



Assessment of The Prevalence of Out-of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The main objectives of the study is to assess the prevalence of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Three objectives and three research questions were raised to guide the study. In carrying out the study, a descriptive survey design was adopted and the study was carried out in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The targeted population for the study comprised of all school administrators, teachers, and parents in the 21 Local Government Area of Adamawa States of Nigeria. Due to the large number of school administrators, teachers, parents and students in the 21 Local Government Area of Adamawa States of Nigeria, a sample of 6 Local Governments, 60 schools, 60 school administrators, 180 teachers, and 120 parents were selected as sampled population for the study using the stratified random sampling technique. A 16-item structured questionnaire tagged "the prevalence of Out-Of-School Children opinion Questionnaire" (POSCOQ) was used to obtain data from respondents for the study. The questionnaire was designed using the modified four-point Likert's rating scale. Two methods of data analysis were used for analyzing data for the study: Simple percentage was used for analyzing the respondents' bio-data and the mean and Standard Deviation methods of data analysis was used to answer the research questions that were raised for the study. In conclusion, the prevalence of out-of-school children (OOSC) in Adamawa State, Nigeria, is a significant concern that has been exacerbated by various socio-economic and political factors. The prevalence of out-of-school children in Adamawa State remains a critical issue that requires urgent attention from both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The prevalence of out-of-school children is influenced by various factors, including socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and the impact of conflict and insecurity. To solve these difficulties, efforts should prioritize inclusive policies that promote equitable access to quality education for all children and the government should ensure that basic education is free and compulsory in all aspects by reducing the cost of education.

KEYWORDS: Education, Prevalence, Out-Of-School Children (OOS), Categories and Impact, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing education's key role in national development and globalization, worldwide, there has been an effort towards functional education, it can be both qualitative and quantitative. The concern for quantitative and qualitative education, was evident in the declaration of Education for All (EFA), at Jomtien Thailand in 1995 and was also endorsed in Dakar in 2000. The world made this endeavor concerted as we saw at a meeting convened by the 56th General Assembly of the United Nations to give a report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (Jika and Lawson, 2011).

In 2015, all Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which includes a plan of action on many global issues including poverty, health, education, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Sustainable Development Goal 4, known as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, is to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (Unterhalter, 2019; Boeren, 2019). Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world (UNICEF, 2018), with an estimated one in every five out-of-school children worldwide is Nigerian. Although basic education is free and considered compulsory by Nigerian law, there are approximately 10.5 million children aged 5 - 14 years old who are not in school. Nearly half of these children come from the northern region that has been heavily affected by the insurgency of Boko Haram. Even primary school attendance for children aged 6 - 11 years old is only 61% (UNICEF, 2018).

In Nigeria, as of 2022, there were about 20 million children of primary school age and adolescents and youths of secondary school age that were out of school (UNESCO, 2022). In 2024, Adamawa State is one of the states with the highest percentage of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Children, millions in Nigeria, are out of school and the state of Adamawa is even more impacted, through conflict and instability (UNICEF, 2024). The state is challenged through Boko Haram insurgency which account for the disrupted educational services and causes other individuals to leave, either in or out of the state. Adamawa alone has recently reported through assessments that it has the highest population percentage of out-of-school children in Nigeria. And according to the NBS and UNICEF estimates in 2023, the approximate number of children in Adamawa State that have enrolled in no official way of learning is estimated to be 1.2 million children. This represents very high population number of school age children and warrants urgent justification for concern. The state of Adamawa, Nigeria is very concerned about the issues of out-of-school children, as population of out-of-school children do vary but existence should be relevant under articulating educational crises across Nigeria.

Zeynep, Abdurrahman, and Şeyma (2016) have attributed the prevalence of out-of-school children to several factors: general financial constraints, disinterest in studies, a somewhat indifferent attitude of parents, lack of facilities for education in villages, poor quality of education, imposition of parental choices on adolescents, and lack of any sort of privacy and toilet facilities for students, besides others, which encompass socio-economic condition and cultural beliefs, conflict and displacement, and infrastructural deficiencies. The attendant problem of dropout is not to be overemphasized, drop out from school has become a global problem. Dropouts among secondary school students can lead to; early marriages; insecurity in the society, (armed robbery, unwanted pregnancy, high rate of abortion, human trafficking, drug trafficking) and breakdown of rules and regulations etc., (Cabus & Witte, 2015). Even majority of the students in school feel that you can only be sure of security if you are occulted and moving around with guns the entire country has become not safe to the extent that parents no longer trust their children, unwanted pregnancy, youthful marriage, trial marriage and divorce are no longer new in our society.

In response to these challenges, both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have initiated various programs aimed at increasing school enrollment and retention rates. Initiatives include: School Feeding Programs. Awareness Campaigns, Infrastructure Development. Despite these efforts, achieving significant progress remains a challenge due to the complex interplay of factors affecting education in the region. It is against this backdrop

that this paper is designed to assess the prevalence of Out-of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study is to assess the prevalence of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to:

1. Identify the categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria.
2. Identify the causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria.
3. Assess the impact of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
2. What are the causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
3. What are the impact of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "out-of-school children" is non-attendance of the school of school-age children for some established factors (Ogunode, Chinwuba & Ayoko, 2022). UNESCO report (2000) points out, that about one thirty million children in the developing world are denied their right to education through dropping out. According to Okoh, Doma, & Akinsola, (2020) the term "out-of-school children" is an inclusive concept and include three categories namely: Out of schooling of school age children, Children dropping out from school, and De-schooling. In Nigeria, the issue of out-of-school children (OOSC) is multifaceted.

The education deprivation in Nigeria according to UNICEF (2014) is driven by various factors, including: Geographic Distribution (Abdu et al., 2020), Socio-Economic Status, (Adeoye & Dipeolu, 2017), Gender Disparities (European Commission, 2021), Child Labor (Ersado, 2005), Disability Status and Internal Displacement (Ajuwon, 2008). The consequences of any form of out of school are obvious for children and the society. Children who are out of school are exposed to social stigma, fewer job opportunities, lower salaries, and higher probability of involvement in criminal activities.

According to Okoh, Doma, & Akinsola, 2020) the following were identified as the consequences of Out of school impels pupils: Out of school impels pupils' self-esteem and psychological well-being, faced with the reality that they lack skills and knowledge to fulfill their desires, School dropouts were more unemployed compared to those who complete school, Dropouts are substantially more likely to rely on public welfare and health services, Dropouts are more likely to be incarcerated during their lifetime, and above all out of school children (OSC) hinders individual development and sustainable development which as a multidimensional concept of development includes economic, social and environmental dimensions being considered and integrated (Boggia & Cortina, 2010; Okoh, Doma, & Akinsola, 2020).

Across the Federal, State and Local Government levels, efforts have been made to address the problem of out of school children in the country. A number of possible interventions put forward are presented below: Accelerated Education Programme, Increased and improved educational infrastructure and resources, Sensitization on the importance of education and

advocacy on the Child Rights Act (2003), A blend of economic interventions for households, Improved security and safe spaces, Gender based violence and child molestation in the school environment should also be prosecuted leveraging available legal framework for child rights protection and safeguarding.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In carrying out the study, a descriptive survey design was adopted and the study was carried out in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The targeted population for the study comprised of all school administrators, teachers, and parents in the 21 Local Government Area of Adamawa States of Nigeria. Due to the large number of school administrators, teachers, parents and students in the 21 Local Government Area of Adamawa States of Nigeria, a sample of 6 Local Governments, 60 schools, 60 school administrators, 180 teachers, and 120 parents will be selected as sampled population for the study using the stratified random sampling technique.

A 16-item structured questionnaire tagged “the prevalence of Out-Of-School Children opinion Questionnaire” (POSCOQ) was used to obtain data from respondents for the study. The questionnaire was designed using the modified four-point Likert’s rating scale. The instrument for the study was validated by two experts in the School of General Education Federal College of Education, Yola for both face and content validity. A pilot test was conducted in Taraba State which is not part of the study area but has characteristics similar to the study area. The pilot test was used to establish the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha method. The data collected during the pilot test was analysed and a coefficient of 0.77 was obtained which shows that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Two methods of data analysis were used for analyzing data for the study:

1. Simple percentage was used for analyzing the respondents bio-data.
2. The mean and Standard Deviation methods of data analysis was used to answer the research questions that were raised for the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information

The information in Table 1 indicates that although there were 360 questionnaire distributed, it was only 328 questionnaire representing 91.1 percent that were returned and well filled while 32 questionnaire representing 8.9 percent were either not returned or not well filled. This information is represented in Figure 1 below:

Table 1: Questionnaire on Return Rate

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaire well filled and returned	328	91.1
Questionnaire not well filled and not returned	32	8.9
TOTAL	360	100

From the summary in Table 2 it is clear that out of the 328 questionnaire that were returned and well filled, 152 questionnaire representing 46.3 percent were filled by male respondents while 176 questionnaire representing 53.7 percent were filled by female respondents. This information is represented in Figure 2 below:

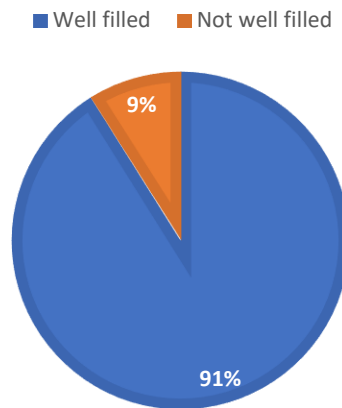


Figure 1: Questionnaire Return Rate

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	152	46.3
Female	176	53.7
TOTAL	328	100

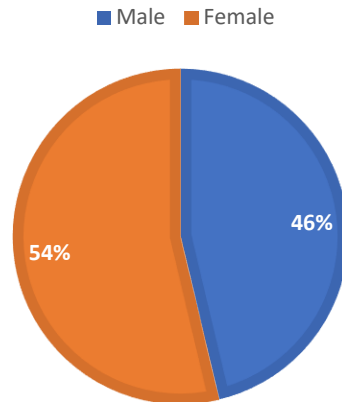


Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Categories

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School Administrators	60	18.3
Teachers	161	49.1
Parents	107	32.6
TOTAL	328	100

The analysis in Table 3 indicate that out of the 328 questionnaire well filled and returned by the respondents, 18.3 percent were filled by the school administrators, 49.1 percent by teachers while 32.6 percent by the parents. This information is presented in Figure 3 below:

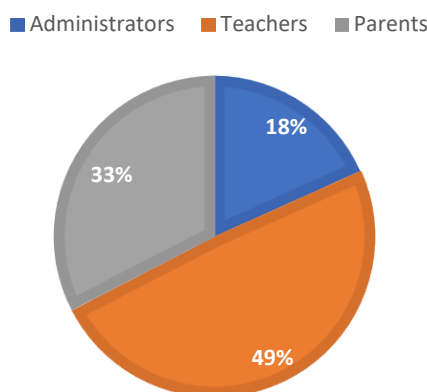


Figure 3: Category of Respondents

Answering The Resarch Questions

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: What are the categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Table 4: Categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Item n = 328	Freq.	Mean	Decision
1	Out of schooling of school age children	957	2,92	Accepted
2	Children dropping out from school	986	3.01	Accepted
3	De-schooling	964	2.94	Accepted
TOTAL			2.96	ACCEPTED

The results of the analysis on the categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria as presented in Table 4, provide valuable insights into various categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The mean scores is utilized to gauge the categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Overall, the grand mean is 2.96 indicating an agreed response on the categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Breaking down the individual items, item 1 reveals that Out of schooling of school age children is a category of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 2.92, categorizing it as accepted. Similarly, item 2 indicates that Children dropping out from school, is a category of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.01, also classified as agreed. However, item 3 suggests that De-schooling, is a category of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, as evidenced by a mean score of 2.94 placing it in the agreed level.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: What are the causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

The results of the analysis on the causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria as presented in Table 5, provide valuable insights into various causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Item n = 328	Freq.	Mean	Decision
1	Geographic Distribution	1016	3.10	Accepted
2	Socio-Economic Status	1024	3.12	Accepted
3	Gender Disparities	998	3.04	Accepted
4	Child Labor	976	2.98	Accepted
5	Disability Status	969	2.95	Accepted
6	Internal Displacement	1032	3.15	Accepted
TOTAL			3.06	ACCEPTED

The mean scores is utilized to gauge the causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Overall, the grand mean is 3.06 indicating an agreed response on the causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Breaking down the individual items, item 1 reveals that Geographic Distribution is among causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.10, categorizing it as accepted. Similarly, item 2 indicates that Socio-Economic Status, is among causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.12, categorizing it as accepted.

However, item 3 suggests that Gender Disparities, is among causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.04, categorizing it as accepted. Item 4 emphasizes that Child Labor is among causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 2.98, categorizing it as accepted. Item 5 indicates that Disability Status is among causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 2.98 categorizing it as accepted. Lastly, item 6 indicates that Internal Displacement is among causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.15 categorizing it as accepted

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: What are the impact of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

The Table 6 presents the mean of the impact of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The mean were calculated for each impact. The first criterion, "out of school children leads to Exposure to social stigma," received a mean score of 3.07, categorizing it as "accepted". The second impact with calculated mean of 3.12 indicate that out of school children leads to fewer job opportunities for the dropouts. Impact three shows that **out** of school children leads to Lower salaries for the dropouts and is represented by mean score of 3.01. Item four shows that out of school children leads to higher probability of involvement in criminal activities for the dropouts this is supported with calculated mean score of 2.94. Impact number five with a mean score of 2.96 shows that out of school children Impels pupils' self-esteem and psychological well-being for the dropouts. In a similar vein, the item six shows that out of school children leads to Lack skills and knowledge to fulfill their desires for the dropouts. This assertion is supported with calculated mean scores of 3.14 while item seven indicates that out of school children hinders individual development for the dropouts with a mean score of 3.10.

Table 6: The impact of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Item n = 328	Freq.	Mean	Decision
1	Out of school children leads to Exposure to social stigma,	1006	3.07	Accepted
2	Out of school children leads to fewer job opportunities for the dropouts	1022	3.12	Accepted
3	Out of school children leads to Lower salaries for the dropouts	988	3.01	Accepted
4	Out of school children leads to higher probability of involvement in criminal activities for the dropouts	964	2.94	Accepted
5	Out of school children Impels pupils' self-esteem and psychological well-being for the dropouts	970	2.96	Accepted
6	Out of school children leads to Lack skills and knowledge to fulfill their desires for the dropouts	1032	3.14	Accepted
7	Out of school children hinders individual development for the dropouts	1016	3.10	Accepted
TOTAL			3.05	ACCEPTED

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that:

The various categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The mean scores is utilized to gauge the categories of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria are: Out of schooling of school age children, Children dropping out from school and De-schooling. This finding agreed with the findings of: Okoh, Doma, & Akinsola, (2020).

The causes of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria are: Geographic Distribution, Socio-Economic Status, Gender Disparities, Child Labor, Disability Status and Internal Displacement. This finding agreed with the findings of Abdu et al., (2020), Adeoye & Dipeolu, (2017), European Commission, (2021), Ersado, (2005), and Ajuwon, (2008).

The impact of Out-Of-School Children in Adamawa State, Nigeria are: Out of school children leads to Exposure to social stigma, Out of school children leads to fewer job opportunities for the dropouts. Out of school children leads to Lower salaries for the dropouts Out of school children leads to higher probability of involvement in criminal activities Out of school children Impels pupils' self-esteem and psychological well-being for the dropouts, Out of school children leads to Lack skills and knowledge to fulfill their desires and Out of school children hinders individual development for the dropouts. This finding agreed with the findings of Okoh, Doma, & Akinsola, (2020), Boggia & Cortina, (2010) and Okoh, Doma, & Akinsola, (2020).

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of out-of-school children (OOSC) in Adamawa State, Nigeria, is a significant concern that has been exacerbated by various socio-economic and political factors. The prevalence of out-of-school children in Adamawa State remains a critical issue that requires urgent attention from both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The prevalence of out-of-school children is influenced by various factors, including socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and the impact of conflict and insecurity.

To solve these difficulties, efforts should prioritize the following:

- Ensuring inclusive policies that promote equitable access to quality education for all children.
- The government should ensure that basic education is free and compulsory in all aspects by reducing the cost of education.
- The law of child marriage should be enforced and also enabling laws for defaulters prohibiting them for being partners for children out of school.
- Enlightenment of parents, guardians and children on the relevance of education on human growth, development and sustainable development. Education campaigns should be intensified throughout the geo political zone. Public sensitization about the value and importance of education should be strengthened.
- There should be poverty reduction strategies through the development of appropriate policies and intervention strategies to help poor people improve their livelihood.

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