

**PERCEPTION: FOOD CHALLENGES, OTHER FACTORS
HINDER STUDENTS OF RURAL AREAS IN SOME
SOKOTO NORTH-EASTERN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREAS FROM PROCEEDING TO HIGHER
INSTITUTIONS**

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Abstract: *This study investigates the factors affecting rural students' progression to higher institutions in some local governments of northeastern Sokoto, Nigeria. The findings reveal that 70.0% of respondents attend school without food, while 30.0% bring food. The majority (73.0%) agree that food insecurity affects their education. Socioeconomic factors, including father's income and education, also impact rural students' ability to pursue higher education. Educational factors, such as access to educational tools and school type, also play a significant role. Cultural factors, including cultural background and perceived importance of education, also influence rural students' educational aspirations. The study recommends improving agriculture in rural areas, providing more teachers and funding, and addressing cultural ideals that may discourage education. The findings have implications for policymakers and educators seeking to promote equitable access to higher education for rural students in Nigeria.*

Key words: *Rural areas; education, nutrition; food; educational; higher institutions.*

Introduction

Education refers to many things. It refers to expression of human debris. Education through it delivery of facts, data, and behavior change purifies human being, develop character, and inculcate culture and civilization (Mangyada & Mukherjee et al., 2018). Education is a tool that inspire rural development, as well as regional and national development generally. Education elicits people to be conscious, increase functional abilities of rural people, provide manpower for yielding various services to rural dwellers, provide employment and economic benefits, and link rural and urban communities (Mangyada & Mukherjee, 2018). Rural people are mostly deprived of basic needs of living (Agumba et al., 2023). Certainly, large portion of the inhabitants of the earth live in the

rural areas, Sokoto State is not an exception (Mangyada & Mukherjee, 2018). One key aspect of great concern in rural areas is the education, especially the progress of higher education, the increase in number of rural inhabitants obtaining higher education qualifications (Alemu, 2014; Chan, 2016). Higher education encourages people to synthesize knowledge and elicit students to solve complex problems (Chan, 2016). Higher education is purposeful, intended to produce people with ability to write and read, equip citizens with ability to share common life, and help "self" and the society. Higher education institutes are avenues producing people for the sake of morality, and society (Agumba et al., 2023). People who are educated by the higher institutions have more social benefits, and economic competencies to serve all. Higher institutions produce people that are graduated to fill social demands (Chan, 2016). Higher institutions produce graduates that are well-informed in leadership skills, social skills, and personal benefits as well, for the nation building, socialization, and boosting an entire economic system of the state (Chan, 2016; Leikuma-Rimicane et al., 2022). Nigeria has its own specific educational policies aimed at ensuring educational development and delivery of quality education. The curriculum starts from preprimary to primary, to secondary, and to higher institutions (Enemeba et al., 2022). Tertiary education or institutions, such as universities, colleges, polytechnics, are struggling to deliver a curriculum spurring to provide students (or citizens) with the zeal for national development, and to inspire them become good ambassadors in the society (Enemeba et al., 2022; Leikuma-Rimicane et al., 2022). However, the system in Nigeria is challenged by factors such as poor quality, lack of funding, poor infrastructures, etc, thereby leading to failure in policies (Enemeba et al., 2022).

Due to several factors children or youngsters are unable to further to the tertiary education levels, therefore, the course of educational policy in the country has been on many occasions halt permanently (Egwaoje, 2024). This is very extreme in rural areas (Scott et al 2015; Wood, 2023), like in many places in Sokoto, Nigeria. There are factors leading to the ugly trend of terminating education at secondary school level. Knowing these factors through analyzing the context (rural) people will invariably serve in a very important way (Singh, 2017). The cultural effects such as the language tradition may serve as barriers to education (Egwaoje, 2024). Factors like, government funding, socioeconomic (financial) status of parents, poor school infrastructures, poor teachers, and others that are more extreme in rural areas make the rural people more disadvantaged in terms of going to higher institutions, generally backward in achieving goals of education; and ultimately with more inequalities (Egwaoje, 2024; Makai et al., 2024). Food systems or food security is certainly among the major determinants in rural areas. Local

foods or otherwise affect health, nutrition, income, and other parameters. Youngsters who facing food security are of much benefits to learn, stay at school, and achieve educational objectives (Martinez et al., 2010; Umar et al., 2023ab). Due to food insecurity, many youngsters abstain schools or completely drop out of school, and travel to urban areas in search of greener pastures (Hughes, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2023). In this vein, a systematic review conducted by Tamiru & Belachew (2017) indicated that, generally food insecurity at household level is linked to school absenteeism. This was also confirmed through a study done by Masa & Chowa (2020) in Ghana, where food insecurity was demonstrated to be negatively associated with escalation. Hunger is correlated to educational deprivation, and poverty indeed as cured by De Muro & Burchi (2007).

Objectives of the study

The followings are objectives of this study:

1. To Evaluate perceived of effects of food systems on participants going to school
2. To determine the perceived effects of socioeconomic factors on proceeding to higher institutions in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas
3. To determine the perceived effects of educational factors on proceeding to higher institutions in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas
4. To determine the perceived effects of cultural factors on proceeding to higher institutions in some Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas

Materials and methods

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design, using a survey questionnaire to collect data from respondents.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Gwadabawa, and Illela rural areas, Nigeria.

Population

The population consisted of rural students in Gwadabawa, and Illela Local Governments, Sokoto, Nigeria.

Sample Size

A total of 200 respondents participated in the study.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used was a convenience or voluntary sampling method.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections: demographic information, socio-economic factors, educational factors, and cultural factors.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

Results and discussion

Results

The results determined in this study are in Tables 1-5.

Demographic Characteristics of respondents in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
15-19 years	70	35.0
20-24 years	100	50.0
25 and above	30	15.0
Educational level		
Secondary student	30	15.0
Secondary graduate	90	45.0
Tertiary student	59	29.5
Tertiary graduate	21	10.5

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of respondents in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas

The finding of this work is in tandem with Sociological Model (SEM). The behavior of the rural people in Sokoto Northeast local governments could be explained through the lens of SEM. Parable, the factors affecting rural people against going to higher institutions are based on person -focus and environment -focus perspectives. Therefore, the environment of the rural people certainly influences their ability to go to higher institutions or not. Factors in the environment such as educational (presence of dilapidated structures or insufficient embodiments), cultural (the Hausa culture), social, economic (poverty) are forefront influences. These influences are broken as intercultural, community, organizational, and interpersonal. Interpersonal factors such as age, characteristics, family (parents) (denoted in Table 1) may be natural (ingrained) and couldn't be easily modified, but their influence could be improved, if the parents re more educated, they may be wealthy and their wards would be likely to supported to complete education. The organizational influence (meso -system) that is the nature of schools ideally affect kids in rural areas against going forward to higher institutions. And the exosystems, the community-level ideals, kike culture (Hausa), and religion impacts on ability to go to school or higher institutions. In order to benefit from large number of people, educational

environment should be made advantageous, including by providing food available at school actors reach, improving agriculture to earn and eat, and improve cultures (Redding et al., 2000; Simpson, 2015; Arghode et al., 2017; Sabokro and Keshawarzian, 2024).

Food security at school		
Do you go to school with food?	60	30.0
Yes	140	70.0
No		
Type of food		
Millet	30	15.0
Rice	40	20.0
Maize	30	15.0
Corn	80	40.0
Empty calories	20	10.0
Presence of food seller at school or nearby premises	20	10.0
Yes	180	90.0
No		
Majority of food sold at school or nearby	164	82.0
Local foods	36	18.0
Empty calories		
Do you think food insecurity may affect going to school or furthering education?	146	73.0
Yes	54	27.0
No		

Table 2: Evaluation of effects of food systems on respondents participants going to school

From Table 2, evaluation of respondent's participants, shows that 70.0% go to school without food, and 30.0% go to school with food. Type of foods consumed by respondents are: corn (40.0%), maize (15.0%), millet (15.0%), rice (20.0%), and empty calories (10.0%). Presence of food seller at school or neighborhood was 90.0% absent, and 10.0% present. Most of the sellers sell local foods (82.0%), and few sold empty calories (18.0%). Majority (73.0%) agreed food insecurity affects going to school and furthering to higher schools, and 27.0% disagree. Mostly

school is the initial contact of children with the outside environment. Students spend much time at schools learning, developing, and growing. However, the youngsters must be healthy in order to participate in schooling, and health is dependent on type of food and eating habit experience by man (Yusuf et al., 2018; Jiya et al., 2020). Young ones at school must eat well either through school feeding or bringing food from home or buying at school shops or neighborhood (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Failure to have good that is effective will surely devastate learning or education (Ibrahim et al., 2023). In this study, the results indicate that most of the students faced food challenges at school or are food insecure, because they go to school without food. This situation may affect their concentration and cognitive ability, and may instigate some of them to absent or drop out of school. This may affect going forward to higher institutions and ultimately affect the rural areas in terms of inequalities (Maitafsir & Kwari, 2022). The situation may be aggravated by the lack of food sellers at most of the schools attended by rural people as submitted by the respondents in this study. Albeit, the few found food sellers at most of the schools sell local foods. Selling of local foods is a good gesture because it gives the students and teachers chance to buy healthy foods, instead of the empty calories (beverages, income, macaroni etc.) that devastate the health overtime or excessive consumption (Yusuf et al., 2018). So, one of the major interventions to be applied by the government is improving agriculture at rural areas in the state (Bryant et al., 2023). Improvement in agriculture help to boost economic status of households and in turn may translate to good welfare of schooling children, improved health of children and adults as well, fight hunger and malnutrition (Sanningrahi & Banerjee, 2016; Yusuf et al., 2018).

Perceived effects of Socioeconomic factors on proceeding to higher institutions in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas

Socioeconomic factors	Frequency	Percentage
Fathers income		
20-50k	50	25.0
51-100k	44	22.0
111-150k	32	16.0
200k and above	73	36.5
Fathers education		
None	60	30.0
Primary	73	36.5
Secondary	45	22.5
Tertiary	22	11.0
Fathers kids		

1-2	50	25.0
3-4	120	60.0
5 and above	30	15.0

Table 3: Perceived effects of Socioeconomic factors on proceeding to higher institutions in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas

Really, socioeconomic factors affect the education at all levels. In this study, the socioeconomic factors affecting education regarding proceeding to higher institutions among rural students was shown in Table 3. Father's income was 20-50k (25.0%), 51-100k (22.0%), 111-150k (16.0%), and 200k and above (36.5%). Father's education was primary (36.5%), none (30.0%), secondary (22.5%), and tertiary (11.0%). Father's kids were, 3-4 (60.0%), 1-2 kids (25.0%), 5 and above children (15.0%). This finding was corroborated in Scott et al. (2015) In America, that revealed, attending higher institutions by parents, finance, are among the factors affecting the furthering to higher education in rural areas. Likewise, Iniquez-Berroz et al. (2020) submitted that, age, level of education, family factors, are barriers to education. In similar vein, Andrew & Etumabo (2016) in Nigeria reiterated the implications of economic factors (harsh economic situation) on going to school, causing many to abstain school.

Perceived effects of Educational factors on proceeding to higher institutions in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas

Educational factors	Frequency	Percentage
Type of secondary school		
Private	15	7.5
Public	130	65.0
Mixed	55	27.5
Grade at school		
None	0	0.0
A	15	7.5
B	82	41.0
C	100	50.0
D	3	1.5
Access to educational tools		
Yes	15	7.5
No	185	92.5

Participation in JAMB	15	7.5
Yes	185	92.5
No		

Table 4: Perceived effects of educational factors on proceeding to higher institutions in Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural areas

In Table 4 educational factors were affecting going to higher institutions among rural students were stated. Educational schools attending was, public (65.0%), mixed (27.5%), and private (7.5%). Grades of respondents are; C (50.0%), B (41.0%), A (7.5%), and D (1.5%). Effect of access to educational tools on proceeding to higher institutions in rural area, as submitted by the respondents are, only 7.5% positive, and 92.5% are negative. 7.5% participated in JAMB (tertiary institutions entry exam), and 92.5% don't write JAMB. Wood (2023) suggested important solutions, by providing more teachers, more funding, improved quality, infrastructures as important amendments to rural education problems. In Hughes (2018) from Tajikistan, it was concluded that low quality in rural schools is a major factor affecting rural education, indicating the general role of educational factors in militating rural education and furthering of learning. Enemeba et al. (2022) decried that, poor facilities or shortages are major barriers to education in Nigeria.

Effects of Cultural factors on proceeding to higher institutions in some Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural area

Cultural factors	Frequency	Percentage
What is your culture?		
Hausa	150	75.0
Fulani	32	16.0
Others	18	9.0
Is education important	105	52.5
Very important	73	36.5
Somewhat	22	11.0
Not at all		
Culture hinders education		
Yes	110	55.0
No	90	45.0

Table 5: Effects of Cultural factors on proceeding to higher institutions

in some Northeastern local governments in Sokoto rural area

Effect of cultural factors were revealed in Table 5. The cultures of respondents are: 75.0% Hausa, 16.0% Fulani, and 9.0% others. 52.5% agree that education is very important, 36.5% attest that, education is somehow important, and 11.0% of them say "not at all." 75.0% believe culture affects education in rural areas, and 45.0% have dissimilar view. Andrew & Etumabo (2016) certain culture ideals place many children in Nigeria into non-schooling, especially the girl child. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents enrolled in this study. Out of 200 respondents, 50.0% are 20-24 years old, 35.0% are 15-19 years old, and 15.0% are 25 and above years old. Out of 200 participants, 45.0 are secondary school graduates, 29.5% are tertiary graduates, 29.5% are tertiary students, 10.5% are tertiary graduates. In Kryzykawska & Zur (2020), a scoping review of factors affecting education in some African States (sub Saharan areas), cost, and household income affects schooling.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

This study has examined the socio-economic, educational, and cultural factors affecting rural students' progression to higher institutions in Nigeria. The findings reveal significant barriers, including low family income, limited access to educational resources, poor academic performance, and cultural influences. These barriers hinder rural students' ability to pursue higher education, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and inequality.

Recommendations

1. Improve access to educational resources: Provide more teachers, funding, and improved infrastructure to rural schools to enhance the quality of education.
2. Address cultural ideals: Engage with local communities to address cultural ideals that may discourage education, particularly for girls.
3. Increase financial support: Implement scholarships, grants, and other forms of financial assistance to support rural students in pursuing higher education.
4. Enhance career guidance: Provide career guidance and counseling services to rural students to help them make informed decisions about their educational and career paths.
5. Promote community involvement: Encourage community involvement in education through initiatives such as parent-teacher associations and community-led education programs.
6. Develop targeted policies: Develop targeted policies and programs to address the specific needs of rural students, including those related to

poverty, inequality, and cultural barriers.

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