

## THE STATE OF BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA BORDER COMMUNITIES

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**Abstract:** *The study investigated the state of basic education in the Nigerian international border communities of Sokoto State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A multistage sampling technique was adopted for the selection of 597 out of 3,876 respondents. A 29 items four-point-Likert scale Researcher's designed questionnaire that was translated into Arabic and Hausa languages with psychometric properties of content validity 0.80, 0.75 and 0.87 and a reliability coefficient of 0.76, 0.82 and 0.71 while the interview items have a content validity of 0.77 and a reliability coefficient 0.78 was used to elicit the needed data. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that parental, teachers, governmental, and facilities factors pose challenges to basic education in the border areas, among others. Educational policymakers are recommended to take necessary measures to decentralize the curriculum of the education system in Nigeria to take care of the educational needs of a different society.*

**Keyword:** *Schooling, Basic education, Border, Parent and Communities*

**Abstrak:** Studi ini menyelidiki keadaan pendidikan dasar di komunitas perbatasan internasional Nigeria di Negara Bagian Sokoto. Desain penelitian survei deskriptif diadopsi untuk penelitian ini. Teknik pengambilan sampel multistage diadopsi untuk pemilihan 597 dari 3.876 responden. Kuisisioner yang dirancang peneliti dengan 29 item skala empat poin skala yang diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Arab dan bahasa Hausa dengan sifat psikometri validitas isi 0,80, 0,75 dan 0,87 dan koefisien reliabilitas 0,76, 0,82 dan 0,71 sedangkan item wawancara memiliki validitas isi 0,77 dan koefisien reliabilitas 0,78 digunakan untuk memperoleh data yang dibutuhkan. statistik deskriptif dan inferensial digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa faktor orang tua, guru, pemerintah, dan fasilitas menjadi salah satu tantangan dalam pendidikan dasar di daerah perbatasan. Pembuat kebijakan pendidikan direkomendasikan untuk mengambil tindakan yang diperlukan untuk mendesentralisasikan kurikulum sistem pendidikan di Nigeria guna memenuhi kebutuhan pendidikan masyarakat yang berbeda.

**Kata Kunci:** Sekolah, Pendidikan Dasar, Perbatasan, Orang Tua dan Komunitas

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## INTRODUCTION

The building of civil society requires increased access to knowledge and education. The right to education is an essential human need and a basic human right, which is crucial to human development. Furthermore, a high-grade level of education stands as the solution to the major social problems of individual countries and the world. To Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education is a pre-requisite of facilitating democracy and a means of promoting peace, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms which enhances the quality of life of an individual.

Nigeria, despite her richness in resources after over 59 years of political independence and over 105 years of nationhood ranked 158 among the 189 nations of the world on the Global Human Development Index report. Numerous factors could be militating against her rapid development and the ascription of such status in the committee of nations, such as corruption, the poor state of education, lack of effective national development planning, and general insecurity, among others (World Bank, 2012; Wills 2010). Thus, the provision of qualitative education in Nigeria is yet to be recognized and implemented as one of the fundamental rights of every child.

In an attempt to make education accessible, affordable to every Nigerian child, the Federal Government of Nigeria agreed with the World Bank, a signatory to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA), and other international agencies, with the sole aim of making education available and accessible to every Nigerian school-age child. Yet, as of 2017, over 104 years of Nigeria's existence as a nation, education is still not accessible to every Nigerian child. The question one would ask from here is, how inclusive is the so-called Universal Basic Education programme when the programme has only catered for gender, nomadic Fulani, the migrant fishermen,

people with disabilities of any form and recently inclusive education programme of Al-majiri, with no mention of people residing in the border areas of the nation?

Border areas or Borderlands refer to areas at the periphery of a country or territory, where cultural and natural phenomena overlap (Oliveros, 2002). To Folami and Karimu (2010), the Nigerian border environment is associated with unclassified problems entangled with peevish outlook and being devoid of most modern facilities and infrastructure that sustain an urban area. Also, Nigeria's border areas are characterized by numerous challenges viz; an inadequate number of formal institutions such as schools, hospitals, banks, recreation centers, and public libraries which are drivers of sustainable development. These challenges have various impacts on the lives of the people living in the border areas, the youth which is the key that unlocks the doors of underdevelopment through education is been faced with various problems such as sociological, psychological, and the most predominant educational problems or challenges.

Educationally, this has made the communities be at a disadvantage. Problems of inequality in the distribution of essential social goods (i.e. education, income, employment, living environment, health, social order, social belonging, recreation, and leisure) in most modern societies may well be an inevitable aspect of the human conditions; at least, no present society seems to have completely overcome them. However, some kinds of problems are preferable to others.

### *The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions*

This study investigated the state of basic education in the Nigerian international border areas of Sokoto State as assessed by the parents and teachers. To this end, answers were sought for the following questions:

1. What are the challenges pose by the parents to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas of Sokoto State?
2. What are the challenges pose by the teachers to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas of Sokoto State?
3. What are the challenges pose by the government to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas of Sokoto State?
4. What are the challenges posed by facilities to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas of Sokoto State?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

This study employed a descriptive survey research design which is the systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a given population or areas of interest factually (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

### *Research Sample*

The target population comprised the teachers and parents in the Nigeria international border areas of Sokoto State. A multistage sampling technique was adopted in the selection of the respondents. This is appropriate as the population involved more than two clusters, which is in line with Sambo's (2008) submission. At the first stage; a purposive sampling technique was employed in the selection of the three villages that have public schools out of 18 villages in the Ieala Local Government Area of Sokoto State. Secondly, the households were stratified on the bases of child enrolment in the school and only households in which child enrolment was sampled. There are 65,821 households out of which 1,137 (615, 321 and 201 respectively) households were selected. These households have a population of 3,763 parents and 113 teachers making a total of 3,876 respondents. Lastly, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 597

respondents out of which 377 (312 parents and 65 teachers respectively) were administered questionnaires while 220 (206 parents and 14 teachers) respondents were interviewed. The sample size was determined using The Research Advisor table of sample selection which was based on the formula prepared by Krejcie and Morgan. Thus;

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P * (1 - P)}{(ME * (N - 1) + x^2 * P * (1 - P))}$$

Where:

n = sample size

X<sup>2</sup> = Chi-square for the

N = Population Size (.05 in the sample size table)

ME = desired Margin of Error (expressed as a proportion)

### *Research Instruments and Procedures*

Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were employed in this study. Quantitative is a structured questionnaire while the qualitative is an interview. To make the sociological findings bias-free, valid and generalizable, triangulation is used. Triangulation helps sociological researchers and other researchers in the field of social sciences to overcome bias and increases the rate of neutrality (Ahmed, 2007). The use of quantitative and qualitative instruments was for the data to be robust and to be able to cater to information that may not be obtained using the questionnaire alone.

A – 29 items four-point-Likert scale researcher's designed questionnaires of a probing type, from the available literature were used for eliciting the needed data from the respondents. The questionnaire was translated into two other languages (Arabic and Hausa), so as not to utter the originality of the items during data collection. Also, it is to cater to the needs of the community members who are unlettered parents. The questionnaire items were validated by experts in the Department of Social Sciences Education, Consultancy unit of the University of

Ilorin to ensure its content validity of 0.76, 0.82, and 0.71. This is in line with Sambo (2008) who maintained that the best procedure for validating a research instrument is to give it to a panel of experts. A test- re-test reliability method was carried out with a sample of three border teachers and 101 teachers and parents within the Ilo border community of Bagudo in Kebbi state. The scores were using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to obtain a 0.76, 0.82, and 0.71 reliability index respectively. The questionnaire contained two sections. Bio-data of the respondent constituted the first section while the second contained 29-items with 4 points responses (Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). The data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA. A 6 items interview question from the literature with psychometric properties of content validity of 0.77 and reliability index of 0.78 was used after a pilot test with 75 parents and teachers in the Ilo community of Bagudo local government of Kebbi State. A tape recorder was used to record the information gathered from the interview schedule.

#### Data Analysis

A thematic coding system was adopted in the interpretation of the interviewed while percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used in answering the research questions and testing of the research hypothesis.

#### Data Collection

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the University of Ilorin, Ilorin which was presented to the Community Heads of each of the villages to allow access to community members who served as respondents. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire in the company of 12 research assistants. Also, the interview was personally conducted by the researcher with two

research assistants who served as record officers. A maximum of three weeks was spent in each of the villages. Anonymity policy of research ethics was upheld.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table for each research question was presented based on the population of the respondents 320 parents, 65 teachers totaling 377 respondents.

### *Challenges posed by the parents to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas of Sokoto State*

**Table 1.** Parents responses to Parental Challenges

s/n	Statements (Parental factors)	N	Mean	std
1	Poor parental interest in investing in their children's education	377	3.25	0.66
2	Lack of financial resources	377	3.19	0.81
3	Poor provision of learning materials for students	377	3.13	0.60
4	Poor provision of the basic needs of students	377	3.31	0.68
5	Poor participation in P.T.A.	377	3.58	0.75
6	The poor motivation of their children to study	377	3.48	1.14
7	Large family size	377	3.00	0.94
8	The religious belief of the people does not influence parents' decision towards enrolling their children in basic schools	377	3.52	0.85
9	Parental occupation	377	3.64	0.77
10	Most parents engage their children in domestic tasks before going to school	377	3.64	0.77
Weighted mean			3.01(75%)	

Table 1 reveals the mean score rang from 3.13 to 3.69 > 3.01 weighted average, which can be rated as a 75 % acceptance level, meaning all the respondents agreed to the fact that parents factors constituted the above challenges to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas.

Base on the result of the interview, 89% of the respondents attest to the fact that they have constituted a challenge to basic education of their children but their challenge was not lacking finance to send their children to school, rather it was their non -involvement in the interest of education that transforms into many other challenges their children are facing.

*Challenges posed by the teachers to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas*

**Table 2.** Teachers Responses

s/n	Statements (Teachers factors)	N	Mean	std
1	Inadequate provision of specilzed teachers in the various core subjects the in border schools	377	2.01	0.37
2	Inadequate numbers of teachers in border school	377	3.03	0.85
3	Lack of provision for border teachers to attend workshop/ seminars/training regularly to improve on their performance	377	3.01	0.54
4	Inadequate provision of good accommodation for border teachers to better their attendance at school	377	3.00	0.66
5	Lack of residential accommodation for teachers posed to border schools	377	3.02	0.43
Weighted Mean		2.81(70%)		

Table 2 shows the mean score rang from 3.00 to 3.03 > 2.81 weighted average, which can be rated as a 70 % acceptance level, meaning that both the parents and the teachers agreed to the fact that teachers factors constituted the challenges of basic education in the border areas.

Ninty-three percent of the teachers interviewed affirm that they were party to the challenges of attaining basic education in the area, in that they were neglected, from the center by the government and

ministry of education officers, they were not given any special allowance for accepting to teaching in the border areas and lastly, their deployment to the area was a form of punishment. Since there was no provision for comfortable accommodations for them this in one way or the other hinders their attitude towards the work.

*Challenges posed by the government to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas*

**Table 3:** Parental Responses on Governmental Challenges

s/n	Statements	N	Mean	std
1	Inadequate provision of instructional materials	377	3.13	0.86
2	Deployment of under-qualified teachers and staff to border schools	377	3.36	0.84
3	Poor supervision of schools at the international border areas	377	3.36	0.63
4	Problems of educational policy being centralized.	377	3.21	0.72
5	Lack of special allowance for teachers and staffs deployed to border schools.	377	3.21	0.72
6	Children lack access to senior secondary school after completing their basic schools	377	3.10	0.85
7	Lack of provision for the education of children with special needs	377	3.29	0.61
Weighted mean		2.98(74%)		

Table 3 revealed mean score rang from 3.10 to 3.36 > 2.98 weighted average, which can be rated as a 74 % acceptance level, this affirm the fact that the respondents sees governmental factors posing the above challenges to basic education in the studies area.

81% of the respondents see the government as a challenge to basic education. This could be seen from staff deployment and lack of continuity in the schooling system. They pointed to lack of

senior secondary school and any form of tertiary education be it, college of education, polytechnics or University for children to continue their school

*Challenges pose by facilities to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas*

**Table 4.** Parental responses on Facilities Challenges

s/n	Statements	N	Mean	std
1	Inadequate classroom blocks	377	2.42	0.90
2	Inadequate staff offices	377	2.58	0.81
3	Lack of staff residential quarters for both teachers and other staff	377	2.52	0.89
4	Lack of laboratories for effective teaching and learning in border schools.	377	2.34	0.88
5	Lack of school library	377	2.53	0.93
6	Lack of access to Information Communication Technology in border schools	377	2.48	0.85
7	Lack of water and electricity supply	377	2.50	0.84
Weighted mean			2.08(79%)	

Table 4 reveals the mean score range from 2.42 to 2.58 > 2.08 weighted average, which can be rated as a 79 % acceptance level, which implies that it was agreed school facilities posed to pose the above challenges to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas. Lastly, 92% of the respondents considered poor facilities available of teachers, and even the Federal Government Youth Corp members for effective teaching constituted a serious challenge to an adequate provision of basic education in the community.

Table 5 shows the significant difference among the challenges posed by the parents, government, teachers, and facilities to the state of basic education in the border communities as assessed by the parents and teachers.

**Table 5.** F-table showing difference of challenges posed by parents, government, teachers, and facilities

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	Sig.
Between group	91.839	1	91.839		
Within group	57221.666	375	152.324	0.509	0.476
Total	57313.505	376			

p= 0.05

Table 5 revealed that calculated F-ratio of 0.50 and a p-value =0.47 > 0.05, thus, the hypothesis is not rejected by accepted. This means that both the parents and the teachers considered all the four factors as major challenges posing a serious threat to the state of basic education in the border communities.

**DISCUSSION**

Nigeria's National Policy on Education (Federal Republic Nigeria, 2004) stated that the federal government has adopted education as an instrument for driving national development in all areas of the nation. However, this does not reflect the situation in the international border areas of Nigeria where there is an overwhelming widespread of illiteracy. Education in these places is characterized by very poor infrastructure, insufficient teachers, insecurity among others. It is common knowledge that a majority of the population in developing countries like Nigeria live in rural and international border areas such as this, which are largely neglected by the government when it comes to the development of any form, education inclusive. Even though border dwellers in Nigeria are usually not properly targeted in government development activities, the nation's wealth is derived from these areas across the country. And this created a concern to education stakeholders, thus, this is why the study assessed those factors posing a serious challenge to basic education in the Nigerian international border areas. After

data collection from the respondents, the four research questions raised were answered and the hypothesis was analyzed using the Analysis of Covariant (ANCOVA).

The findings of the study revealed that parental factors contributed to why schools in the border areas are without schooling activities. This was shown from the study that most parents do not have interest in investing in their children's education majorly due to their occupation, poor provision of learning materials for pupils, poor provision of the basic needs for pupils, poor attendance at Parent Teachers Association (PTA), the poor motivation of their children to study among others. When parents in the border areas do not provide the required educational needs for pupils and also do not have an interest in investing in education, these will affect the schooling of their children, thereby, leading to a situation of availability of school without schooling. The poor quality of schooling can be noticed from the poor condition of teaching and learning, obsolete pedagogy employed by teachers, and the non-availability of facilities that promote effective learning. These findings corroborated the study of Catholic Relief Services (2007) which pointed out among others that parents do not send their children to schools. Among the reasons given is the negative attitude of most parents towards education, generally. The parents who do not send their children to school consider it as time-wasting owing to the low quality of education given to those children who attend. The finding of Hadley (2010) negates the present study by revealing that the cultural belief of the family contributed to the border children not a poor state of schooling. Also arguing in the same line was the report of the survey study conducted by UNICEF (2010) that pointed at a high rate of illiteracy among adults groups in the border as a factor determining their attitudes towards schooling generally.

Finding from the study also revealed that border schools are faced with the challenges of inadequate numbers of teachers in terms of quality and quantity. The position of the border areas to the seat of government leads to teachers being denied the opportunity of attending workshop, seminars, and conference which is required for professional development and promote effective teaching. Moreso, teachers' deployment to border schools is considered a challenge, this is because most very committed and hardworking teachers in the school at the center are not always deployed to the border communities to serve. In so many cases, teachers who are found wanting one misconduct or inappropriateness are those deployed to border communities to serve as a way of punishing him/her. Getting to these communities accommodating themselves was also found to constitute a serious challenge. All these will affect their attitude and commitment to work. This finding also corroborates that of African Region and World Bank (2003) research activities of schools in seven border communities of Senegal which shows that teachers do not regularly plan their lessons; they rarely prepare any activity to actively involve children; they fail also to adopt new pedagogical skills to teach initial literacy, number and basic science concepts to young children; and lastly, they equally fail to work with other teachers to develop teaching lessons and materials and to share ideas. Also, the findings of this present study corroborated that of Alexandra (2008) which revealed that lack of basic social amenities in the border communities predicted to a large extent the quality of teaching by the school teachers.

As for the governmental factors challenges rendered border areas a situation of school without schooling. The study revealed that there is a situation of inadequate provision of instructional materials in the schools for the pupils and students to use. Teachers deployed to these

areas are those found wanting in the performance of their duties in the urban cities as a form of punishment, this call for why they will not put in their best in the discharged of their task. Poor supervision of schools at the international border areas is another challenge which brought about a situation school existing without the effective teaching and learning taking place. Problems of the educational policy being centralized did not help to take care of the special nature of the environment and the predominant occupation of the border dwellers. Their occupation is farming and this is where the services of their children are mostly required. School lessons and programmes in Nigeria are centrally controlled which make it impossible for border children to be in school when they are to be on their parent's farm. Lack of special allowance for teachers and staff deployed to border schools, children's lack of access to senior secondary school after completing their basic schools, and lack of provision for the education of children with special needs are parts of problems facing basic education in these areas. All these contributed to why there are schools in the border areas and no schooling is taking place. This finding also tallies with that of Marya (2011) whose findings revealed that government poor fund allocation to education constituted a serious challenge to the schooling system in Nigeria either in the urban, rural, or international border areas. Insufficiency has been attributed to no provision of facilities and infrastructures in schools in the border communities. Marya's findings also argued that no right could exist without corresponding government obligation and that government is obliged to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to every child regardless of any society they find themselves. The finding of this study also corroborated those of Okoh (1998), Ahmed and Carron (1989) and Uwheraka (2005) whose findings also argue in that

insufficient fund disbursed by the government to handle or manage basic education resulted in low quality of teaching and learning experienced in schools at both urban and border areas, poor staff training, poorly motivated teaching staff, poor physical school structures, among others. These, definitely, influence access, retention completion, and achievement of education in this region, regardless of the vital role of education in society.

On the part of inadequate facilities, it was revealed from the study that, they are inadequately provided to schools in the border areas. These affect schooling in border areas negatively and give room to teachers focusing more on theoretical teaching (purely teacher-centered rather than student-centered) and hence, contribute to students not being proficient in practical skills acquisition. This has led to basic school system breeding/producing basic school leavers who cannot fit into senior secondary school. This finding negates the finding of Adam (2011), who posited that these educational resources, whether adequate or inadequate in terms of supply, do not significantly influence students' teaching and learning. Thus, the findings are also in agreement with that of Oghenekohwo, Adekola, and Iyunade (2011) whose study also revealed that insufficient educational infrastructure is a general problem in Nigeria's educational system both at the urban, rural or international border areas. The findings describe the Nigerian schooling system as an operating academic institution in a vacuum ("just empty four walls,") without any real educational infrastructures. Equally, is the findings of Anaxagorou, (2007) whose study also revealed the state of infrastructure of Liberia border schools has always not been able to keep pace with the population of the school-age children around. What was on the ground there was a case of classes without adequate furniture and facilities, with pupils sitting on the floor.



The challenges posed by the parents, government, teachers, and facilities to basic schools in the border areas was assessed the same way by the respondents. This could be because the respondents lived together in the same communities where they are exposed to the same situation which could influence them to believe, behave, or feel the same way about issues and challenges. The studies of Alexandra (2008), Mark, Benwari, and Abraham (2010), Oghenekohwo, Adekola, and Iyunade (2007), Aina, (2010), and Lewin (2010), are in agreement with the present study. These scholars maintain that there are shortages of teachers, educational materials, facilities, and infrastructures. Disappointedly, poor qualities of education, insufficient numbers of qualified teachers, negative attitude of teachers towards teaching, poor teachers' attendance in school and poor supervisions and inspections of the schools from the state and federal ministries of education among others posed a serious challenge to basic education in the Nigeria international border areas.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that government factors contributed more to the state of basic education in the border areas thereby creating an unequal opportunity for school-age children in Nigeria. All other factors are dependent on government policies and programmes.

It was based on the findings of this study that the researcher recommended that:

- a. Parents in the border areas should develop an interest in the education of their children thereby involving themselves in all the supports their children would require for schooling.
- b. The government through the Ministry of Education should provide special allowance and comfortable accommodation to teachers in the

border areas for the teachers' attitude towards the work to change for better.

- c. The government should deploy enough teachers to the border areas and ensure continuity in the schooling system by building senior secondary schools and higher institutions of learning for pupils in the border areas to continue their education.
- d. Provision should be made for teaching and learning facilities to bring about effective teaching and learning.

By implication, the findings of this study will help the education industry by exposing government, curriculum planners, policymakers, students, teachers, parents and other members of the community to another disadvantaged group in Nigeria the people living in the international border areas; that the challenges of the disadvantaged group in the border areas are educationally at disadvantage. Lastly, there is a need to investigate which form of alternative types of education and vocational training should focus on developing the life skills of the border people.

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