Four Stakeholder's Perception on Educational Effectiveness of Nigerian Turkish International Colleges: A Qualitative Case Study

Hasan Aydin[1]

Abstract

This study examined the perceptions of the efficacy of the Gülen educational initiative and provides an analysis of the educational viability of "Gülen-inspired" schools in Nigeria, which named "Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges (NTICs). This study used a qualitative methodology with case study approach in which 22 individuals participated, among them 3 administrators, 7 Nigerian/Turkish teachers, 8 students, and 4 parents. Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and in small focus groups to elicit the lived experience of people involved with the schools. Data collection consisted beyond the interviews was collected through classroom observations as well. The study finds NTIC schools are successful in promoting academic achievement in an environment that also teaches sound values and acceptance of others through curriculum, school organization, and the quality of the people who work in the schools, people who are hardworking, giving, and dedicated to improving quality of life in Nigeria through education.

Introduction

A Turkish Islamic scholar, intellectual, philosopher, and educational activist, Fethullah Gülen is internationally well known for his widely lauded messages of tolerance, peace, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding. The Gülen movement is a transnational civic society movement inspired by the teachings of Turkish Islamic theologian Fethullah Gülen. His teachings about *hizmet* (altruistic service to the "common good") have attracted a large number of supporters in Turkey, Central Asia, and increasingly in other parts of the world (Clinton, 2008; Kurtz, 2005). The movement is mainly active in education and interfaith (and intercultural) dialogue (Ebaugh, 2010); however, it has also aid initiatives and investments on media, finance, and health (Çetin, 2010). Millions of people around the world, inspired by Gülen, act collectively to build schools, universities, dialogue centers, and charitable organizations under the title *Hizmet* (service; Ebaugh, 2010).

The millions are inspired by Gülen's educational philosophy which stresses teaching "by example" and the cultivation of "good behavior" (Aslandoğan & Çetin, 2006; Park, 2008). Gülen's educational institutions, initially developed in Turkey in the early 1980s, spread to the countries that were once a part of the Soviet Union and then to Asia, Europe, and Africa. Currently there are Hizmet inspired schools in 140 countries

and it is the global scale of the Gülen's Movement's outreach that has attracted attention. These institutions have won high praise for the quality of education as students in these schools regularly achieve high scores in international and national scientific competitions (Clement, 2007; Keles, 2007). Now, more than ever, knowledge and education are very important for humanity and good education makes for better lives (Lafer, 2004). Globally, people realize this and good numbers strive to become educated (Banks, 2004). Believing in the promise of a well-educated future generation, Gülen (2004) supporters aspire to create a society reflective of a truly developed civilization.

Today, almost all highly developed countries make large investments in education. They do so with the hope of increasing the possibility that an educated younger generation will be successful in the future (Gülen, 2000). In Turkey, in the 1980s, a shortage of high quality schools inspired the development of new educational institutions. These institutions were established by a new middle class with aspirations for higher education for its children. Under these conditions,

[1]Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

Corresponding Author:
Hasan Aydin, Curriculum and Instruction Department, College of Education, Yildiz Technical University, Esenler, Istanbul, Turkey.
Email: aydinh@yildiz.edu.tr

Gülen associates opened their first two private high schools in Izmir and Istanbul, the two largest cities in Turkey (Aslandogan, 2009). Even before the schools were opened, dormitories were built for the youth who came from out of town so they could attend the extant schools. This was followed by the creation of secondary schools for students in 9 to 12 grades. These schools, like their public and private counterparts, engaged in teaching the common school disciplines. Students were being under very strict supervision and they were preparing students for university admission tests and for national and international science contests in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and computer science (Kalyoncu, 2008; Nelson, 2005). Since then, groups of people inspired by Gülen's education paradigm have opened educational institutions all over the world. In Turkey and in other countries, such as in Central Asia, Balkans, European countries, Africa, and United States, hundreds of Gülen-inspired schools, language centers, and universities have been founded (Nelson, 2005) predicated upon Gülen's educational vision defined by Michel (2003) as integrating the insights and strengths found in the various education systems of the past and the present to bring about a "marriage of mind and heart," to raise the level of individual "thought, action, and inspiration" (Kalyoncu, 2008, p. 13).

Gülen (2001) argues that the most important responsibility and purpose in human life is to seek and understand the importance of education. Gülen explains that "the human factor lies at the base of all our problems, for all problems begin and end with people." He argues,

> Education is the best vehicle for a defect-free (or almost defect-free) well-functioning social system and for a good life beyond the grave. In this respect, just as teaching is the most sacred profession, the best service to one's country or nation is education. (Gülen, 2001, p. 14)

In other words, people who want to guarantee a decent future cannot be indifferent to how their children are being educated. He also discusses how a nation's future depends on its youth. Parents who want to protect their nation's future should apply as much energy to educating their children as they devote to other aspects of parenting.

Çetin (2010) underlines that the reasons for both the educational deficiencies observed by some in today's generation, as well as the incompetence of public administrators, national leaders, and ills affecting many nations, lie in the prevailing conditions affecting education and the ways in which teachers have taught over many years. Likewise, those who also are charged with educating today's young people should understand themselves, at least in part, to be responsible for the way that youth will grow to affect societies. Those people who wish to foresee a nation's future can acceptably do so by analyzing the education and upbringing of its young people (Çetin, 2009). Gülen believes that those who neglect learning and teaching

should be counted as "dead," for, as he argues, human beings were created to learn and communicate to others what they have learned (2006, p. 11).

Proper education, Gülen says, helps us build sensible opinions and acquire sensible viewpoints on everything in life. Aslandogan (2006), referencing the Gülen philosophy argues that the purpose of education is to instill values, attitudes, and proper behavior in children, and prepare them for challenges and opportunities of life. Gay (2000) posits that education is important because it equips us with all that is needed to make our dreams come true. According to Aydin and Chandler (2010) and Michel (2006), again echoing the Gülenian philosophy, education opens doors for career opportunities and healthy growth. Most employers today require employees to be well educated, so education becomes an eligibility criterion for decent employment (Rumbaut & Portes, 1997).

Furthermore, Solberg (2005) explains that the Gülen-inspired schools are perceived to be institutions of effective practice by several states' authorities and members of the public in regions where schools exist. In part, success is due to the fact that they are private schools for which students are preselected on the basis of academic performance, their test scores are usually higher than the national average for their respective nations. However, selectivity is but one of the reasons for the real and perceived success of these schools. First, most of the students stay in dormitories and, thus, spend all of their time on school campuses where they are tutored 2 to 3 hr daily or 10 to 15 hr a week beyond the time spent in their courses. In addition, teachers are available to help students with their homework at night in the dormitories. Students, then, are steeped in a culture of school activities for months at a time, in institutions where, according to Keles (2007), approximately 50% of the students are preparing for the Academic Olympics, specifically in science, math, language, and sports and many students receive scholarships to study in nations with high standards for admission of foreign students such as Japan, Turkey, the United States, and the European countries.

Keles (2007) argues that the quality of education, together with the positive attitude of teachers toward students and parents, makes Gülen schools successful. Yesilova (2008) notes these Gülen schools have a good reputation because, for example, Gülen students typically do not engage in negative aspects of youth culture such as drug use, alcohol abuse, and immoral behavior.

However, as one looks at the Nigerian educational environment, it is striking to notice that the nation is the location of extraordinary wealth (one fifth of U.S. oil comes from Nigeria) and crushing poverty (Falola & Heaton, 2008). It is also true that education of reasonable quality is available for the wealthy people, but severely limited for the poor.

This is mainly due to the fact that over the past several decades, Nigeria has been plagued by frequent political unrest (Adetula, 2008). Its instability and economic inequality have generated negative effects on the education system,

much the result of corruption in all governmental agencies, including those responsible for education, and insufficient implementation of effective programs, lack of educational resources, poor funding, inadequately equipped classrooms, lack of qualified teachers, and a host of other problems (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007).

Furthermore, Mustapha and House (2003) stressed that Nigeria has been, critically, torn by religious and ethnic differences. During the last decade, thousands of people were killed in conflicts between Moslems and Christians between Northerners and Southerners, and between Hausa Fulanis, Yorubas, Igbos, and other tribes.

Consequently, within this environment where Moslems, Christians, other religious groups, students, and teachers have to work and study side by side, a question worth asking is whether particular types of school, here, in particular, the Gülen-inspired schools, have been able to contribute to the building democracy, and whether they have the potential to raise future leaders for a democratic society through educational programs that truly African youth.

Because of the wealth of natural resource, primarily oil, the opportunity for modernization is made possible. However, presently, oil revenues benefit only the few because of corruption in the government. In light of this reality, a number of individuals and institutions, including the head of the state himself, claim to be focused on building a system of education that will reduce societal inequities. Therefore, participants were questioned on their views of Gülen schools in regard to their perception of whether the schools were succeeding in their mission and their sense of how the Gülen-inspired schools were addressing the national educational problems of Nigeria, and their sense of the efficacy of Gülen's educational philosophy, methods, and curriculum for students in Nigeria.

This study focuses on the effectiveness of the Gülen-inspired schools in Nigeria and their role in promoting education in this country. Every country has its own educational systems, and some of them do not serve all students well (Farenga, 2000). The Nigerian educational system, indirectly the subject of this study, has, traditionally, been ineffective, for several reasons including the effects of political manipulation and corruption, leading to poor funding and implementation of ineffective instructional programs. Classrooms are typically inadequately equipped, instructional materials are scarce, and qualified teachers occupy relatively few classrooms (Dike, 2008; Moja, 2000; Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007). One approach to improving the situation has been developing alternative approaches to education such as those sponsored by the Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges (NTICs). This study begins to examine the NTIC schools by gathering the perspectives of those involved with the NTICs to better understand methods and curriculum used in the NTICs in Abuja, Nigeria. Another purpose of this study is also to investigate various stake holders' sense the effectiveness of the schools and their value as an alternative to the schools in the public system.
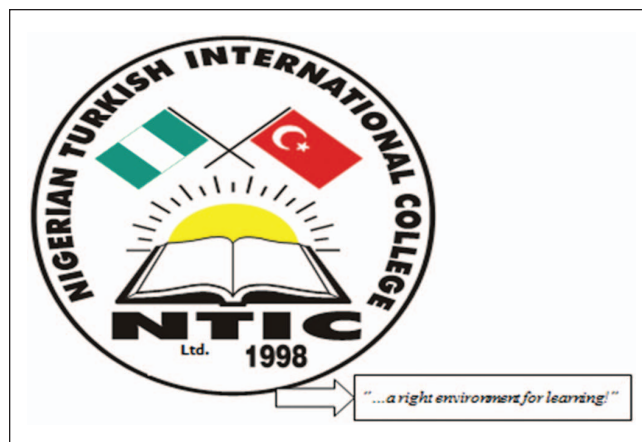

Figure 1. The logo of Nigerian-Turkish International colleges (NTICs).
Source: From NTICs website: http://www.nticnigeria.com/.

In addition, this study attempts to build understanding of factors that differentiate schools guided by Gülen educational philosophy to create a description of Gülen-inspired school programs, and how elements of Gülen education beyond curriculum and methods such as teacher altruism and concentration on relationships between students and teachers contribute to the results the schools achieve. In essence, the study helps to build understanding of the efficacy of the Gülenian educational initiative and provides analysis of its educational viability for schools operating in Nigeria.

Overview of NTICs

All the data for this study were collected on the NTIC campus in Abuja, Nigeria, on which reside a group of Gülen-inspired schools (Figure 1). The initiative to build the schools started in 1998 in a rented building with 3 students and 13 teachers and only a boys' hostel. The schools are private institutions operating under an agreement with the Nigerian Government under the name "Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges" run by SURAT Educational Institutions Limited. SURAT operates several campuses around Nigeria and other parts of West Africa, with most campuses containing a preschool, an elementary school, and one or more secondary schools. SURAT has also built a university in Abuja in 2009. The organization currently operates 17 colleges located in six different states, one Abuja, Nigeria's capital, and the others in Lagos, Kanu, Kaduna, Yobe, and Ponta states. Together, the schools enroll 3,200 students, 2,200 of whom live and attend classes in single-sex boarding school environments. NTICs are secular schools using a science-oriented curriculum emphasizing science subjects and mathematics. Unlike the public schools in Nigeria, NTIC schools have modern facilities and equipment such as projectors, electronic (smart) boards, and Internet access in their classrooms, and are furnished with fully equipped laboratories in which courses in physics,

Table 1. Frequency Distribution for Gender of Participants.

Stakeholder's	Total number of participants	Gender (M/F)	Sample pool (%)
Teachers	7	4/3	31.8
Students	8	5/3	36.4
Parents	4	2/2	18.2
Administrators	3	2/1	13.6
Total	22	13/9	100

chemistry, biology, and integrated science classes are taught. All campuses also have science resource centers, computer labs, and rich library resources. In addition, the classes are small in size. In the secondary schools, for example, the maximum number of students is 24, allowing the teachers to give more attention to individuals. For the nursery and primary sections, the maximum is 12 students with one main teacher and one assistant in each classroom.

Method

The study presents the results of the analysis of qualitative data collected in the Gülen-inspired schools in Abuja, Nigeria, from participants involved in individual and focus-group interviews, through classroom and campus and observations collected by researcher in Spring 2010. Participants in this study were 22 adults, 9 females, and 13 males aged 16 to 61 ($M = 28.9$) representing four different groups: teachers, students, administrators, and students' parents, all are involved with the NTIC in Abuja, Nigeria.

Table 1 shows the demographic classification of participant by gender.

This study presents an analysis of the data collected using researcher-developed protocols that included open-ended and unstructured questions, observation, and review of pertinent documents. The two broad research questions that this study sought to answer are as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the nature of Gülen education in Nigeria as experienced by those involved in Movement schools?

- How do participants in the schools—teachers, administrators, parents, and students—embrace the Gülenian philosophy, and what do they understand that philosophy to be?
- What is the participants' conception of the Gülenian philosophy inaction?

Research Question 2: Has the philosophy been enacted in these schools?

- What do participants in the Gülenian schools consider in determining whether the schools are successful, and in what ways do they consider the schools to be successful or unsuccessful?

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

To answer the two research questions, the researcher gathered and analyzed a significant amount of data, as qualitative research demands. Because of the amounts, the collected information had to be maintained in an organized fashion (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Huberman & Miles, 1983; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994, 1995; Yin, 2003). All the individual and focus-group interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim then filed in such a way as to reflect the means by which the material was collected and the order of collection.

As far as the data analysis is concerned, the researcher was cognizant of Patton (2002), who, in describing the process of inductive analysis, advises that "the patterns, themes and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis" (p. 390). This analysis process began after the first individual interviews were transcribed and the documentation reviewed. Marshall and Rossman (1989) argue that "the phase of data analysis is the most difficult, complex, ambiguous, creative and fun" (p. 115) component of qualitative research. At the onset of analysis, the researcher began to make notes regarding the nature of the data and identify possible themes or trends from the initial transcriptions, field notes, and documents.

After reading through the transcripts in search of "underlying meaning," as suggested by Creswell (2003, p. 155), the researcher compared responses from the interviewed participants to discover themes that would emerge. These transcripts were then shared with peers in doctoral programs whose areas of inquiry are varied and different from that of the researcher to check the potential explanatory power of various emergent themes. Here, the researcher enrolled peers as "debriefers" to provide "an external check on the inquiry process," this recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 301).

As the remaining individual and focus-group interviews were transcribed and read, the researcher began to make notes in the margins of the transcriptions to summarize the topics that participants discussed. At the same time, he began to generate a list of common ideas and possible themes that were repeated or appeared as patterns in the interviews, observations, and documents reviewed. Initially, the list of concepts and common ideas consisted of roughly

60 individual items. As these concepts surfaced in the interviews, the researcher began to look through the field notes and archived documents for information that supported the general concepts and ideas from the interviews.

The last step in the analysis process was the grouping of concepts and ideas into common themes and subthemes. The purpose of this procedure, according to Patton (2002), is that it helps in "developing some manageable classification or coding scheme" that can serve as "the first step of analysis" (p. 463). The process of qualitative case analysis was applied to all of the 22 transcripts and the field notes before the themes were grouped and organized. Patton described this use of content analysis as a means for a "data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (p. 453). As these themes emerged, the researcher identified key events and processes within the schools as the best descriptors to aid in the organization of the data. Each theme was given a color code and all transcripts were reread and color-coded by themes as suggested by Creswell (2003).

Result

The two broad research questions were designed to allow for examination of the perceptions and outlook of participants involved in Gülen-inspired schools in Abuja. Interviewees, it should be said at the outset, almost all of them, indicated that they had positive attitude toward the Gülen philosophy and believed that the Gülen educational practices are a positive force in guiding the design of school programs. They also were aware of the fact that the schools are founded by volunteers inspired by Gülen's ideas and not by Gülen himself.

The Gülen influence was apparent from the beginning. Our first interviewee, Hasan Huseyin Aygun, the General Director of NTIC and owner of the schools in Abuja and several more in other states of Nigeria, indicated that he was responsible for all aspects of school operation, including school administration, curriculum, teaching, and finance. In a 3-hr interview, he explained that it was the Gülen philosophy that pushed him to undertake the building of the schools. While Gülen does not have much influence on the day-to-day operations of the schools, Aygun said that

> Gülen's writings provide a philosophical foundation, a humane notion of how one should comport oneself in this world as a single human being amongst many, all worthy, all in need of certain basic things to live decently. These notions guide those involved in the school in their treatment of others.

With the Gülenian emphasis always in mind, the analysis of the data produced many themes and focused on the most frequently occurring ideas related to the two comprehensive research concerns, the success of the schools and the manner in which the schools operate. *Teachers as a model are* often spoken of in Gülenian circles, and certainly when discussing the NTIC schools with those involved in the program. The theme to emerge from the data analysis is that of *service to others*, the principles of service, along with dedication, ethical behavior, and altruism modeled by faculty and staff live through the manner in which they comport themselves and behave toward others. Another theme to have emerged is the strong emphasis on academic achievement and its critical importance to the NTIC mission.

Theme One: Teacher As a Model

The first theme that arises from the data analysis is that of the teacher as a role model. The teachers, who work in the schools, as reported earlier, are influenced by Gülenian ideals. Their belief in Gülenian principles of education encourages them to demonstrate the altruistic behaviors that they hope for students to emulate. The teachers act as role models through their giving to each other and to students, by being altruistic themselves. They serve as examples when they, for example, provide tutoring services after school without charge. Teachers also spend portions of their own teaching salaries on gifts and food for students. They act as models to be imitated, in terms of dedication, ethics, and altruism. One teacher reported that his reason for coming to the NTIC schools was to be a role model for students—to lead by setting examples. One Nigerian female teacher went so far as to say that the NTIC teachers' behavior differed greatly from that of the teachers in the public schools. She said,

> In the public schools in Nigeria, the teachers don't seem to come to school all the time, because nobody will be there to supervise their activities there, so they just leave school. It's for the government—at the end of the month I'll get what I'm supposed to earn. They don't really put the interest of the students first.

In the schools that are Gülenian inspired, the ethos of the place is insistent that teachers care about the students and put the interests of the students before their own. This attitude is highly appreciated by the parents who see teachers work long hours and stay after at the end of the school day. One of them joyfully acknowledged as follows:

> One thing I noticed is that Nigerian-Turkish will not take money for overtime on these children—that is what I noticed. But while my children were in other schools, we were paying for after school lessons.

Parents can also see the ethical nature of teachers, another parent telling the researcher that, "You cannot bribe a teacher. You just can't." This comment reflects the integrity of the teachers who operate under the influence of the Gülenian belief system. Their lack of concern for monetary compensation is reflected in the following comment:

The salary is not higher and what-so-ever. If you are dealing with children there are a whole lot of blessings that come from children and especially the educational system. You can't dictate for all that you are doing, believe me you can't dictate it. What you get, do your best, do your work and I think it goes a long way. You cannot dictate, even if they happen to give you all the work, all the money, do you really think you'll be paid for the work that you'll be paid for, the work that you've done? You taught someone and he is the president and yourself, you are not the president; that person is the president. You've not gained, so I won't say that they can pay you for all that you have been doing. Nobody can really pay you for what you are doing.

Furthermore, they implicitly teach students the importance of punctuality and hard work by being on time themselves and staying late after the official working hours. As a Turkish male teacher states,

Teaching by example, I have to let you know. We always come to class before students; so, if I come late in class, how can I say that the students should not come late? When I say something to class, they know that I am serious about what I am talking about it. So, you need to be serious first, if not you can't manage the class. You should be serious in class and show it by your teaching methods but also you should be friendly outside with students so they can understand your teaching method. This is a kind of management in classroom. So this is a qualification for a teacher for teaching well in classroom with all subjects.

In regard to altruism, the teachers, respondents report, are striking examples to imitate because they cooperate among themselves and offer financial support and extra free hours to their students. Gülenian philosophy, participants say, urges them, as one administrator pointed out, to function on the basis of "oneness." "The idea of oneness," said an interviewee, "is being one and the idea of wanting for each other. What you want for yourself, you want it for me. What I want for myself I should want it for you."

This concept is what administrators and teachers say they bring to the classroom and promote throughout the school. This is demonstrated through the way the teachers interact among themselves, as reported by one Turkish teacher:

All teachers in this school are like brothers and helping each other as they are helping to students. Teachers are very respectful when talk and interact each other. So, when students can see the relationship and collaboration between teachers, they are following their teachers as an "example." This behavior of the teacher effects on students in a positive way and this is very important for students' life.

The parents, it appears, are impressed with the way that teachers demonstrate their altruistic Gülenian ideals and a Turkish administrator said that sharing with the others is

the best way to help our society is to share our belongings and knowledge with others who has limited or do not have it. We should not be a selfish with our own things. For example, if Gülen has not been shared his knowledge, idea and if he did not encourage us to help other people how could we come here to help Nigerian society.

In response to the Turkish administrator's comment, one student said,

We learn to give our stuff to our friends from our teachers. For example, one of my teachers told me that, if I do not have anything to give my friends, I can smile at them when I talk with them. He said that smiling is like a charity if you have a smile for others. Another idea that we learn from this school is that we are all one family, and we need to share ideas that we have. We need to share whatever we have with one another. We need not to be selfish with our ideas and with our things.

As participants see things, teachers do what they preach because their ultimate ideal is to be models of dedication, ethical behavior, and altruism to help their students learn to be generous and learn to live together. If these values are adhered to as key values, students are likely to help in precipitating change for the good of Nigeria.

Theme Two: Academic Achievement

The second theme that the data indicated to be worthy of discussion was the academic achievement of the students. The levels of achievement attained, participants said, is a result of the effect of actions taken in accordance with the principles of education reflected in the previous theme. As a matter of fact, the NTIC schools, informants reported, have succeeded in engaging students in high-level academic studies while, in the process, changing the way students see themselves and in how they interact with others. Success in academic competition was mentioned repeatedly by participants as an important aspect of NTIC culture. Because of their successes and the reputation success has wrought, the schools are among the most prestigious in the country and consistently attract students whose parents are members of the Nigerian elite and poor families. The majority of the participants emphasized that the NTIC schools are also receiving considerable attention from the government because of their achievement, in particular their high graduation rates. Pride in achievement and willingness to do what is necessary to maintain high levels of achievement are evident in many of the comments collected for the study.

To be more specific, in terms of students' behaviors and skill acquisition, most participants involved in the study were impressed to witness the changes that take place in students once they become students in the NTIC schools. For instance, one parent told the interviewer that

in interaction, social interaction . . . you can see how these children interact socially. Mr. Aygun can bear witness to this when they travel to Turkey . . . my children have been to Turkey now, two times. And there . . . they were staying with different parents. There was a parent, if I can repeat the story, who wrote a letter that one of my sons behaved extremely wonderful . . . you know. So, at the domestic level . . . even in the social, and every other the they . . . they appraised of their behavior—very well and . . . I gave the letter to Mr. Huseyin to interpret for me what the parents had said . . . the parents wanted me to be a friend to that family.

Another parent had this to say:

What I can say [is that there have been] changes in the eloquence of speech, the intelligence, the discussion level. The children can discuss with you at any level, you know the content . . . the content at their level: They are so good in it, yes.

Some parents were anxious to report upon how differently their children behave now as opposed to behavior observed when these students attended the state run schools. Behavior changes, they say, help students to increase their academic achievement. One told the researcher that

the quality of the education at this school is the emphasis on language. Because, when my son entered in this school after a year, I realized that he could speak fluently and confidently in English and also in other tribal languages too. However, when he was at his previous school, he was so shy he could not even speak with us. So, I am very happy to see my child is growing up with self-confidence.

Another says that she feels the schools' adherence to Gülen's philosophy is responsible for many major and positive changes in her child.

In addition, to perception of changes in behavior and attitude toward academic subjects, many reported that the schools succeed in giving students a desire to study and develop understanding of the concepts being taught, in part because the schools help them to get over their fear of such subjects as mathematics and science by helping them understand that they are capable of mastering them. One parent, laughing, considered her experiences with math in contrast to how her child is experiencing the subject. She said,

Children hate mathematics in Nigeria. Like me, when I was in secondary school—though I was a bit good in mathematics . . . not much—but whenever a mathematics teacher was coming, some of them [fellow students] would just go through the window. But my children, anytime they are going for Math Olympiad, they call me "mommy, mommy come and pray for us—we are going for Olympiad mathematics competition." So look at how children are even rushing *for* mathematics. I am very happy that my children like mathematics a lot.

Furthermore, the NTICs students are, in general, conscious of the value of the education they get from the NTICs. This is clearly voiced by a student from a focus group. "Comparing [myself] to students who came from public schools, we were better off . . . but then—yes I'd say they definitely gave us what we needed to start off in the university."

Students believe that they are receiving a better education than the students who are attending the public schools and other private schools. They feel that they are better prepared for universities than those who attend schools that are not a part of the Gülen education network. In addition, they are hoping that education will change people in the future because, as one of students said,

It is more the illiterates that do that kind of thing [act in violent ways]. Well, in the educated environment, where there is education, all those things can't be happening. It is more [prevalent] where people just go to religious schools. They never went to a school where they teach math or English. They just go for Islamic studies; some go for their Christian studies. So it happens mainly amongst those kinds of people.

Graduating students recognize the quality of their preparation and what it has done for them. They also are aware of the schools' reputations and the value of that reputation for further endeavors. A NTIC graduate said,

So, to get admitted to universities in Nigeria and abroad is hard but we are prepared here. Our [NTIC] school organized additional classes for preparation for the Nigerian university nation-wide exam, TOEFL, GRE, and others. Therefore, we passed all tests easily. I think we were so lucky that we graduated from this school.

The Gülen-inspired schools, the graduates interviewed agreed, prepared them for higher education and they emphasized that they were lucky because of theirs and their school's accomplishments.

Recognition of the quality of education provided in NTIC schools rises to the highest levels of Nigerian society. Documents provided to the researcher showed, for example, that former Nigerian president (2008) Musa Yara'dua was very much aware of the work of the NTICs and praised them for the kind of science and math education provided and for helping children, from a young age, succeed at the international level against students from other countries in academic competitions. Recognition is also evident on the website allAfica.com, which commends the schools for the education offered students in "training them to grow up as global citizens in line with globalization." The commendation from Yara'dua extended beyond achievement to recognition for opportunity provided to students from all parts of Nigeria, from all religious backgrounds, and socioeconomic conditions, in part by keeping fees low.

Table 3. Graduation Rate of NTIC Schools in Abuja, 12th-Grade Students Entering 2004 and Graduating in 2009.

Academic year	Total number of students entering NTICs in Grades 6-12	Total number of 12th-grade students graduated	%
2004	58	58	100
2005	65	64	98
2006	59	59	100
2007	75	75	100
2008	70	68	97
2009	92	92	100
Total	419	419	99.2

Source: Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges (NTICs) Handbook (2009).
Note: NTIC = Nigerian-Turkish International College.

Almost all of students who are finishing primary school at the NTIC are progressing on to secondary school, something not typical of schools in Nigeria (see Table 3).

As Table 3 shows, NTICs 12th-grade students' average graduation rate from 2004 to 2009 is 99%. It appears that students enrolled in the NTIC schools by the sixth grade in Abuja are very likely to complete their high school educations, something not so common in the state run schools. In addition, data collected from NTIC administrators and certified by the state accreditation agencies show that senior secondary (SS3) level students at the schools in Abuja all passed the first Junior Secondary Certificate Examination (JSCE) examination administered by the Educational Research Committee (ERC) in Abuja. This 100% success rate is maintained in the following year when students take the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE), conducted by National Examination Council (NECO). This holds true for the years 2002, 2003, and 2004. This is, at least in part, due to the fact that the NTICs provide considerable help for students who need it through supplementary lessons offered on Saturdays in the major subjects. As Onche (2010) reports, by their 10th year of operation in Nigeria, NTICs are one of the most renowned and respected colleges in Nigeria. A Nigerian who teaches for NTIC reported that one of the greatest achievements of the schools is that even people who are not involved with them are aware of their accomplishments.

> If we bring one of the students from another school to our school just for 2-3 hours, s/he will recognize immediately a positive environment and s/he will learn something from our students' even if there for only a short time. Students from outside will recognize the differences between NTICs and their schools.

Teachers regularly emphasized, as the teacher above did, that the contribution of the teaching and learning environment at NTICs is noticeable by other people outside the schools.

One factor in the success of the schools is having the majority of students living on campus in dormitories (hostel). A student told the researcher that one important goal, achieved through taking on the responsibilities of living away from home in the presence of others who are not members of their immediate families, is the attainment of independence, growth in the knowledge that one must take care of one's self while considering the needs of others.

> One of key element of our success is hostel, because students from boy and girls sections live in hostels. There are a lot of advantages to living there; first, they have tutoring time every day from Monday to Friday and each class has two tutors to help us with our homework and also prepare us for the next day's classes. Second, we learn how live independently like without family so, it will help when we go to universities in other countries. Third, we also learn that there is no differentiation between poor and wealthy students, different ethnic and religious backgrounds etc.

As the student reports, the residential setting allows for students to have access to tutors everyday and live in a more independent manner in relation to how they live when home. Students, no matter what their background is, live in the same setting with the same amenities. This equity in living conditions allows for students from different socioeconomic and religious backgrounds to cohabitate in a way that diminishes emphasis on differences between students and leads to better understanding between people that could not otherwise be achieved, a factor in academic success on university campuses with diverse student populations. NTICs boarding facilities provide students with a comfortable home that leads to responsible behavior and important kinds of socialization. Throughout the researcher's stay on the NTICs campuses, individuals from all participant groups mentioned with regularity the value of the boarding school environment. The benefits of NTICs boarding schools can be enumerated as follows:

- They provide students a comfortable living environment in which to study while surrounded by others deeply involved in academic activities, something not true of the home environments of most.
- The *family* of boarders is made up of people from different backgrounds and this allows for discussions

that included multiple perspectives, a key to growth of critical thinking ability. Researcher observations in the dorms and on dormitory grounds confirmed reports from many that boarders truly enjoy each other's company and benefit from the sharing of ideas that take place, a wonderful sight to see in a divided nation.

- Students who board regularly visit students from other NTICs campuses across Nigeria and from this learn of life in places different from their own, again a factor in widening of perspective, in developing increasingly sophisticated notions of the nation and the world. It was clear that the visits occurred frequently enough to allow students on different campuses to know one another so well as to be on a first name basis with those they visited.
- The NTICs boarding program includes travel to recreational and educational sites around the country, to regional and national parks, to museums and historical sites. For many, these are experiences they would not have if they lived at home.
- The campus houses well-equipped sports facilities for basketball, football (soccer), table tennis and such. Health and intellectual growth are understood to go hand in hand.
- Living in these family-like learning environments helps the students with time management as they have an organized hostel schedule. They are taught to use time wisely and they have immediate access to school materials.

One of the students noted how the residential realities cultivate a strong version of multicultural understanding, again a factor related in important ways to academic growth. He told the researcher that

> students from very poor families and from the villages live here with President of country's kid, so it is a unique place. Also, there are a lot of sport activities . . . every weekend. I like it very much and I think there are a lot of advantages to live in hostel.

Beyond the living conditions and the Math Olympics, it is also worth mentioning, as a Nigerian male teacher reported, the role played by the parents and teachers from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds who come together to support the schools that support their children. The collaboration of parents, teachers, and students make these schools successful. For example, the Parent and Teachers association (PTA) meets once a month to discuss students' needs and other aspects of school and its work. This engagement motivates parents and teachers to work hard for students' achievement.

Issues

One concern of some is that most NTIC students attend schools that separate the genders, female students confined to one school and males to another at the secondary level. Two female students in a focus group did offer a complaint, this being one of the few things any participants found to we wrong at NTIC. They did not like the single-gender education idea and they offered a most interesting reason returning to how the schools operated before boys and girls were separated. They reported that they worked harder in the co-ed setting because they did not want the boys to think they were better than the girls, an *academic* reason for a social change. There may be a broader reason for concern here as the schools claim their mandate to be helping students to accept differences that exist between people. Proximity to others who are different is claimed to be a major means of building understanding and tolerance, yet male and female students rarely, if ever, are given the opportunity to interact. This is an issue that the schools need to address and there is a good opportunity to do this in the secondary day school, which is integrated genderwise. The researcher strongly recommends that this issue be given further study.

One other concern worthy of consideration regards the difficulty some have in understanding the English of the Turkish teachers. Then, too, many of them had difficulty understanding the American who accompanied the researcher because his accent was so different from those with whom they were familiar. However, the American was not acting in the capacity of a teacher. A student who does not understand what a teacher is saying cannot benefit by the teaching. How this problem, a serious one, is to be solved is something the NTIC schools must consider as most teachers are of Turkish background. Perhaps English language proficiency should be a qualification for teaching at the NTIC schools. This is particularly critical as the NTICs methodology heavily favors direct instruction with a good portion of instruction delivered through lecture and demonstration. The researcher recommends that the efficacy of such methodology be investigated in regard to the kind of learning it produces. The hope is that NTIC schools are dedicated to promoting critical thinking and creativity. Lecture/demonstration-based methodologies are not the best means of achieving such outcomes and the hope is that change will come at some point.

Another critical concern of the researcher was a profoundly obvious lack of discussion of current problems in the Nigerian state, problems that are a significant part of Nigerian daily news. These include political corruption which is a persistent concern of those dedicated to an equitable, fair, and democratic society. Other issues of immediate concern to knowledgeable Nigerians are those related to oil—pollution, environmental degradation, loss of clean water sources, land degradation and no longer useful in the production of food, the taking of oil revenues by the few, and the poverty of those whose livelihoods have been destroyed by oil production activities. The NTIC schools, it seems from observation and the conversations held with NTICs participants, step lightly around such topics and this is understandable considering the fact that these Turkish institutions are permitted by the Nigerian government to exist in Nigeria. Although

avoidance of the topics might be polite and political, the negation of consideration of these critical topics diminishes the potential of the schools to develop awareness critical to solving the critical problems facing the Nigerian nation. In addition, science-based environmental problems could be addressed in science classes.

Discussion and Conclusion

Through the use of qualitative case design and multiple sources of the data as well as multiple levels of analysis, two major themes emerged. They were then organized on the basis of the key events and processes related to the effectiveness of the school.

The first theme to emerge from the research was that of teachers as role models. They, according to participant testimony, act as role models to be imitated in terms of dedication, ethics, and altruism. Many noted the *dedication* of teachers who work extra hours to help their students improve. In the schools studied, participants regularly mentioned that teachers take care of students as if they are their own children. Aslandoğan and Çetin (2006) emphasized that teachers also take after-school clubs, provide extra after-school and weekend tuition, and take students on educational visits and field trips. These are all normal practice worldwide throughout the Gülen movement. Administrators and teachers believe this extra dedication plays a major role in the success of the schools. These dedicated teachers are committed not only for the academic success of their students but also their personal growth as well. They go the extra mile to reach out to each student and parent to better engage the students and also involve parents more in their children's education (Keskin, 2012). In addition, Ünal and Williams (2000) stated that the relationship between teacher and student is crucial: "The best way to educate people is to show a real concern for every individual, not forgetting that each individual is a different 'world'" (p. 313). This importance given to the development of the individual in Gülen-inspired schools leads to teachers and administrators dedicating extra hours to free after-school and weekend lessons for individuals or small groups. Moreover, Woodhall (2010) argued that teachers in Gülen-inspired schools also form groups or pairs to support new and probationary teachers with planning lessons and clerical tasks associated with teaching. The friendships that result from these voluntary activities build strong feelings of community around schools. This attitude is highly appreciated by the parents and students. *Ethics*, participants report, is sign of teacher integrity and ethical behavior is teachers even-handed treatment of students whether they be Black or White, Christian or Muslim, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, Southern or Northern, poor or wealthy.

Altruism was another dominant subtheme in the data. Participants in all the four stakeholder groups observed that NTIC schools serve to teach, and that students learn altruism as an important value. Altruism is communicated to students through the behavior of teachers who give of their time, talent, and financial resources to help Nigerian students solve the problems of the Nigerian society.

Çetin (2006) says that altruism "is an ethical doctrine that holds that individuals have an ethical obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, if necessary, at the sacrifice of self-interest" (p. 5). The teachers who work in the schools are encouraged by the Gülenian ideal and adherence to the Gülenian ideals causes teachers to demonstrate altruism to students through the manner in which they comport themselves. Students reported that their teachers do act as role models and share with each other and the students and this demonstrates to others the value of altruistic behavior. Teachers serve as examples by providing tutoring services after school without charging the students and spend their own money on gifts and food for students. The students and the parents are clearly aware of the teachers' dedication and willingness to give. The belief that in seeing this behavior the students learn to be altruistic, this notion was repeated throughout the interviews. A good number of respondents stated the belief that students who have learned to value altruism will serve the Nigerian nation by working in Nigeria after finishing their educations to help precipitate change for the good of the country. According to Gülen, individuals and societies benefit from constant renewal through education and morally elevated actions, but this depends greatly on the dedication of effective teachers (Aslandoğan & Çetin, 2006) who promote the values that lead others to dedicate their lives to good causes.

The second theme to emerge from the study involved academic achievement. According to Woodhall (2010), measuring the achievements of the Gülen movement indicates that the application of Gülen's philosophy is the key to the success of the movement. The schools that are built upon the Gülen's ideals are, according to documents and testimony (some from sources in the Nigerian government) experiencing success in academic achievement, the primary indicator of this NTIC schools success in academic competitions. Consequently, the schools are places where people in the higher echelons of Nigerian society want their own children to be educated. In addition, a majority of participants were eager to report that the schools are receiving attention from the government for their performance and high graduation rates. For example, the NTIC schools in Nigeria are among the highest achieving in math and science on the African continent (Onche, 2010). Nigerians are very proud of NTICs' accomplishments and are thanking the schools for the accomplishments in the math and science Olympics. Of course, the type of instruction that leads to high achievements in competitions does not necessarily signal development of skills, understandings, and dispositions assumed to correlated with independent thinking and effective decision making. However, participants in the study, those attached to the schools and those holding office in the education ministries, do not seem to be focused on such outcomes and consistently

refer to accomplishment in competitions as the standard for academic success.

The NTICs have been touted for their educational quality and high standards for the last 10 years within the Gülen community. NTICs students have won more than 70 medals in national and international mathematics and science Olympiads. In line with observers notions of achievement in the schools, Michel (2003) notes that Gülen students' performance in academic competitions in the natural sciences, information sciences, and languages is outstanding, and he considers them "to be among the most dynamic and worthwhile educational enterprises in the world" (p. 70). Gülen-inspired schools, movement advocates argue, also outshine competitors in the moral character of their staff and teachers. For example, the Filipino-Turkish Tolerance School operates in a city where 50% of the population is Christian and 40% is Muslim, the remainder of differing religious and ethnic backgrounds. According to Michel, "the school provides more than a thousand students more positive ways to interact than through the violent example set by military and paramilitary forces" (as cited in Nelson, 2005, p. 7). He asserts that the school lives up to its name, providing a fortress of tolerance in an otherwise religiously polarized area of the Philippines, while maintaining excellent relations with the Christian institutions in the region. My own observations confirm the positive interaction that occurs between students from different religious backgrounds during my visit to two Filipino-Turkish schools in 2004.

Another indicator of success for those attached to the NTIC schools is the fact that graduates continue their studies in the most prestigious universities of the world with 54% of NTICs graduates studying abroad in places such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and EU countries. There are many of reasons why NTICs have become, according to particular sets of standards, efficient and successful educational establishments. Students reported that one of the most important reasons of such success is hidden in the so-called "teacher factor," more precisely, a community ethos that has teachers interacting for sustained periods of time with students. Those participating in the study emphasized that their teachers were exemplary individuals, well-educated, intelligent, caring, and some brave enough and willing to leave their home countries to serve people in Nigeria.

Success in academics after graduation is also attributed to the fact that NTIC schools teach languages such as Turkish, French, Arabic, and the three largest tribal languages. Data showed that multilingual education by professional teachers made it possible for many students to continue their education in distinguished universities abroad because of their facility with languages other than their native language. Instruction in foreign languages helps students to get admitted to universities where they want to study. In addition, students emphasized that having teachers from foreign countries provided opportunities for learning how to deal with and respect people from different backgrounds and cultures.

The participants emphasized that the method of teaching in NTICs is based on giving high value to the academic progress of each student. This is possible, in part, because average classes in NTIC schools are much smaller in size than those in Nigeria's regular schools so that teachers usually have more opportunities to interact closely with each student. One graduate student said, "During the five years I studied in this school I always felt that our teachers perceived their task of educating as not only a job, but also as personal duty and responsibility." Therefore, dedication combined with the ability to work with small groups of students, is understood to be an important part of the formula for success. A student in one of the focus groups mentioned that "teachers expected us to show the best academic progress we could and they were working hard to constantly increase our learning capacity." Students, participants said, were expected to work much harder than those in regular schools and, as one student said, true success is unlikely to come without hard work. Students stressed that whenever students needed help, teachers were ready to work extra hours until nobody had any problems in understanding the material. The importance that teachers gave to their work resulted in the fact that students started to feel a desire and obligation to be the best they could be. It deserves mention that teachers in the public schools in Nigeria often work in classrooms of 70 or more students. This study cannot be used, then, to compare teachers' abilities or dedication, but only can report that in the NTIC schools and state officials, such factors contribute to the perceived success of students in the schools.

Besides the academic achievement, parents reported positive behavioral changes in their children. To be more specific, in terms of students' behaviors and acquisition of skills, most participants involved in the study were impressed by the changes that take place in students once they become students in the NTIC schools. Parents saw changes in their children's speech, honesty, intelligence, and knowledge. Some parents did go so far as to point out differences they saw in their children's behavior when attending public schools and when in the NTIC schools. For example, the former minister of education of Nigeria stated that, "students at NTICs have a high level of English proficiency and speak with confidence." He also said that

> students learn how to tolerate other students and also, they learn equality even if they are coming from different SES, but they receive the same education from one school. This situation will help them to be a fair and a righteous person as leaders of future.

The parents, state officials, teachers, administrators, students, and general outside population saw the differences in the students who attended NTICs.

In addition, this research reinforces the importance of teacher dedication, ethics, and altruistic beliefs for motivating students and growing their desire and sense of obligation to be the best they can be. The research hints at the existence of a correlation between teacher behavior (as role models) and student achievement, at least as it is reflected here in student performance on national examinations, admittance to selective universities worldwide, and NTIC schools performance in national and international competitions. Furthermore, the modeling of effective approaches to education, as reflected in the NTIC schools, if properly adapted for use in the Nigerian school system, could help Nigeria grow as a society based on equality and democratic principles. Conversations with education officials in the Nigerian government caused the researcher to believe that the model is being observed and NTIC practices are being considered for use in the Nigerian public school system.

Beyond Nigeria, in nations around the world, the results of this study might be used to build multicultural and intercultural relationships through new school configurations that allow for direct interaction between members of diverse cultural groups. The researcher believes, after careful analysis of the data collected, that the NTIC schools demonstrate the efficacy of the Gülenian philosophy of education, especially in conflict-ridden nations such as Nigeria because, if those participating in the study are right, it can help reduce poverty, promote positive human development, promote peace, aid in conflict resolution, and improve educational opportunities. These elements may offer the possibility to decrease religious and tribal violence and address the consequences of exclusivist agendas operating in these countries.

Limitation of the Study

In general, as qualitative studies have a small sample size, the findings are not generalizable. Although the researcher believes the findings of this study to be suggestive of the value of certain NTICs practices, one should be aware of the fact that it is limited to the age group of the participants, the size of the population, and the limited variety of the interviewees, particularly in regard to their relationship to the schools studied. In regard to the age of the participants, the researcher interviewed only senior students and students who had graduated from the schools. Consequently, the respondents were limited to a specific age range, mostly adults. Some discussion took place with younger students but only in an informal manner through visits to classrooms and encounters on the school grounds.

Furthermore, the numbers of classes that the researcher observed were limited with only a few classes visited during the data collection period because of time restrictions. Therefore, the study may not have produced data that allows for a complete picture of what occurs in the classrooms.

A critical limitation on the kind of data that could be collected results from the method used to identify and contact participants. In this case, almost all of those interviewed are associated with the NTIC schools, as students, parents of students, teachers, and school administrators. Very few involved in the study were not directly involved with the NTIC schools, and most of those had a continuing affiliation with the schools, a factor that could have a biasing effect on the data.

Third, the generalizability of this study is affected by its small sample size and 3-week research period. While every effort was made to gather multiple data in the form of interviews, and observations of data to enhance the possibility of drawing valid and legitimate generalizations, research on the NTIC schools needs to be done over a longer period of time with a larger sample of schools, such as the NTIC schools in other states in Nigeria as well as schools not in the NTIC network. Because of travel and time limitations, this study only examined the schools at Abuja campus of NTIC schools. Participants may have had limited experience with educational models other than the approach offered by NTICs.

The fourth limitation is related to the academic achievement of students at NTICs. The researcher did not have a chance to see actual student work. For the most part, data on achievement was provided to the researcher through the NTIC administration. Additional information regarding academic achievement was made available by the state education department of Abuja. All information showed students to be doing quite well on the skills and knowledge assessed. The researcher is therefore limited in his understanding of academic achievement to standardized forms of assessment provided by these sources.

A fifth possible limitation is related to academic achievement between Gülen-inspired schools and Nigerian public schools. A primary purpose of this research was to compare academic achievement differences that might exist between Gülen-inspired schools and government schools. The study, however, was limited by the fact that the researcher was not allowed access to the public schools. In fact, when attempting to gain access to a public school, the researcher was told to leave the campus and not to contact students or teacher at the institution. Thus, the researcher did not have a chance to compare instructional approaches as they might differ in Gülen-inspired schools and public schools. It was clear from data collected by the government and the NTIC schools that academic achievement, on the variables for which data were collected, that NTIC students showed higher levels of achievement.

Author's Note

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

References

Adetula, V. A. O. (2008). *Money and politics in Nigeria*. Abuja, Nigeria: Petra Digital Press.

Aslandogan, Y. A. (2006, March). *Pedagogical model of Gülen and modern theories of learning*. Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Islam in the Contemporary World: The Fethullah Gülen Movement in Thought and Practice, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX.

Aslandogan, Y. A. (2009, June). *The Gülen movement* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://csis.org/multimedia/audio-Gülen-movement

Aslandoğan, Y. A., & Çetin, M. (2006). Gülen's educational paradigm in thought and practice. In R. A. Hunt & Y. A. Aslandoğan (Eds.), *Muslim citizens of the globalized world: Contributions of the Gülen movement* (pp. 35-61). Somerset, NJ: The Light.

Aydin, H., & Chandler, S. (2010, November). Building a culture of dialogue: A qualitative field study of the Gülen-inspired schools in Abuja, Nigeria. Paper presented at the Gülen Movement: Paradigms, Projects, and Aspirations, International Conference, Chicago, IL.

Banks, J. A. (2004). *Diversity and citizenship education: Global perspectives*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Çetin, M. (2006, November). *Voluntary altruistic action: Its symbolic challenge against sinecures of vested interests*. Paper presented on the Second Annual Conference on Islam in the Contemporary World: The Fethullah Gülen Movement in Thought and Practice, The University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Çetin, M. (2009, April 19). *Is the Gülen movement a civil society initiative? Today's Zaman*. Retrieved from http://todayszaman.com/news-172853-is-the-gulen-movement-a-civil-society-initiative-by-muhammed-cetin.html

Çetin, M. (2010). *The Gülen movement: Civic service without borders*. New York, NY: Blue Dome Press.

Clement, V. (2007). Turkmenistan's new challenges: Can stability co-exist with reform? A study of Gülen schools in Central Asia, 1997-2007. In I. Yilmaz (Ed.), International conference proceedings Muslim world in transition: Contribution of the Gülen movement (pp. 572-583). London, England: Leeds Metropolitan University Press.

Clinton, B. (2008, September 30). *Bill Clinton: Fethullah Gülen's contribution to the world* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPiPOL9-EQs&;feature=related

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Dike, V. (2008). *The state of education in Nigeria and the health of the nation*. Africa Economic Analysis. Retrieved from http://www.afbis.com/analysis/education10204234737.htm

Ebaugh, H. R. (2010). *The Gülen movement: A sociological analysis of a civic movement rooted in moderate Islam*. London, NY: Springer.

Falola, T., & Heaton, M. M. (2008). *A history of Nigeria*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Farenga, P. (2000). *The education emperor has no clothes: Ideas for nurturing a culture of learning*. Rangeley, ME: A Coalition for Self-Learning Press.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gülen, M. F. (2000).At the threshold of a new millennium. *The Fountain*, *3*, 5-9.

Gülen, M. F. (2001). *Impressions*. Retrieved from http://www.fethullahGülen.org/about-fethullah-Gülen/education/780-impressions.html

Gülen, M. F. (2004). *Essays perspectives opinions* (2nd ed.). Rutherford, NJ: The Light.

Gülen, M. F. (2006, January). *Education from cradle to grave*. Retrieved from http://www.mlife.org/content/view/68/71/

Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1983). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Some techniques of data reduction and display. *Quality & Quantity*, *17*, 281-339.

Kalyoncu, M. (2008, November). *Gülen-inspired schools in the East Africa: Secular alternative in Kenya and pragmatist approach to development in Uganda*. Paper presented at the Islam in the Age of Global Challenges: Alternative Perspectives of the Gülen Movement, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

Keles, I. (2007). The contributions of the Sebat international education institutes to Kyrgyzstan. In I. Yilmaz (Ed.), *International conference proceedings Muslim world in transition: Contribution of the Gülen movement* (pp. 362-376). London, England: Leeds Metropolitan University Press.

Keskin, V. (2012). *International teachers at the public schools and 60 minutes coverage of Fethullah Gülen and Hizmet movement*. Retrieved from http://www.rumiforum.org/articles/gulen-inspired-schools-glocal-schools-serving-with-integrity-and-sincerity.html

Kurtz, R. L. (2005). Gülen's paradox: Combining commitment and tolerance. *Journal of the Muslim World*, *95*, 373-384.

Lafer, S. K. (2004, October 8). More school isn't necessarily better. *Reno Gazette-Journal*, pp. A*1*, A4.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Michel, T. (2003). Fethullah Gülen as educator. In M. H. Yavuz & J. L. Esposito (Eds.), *Turkish Islam and the secular state: The Gülen movement* (pp. 69-85). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Michel, T. (2006). *Gülen's pedagogy and the challenges for modern educators*. Retrieved from http://www.thomasmichel.us/modern-educators.html

Moja, T. (2000). *Nigeria education sector analysis: An analytical synthesis of performance and main issues*. New York, NY: World Bank Press.

Mustapha, A. R., & House, Q. E. (2003). Ethnic minority groups in Nigeria: Current situation and major problems. *Journal of Human Commission Rights*, *5*, 1-24.

Nelson, C. (2005). *Fethullah Gülen: A vision of transcendent education*. Retrieved from http://www.fethullahGülen.org/conference-papers/the-fethullah-Gülen-movement-i/2133-fethullah-Gülen-a-vision-of-transcendent-education.html

Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges. (2009). *Annual report on NTICs*. Abuja, Nigeria: Nigerian Turkish International College.

Odia, L. O., & Omofonmwan, S. I. (2007). Educational system in Nigeria problems and prospects. *Journal of Social Science*, *14*, 81-86.

Onche, C. (2010, March). *Nigerian-Turkish colleges fight maths phobia, awards scholarships. leadership for god and country*. Retrieved from http://leadershipnigeria.com/news/fct/12676-nigerian-turkish-colleges-fight-maths-phobia-awards-scholarships

Park, B. (2008). The Fethullah Gülen movement. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, *12*, 1-14.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Rumbaut, R. G., & Portes, A. (1997). *Immigrant America: A portrait*. Los Angeles: University of California, Press.

Solberg, A. (2005, April).*The Gülen schools: A perfect compromise or compromising perfectly?* Proceedings of the 2ndKotor Network Conference: Religion in Schools: Problems of Pluralism in the Public Sphere, Kotor, Bosnia Herzegovina.

Stake, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Ünal, A., & Williams, A. (2000). *Advocate of dialogue: Fethullah Gülen*. Fairfax, VA: The Fountain.

Woodhall, R. (2010). *Fethullah Gülen's philosophy of education in practice*. Retrieved from http://www.fethullahGülenforum.org/articles/5/fethullah-Gülen-s-philosophy-education-practice

Yesilova, H. (2008). *The crisis in Caucasia and the Gülen-inspired schools*. Retrieved from http://www.fethullahGülen.org/fethullah-Gülen-web-site-blog/3050-the-crisis-in-caucasia-and-the-Gülen-inspired-schools.html

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Author Biography

Hasan Aydin received his BA in English in 2005, and he earned his MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 2007. He holds his PhD in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in multicultural education in 2011 from the University of Nevada, Reno. Currently, he is an assistant professor of multicultural education at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey. His areas of expertise and academic interests are multicultural/intercultural and bilingual education curriculum, including immigration, cultural integration, and assimilation of Turkish immigrants in the European Union and the United States; international education; diversity; ethnic identity; second-language acquisition; Kurdish language curriculum; and teaching online classes with Web 2.0 technology. He is a coauthor of *Cultural Integration of Turkish Women in the Netherlands* published in 2012 by LAMBERT Academic Publishing. He has published several peer-review journal articles and has presented at national and international conferences.