one of the Islamic organizations (Table 15). Twenty six (43%) reported they attended Friday Prayer regularly, 7 (12%) rarely

missed, 18 (30%) sometimes, and 9 (15%) never. Tables 13-22 present parents' distribution according to religion, religious commitment and practice.

Table 14

Distribution of Parents According to Level of Commitment
(N=60)

<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
High	13	15	28	46.7
Average	15	13	28	46.7
Fair	2	2	4	6.6
Low	0	0	0	0.0
<u>Total</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 15

Distribution of Parents According to Member
of Islamic Organizations (N=60)

<u>Member</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	7	7	14	23.3
No	23	23	46	76.7
<u>Total</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 16

Distribution of Parents According to
Attendance of the Mosque (N=60)

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Frequently	6	13	19	31.7
Sometimes	20	15	35	58.3
Never	4	2	6	10.0
<u>Total</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 17

Distribution of Parents According to
Attendance of Friday Prayer (N=60)

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Regularly	7	19	26	43.3
Rarely missed	5	2	7	11.7
Sometimes	12	6	18	30.0
Never	6	3	9	15.0
<u>Total</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 18

Distribution of Parents According to Fasting Ramadan (N=60)

Fasting	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
Yes	22	26	48	80.0
Sometimes	4	3	7	11.7
Never	4	1	5	8.3
Total	30	30	60	100.0

Table 19

Distribution of Parents According to Reading Quran (N=60)

Reading	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
Yes	16	21	37	61.7
Sometimes	10	8	18	30.0
Never	4	1	5	8.3
Total	30	30	60	100.0

Table 20

Cover for Women (Hijab) (N=60)

Hijab	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
Yes	16	18	34	56.7
No	9	6	15	25.0
I don't know	5	6	11	18.3
Total	30	30	60	100.0

Table 21
Attendance of Community Activities (N=60)

Attendance	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
Yes	11	14	25	41.7
Sometimes	15	14	29	48.3
Never	4	2	6	10.0
Total	30	30	60	100.0

Table 22
Teaching Children about Islam (N=60)

Teaching Islam	Mother	Father	Total	Percentage
Yes	16	16	32	53.3
Sometimes	10	11	21	35.0
No	4	3	7	11.7
Total	30	30	60	100.0

**Parents' Characteristics and Opinions
Concerning Public Schools**

Of the 30 parents interviewed, 11 parents (36.6%) attended public schools (see Table 23). All parents who attended public schools agreed that public schools had changed since they attended. A majority of parents talked about the moral decay, violence and lack of discipline. Typical comments were: "yes, too much, public schools are not the same." "There is no control on the students'

Table 23

Summary of Parents' Responses About the Public School (N=30)

Variable Descriptors	No. Of Parents Who Answered	
	Yes	Percentage
Parent attended public school	11	36.6
Agree public schools have changed	11	36.6
Considered alternative public education	2	6.6
Presently has a child in public school	5	16.6
Feel guilty about not supporting public school through my child's attendance	2	6.6
Would consider enrolling child in public school if school is academically equal	8	26.6
Would consider enrolling child in public school if school is socially equal	14	46.6
Would consider enrolling child back in a public school	5	16.6
Tried to change public school policy before leaving	6	20.

behaviors." "There is no protection for teachers or safe environment anymore." "No morality."

Only 2 of 30 parents (6.6%) reported considering alternative public education. Five parents reported having other school-age children in public schools. When asked about the reason for choosing to enroll that child in public

school, 1 parent cited "financial reason." One parent said, "I have a 5-year old child in public school, it is an excellent school, stimulating environment that Islamic Schools cannot match." Two parents indicated that attending public high schools gave their children more academic opportunities, such as scholarships and advanced classes. One parent reported that their child has a learning disability and the Islamic school has no special facilities.

Only 2 of 30 parents (66%) reported that they felt guilty or bad about not supporting public schools through their child's attendance in public school. One parent said, "I support whichever school my child attends."

When asked if they would consider enrolling their children in a public school, if the school were academically equal to the Islamic school, 8 parents (26.6%) said, "yes, I would consider it." However, when asked if they would consider enrolling their children in a public school if the school offered an equal social environment, 14 parents (46.6%) answered "yes."

Parents were asked if they would consider re-enrolling their children in public schools - only 5 parents considered re-enrolling their child in public schools. One parent found tuition costs a financial strain. Three parents reported that the Islamic schools their children attended had low academic standards and did not meet their children's needs. One parent (3.3%) said, "This Islamic school is

didactic and rigid, my child is 6 years old, I want my child to have fun, get to learn important life lessons through play."

There was a variety of responses to the questions, "What kind of changes would you want to see in public schools before you would consider sending your child to public school? Some responses were: "Discipline and good morals," "stop violence, drugs, smoking and drinking," "eliminate negative peer pressure," "I want an Islamic environment, I know that it is impossible," "teach respect and responsibility," "revert 30 years at least," "strict dress code," and "more emphasis on academics."

Another interesting public school response involved Hirshman's concept of "exit and voice" according to Eugene (1989). Hirshman indicated that neither parents who exit public schools, nor parents who raise their voice against the public school system seek to change public schools before leaving them, and enrolling their children in private schools.

Parents in this study were asked if they tried to change public school policy before leaving. Only 6 parents (20%) raised their voices to change the public school system. Responses were: "I have talked to some young students about a conservative way of dress, I was a teacher in that school." "I was an active PTA mom, volunteered in many extra activities in order to be involved for my daughter's

sake, but the environment is too much to change." "I talked to the principal and told her that we do not want our children to be subjected to religious aspects of holiday celebration." "I sent a letter to my child's teacher telling him about Islamic Holidays." "I attended a PTA meeting and I talked about the significance of morality at schools."

Twenty four parents (80%) did not seek or compel any change. Some of their responses were: "This is a problem for all parents and all students. Everyone must agree before you can change anything. I am not optimistic." "All parents are needed, not just one." "This is a difficult problem, parents can't solve it." "I didn't have the chance." "I don't have the time." "There is just too much to do." "We need to change society first." "I worked as a teacher in a public school. There is no way you can change it." "I want my child to learn about his religion. Public schools are prohibited by law to teach religion. If they do, they violate the separation of church and state. How can we change the decay of morality without religion?" "If I can make change in academic areas, what about social and religious areas? These areas are my main concern. I told you there is no hope." A summary of parents' responses about the public schools appears in Table 23.

Parents' Characteristics and Opinions Concerning Islamic Schools

Regarding parents' commitment to Islamic schools, 27 parents (90%) reported that they were highly committed to Islamic schools in general (see Table 24). Fourteen (46.6%) of the same parents mentioned they were highly committed to the specific school their children attended. Three parents (10%) regretted enrolling their children in Islamic schools.

Parents were asked, "If you were to move to another part of the state, would you first look for public schools or Islamic schools?" Twenty-six (86.6%) parents reported that they would first look for Islamic schools and 4 (13.3%) reported they would check out both.

Parents were asked about considering home schooling for their children. Ten (33.3%) parents reported they had considered home schooling. Thirteen (43.3%) parents have only 1 child attending the Islamic school, 11 (36.6%) parents have 2 children, 3 (10%) parents have 3 children and 3 (10%) parents have 4 children.

Eight parents considered not having their child enrolled in an Islamic school when it is an option. Twenty five of the 30 parents (83.3%) indicated tuition was a problem.

There are a number of challenges that parents cited in regard to Islamic schools. Table 25 presents parents' perceptions regarding possible problems and challenges facing Islamic schools in North America. Statements appear in order of times mentioned.

Table 24

Summary of Islamic Schools Data (N=30)

<u>Variable Descriptors</u>	<u>No. Of Parents Who Answered</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
	<u>Yes</u>		
High commitment to Islamic schools	27		90.0
High commitment to the specific school your child attends	14		46.6
Have regret about enrollment in Islamic schools	3		10.0
If moved, would look for Islamic schools before public schools	26		86.6
Considering teaching child in home school situation	10		33.3
Believe it is a sin not to enroll the child in Islamic schools	8		26.6

The driving distance to Islamic schools ranged from 1 mile to 56 miles (one way) and was perceived by 50% of the parents as a problem. The driving distance to public schools ranged from "next door" to 7 miles (one way). Eight parents (26.6%) were employed by the school their children attended; 5 as teachers, 2 as administrators and 1 as a principal and these provided transportation. Five parents (16.6%) reported they did volunteer work for the school their child attended. The volunteer work included such things as serving on the school board, fund raising, serving lunch, cleaning the school, and teaching.

Twenty five parents (83.3%) agreed that tuition was a problem. Twenty two (73.3%) agreed that inadequate physical facilities was a problem. Lack of money was selected to be a problem by 22 parents (73.3%). Twenty parents (66.6%) agreed that lack of parental involvement is a drawback. Eighteen (60%) parents agreed that lack of certified teachers was a challenge facing Islamic schools. Lack of extracurricular activities was also considered a problem by 18 (60%) parents. Seventeen (56.6%) parents indicated that conflict with other Islamic schools was a problem, and 15 (50%) parents considered the driving distance a problem. Fourteen (46.6%) parents agreed that the school was too small, and 14 (46.6%) agreed that enrollment was too low. Thirteen (43.3%) parents agreed that the administration was in the hands of the board. Thirteen (43.3%) indicated that Islamic schools have an uncertain future. Accreditation was considered a problem by 12 (40%) parents. No parent reported that Islamic schools' principals and administrators lacked Islamic knowledge. Eight (26.6%) were concerned about the lack of qualified Arabic and Islamic study teachers. Four (13.3%) parents felt that mixing boys and girls in the classroom was a problem. Four (13.3%) parents concurred that Islamic schools lacked materials for Arabic and Islamic studies. Four (13.3%) believed that separate education for minorities was very unlikely to result in equal education. Three (10%) parents felt that

segregation of Muslim students from the regular society does not give them the opportunities to learn how to live Islamically in a non-Muslim society.

Table 25

Frequencies and Percentages of Parents Who Agreed with the Possible Challenges and Problems Facing Islamic Schools (N=30)

Problems Facing Islamic Schools	No. Of Parents Who Answered	
	Yes	Percentage
Tuition	25	83.3
Inadequate physical facilities	22	73.3
Lack of finance	22	73.3
Lack of parental involvement	20	66.6
Lack of certified Muslim teachers	18	60.0
Lack of extracurricular activities	18	60.0
Conflicted with the community	17	56.6
Driving distance	15	50.0
School is too small	14	46.6
Enrollment is extremely low	14	46.6
The administration is in the hands of the school board	13	43.3
Uncertain future	13	43.3
Accreditation	12	40.0
Lack of Islamic knowledgeable administration	9	30.0

Variable Descriptors	No. Of Parents Who Answered	
	Yes	Percentage
High commitment to Islamic schools	27	90.0
High commitment to the specific school your child attends	14	46.6
Have regret about enrollment in Islamic schools	3	10.0
If moved, would look for Islamic schools before public schools	26	86.6
Considering teaching child in home school situation	10	33.3
Believe it is a sin not to enroll the child in Islamic schools	8	26.6
Lack of qualified Arabic and Islamic teachers	8	26.6
Separate education for minorities is very unlikely to result in equal education	4	13.3
Lack of Arabic and Islamic studies materials	4	13.3
Mixing boys and girls	4	13.3
Segregate Muslim students from regular society does not give them the opportunity to learn how to live Islamically in a non-Muslim society	3	10.0

Research Question 2

Do parents in Florida enroll their children in Islamic schools primarily because they are attracted to these schools or because they are dissatisfied with public schools?

Parents were asked if they enrolled their children in Islamic schools because they were dissatisfied with public schools or because they were attracted by Islamic schools. Only 7 (23.3%) parents reported they were dissatisfied with public schools, 23 (76.6%) reported they were attracted to Islamic schools. Some of the parents' comments were: "I am not dissatisfied, it is not my decision." "It is rather fear more than dissatisfaction."

When parents were asked if they were attracted to Islamic schools in general (yes or no), or were specifically attracted to their child's Islamic school (yes or no), two thirds of the parents responded yes to attraction in general and one third responded yes to attraction to the specific school their child attended.

When parents were asked if they were dissatisfied with public schools in general or their child's public school, 20 parents (66.6%) said "in general." Ten parents (33.3%) were dissatisfied with their children's specific school. Table 26 presents the data for the answers to Questions 22, 23 and 26.

Parents' reasons for dissatisfaction with public schools or attraction to Islamic schools were divided into three categories: religious, sociocultural and academic reasons.

Three open-ended questions were asked to clarify the reasons for parents' dissatisfaction with public schools or interest in Islamic schools. Question 21, "Can you tell some of the most important reasons for choosing Islamic schools?"

Table 26

A Summary of the Data for Question 22, 23 and 26 (N=30)

Question	Parents' Responses
22. Did you change schools mostly because you were dissatisfied with public schools or because you were attracted by Islamic schools?	Dissatisfied - 7 Attracted - 23
23. Were you dissatisfied with public schools in general or specifically?	In general - 20 Specifically - 10
26. Do you think that you were attracted to Islamic schools in general or specifically?	In general - 20 Specifically - 10

Question 24, "If you were dissatisfied with public schools in general, give only the most important reason for your dissatisfaction." Question 30, "What is the single most important reason you are attracted to Islamic schools in general, and specially with your child's school?"

The responses for these questions ran the gamut of religious, sociocultural and academic reasons. The three categories are discussed in turn.

Table 27 illustrates the primary category of reasons cited by parents as the basis for their dissatisfaction with public schools or interest in Islamic schools.

Table 27

Parents' Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Public Schools and Interest in Islamic Schools (N=30)

Question	Reason Category	Number Of Parents	%Age
21. Can you tell some of the most important reasons for choosing Islamic schools?	Religious	16	51.6
	Social	11	33.3
	Academic	3	10.0
24. If you were dissatisfied with public schools in general, give only the most important reason for your dissatisfaction.	Religious	10	33.3
	Social	15	50.
	Academic	4	13.3
	Other	1	3.3
30. What is the single most important reason you are attracted to Islamic schools in general?	Religious	18	60
	Social	10	33.3
	Academic	2	6.6

Religious Reasons

Sixteen of 30 parents (51.6%) from the 3 Islamic schools involved in the study, responded to Question 21 on the reasons for selecting Islamic schools as religious. Of 16 parents citing religious reasons, 4 of 7 (57.1%) were from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF); 4 of 8 (50%) were from the Universal Academy of Florida (UAF); and 8 of 15 (53.3%) were from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF). General comments which indicated religious reasons reflected

interest in religious education and Islamic principles.

Examples of these comments were:

We want our children to have Islamic education, study Quran, and Arabic.

To learn more about Islam.

I generally want my children and all other children to have the best of both worlds, Islamic schools reinforce Islamic principles, teach Quran and Islamic studies.

We should increase our children's knowledge about Islam. Allah says in the Quran 'God will exalt those who believe among you and those who have knowledge to high ranks. God is informed of what ye do (Quran-11).' Allah also says 'Those truly fear God among his servants who have knowledge.'
(Quran-28)

I want my daughter to learn about Islam. Have you heard about the Prophet Mohammed's Hadith 'No present or gift out of all the gifts and presents to a child is superior to a good Islamic education?'

We want our children to have strong faith in Allah and obey him. If they don't have Islamic knowledge, they can fall astray from the right path and may be misled in the absence of knowledge.

In Question 24, parents were asked to cite one reason for dissatisfaction with public schools. Ten of 30 parents (33.3%) cited religious reasons for dissatisfaction with public schools; 2 of 7 (28.5%) from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF); 3 of 8 (37.5%) from the Universal academy of Florida (UAF); and 5 of 15 (33.3%) from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF). General parents' statements reflected lack of sensitivity to Islamic principles in public schools. Examples of these responses were "public schools separate church and state, but at the same time

celebrate religious holidays such as Christmas, what about my child's Islamic holidays?" "It is difficult to practice religion in public schools, such as prayer, fasting in Ramadan."

Other parents' remarks reflected lack of tolerance by peers, e.g., "daughter's head cover." "Students in public schools make fun of our Islamic values, no dating, no dancing, etc." "My child was ridiculed by peers because of the religion."

Other parents' comments were related to the lack of religious values and principles in public schools. Several parents' comments were "The public schools no longer permit teaching religion." "Public schools removed God and moral religious values from classrooms." "Some schools teach antireligious principles." "Public schools teach our children that life began by chance."

Question 30 was the third open-ended question. Parents were queried "What is the single most important reason you were attracted to Islamic schools in general?" Seventeen of 30 parents (57.6%) responded to Question 30 with primarily religious reasons for attraction to Islamic schools. Of the 17 parents who reported religious reasons, 4 of 7 (57.1%) were from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF), 5 of 8 (62.5%) were from the Universal Academy of Florida (UAF), and 8 of 15 (53.3%) were from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF)." General responses which indicated these

religious reasons were related to Islamic knowledge and faith, e.g., "For Islamic knowledge." "Today, more than ever, we need to be strengthened through the study of religion." "Learn and practice their faith." "Daily afternoon prayers." "Study the Quran." "Increase their Islamic knowledge."

Other parents' comments were related to building the Islamic personality, e.g., "Develop an Islamic personality, to attain piety and faith which should be developed so that it creates a righteous person." "It is our responsibility and moral duty to educate and raise our children to be true Muslims."

Sociocultural Reasons

Eleven of 30 parents (36.6%) responded to Question 21 regarding the reasons for selecting Islamic schools as sociocultural. Of 11 parents citing sociocultural concerns, 3 of 7 (42.8%) parents were from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF), 3 of 8 (37.5%) parents were from the Universal Academy of Florida (UAF), and 5 of 15 (33.3%) parents were from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF). General sociocultural concerns were related to the school's environment and discipline. Examples of parents' responses were "We want our children to be in a safe environment." "The public school environment is dangerous." "Islamic schools have a safe and orderly environment."

"Islamic schools have more discipline and have control on students." "Our children learn discipline by learning responsibility." "Good manners and behaviors, obedience, and respect are very important."

Other responses from the parents reflected some cultural reasons, such as, "A significant population of Muslims from around his father's country who shares the same social habits and cultures." "In Islamic schools, my child's culture and identity are respected and my child is more confident."

When responding to Question 24, 16 of 30 parents (50.3%) cited sociocultural reasons for dissatisfaction with public schools. Four of 7 parents (57.1%) were from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF), 4 of 8 (50%) were from the Universal Academy of Central Florida, and 8 of 15 (53.3%) parents were from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF). General parents' statements reflected a lack of discipline in public schools. Examples of parents' comments were: "Public schools suffer from lack of discipline." "Lack of respect for teachers." "Children in public schools are wild." "Some students carry knives at schools." "Some students use drugs at schools." ". . . Drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking is a big problem." "I am really afraid of physical attacks on my son." "Punishment is too lenient in public school."

Other responses indicated peer pressure as a major concern in public schools. Examples of parents' responses were: "Peer pressure is strong in public schools." "What if my daughter gets affected by the corrupt students around her?"

Some parents cited cultural reasons, e.g., "racial discrimination and prejudice." "My son's culture is not even recognized." "I don't want my daughter to be Americanized." "Dating, dancing and having children before marriage are considered sins in our religion."

Parents reflected their fears regarding the deterioration of a value system in public schools. They reported "Public schools do not teach moral values." "If my child learns math, science and English without any manners or morality, his mind will be spoiled and I will lose him."

For Question 30, 11 of 30 parents (36.6%) reported sociocultural reasons as the attraction to Islamic schools. Of 11 parents citing sociocultural reasons, 3 of 7 parents (42.8%) were from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF), 3 of 8 parents (37.5%) were from the Universal Academy of Florida (UAF), and 5 of 15 parents (33.3%) were from the Muslim Academy of central Florida (MACF).

General sociocultural reasons for attraction to Islamic schools were related to the environment and discipline. Examples of parents' responses were: "I don't not need to worry about violence, drugs or child abuse, my child is

safe." "More strict discipline." Several responses reflected cultural reasons, such as, "I want my child to carry my traditions and cultural habits and not to be Americanized." "This Islamic school teaches my child to be proud of his heritage and culture." "I heard about the melting pot of America."

Academic Reasons

Three of 30 parents (10%) responded to Question 21 regarding the reasons for selecting Islamic schools as academic. Of the 3 parents citing academic concerns, none of the 7 parents from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF) reported academic reasons, 1 of 8 (12.5%) parents were from the Universal Academy of Florida (UAF), and 2 of 15 (13.3%) parents were from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF).

Examples of academic concerns were: "Islamic schools have better academic education than public schools." "There are only 3 students in my daughter's class, she gets more attention."

To Question 24, 4 of 30 parents (13.35) responded with academic reasons for dissatisfaction with public schools. One of 7 parents (14.2%) was from the Islamic Academy of Florida (IAF), 1 of 8 parents (12.5%) was from the Universal Academy of Florida (UAF), and 2 of 15 parents (13.3%) were from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF). Parents'

responses were related to the curriculum and instruction. Examples of parents' responses were: "The math curriculum is very weak." "Teachers can't teach one to one because of the number of students in the class." "There are 25 students in one classroom." "Lack of motivation or desire for learning."

When responding to Question 30, 2 of 30 parents (6.6%) voiced academic reasons for attraction to Islamic schools. The 2 parents were from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida (MACF). Examples of parents' responses were: "More attention in the class because of fewer number of students." "Individualized teaching. . . ."

In response to Question 31, parents were to complete two lists by ranking their responses from 1 (highest) to 12 (lowest). The first list asked them to identify the reasons for their interest in Islamic schools and the second list asked them about the reasons for their dissatisfaction with public schools.

According to the first ranking list illustrated in Table 28, the main reasons for attraction to Islamic schools were religious, followed by sociocultural reasons and finally academic reasons were parents' last choice.

In the second ranking list illustrated in Table 29, the main reasons for dissatisfaction with public schools were sociocultural followed by religious and finally academic. The rankings were weighted by assigning 10 points to the

Table 28

Ranked List of 12 Reasons for Attraction to Islamic Schools

Rank	Reason	Reason	Points	Number of Parents	Percentage
1	This Islamic School teaches Quran and Islamic studies. It helps children develop God-consciousness and rational understanding of Islam.	Religious	233	30	100.0
2	This Islamic school promotes and inculcates Islamic behavior within an Islamic framework based on Quran and Sunnah	Religious	203	28	92.3
3	This Islamic school nurtures my child's loyalty to the Islamic faith.	Religious	176	27	90.0
4	This Islamic school provides a safe and orderly environment.	Socio-cultural	160	25	83.3
5	This Islamic school preserves cultural and national identity of original homeland. It also preserves and perpetuates the Islamic identity.	Socio-cultural	122	17	56.6
6	This Islamic school develops a wholesome appreciation for the value of religion in human life.	Religious	117	26	86.6

Rank	Reason	Reason	Points	Number of Parents	Percentage
7	This Islamic school offers a quality education.	Academic	108	17	56.6
8	This Islamic school provides my child with opportunities to put his/her values to use in the classroom, at lunch, during recess and on the playground.	Socio-cultural	87	17	56.6
9	This Islamic school teaches my child discipline by teaching him/her responsibility.	Socio-cultural	65	17	56.6
10	This Islamic school emphasizes basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics.	Academic	52	15	50.0
11	This Islamic school offers my child a high level of comprehensive instruction by competent teachers.	Academic	49	15	50.0
12	This Islamic school has more emphasis on basic subjects as math and science.	Academic	39	7	23.3

Note. Total Religious Points = 729;
 Total Social Points = 434
 Total Academic Points = 248

Table 29

Ranked List of 12 Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Public Schools

Rank	Reason	Reason	Points	Number of Parents	Percentage
1	The public school exposes my child to an environment of social violence holocaust of diseases, crime, drinking, smoking and drugs.	Social	208	24	80.0
2	The public school teaches my child an alternative way of life which in many instances is diametrically opposing to Islamic lifestyle.	Religious	186	23	76.6
3	The public school doesn't give my child the type of environment that is conducive to the kind of social development I want for him/her.	Social	174	17	56.6
4	The public school places my child at risk of negative peer pressure.	Social	149	22	73.3
5	The public school lacks discipline and control of students' behavior.	Social	106	17	56.6
6	The public school has anti-religious humanistic philosophy.	Religious	58	8	26.6
7	The public school has low academic standards.	Academic	47	9	30.0

Rank	Reason	Reason	Points	Number of Parents	Percentage
8	The public school is guided by educational philosophies based on atheism.	Religious	45	8	26.6
9	The public school does not put enough emphasis on math and science.	Academic	44	7	23.3
10	The public school fails to motivate my child to continue his/her education.	Academic	39	8	26.6
11	The public school denies my child religious freedom.	Religious	30	5	16.6
12	The public school stifles creativity and slows down my child's progress.	Academic	17	3	10.0

Note. Total Religious Points = 358
Total Social Points = 637
Total Academic Points = 147

Table 30

Parents' Reasons for Enrolling Their Children in Islamic Schools

Rank	Reason	Reason	Points	Number of Parents	Percentage
1	The Islamic School teaches Quran and Islamic studies. It helps children develop God-consciousness and rational understanding of Islam.	Religious	233	30	100.0
2	The public school exposes my child to an environment of social violence holocaust of diseases, crime, drinking, smoking and drugs.	Social	208	24	80.0
3	This Islamic school promotes and inculcates Islamic behavior within an Islamic framework based on Quran and Sunnah	Religious	203	28	92.3
4	The public school teaches my child an alternative way of life which in many instances is diametrically opposing to Islamic lifestyle.	Religious	186	23	76.6
5	This Islamic school nurtures my child's loyalty to the Islamic faith.	Religious	176	27	90.0
6	The public school doesn't give my child the type of environment that is conducive to the kind of social development I want for him/her.	Social	174	17	56.6

Rank	Reason	Reason	Points	Number of Parents	Percentage
7	This Islamic school provides a safe and orderly environment.	Social	160	25	83.3
8	The public school places my child at risk of negative peer pressure.	Social	149	22	73.3
9	This Islamic school preserves cultural and national identity of original homeland. It also preserves and perpetuates the Islamic identity.	Social	122	17	56.6
10	This Islamic school develops a wholesome appreciation for the value of religion in human life.	Religious	117	26	86.6
11	This Islamic school offers a quality academic education in an Islamic framework.	Academic	108	17	56.6
12	The public school lacks discipline and control of students' behavior.	Social	106	17	56.6
13	This Islamic school provides my child with opportunities to put his/her values to use in the classroom, at lunch, during recess and on the playground.	Social	87	17	56.6

Rank	Reason	Reason	Points	Number of Parents	Percentage
14	This Islamic school teaches my child discipline by teaching him/her responsibility.	Social	65	17	56.6
15	The public school has anti-religious humanistic philosophy.	Religious	58	8	26.6
16	This Islamic school emphasizes basic skills such as reading, writing and and mathematics.	Academic	52	15	50.0
17	This Islamic school offers my child a high level of comprehensive instruction by competent teachers.	Academic	49	15	50.0
18	The public school has low academic standards.	Academic	47	9	30.0
19	The public school is guided by educational philosophies based on atheism.	Religious	45	8	26.6
20	This Islamic school doesn't put enough emphasis on math and science.	Academic	44	7	23.3
21	The public school fails to motivate my child to continue his/her education.	Academic	39	8	26.6

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Number of Parents</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
22	This Islamic school has more emphasis on basic subjects as math and science.	Academic	39	7	23.3
23	The public school denies my child religious freedom.	Religious	30	5	16.6
24	The public school stifles creativity and slows down my child's progress.	Academic	17	3	10.0

Note. Total Religious Points = 1,087
Total Social Points = 1,071
Total Academic Points = 395

parents' first choice to 1 point for their last choice. Numerical sums were calculated for each reason and data displayed according to the points received.

Table 30 presents the ranking of 24 reasons for attraction to Islamic schools or dissatisfaction with public schools. Table 31 summarizes the rankings of the three main categories of concern, religious, sociocultural and academic. Religious reasons were the first reason for choosing Islamic schools, social reasons were the second reason; there was only a slight difference between the points acquired by religious reasons and social reasons. Academic reasons were the third concern.

Table 31

List of Three Reasons for Enrollment in Islamic Schools in Rank Order

Rank Order	Reason	Points
1	Religious	1,087
2	Social	1,071
3	Academic	395

Note. Sum of responses from rankings in Table 30.

Question 34 asked parents if their original reasons for transferring children into the Islamic school were the same reasons that caused them to continue enrollment of their

children in Islamic schools. Twenty-two parents responded that transfer reasons were the same as their continuous enrollment reasons (see Table 32).

Eight parents reported that their reasons had changed. However, these same parents also reported they had additional reasons for continuing their children's enrollment in Islamic schools. Examples of their responses were: "My child loves the school now." "We moved close to the school and that is easier for me now." "I found a sponsor for my children." "I'm working in the school now."

Parents' Self-Categorization

In response to Question 64 which required the grouping of parents into categories based on their reasons for enrolling their children in the Islamic schools, parents were asked to describe their own reasons for enrollment as being mostly religious, sociocultural or academic (see Table 32). Thirteen parents (43.3%) cited their reasons as religious, 12 (40%) as sociocultural, 3 (10%) as academic, and 2 parents answered: "you can't separate religion from the social life." "Islamically speaking, we don't separate the two (religious and social)."

Question 65 was asked to clarify Question 64 "What is the heart of the matter for you? Is it the effect of Islamic schools on your child's academic level, Islamic values and beliefs, or behavior and discipline?" Seventeen

Table 32

A Summary of Data for Questions 34, 64, 65 and 28 (N=30)

Question	Parents' Responses	
34. Do you think your reasons for keeping your child in the Islamic school are the same that caused you to enroll him/her in the first place?	Yes	22
	No	8
64. Do you think that your reasons for changing schools were mostly religious, academic or sociocultural reasons?	Religious	13
	Social	12
	Academic	3
	Other	2
65. What is the heart of the matter for you: Is it the affect of Islamic schools on your child's academic level, Islamic values and beliefs or behavior and discipline?	Islamic values	17
	Behavior & Discipline	9
	Academic	4
28. If more than one Islamic school existed, would you have enrolled your child in another Islamic school in your city?	No other schools	17
	Would enroll	11
	Would not enroll	2
		2

Note. Social=Sociocultural

parents (56.6%) responded "Islamic values and beliefs," 9 parents (30%) indicated "Behavior and discipline," and 4 parents (13.3%) "Academic." The majority of parents reported, "It is difficult to separate the religious from the social reasons" (see Table 32).

Preference of Present Islamic School

Questions 27 and 28 related to the proximity of the Islamic schools to the parents' homes. Fifteen parents

(50%) reported that they have only one school in their community while 13 (43.3%) reported they had two schools. Two parents (6.6%) reported they did not know of any Islamic schools and had to travel 56 miles (one way) every day so that their child could attend the closest Islamic school.

Most of the families did not have a choice of Islamic schools, since there was only one Islamic school in the area where they lived. When families did have a choice between two Islamic schools, their choice was to keep their children in the current school. Only 2 parents (6.6%) said they would not keep their children in the current school and refused to offer any reasons for their choice.

Research Question 3

Were there any specific events which caused you to enroll your child in an Islamic school?

When parents were asked if a specific incident occurred which caused them to enroll their children in Islamic schools, 15 parents (50%) reported a specific event, and 15 (50%) did not. Examples of some specific events mentioned were: "Negative high school experience of our older daughter." "My wife's experience with high schools." "My son gave in to the corrupt environment of public high schools. I lost him." "I discovered that public schools conditioned children to disrespect their parents." "Reading The Orlando Sentinel on October 15, 1995, entitled "Discipline and Violence Worry Schools." "I am very

concerned about my children's safety." "Violence increased in Florida." "My daughter was ridiculed by peers because of personal dress preferences." "I was disappointed with the academic emphasis in middle public schools." "My son came to me one day and told me that life began by chance and there is no such thing called God." "I heard about too many incidents at public schools, carrying weapons, physical attacks, using or selling drugs." "I was impressed by the daily afternoon prayer in the Islamic schools." "I attended the graduation party of my child's Islamic school and I was impressed by the children's' performance." "We are the founders of this Islamic school." "My best friend sends her children to Islamic schools." "My daughter was not accepted in public schools because of her age. I do not want her to lose one year from her life, this Islamic school accepts children less than 5 years old."

Research Question 4

What are the sources of information about public schools and Islamic schools?

Table 33 summarizes the sources of information that influenced Florida parents to enroll their children in Islamic schools. Regarding public schools, 5 parents (16.6%) received information about public schools through some form of personal observation such as former teachers, school helpers, or PTA members. Two parents (6.6%) reported they heard about public schools from their spouses. Three

(10%) parents reported hearing about public schools from relatives or friends, 3 (10%) from other parents, 3 (10%) from referent child, 2 (6.6%) from attending open houses, and 6 (20%) from the media. Thirteen parents (43.3%) reported that the source of information about public schools influenced their decisions to withdraw their children from public schools and enroll them in Islamic schools.

Concerning Islamic schools, 5 parents (16.6%) were informed about Islamic schools throughout their personal observation as teachers, board members, administrators, principals, and PTA members. Three parents (10%) heard from their spouses, 4 parents (13.3%) heard from their relatives or friends. Two parents (6.6%) were informed by other parents. The mosque was a source of information about Islamic schools for 4 parents (13.3%). Two parents (6.6%) received information at an open-house or graduation parties. Four parents (13.3%) indicated they heard about Islamic schools from the community newsletter. Twenty four (80%) parents reported being influenced, to some degree, by the source of information.

Table 33

Sources of Information about Public and Islamic Schools

Source	Source of Information					
	Public		Islamic		Both Schools	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal observation	5	16.7	5	16.7	10	16.7
Spouse	2	6.7	3	10.0	5	8.3
Relative or friend	3	10.0	4	13.3	7	11.6
Other parents	3	10.0	2	6.7	5	8.3
Mosque	n/a		4	13.3	4	6.7
Older child	6	20.0	4	13.3	10	16.7
Referent child	3	10.0	2	6.7	5	8.3
Open house	2	6.7	2	6.7	4	6.7
Community newsletter	n/a		4	13.3	4	6.7
Public media	6	20.0	n/a		6	10.0
Total	30		30	100.0	60	100.0

Research Question 5

What are the causes of change from public schools to Islamic schools?

There were two basic causes of change from public schools to Islamic schools. Either parents received new information that influenced their decision, or parents changed their religious values or opinions about education.

In the context of the study, a majority of parents indicated that changes were due to some new information that either attracted them to Islamic schools or caused dissatisfaction with public schools. In several cases, parents were very concerned about the increase of crime and violence in Florida. Some parents referred to the latest incidents in public schools. In October 1995, a boy was shot and killed at a central Florida middle school. In November 1996, a high school female student shot herself. On November 3, 1996, high school administrators learned that a student brought a gun to school. One parent reported "I read in the newspaper that a 41 million dollar school in Texas was built with security as a primary focus. The school has 37 surveillance cameras to help administrators and police keep an eye out for trouble, an observation area was built above the cafeteria and other common areas." Another parent reported "we can't solve the problem of safety with security guards, surveillance cameras and metal detectors . . . not with technology. We have to go back to religion and morals."

Ten parents (33.3%) reported that the decision to enroll their children in Islamic schools was due to a religious conversion or a sudden change in their values. Four parents (13.3%) reported that it was because of their husbands' religion and culture. Twenty three parents (76.6%) revealed that the change in enrollment was the result of an

attraction to Islamic schools. Seven parents (23.3%) had feelings of dissatisfaction with public schools. Examples of parents' responses were: "I am convinced that the two greatest threats in the identity of Muslim students in America are public schools and peer pressure." "Muslim youth are leaving Islam in large numbers. My son became an atheist. Public schools change our children to secular humanists. Many Muslim youths are dealing with drugs. Many Muslim girls are getting pregnant by non-Muslim men out of wedlock." "Go to any Mosque today and you'll find that 16-25 year old ages are virtually nonexistent. Where are they? They are out in the street." "To put our children in public schools is like throwing them to the wolves." "Islamic schools can exert positive peer pressure on one another." "I do not want my children to dissolve in the North American melting pot." "Under the influence of public school systems, many children have become selfish, secular, and materialistic." "My two sons are lost. They grew up with no interest in religion. My young daughter is 9 years old. I do not want to lose her too."

Research Question 6

Who participated in the decision-making process of choosing Islamic schools as an alternative to public schools?

Some questions in the interview sought to identify the roles of parents and child in the decision-making process.

When parents were asked who participated in the decision making-process of choosing Islamic schools, both parents were involved in 23 decisions. In 4 decisions, only fathers were involved, in 2 decisions only mothers were involved. In 12 decisions, the child was involved and in 18 decisions the child was not involved. Generally, children in higher grades were involved in the decision while children in lower grades were not. Table 34 summarizes the data.

Table 34
Participation in the Decision to Enroll in Islamic Schools
(N=60)

Person	Involved in Decision	Not Involved in Decision	Against Decision
Father	12	3	2
Mother	11	4	3
Child	12	18	10

Parents gave various responses to the question about how their child participated in the decision. Some responses were: "We asked the child how he/she felt about going to Islamic school. He was reluctant to do so, however, we convinced him to go for 6 months for trial." "She was asked to choose when all the advantages were told. We visited public schools and private schools in the area with our child prior to making the decision. We observed our child's

reaction to each environment. We knew that she was too young to make decisions, but we involved her." "We asked our daughter if she would like to go in order to learn more Arabic and Quran, she agreed." "Our daughter in 7th grade understands the importance of Islamic education along with regular education. She herself called different Islamic schools in Orlando, Tampa, Virginia, and even in Amman, Jordan. She visited this school and she liked it." Four parents considered their children's satisfaction with the Islamic schools as a contribution to the decision making. The majority of parents felt that their children were not capable of making such major decisions. Ten children in middle and high schools were in Islamic schools against their wills.

Summary

This study was designed to determine the reasons that led some parents to choose Islamic schools for their children. Chapter IV detailed the analysis of data accumulated throughout the study. Data were summarized into tables.

Results indicated that 67% of parents were attracted to Islamic schools while 23% were dissatisfied with public schools. Parents' dissatisfaction with public schools or attraction to Islamic schools were general perceptions and not specific reasons.

A finding emerged from the study which indicated that Muslims' pictures of public schools were scenarios loaded with violence, drugs, promiscuity, prejudice, lack of sympathy, tolerance and moral decay. Parents considered public schools a threat to their children. Parents were deeply concerned with the public school's environment which challenged their progeny. Also, they were concerned about the peers their children imitated.

Parents reported that Islamic schools provided Islamic education for their children, strengthened their religious faith, and built Islamic characters. Islamic schools were also expected to keep the children away from the influence of public schools and nurture the future leadership for the community.

The study indicated that the first reason for selecting Islamic schools was religious, the second reason was sociocultural, while an academic reason was the parents' last choice. Parents expected Islamic schools to serve as a place that provided the following religious services to their children:

1. Teach children about their Islamic religion.
2. Celebrate religious holidays.
3. Preserve the children's faith in the midst of a contaminating secular world.
4. Produce true Muslims who fear Allah and follow His prophet.

5. Instill in children a firm commitment and dedication to Islam as the eternal source of guidance.
6. Develop a wholesome appreciation for the value of religion in human life.

The second most important reason was sociocultural. Parents believed that Islamic schools could do the following:

1. Provide safer and more disciplined environment.
2. Galvanize the children against the negative effects of the dominant culture.
3. Inculcate a sense of pride in the cultural heritage.
4. Preserve and perpetuate the Islamic identity.
5. Provide Muslim peers.
6. Prepare each child to be a good and productive citizen in society.

The last parents' reason for selecting an Islamic school centered on academic reasons and included the following:

1. Provide individualized teaching.
2. Teach Arabic as a second language.
3. Provide an atmosphere conducive to creating a good learning environment.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the reasons Florida parents enrolled their children in Islamic schools. Parents' responses included religious, sociocultural and academic reasons. At the time of the study, the researcher was an Assistant Principal of Muslim Academy of Central Florida. According to the researcher's criteria of availability and willingness to participate in the study, more parents were selected from the Muslim Academy of Central Florida than either of the other 2 schools. Although data analysis did not indicate a difference in the percentage of parents from each school responding to most questions, the sample might be biased and interpretations and conclusions skewed in the direction of the researcher's expectations.

Findings of this study generally indicated that the decision to enroll children in Islamic schools was first religious followed by sociocultural, and finally academic. These findings were similar to Foreman's study (1982) and Eugene's study (1989). Both studies indicated that parents

were motivated to enroll their children in Catholic or fundamental and evangelical Christian schools because of a desire for a social education, secondly, by their desire for a social education, and, thirdly, by their desire for an academic education.

The question of private or public education has always been debated in American society. Parents frequently argue for private education under the perceptions that private schools have better discipline, better teaching, smaller classes and therefore better academic results. However, in a recent article in The Orlando Sentinel, Lowell Rose, former Executive Director of Phi Delta Kappa pointed out "(academic) results at private schools do not turn out any differently than what you get in public schools" (Badie, 1996, p. A8). A comprehensive study of 22,700 public schools, 1,500 preparatory schools and 5,300 parochial schools conducted in 1994 and reported in Money Magazine indicated "students achievement, class size and facilities are about equal in private and public schools. . . private schools, however were given credit for maintaining discipline" (Badie, 1996, p. A8).

Thus, if results are indeed the same, then parental choice must be based upon perceived needs and desires.

Discussion

Research Question 1 asked about the demographic characteristics of parents in Florida who chose to send their children to Islamic schools. The parents came from different ethnic backgrounds. Data revealed that the majority of parents were naturalized American citizens. This explained their uphill struggle to incorporate the nationalities of Americans with the virtues of Islamic principles. One third of the parents were converted Muslims, 72% were born Muslims. The majority of parents rated a high or average commitment to their religion. This suggested that parents desired to send their children to Islamic schools was religiously oriented.

Both parents participated in the decision to enroll their children in Islamic schools. This result indicated that men did not have more influence in making the final decision as might be practiced in certain cultures within the Islamic community.

Parents were not highly participatory in their religious practices but wanted their children to be exposed to religious education. Fathers were more involved in religious activities than mothers. Many parents volunteered in the schools and were actively concerned about the progress of their children.

Research Question 2 asked parents if they changed schools mostly because they were dissatisfied with the

public schools or because they were attracted to Islamic schools. Findings revealed that parents were more attracted to Islamic schools than dissatisfied with public schools. Dissatisfaction with public schools was generally expressed in sociocultural areas. Fifty percent of the parents perceived the public schools as environments of violence, crime, drinking, smoking and drugs. These conditions were not acceptable in Islamic cultures. Good Muslims do not drink, smoke or use drugs. Furthermore, violence and crime are contrary to the Quran.

Parents' responses indicated that Muslims were dissatisfied with the environment that prevailed in the public schools and the environmental conditions clashed with their values. Parents were worried about the lack of sympathy, sensitivity, and tolerance towards their basic needs, such as the Islamic dress, diet, time allowed for prayers, Islamic holidays and personal privacy. Even though parents expressed these concerns, most parents did not have direct exposure with public schools and therefore based their perceptions on other sources of information. No attempt was made by the researcher to validate their perceptions or their sources of information.

It was evident that parents were also concerned about the dangers of assimilation. Many parents indicated "we don't want our children to be Americanized."

The Islamic foundation school handbook, cited in Molook's (1990) study indicated the dangers of assimilation:

. . . Of those Muslims who came here in the first quarter of this century, their children are almost 100% lost. The reason for this assimilation is that at that time there were no mosques, Islamic centers, Islamic Institutions, or Muslim communities. Muslim children continue to lose their Islamic identity at a very high rate. (p. 75)

Although many parents were dissatisfied with the public school environment, decisions to enroll their children in Islamic schools were based upon their attraction to the Islamic schools. In this study, parents' crucial concern was the protection of their children's faith. They could not tolerate any act odious to Islam. With the voice of parental authority, they sent their children to Islamic schools. Islam is simply a way of life, not only for children but for the whole Islamic society. The conditions of the public schools brought a conflict of values between public acceptance and Islamic expectations. Within the greater society, Islamic parents struggled with differences between society "norms" and Islamic principles. Recognizing this struggle on their part as adults, they sought the guidance of Islamic schools to help them instill Islamic values in their children. However, parental responses about their religious practices revealed parents did not faithfully fulfill their religious obligations. Less than 50% regularly attended prayer, mosques, which indicted a high commitment to Islam. Consequently, parents were

expecting the schools to set parameters of acceptable religious behavior for their children.

The majority of Muslims in North America do not practice Islam. In an interview with Mohammed AlMasri, the Director of Alrahman Mosque in Orlando, the researcher queried him as to the number of Muslims in Orlando (personal communication, May 13, 1996). AlMasri reported that the number of Muslims in Orlando exceeded 15,000. He added "the Muslims who attend Friday Prayers, in all mosques in Orlando, were estimated to be 2,000 Muslims. People who attended Eid Prayer were estimated to be 5,000 Muslims." It is important to mention that Friday Prayer is obligatory for men, while Eid Prayer is recommended and some people go for Eid Prayer mainly for socializing and not for practicing their faith. Emerich (1995) claimed:

That the majority of the stated 6 million Muslims do not practice Islam at all. He asked, so why has there been such interest in Islamic schools in North America in recent years? Why has the number of schools mushroomed from a small handful to around 200 in a matter of a decade? This is- and is not- an easy question to answer. (p. 22)

Emerick declared that:

The two reasons which are fueling the rise of the vast majority of Islamic schools in North America have little to do with the goal of promoting Islam, but rather, with the desire, on the part of the parents to: (a) keep their children from drugs, violence, dating and low-standard of most public schools, and (b) to try to build and maintain 'home culture' of the parents within the child, i.e., learning the old language, customs and culture, and to a lesser extent, making sure the children around others of the same ethnic/cultural group. (p. 23)

However, it seems that the Muslim community much like the community as a whole expects schools to do that which they are reluctant to do. As Kysilka (1996) reported in her article Guilt-Free Education, "society and parents have abdicated their responsibilities for educating their children to the schools and the teachers. Frankly, the school and teachers cannot assume all that responsibility" (p. 85)

Muslim parents, as other parents, expected the schools to have the full responsibility to educate their children. Kysilka (1996) reported that "Today's schools cannot assume all the responsibilities for the education of children; society must take part in the process . . . schools cannot be the correctional institutions for society's failure" (pp. 84-85).

Both parents and society were expected to play a decisive role to educate children as Molook (1990) reported:

It was expected that while the public schools could impart general education, the children would be given Islamic education and training at home. This arrangement, however, was not always practical because many parents were unable to afford time to teach their progeny. (p. 124)

Although parents in this study claimed that religion was the major reason for sending their children to school, and this was corroborated by other research, sociocultural reasons were high on the list of parental concern. Parents perceived Islamic schools as safe havens for their children. These findings were affirmed by other sources. On June 25,

1995, The Orlando Sentinel published an article entitled, Private Schools Seen as a Wholesome Option. This article indicated that "parents are sending children to religious schools to find a safe environment" (Staff, 1995, p. A15).

In the same article, Sulaiman Alfraih, Principal of the boys school at the Islamic Saudi academy in Washington, DC, stated:

Religion is not the only thing attracting more people to religious schools these days. Many parents like the wholesome atmosphere. . .Our school is free of drugs, free of violence and free of sex. . . of their ideology, the parents love to see their kids in a very safe, clean environment.
(p. A15)

Parents' responses, regarding their dissatisfaction with public schools or attraction to Islamic schools, revealed striking homogeneity among parents' responses from the 3 Islamic schools involved in the study. These parents sent their children to Islamic schools not only to provide them with a better academic education, but also to put their children in a safe environment and help them grow within Islamic faith as practicing Muslims.

Research Questions 3 and 5 asked about any specific events or reasons which caused parents to enroll their children in Islamic schools. Parents' individual events were general and they did not explore the nature of the events. The events that were mentioned might happen to any student at any time, but responding parents found that these events were in conflict with their culture and religion.

The parents' responses revealed that their children's faith, identity and safety were the main concerns.

Research Question 4 asked about the sources of information about public schools and Islamic schools. The parents' responses indicated that they were told about these schools informally by personal observation, friends, mosques, spouses or their parents. Some parents relied on what they heard and the media for their information about public schools. Public schools are misrepresented and misjudged. Orange County School board member, Katie Adams, defended the public school system when she reported in The Orlando Sentinel "our worst mistake in Orange County is that we don't tell the story about our school well, and people just rely on what they hear and the media for their information" (Badie, 1996, p. A8).

Finally, Research Question 6 sought to identify the roles of parents and children in the decision-making process. The study indicated that generally, both parents were involved in making decisions. Some children in higher grades were involved in the decision. One third of the children were enrolled in Islamic schools against their will. These findings revealed the fact that fathers did not have the sole authority to make decisions as their counterparts in certain cultures within an Islamic community. The results also indicated that parents had some control and authority over their children.

In conclusion, research results indicated that parents enrolled their children in Islamic schools primarily for religious reasons, secondly, for social reasons, and thirdly, for academic reasons. Such conclusion leads one to reflect on what Charles Haynes (1991) reported:

Literacy is on the way down, and violence is on the way up in public schools. But these are only some of the concerns Muslim parents have about public schools here. The biggest question they have to deal with is whether their children will remain Muslims after going through the public school system. (p. 18)

Recommendations for Further Study

1. The survey instrument was extremely long and intensive. Experimentation should be done to create a shorter more user-friendly instrument. Although, in an initial study, depth of response was important, based upon data accumulated in this study, instrument revision is possible.
2. Results of this study suggested the need for continued investigation about the reasons parents send their children to Islamic schools. Further study is needed to replicate the present study using larger samples and including subjects from all 50 states.
3. A number of full-time Islamic schools is still insignificant compared to the estimated six million Muslims in the United States. It is likely that

almost all Muslim children of school age are in public schools. A study is needed to investigate the reasons parents choose to send their children to public schools rather than Islamic schools when Islamic schools are an alternative.

4. A longitudinal study should be conducted to follow up graduates of Islamic schools to determine their academic success, career options, and religious practices.
5. Comparative studies between various private and parochial schools should be conducted to determine if parents view their schools in similar ways with respect to discipline practices and academic programs and moral development.
6. A comparative study is suggested regarding the attitudes of Muslim students in full-time Islamic schools and those of their Muslim peers who attend public schools. This will provide an understanding of the difference in attitudes between the two groups.
7. Little is known about Islamic schools in other English-speaking countries. A comparative study of the development of Islamic schools in areas such as Great Britain and Canada and the United States might prove useful in helping to develop curricular and

activities which honor Islam and still meet the national goals of those countries.

8. Perhaps, if public schools were more sensitive to the practices of the Islamic culture, fewer parents would find a need to enroll their children in Islamic schools. A study or studies should be conducted to determine how public schools are attempting to sensitize children to cultural differences which exist in their communities.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
THE ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM

The Prophet believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. They all believe in God, His angels, His scriptures and His messenger, making no distinction among His prophets. And they say, "We hear and we obey, Grant us thy forgiveness, our Lord, and unto thee is the journeying" (2:285).

Faith in the Unity of God

"The most fundamental and most important teaching of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) is faith in the unity of God" (Aawdudi, 1988, p. 62). To be a Muslim, one has to admit the unity of God and prophethood of Mohammed: Lailah Illa Allah, Mohammed Rasuul Allah (there is no God except Allah, and Mohammed is His messenger). "Say: He is God, the One, the self-sufficient. He begets not nor is He begotten, and there is none like Him" (112: 1-4).

Belief in God's Angels

"Belief in the existence of being called angels is common to various faiths. It is also a fundamental belief of Islam" (Haneef, 1985, p. 16). Belief in angels is another principle of faith in Islam. Angels are absolutely obedient to God's commands. They are sent to worship God, to administer God's punishment, to convey Allah's revelation to His prophets and apostles.

Belief in All Revealed Scriptures

Muslims should believe in all revealed Books: Books of Abraham, The Book of Moses, The Book of Christ, The Book of David, and The Holy Quran.

"It is He who revealed to thee (Mohammed) the scripture (the Quran) in truth, confirming what went before it. And He revealed the Taurat (the original scripture revealed to Moses) and the Injeel (the original scripture revealed to Jesus) before this as "guidance to mankind). And He revealed the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong). . ." (3:3-4).

Belief in All Prophets

"A Muslim is told to believe in all prophets such as Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed" (Alkhuli, 1987, p. 33). All the prophets of God have been sent by Allah to teach the same straight path of "Islam" (submission to Allah). In this sense there is no difference between Mohammed and other Prophets (blessing of Allah and peace be upon them all). A Muslim respects all prophets equally.

"This Quran is not such as can be produced by anyone other than God, but it is a confirmation of earlier revelations and a detailed explanation of the scriptures in which there is no doubt from the Lord of the worlds" (10:37).

Belief in Life after Death

The fifth article of Islamic faith is belief in the Hereafter. Muslims should believe in life after death and in the Day of Judgment.

“Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We record all that they send before and that they leave behind, and we have taken account of all things in a clear Book (of evidence)” (36: 12).

Muslims should believe that Allah is the All-wise, All-powerful creator. At the day of Judgment, Allah will raise those who are dead and bring them to life again.

“Then how can you reject faith in God, seeing that you were without life and He gave you life? Then He will cause you to die and will bring you to life again, and again to Him will you return” (2:28).

“Life after death makes a person’s life well-balanced. In Islam, a person must work for this life as if he lives forever and must work for the other life as if he dies tomorrow” (Alkhuli, 1981, p. 88).

Al Mawdudi explained the importance of faith in The Day of Judgment when he said,

“A man who believes in the next world as well and is convinced of the final consequences of his acts will look on all worldly gains and losses as temporary and transitory and will not put his eternal bliss at stake for a passing gain. He will look on things in their wider perspective and always

keep the permanent benefit or harm in view. He will do the good, however, costly it may be to him in terms of worldly gains, or however injurious it may be to his immediate interests; and he will avoid the wrong, however tempting it may look. He will judge things from the view point of their eternal consequences and not according to his whims and caprices" (Mawdudi, 1988, p. 81).

Life after death makes the whole thing look fair and just. In many times, this life is not fair. your honesty may entail your poverty. Another person's dishonesty may entail his richness. Good deed in this life are sometimes punished, however, bad deed might be rewarded. According to Islam, there is life after death, where each person is rewarded or punished as God says in the Quran.

"Verily, the sinners will be in the punishment of Hell..., to remain there in. It will not be lightened for them and they will be overwhelmed in despair. And We shall not be unjust to them, but it is they who have been unjust to themselves" (43:74-76).

Those who believe and do righteous deed, they are the best of creatures, their reward is with their Lord: Gardens of Paradise beneath which rivers flow. They will dwell there in forever, God well-pleased with them and they with Him. This is for those who hold their Lord in awe" (98: 7-8).

Belief in the Divine Decree

The sixth principle of faith in Islam is to believe in predestination whether good or bad. Muslims believe that everything that happens in the world, from the smallest to the greatest events, is governed by the Almighty Creator and Sustainer.

“Such a belief gives the Muslim a tremendous degree of inner certainty, confidence and peace of heart, especially in the face of affliction” (Haneef, 1985, p. 35). It is a relief for any human being to believe that God alone is the source of benefit or harm, that no one has the slightest power to cause him good or bad.

Belief in Predestination does not contradict man's responsibility and free will. “Man is free in his choices and that is why he is responsible for his deed in this life and in the other life. Man has also to accept this own limitations and admit that he is subject to external or internal factors that he cannot sometime over come. “This belief put man in his actual size and position and does not over burden him with loads and responsibilities which he cannot shoulder” (Alkhuli, 1987, p. 39).

APPENDIX B
THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Islam has five obligatory acts of worship which Muslims must perform. They are known as the five pillars of Islam. These pillars are mentioned in the following Hadith (a saying of Prophet Mohammed pbuh).

“Islam is based on five things: declaring that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammed is the messenger of Allah, the establishment of Salat (prayer), the payment of Zakat (welfare contribution), the Hajj (pilgrimage to Makka), and Sawm (fasting) in the month of Ramadan” (Hadith).

1. Declaration of faith (Shahadah): To bear witness that there is no deity except God and that Mohammed is the Messenger of God. This declaration of faith constitutes the first step in becoming a Muslim.
2. Prayer: Daily prayers are offered five times a day a duty towards Allah. Every observant Muslim must set aside time each day for these five prayers that are mandated by Islam. Prayers strengthen and enliven the belief in Allah and inspire man to a higher morality. Prayers purify the hearty and prevent temptations toward s wrong- doings and evils. The formal worship must be performed at dawn, midday, mid afternoon, sunset, and after dark in the evening. The prayers must be made regularly in order to perfect communication with God; both in showing gratefulness and asking for guidance.

"And be steadfast in prayer (Salat) and regular in poor- due (Zakat), and whatever good you send forth for your souls before you, you shall find it with God, Verily, God sees all that you do" (2:110).

"What stands between a man and disbelief is the abandonment of Salat" (Hadith).

3. Poor-Due (Zakat): to pay annually 2.5% of one's net saving on which a year has passed as a religious duty and purifying sum to be spent on poorer sections of the community. The Quran speaks of the obligation of Zakat in these words:

"Verily, the God-conscious will be in the midst of gardens and springs (in the hereafter), taking that which their Lord gives to them. Indeed, before that they were doers of good. They would sleep but little at night in their wealth (was remembered) the right of him who asked and him who was prevented (from asking, although needy)" (51: 15-19).

Alms-giving (Zakat) is considered an act of worship because it is a form of offering thanks to God for the means of material well being that once has acquired.

4. Fasting (Sawm): During Ramadan, all Muslims (except young children, those in ill health) are required to abstain from food, drink, and sexual activity, from

dawn until sunset. Fasting develops a sound social conscience, patience, unselfishness, and will-power. "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, in order that you may be conscious of God . . . Ramadan is the (month) in which the Quran was revealed as a guide to mankind and as a clear evidence for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So whoever among you witness this month, let him spend it in fasting; but if anyone is ill or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends to ease for you and He does not intend hardship (He desires) that you should complete the prescribed period, and that you may glorify God for guiding you and that you may be thankful" (2: 183, 185).

The very purpose of fasting is to make a Muslim able to control his passions, so that he becomes a person of good deeds and good intentions.

5. Pilgrimage (Hajj): It is to be performed once in a lifetime if one can afford it financially and physically. Hajj takes place in Meccah in Saudi Arabia. There are people from all over the world, of every color, language and race who come to worship Allah at the sacred shrine called the Kabah.

The Kabah is the oldest building in the world dedicated to the worship of Allah.

"The first house (of worship of God) appointed for men was that at Bakka (Mecca, full of blessings and of guidance for all kinds of beings. In it are signs manifest: The station of Abraham - whoever enters it attains sanctuary.

Pilgrimage to it is a duty men owe to God - Those who can offered the journey. . ." (93: 96- 97).

The annual pilgrimage coincides with the religious celebration of Eid Al- Adha (the feast of sacrifice), which all Muslims are commanded to celebrate in commemoration of Prophet Abraham's' willingness to sacrifice his son in trustful obedience to God's command (his son was spared through God's mercy).

'And proclaim the Hajj to men; they will come to thee on foot and (mounted on every kind of lean camel coming through deep ravines" (22:27).

APPENDIX C

SELECTED VERSES FROM THE QURAN AND
PROPHET'S SAYINGS ABOUT ISLAMIC EDUCATION

“Surely, this Quran guides to that which is the straightest, and gives good news to believers who practice good and they will get a great reward” (17:9).

Islam stressed on learning. The Quran and the Sunnah (Prophet’s sayings reveal powerful incentives for learning and knowledge. In the Quran, knowledge has been combined with Iman (faith) and with wisdom:

But those endued with knowledge and faith will say: “Indeed ye did tarry, within Allah’s decree, to the Day of Resurrection, and this is the day of Resurrection” but ye . . . Ye were not aware (30:50) and When he (Moses) reached full age, and was firmly established (In life), we bestowed on him wisdom and knowledge: For thus do we reward those who do good” (28:14).

“Lugman was famous for his sound intelligence and wisdom in most probably an Arabic-speaking Black African” (Sarwar, 1989, p. 188). In his advice to his son, he says, “O my son! establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: And bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) In (the swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, Nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster, and be moderate In thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sound without doubt Is the braying of the ass . . .” (31:17-19).

THE NATURE OF ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE:

Muslims regard the Quran as the divine guidance and the very word of Allah, for the Quran states:

Surely this Quran guides to that which is most upright and gives good news to the believers who do good work that they shall have a great reward (17:9).

"Surely we have revealed the Quran and we will most certainly guard it" (15:9).

"Praise be to Allah who has revealed the Book (Quran) to His slave (Mohammed) and has not placed there in any crookedness" (18:1).

"This is the Book; In it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah;

Who believe in the unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what we have provided for them,

And who believe in the revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter".

The Quran for Muslims is the fountain of all knowledge. The Quran declares:

Verily, this is My way leading straight: follow it; follow not (other paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path, Thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous (6:153).

The following selection of verses of the Quran gives a clue to the importance of education in Islam:

"Are those who know equal with those who know not?"

(39:9)

"Allah raises the believers and those who have knowledge many steps" (8:11)

"And ask those who have knowledge when you do not know?"

(11:7)

SELECTIONS FROM THE HADITH (PROPHET'S SAYINGS)

Prophet Mohammed urged Muslims to seek knowledge anywhere they find it. He said;

"Seeking knowledge is an obligatory on every Muslim" (Hadith). He also said "The best of men is the learned believer who, if he is needed will be useful, while if he is not needed, will be self-sufficient."

Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) sayings explain the importance of education in Islam. Some of the Prophet's sayings are:

"Whosoever reverth the learned, reverth me" (Hadith)
The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr" (Hadith).

"He who treads the path for learning, Allah facilitates his path to paradise" (Hadith).

"He who leaveth his home in search of knowledge, walketh in the path of Allah" (Hadith)

"Seek learning even if it be found as far as China" (Hadith)

"Seek knowledge from cradle to grave" (Hadith)

“To seek knowledge is a duty for every Muslim (male) and Muslimah (female)” (Hadith)

APPENDIX D
THE ACCOUNTING SCHEME

The Accounting Scheme

Part I. Old Choice or New

- A. Dissatisfaction with public schools (p. 8)
 - 1. Religious Reasons
 - 2. Social Reasons
 - 3. Academic Reasons
- B. Attraction to Islamic Schools (IS)
 - 1. Religious Reasons
 - 2. Social Reasons
 - 3. Academic Reasons
- C. Not able to categorize

Part II. Specific Occurrence

- A. Referring to public schools
 - 1. Religious Reasons
 - 2. Social Reasons
 - 3. Academic Reasons
- B. Referring to Islamic schools
 - 1. Religious Reasons
 - 2. Social Reasons
 - 3. Academic Reasons
- C. No precipitating event named
- D. Not able to categorize

Part III. Source of Information

- A. About public schools
 - 1. Firsthand observation
 - 2. Referent child

3. Older child
 4. Spouse, relative, or friend
 5. Media
 6. Mosque
 7. Other sources
- B. About Islamic Schools
1. Firsthand observation
 2. Referent child
 3. Spouse, relative, or friend
 4. Media
 5. Mosque
 6. Other sources

Part IV. Cause of Change

- A. New information has changed mind
- B. Person has changed point of view
- C. Not able to categorize

Part V. Miscellaneous Questions about Reasons

- A. Dissatisfaction with public school general or specific
- B. Attraction to Islamic Schools general or specific
- C. Transfer reasons same as enrollment reasons
- D. Self-categorization of parents
- E. Reasons in this Islamic School rather than another

Part VI. Participants in Decision to Enroll

- A. Initiators of decision
- B. Involved in decision
- C. Supporters of decision

D. Non-supporters of decision

Part VII. Descriptive information about Parents and Child

- A. Gender of parents
- B. Age of parents
- C. Marital status of parents
- D. Education level of parents
- E. Occupation of Parents
- F. Income of parents
- G. Original homeland of parents
- H. Ethnic background of parents
- I. Status in America of parents
- J. Religious commitment of parents
- K. Income of household
- L. Gender of child
- M. Grade of child

Part VIII. Parents Information and
Opinion about Public Schools

- A. Attended public schools
- B. Agree PSs have changed
- C. How PSs have changed
- D. Would enroll in PS if like parents'
- E. Other child now is PS
- F. Driving distance to PS
- G. May return if academically equal
- H. May return if socially equal
- I. Change required in PS
- J. Permit return if child wished

- K. Child likely to return to PSs
- L. Tried to change policy at PS before leaving

Part IX. Parents Information and
Opinion about Islamic Schools

- A. Commitment high to IS alternative
- B. Commitment high to this IS
- C. Number of children in this IS
- D. Number of years child in IS
- E. Driving distance to this IS
- F. All tuition is paid by parents
- G. Tuition is a burden
- H. Employed or volunteer in IS
- I. Agree that all Muslims should enroll children in IS
- J. Would enroll in another if this IS did not exist
- K. If moved, would look for an Islamic school first
- L. Considered teaching child in a home school
- M. Consider sending child to a private school

Part X. Parents' Perceptions about Challenges
Facing Islamic Schools

- A. Tuition is high
- B. Driving distance
- C. Lack of curricular activities
- D. Uncertain future
- E. Accreditation
- F. Inadequate facilities
- G. Unqualified staff
- H. Lack of parental involvement

- I. Size of the school
- J. Arabic and Islamic study materials
- K. Community conflict
- L. Mixing boys and girls in the classrooms
- M. Board of directors
- N. Administration

APPENDIX E
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

“ASSALAMU ALAIKUM. . .”

I am Feryal Yunis Elkhaldy, a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida, presently, doing research for my dissertation. This dissertation is entitled “Why parents in Florida enroll their children in Islamic Schools.”

Your participation in the study will provide valuable information for others. Your name was given to me by the principal of your child’s/children’s school. He/she said that you might be willing to discuss the reasons why you chose to enroll your child in an “Islamic School.” Your patience and cooperation during the interview will be greatly appreciated.

1. “First, do you want the interview to be in English, Arabic or Urdu?”
2. “Are you willing at this time to discuss why you enrolled your child in an “Islamic School”? Yes No
3. “Has your child attended a “public school?”
4. “Do you understand that the information you share with me should be anonymous and will be kept confidential?” Yes No
5. “Is it Okay to record this interview on the tape recorder?” Yes No

Show tape recorder to parent

“You only have to answer the questions you choose to, and you can stop the interview at anytime. If you have any questions before we start, do not hesitate to ask me.”

Turn on tape recorder

6. Are you the mother/father of the child? Yes No

7. If No on #6: "What is your relationship to the child?"

8. "How many children do you have attending (Name of Islamic School)?"

_____ children

9. If one on #8: What is the name of the child?"

First Name _____ (optional)

10. If two or more in #8.

"When I ask you about reasons for enrolling in (Name of Islamic School), please refer only to the oldest child that you have in the school. By doing this, I think that you can be more specific about reasons.

What is the oldest child's name? First Name _____

11. (Name of child) is a male/female? Male Female

12. "How old is (Name of child)?" Age _____

13. "What grade is (Name of child) in?" Grade _____

14. "Did (name of child attend public schools?" Yes No

15. "If Yes on #14, what grades?" Grades _____

16. "If he/she were to attend public school now, what school would it be?"

Name of Public School _____

"Now, I am going to ask you about reasons you enroll your child/children in Islamic schools. Please think specifically about (Name of child), Name of (Islamic School), and (Name of Public School)."

17. "Who was involved in making the decision to enroll (Name of child) in (Name of Islamic School)?" Father Mother Both

18. "Did (name of child) take part in the decision?" Yes No

19. "If yes in #18, how did he/she participate in the decision?"

20. "Do you remember how long ago you decided to enroll your child/children in (name of Islamic School)?" Yes No

21. "Can you tell some of the most important reasons for choosing (name of Islamic School)?"

22. "Did you change schools mostly because you were dissatisfied with (name of public School) or because you were attracted by (name of Islamic school)?" Dissatisfied Attracted

23. "Do you think that you were dissatisfied with public schools in general or specifically with (name of public school)?" General Specific

24. "If you were dissatisfied with public schools in general, give only the most important reason for your dissatisfaction."

25. "If you were dissatisfied specifically with (name of public school), what was the major reason?"

26. "Do you think that you were attracted to Islamic schools in general, or were you specifically attracted to (name of Islamic School)?" General Specific

27. "How many Islamic Schools are there in (name of the city)?" _____
28. If more than one in #27, if (name of Islamic school) did not exist, would you have enrolled your child in another Islamic school in your city?
 Would enroll Would not enroll
29. If you would not in #28, would you enroll your (name of child) in public schools, private schools, or would you prefer home schooling?
 Public schools Private schools Home Schooling
30. "What is the single most important reason you are attracted to Islamic Schools in general, and specially with (Name of Islamic School)? Give only one reason."
-

31. If dissatisfied in #22, give "Dissatisfaction list to parent first, then give the "attracted list." If attracted in #22, "give attracted list" to parent first, then give the "dissatisfaction list."

When the "DISSATISFACTION LIST" is given, read: Here is a list of 12 reasons that some people say they are dissatisfied with public schools. Please read the list and place an "x" next to the reasons you agree with. Then, number the reasons beginning with #1. Reason #1 is the reason you agree with most. The directions are also on the list. When you have finished, give the list back to me."

When the "ATTRACTION LIST" is given, read: "Here is a list of 9 reasons that some people say they are attracted to Islamic schools. Please read the list and place an "x" next to the reasons you agree with. Then, number the reasons beginning with #1. Reason #1 is the reason you agree with most. The directions are also on the list. When you have finished, give the list back to me."

AFTER THE TWO LISTS HAVE BEEN RETURNED, CONTINUE WITH THE INTERVIEW.

32. Was there a specific event that you can identify that caused you to change schools. Yes No
33. If yes on #32: "What was the specific event that made you change schools?"
-

34. Do you think that your reasons for keeping (Name of child) in (Name of Islamic school) are the same reasons that caused you to enroll him/her there in that first place? Yes No

35. "How did you get your information that (Name of public school) was not the right place for (Name of child) to attend?"

36. "Did (source of information) influence your decision to withdraw (name of child) from (name of public school)?" Yes No

37. "How did you get your information that (Name of Islamic school) was a better place for (Name of child) to attend?"

38. "Did (source of information) influence your decision to enroll (Name of child) in (Name of Islamic school)?" Yes No

39. "Do you have any school-age children now who are attending a public school?" Yes No

40. If "yes" in #30, "why did you choose not to enroll that child in (Name of Islamic Schools) or in another private school?"

41. "Are you employed by (Name of Islamic school) or do you do any volunteer work for the school?" Employed as _____ Volunteer as _____

42. "Did you consider any public alternative schools before enrolling (Name of child) in (Name of Islamic school)?" Yes No

43. "Did you consider Home schooling for (Name of child) before enrolling him/her in (Name of Islamic school)?" Yes No
44. If (Name of child) did not like (name of Islamic school) and wanted to go to a public school, would you allow him/her to go? Yes No
45. "Are you really convinced that (Name of Islamic school) has the type of educational experience you like for (Name of child)?" Yes No
46. "Is it positive persuasion, toward these schools, that enhanced you to enroll (Name of child) in (Name of Islamic school)?" Yes No
- ✓ 47. "If (Name of public school) had high academic standards, would you consider enrolling (Name of child) at (Name of public school)?" Yes No
- ✓ 48. "If (Name of public school) had a safe, orderly environment, would you consider enrolling (Name of child) at (Name of public school)?" Yes No
49. "In your opinion what is the major concern about public schools?"

50. "What kind of changes you want to see in public schools before you would consider sending (Name of child) to public school?"

51. "Do you think that you can help in the change?" Yes No

52. "If yes in #51, did you try?" Yes No

53. "If yes in #52 what did you do?"

54. "If No in #52, Explain why?"

55. "Are you considering enrolling (Name of child) in a public school?"
 Yes No

56. "Do you have any regrets or second thoughts about enrolling (Name of child) in (Name of Islamic school)?" Yes No
57. "How would you characterize your commitment to the idea of Islamic schools? Is your commitment high, average or low?"
 High Average Low
58. "How would you characterize your commitment to (Name of Islamic school)?"
 High Average Low
59. "Did you attend public school in the United States?" Yes No
60. "If yes in 59: Do you think that public schools have changed since you attended?" Yes No
61. "Do you feel at all guilty about not supporting public schools through your child's attendance in a public school?" Yes No
62. "If you were to move to another part of the state or country, would you first check into the local public schools, or would you instead look for Islamic schools?" Public schools Islamic schools
63. "Do you think it is a sin not to enroll (Name of child) in Islamic schools?"
 Yes No
64. "Do you think that your reasons for changing schools were mostly religious reasons, academic reasons, or sociocultural reasons?" (I am using sociocultural reasons to mean reasons of environment, discipline, behavior control and identity) Academic Sociocultural Religious
65. "What is the heart of the matter for you: Is it the effect of Islamic schools on your child's academic level, Islamic values, and beliefs or behavior and discipline?" Academic Islamic & beliefs Behavior & discipline
66. "If you didn't have friends who enroll their children in Islamic schools, would you have been as likely to make the decision to enroll your child in a similar school?" Yes No
67. "Islamic schools are more important for girls than boys." Yes No
68. "What type of school do you prefer for (Name of the child)?"
 all male co-educational all female co-institutional

69. "(Name of Islamic school) should start from kindergarten until 12th grade."
 Yes No
70. "If a choice must be made, it would be better to keep and maintain"
 high school, 9-12 middle school 6-8 elementary, K-5
71. "Do you recommend separation of the sexes for schooling purposes through the adolescent years?" Yes No
72. "I prefer single-sex schools for all levels (all girl or all boy schools)"
 Yes No
73. "Thank you very much for your time . . . May I call you again, if I need follow-up information?" Yes No
 Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone Number: _____
74. "Are you interested in receiving the results of this study?" Yes No
75. "Is there anything else that you would like to talk about concerning the enrollment of (Name of child) in (Name of Islamic school)?" Yes No

THANK YOU AGAIN!

PART I

REASONS PARENTS ARE ATTRACTED TO ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

The following reasons were identified as possible reasons for choosing Islamic Schools. Kindly read the following 12 reasons and place an "x" next to the reasons you agree with. Next, number the reasons you marked, beginning with #1. The reason you select as #1 is the reason that you agree with most. As you respond, please keep in mind your child and the Islamic school your child attended.

Most
 Agree Agree

I decided to enroll my own child in this Islamic school because . . .

1. This Islamic school offers a quality academic education in an Islamic framework. _____

2. This Islamic school provides a safe and orderly environment. _____
3. This Islamic school nurtures my child's loyalty to the Islamic faith. _____
4. This Islamic school has more emphasis on basic subjects as math and science. _____
5. This Islamic school provided my child opportunities to put his/her values in to use in the classroom, at lunch, during recess and on the playground. _____
6. This Islamic school promotes and inculcates Islamic behavior or within an Islamic framework based on Quran and Sunnah. _____
7. This Islamic School emphasizes basic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics. _____
8. This Islamic school teaches my child discipline by teaching him/her responsibility. _____
9. This Islamic school teaches Quran and Islamic studies. It helps children develop God-consciousness and rational understanding of Islam. _____
10. This Islamic school offers my child a high level of comprehensive instruction by competent teachers. _____
11. This Islamic school preserve cultural and national identity of original homeland. It also preserve and perpetuate the Islamic identity. _____
12. This Islamic school develops a wholesome appreciation for the value of religion in human life. _____

Other reasons...

PART II

REASONS PARENTS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following concerns were identified as possible reasons for your dissatisfaction with public schools. Please read the following 12 reasons and place an "x" next to the reasons you agree with. Next, number the reasons you marked, beginning with #1. The reason you select as #1 is the reason that you agree with most. As you respond, please keep in mind your child and the public school your child attended.

- | | Most
Agree | Agree |
|---|---------------|-------|
| I decided not to enroll my child in public school because . . . | | |
| 1. The public school has low academic standards. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. The public school places my child at risk of negative peer pressure. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. The public school teaches my child an alternative way of life which in many instances is diametrically opposes to Islamic life styles. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. The public school fails to motivate my child to continue his/her education. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. The public school exposes my child to an environment of social violence, holocaust of diseases, crime, drinking, smoking and drugs. | _____ | _____ |
| 6. The public school has anti-religious humanistic philosophy. | _____ | _____ |
| 7. The public school offers does not put enough emphasis on math and science. | _____ | _____ |
| 8. The public school doesn't give my child the type of environment that is conducive to the kind of social development I want for my child. | _____ | _____ |
| 9. The public school is guided by educational philosophies based on atheism. | _____ | _____ |
| 10. The public school stifle creativity and slow down my child's progress. | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Public school lacks discipline and control on students' behavior. | _____ | _____ |

12. The public school teaches denies my child religious freedom. _____

Other reasons ...

PART III

CHALLENGES FACING ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

The following statements represent your opinions and perceptions regarding the possible challenges and problem facing Islamic schools in North America. Your agreement or disagreement will be determined on the basic of your own particular experience with your child's Islamic school.

Please circle the responses that best describe your perceptions of the following problems. The response categories are:

- 1. Strongly agree with the statement (SA)**
- 2. Agree with the statement (A)**
- 3. Undecided or I don't know (UN)**
- 4. Disagree with the statement (D)**
- 5. Strongly disagree with the statement (SD)**

The challenges and problems facing my child's Islamic school are:

	(SA)	(A)	(UN)	(D)	(SD)
1. Tuition	1	2	3	4	5
2. Driving distance	1	2	3	4	5
3. Lack of extra curricular activities	1	2	3	4	5
4. Uncertain future	1	2	3	4	5

5.	Accreditation	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Separate education for minorities is very unlikely to result in equal education	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Inadequate physical facilities	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Lack of finances, there is no Muslim community with enough funds to compete with the public school systems for teachers and resources	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Lack of Islamically knowledgeable principals and administration	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Lack of parental involvement	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Lack of certified Muslim teachers	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The school is too small	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Enrollment is extremely low	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The biggest problem is the materials for Islamic studies and Arabic	1	2	3	4	5
15.	We don't live in an Islamic society. Segregating young people from regular society doesn't give them the opportunity to learn how to live Islamic-ally in a non-Muslim society	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Lack of qualified Arabic and Islamic studies teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	The administration is entirely in the hands of the School Board of Trustees	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Conflict with the community and other Islamic schools (full-time, week end or part-time Islamic schools)	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Mixing boys and girls in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5

PART IV

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please provide the following information about yourself, your spouse and your child and his/her Islamic school.

1. Gender: Female Male
2. Your child's gender Female Male
3. Public school district _____
4. Location of public school: Urban/inner city: Suburban: Rural:
5. Name of your child's Islamic school: _____
6. Location of your child's Islamic school: Urban/inner city Suburban: Rural:
7. Number of students in your child's Islamic school:
 Less than 50: 50--100: 100--200: More than 200:
8. Average Number of Student \$in classroom:
 Less than 10: 10--15: more than 15:
9. Please circle the grades which are available in your child's Islamic School:

K	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10. How many miles, one way, is your home from the Islamic school? _____
11. Is there any other Islamic school closer to your home? Yes No
12. If yes in #11 why did you choose this specific school?

13. How many miles, one way, is your home from the public school your child would be attending? _____
14. How much tuition in the Islamic school is required per year for your child?

15. Do you personally pay for all the tuition? Yes No

16. If No in #15, what percentage of the tuition do you pay? _____
17. Who pays for the remainder? _____
18. Would you still enroll your child in the school if you paid full tuition?
 Yes No
19. Is tuition a burden on you? Yes, very much Yes, a little No:
20. My family's income last year was: (please check one)
 Under \$10,000 Between 10,000-15,000 Between \$15,000 -\$20,000
 Between \$20,000-\$25,000 Between \$25,000-35,000 Over \$35,000
21. Please check your current marital status:
 No Married Separated Divorced Widowed:

If you are married, please answer the following questions about yourself and spouse.

22. Age
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____
23. Occupation
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____
24. Level of education
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____
25. Original homeland
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____
26. Ethnic background
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____
27. Status in America
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____

28. How long have you been in America
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____
29. Religion (born Muslim/convert) (Muslim/Christian) (others . . .
YOU _____
SPOUSE _____

If you or your spouse are Muslims, please answer the following questions

30. How do you rate your level of religious commitment?
YOU High Average Fair Low
SPOUSE High Average Fair Low
31. Have you been a member of one of the Islamic organizations
YOU Yes No
SPOUSE Yes No
32. How often do you go to the Masjed?
YOU Frequently Sometimes Never
SPOUSE Frequently Sometimes Never
33. Have you been attending Friday prayer
YOU Regularly Almost never miss Sometimes Never
SPOUSE Regularly Almost never miss Sometimes Never
34. Do you fast during Ramadan?
YOU Yes Sometimes Never
SPOUSE Yes Sometimes Never
35. Do you read Quran?
YOU Yes Sometimes Never
SPOUSE Yes Sometimes Never
36. Do you consider Islamic dress for women (Hijab) obligatory and very important
YOU Yes No I don't know
SPOUSE Yes No I don't know
37. Do you join Muslim community activities?
YOU Yes Sometimes Never
SPOUSE Yes Sometimes Never

38. Do you have time to teach your children about Islam?
YOU Yes Sometimes No
SPOUSE Yes Sometimes No

**Please accept my sincere gratitude for your tolerance,
patience, honesty and your precious time**

Researcher Signature

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