

**GLOBALIZATION AND EDUCATIONAL TARGETING:  
A STUDY OF STABLE INEQUALITIES**

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## **Abstract**

As governments and nations of the world count down to 2015, the target year for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) via the instrumentality of globalization and educational targeting, it is imperative that stakeholders take stock and assess progress towards accomplishment. This paper contributes to this onerous task by analyzing globalization and educational targeting in Africa from a sociolinguistic point of view (using Nigeria as a reference point). The analysis explores the influence of the global education agenda, the connection between economic globalization, educational policy and the pedagogic aspects of educational inequalities. A brief case study which compares the targeted groups with more privileged groups completes the paper. It reveals that educational inequality has remained unchanged as far as literate practices in rural and urban settings are concerned.

## **Introduction**

Globalization as a concept means different things to different people across countries. UNDP (2001:72) defined it as a multidimensional process of unprecedented rapid and revolutionary growth in the extensiveness of intensity of interconnections on a purely global scale. This manifests in various forms such as globalization of democracy, global revolution particularly through information and communication technologies, globalization of culture and environment, globalization of the economy. Thus, globalization draws closer all the world regions in order to share common knowledge and to develop strategies for resolving both common and regional peculiar problems. It contracts the world in order to make living worthwhile and relishing. Some scholars (Anyanwu, 2003; Makinde, 2006 and Zuofia, 2006) have argued that globalization impinges on state educational provision by establishing an agenda that encompasses official objectives and instruments of education.

A significant innovation is that today states as well as international organizations, corporations and social movements all endeavour to fashion the educational agenda at the global level. In essence, globalization impinges on the national educational policy agenda directly or indirectly. For example the influence and waves of educational targeting worldwide have rolled through Africa uncritically and have been passively absorbed sometimes without regard for the multiple realities, contexts and paradoxes. In Nigeria for instance, educational targeting is an outcome of policy review. The 1969 curriculum conference was the first major forum that provoked discussions on what should be the ideal curriculum for the nation's schools and colleges. The government later set up an implementation committee in the national education policy to translate the policy into a blueprint that would guide its implementation. On the basis of that blueprint the national policy on education was revised in 1980 and published in 1981. The implementation of the National policy started in 1982 with the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education and continues even thirty years after the national curriculum conference of 1969 where the idea was first muted. Curriculum 1981 was streamlined in order to ensure that its goals and

vision are more easily realized in the classroom. The policy witnessed a major revision in 2004 with the wind of globalization currently being witnessed. This led to the introduction of basic education as a result of which the 6-3-3-4 system of education gave way to 9-3-4 system which recommends educational targeting as a key tool to guarantee minimal but universal education and as a means of eradicating illiteracy and poverty. Broadly speaking, it consists of positive pedagogic discrimination in favour of the poor, disadvantaged group in order to improve their access to schooling.

Thus, literacy development is a major objective of educational targeting. The broad aim of basic education according to the implementation guidelines is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning through the inculcation of appropriate learning to learn, self awareness, citizenship and life skills (NERDC, 2008:15)

As Uwalt (2003) pointed out, it is the economic dimension that is perceived to constitute the hallmark of globalization. He referred to economic globalization as the integration of the domestic economies with the world economy and the inevitable consequential increase in the economic interdependence of the countries through trade, financial and investment flows, freer factor movements and exchange of technology and information.

Thus, globalization denotes the increased international integration of trade, investment and finance. It also connotes reactions to integration and the policies that accompany it. This may explain why government policies tend towards economic interdependence of countries worldwide through increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services of international capital flows and also through the more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology (IMF, 1997). For example economic policies in Nigeria have always been reactions to what the international community believed to be succour to economic problems. For instance import-substitution policy and SAP were conceived to be routes to industrialization in Nigeria and placing our economy in proper perspective.

Under normal circumstances, economic globalization and education should impact on the lives of people in all sectors of the society. No doubt, education is an essential ingredient of socio-economic transformation of African countries. It is the backbone of higher socio-economic status, better health, better employment prospects, full participation in society, general happiness and wellbeing for the individual and rich human capital and governable citizens for any nation that aims at sustainable development. The vehicle through which education is transmitted is literacy, defined by UNESCO (2004:6) as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute, use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potentials and to participate fully in the wide society.

Following the recommendations included in the global educational agenda and the UNESCO education for all programmes since 1990, African countries have conducted educational targeting as a means of helping the poor, yet, those who grow up poor often have different educational opportunities, experiences and hopes. Historically, poverty has been associated more with rural than urban dwellers. Urbanization has been driven by the concentration of investment and employment opportunities in urban areas.

It is worthy of note that Nigeria has the largest rural population of 79 million out of 610 million in the whole of Africa (The Punch, 2010). It is therefore pertinent that Africa with emphasis on Nigeria works on the prevalence of education inequalities especially more that governments and stakeholders the world over are taking stock and perfecting strategies towards attaining the Millennium Development goal on Education and economic reforms. It is on this premise that this paper presents the empirical findings of a research project which focuses on the literacy opportunities and educational achievement of the targeted groups in Nigeria. It provides evidence that targeting has stabilized rather than reduced educational inequalities.

The study was conducted to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the enrolment pattern in rural and urban schools?
2. What is the dropout rate in rural and urban schools?
3. Is there a significant difference in the number of teacher-student ratio in rural and urban schools?
4. Is there a significant difference in the educational achievement of students in rural and urban schools?
5. How do female and male students in rural and urban schools compare in their educational achievement?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the enrolment of students in rural and urban schools.
2. There is no significant difference in the dropout rate of students in rural and urban schools.
3. There is no significant difference in the teacher-student ratio in rural and urban schools.
4. There is no significant difference in the educational achievement of students in rural and urban schools.
5. There is no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students in rural and urban schools.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive survey design to unveil the dichotomy in the status of education in rural and urban secondary schools in Nigeria. Documentary evidence provided data on the variables under investigation viz: enrolment, dropout rate, and teacher-student ratio. Also the assessment of records and classroom observations provided evidence of the overall physical conditions of the schools.

## **Population/Sample**

All public secondary schools in Lagos State constitute the population for the study. The sample used in the study consisted of four schools randomly selected from each of rural and urban settings in four randomly selected districts in Lagos State. All SSS III students in the 2010 school year participated in the study on the basis that the students have spent a minimum of six years in the school. This period is considered long enough to be able to measure the impact the school would have had on their performance. Students who transferred from urban to rural schools and vice-versa within the period were excluded from the study for obvious reasons. A total of 1081 students participated in the study. There were 817 students from urban schools out of which 430 were males while 382 were females. The sample from rural schools was made of 269 students out of which 161 were males while 108 were females. All the schools are public in ownership (government owned and financed).

## **Data Collection Procedure**

Documentary evidence used to gather information on the variables of interest include:

1. class attendance register
2. log book
3. teachers' records
4. examination results

With the cooperation of the management and staff of the sampled schools, the documents were studied and collated. Data obtained from the collation were subjected to statistical analysis using means, standard deviation, and t-tests for the purpose of testing the six hypotheses of study.

## **Presentation of Results and Data Analysis**

The results of this study are hereby presented according to the research hypotheses tested.

### Research Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the enrolment of students in rural and urban schools.

**Table 1: Enrolment of students in rural and urban schools**

Variation	N	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	f-cal	t-cal	t-tab	Signf
Urban	812	630.250	168.20	0.133	5.554	11.216	P < 0.05
Rural	269	300.25	196.14		3.554		

Results in the table above show significant difference between the two variables, this shows in the t-cal 5.554 > 1.65 of t-value and it was found significant such that the null hypothesis, there is no significant difference in the enrolment of students in rural and urban was rejected (T-cal > t-value, df = 6; P < 0.05).

### Hypothesis Two

Ho: There is no significant difference in the dropout rate of male and female students in rural and urban schools.

**Table 2: Dropout rate of students in rural and urban schools**

Variation	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	f-cal	t-cal	t-tab	Signf
Urban	2.411	1.35907	114	-1.242	1.65	P < 0.05
Rural	2.6923	1.07417		4.208		

Results in the table above shows no significant difference between the two variables, this is confirmed by the t-cal (-1.242) < 1.65 of t-value respectively such that the null hypothesis, was accepted (t-cal > t-value, df = 6; P < 0.05).

### Hypothesis Three

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant difference in teacher-student ratio in rural and urban schools.

**Table 3: Teacher-student in rural and urban schools**

Variation	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	f-cal	t-cal	t-tab	Signf
Urban	2.1720	1.07960	156	2.382	1.65	P < 0.05
Rural	2.5846	1.05907		5.390		

The result above reveals the teacher-student ratio in rural and urban schools. The mean computation for urban and rural were (2.1720, 2.5846) and standard deviation (1.07969, 1.05907) respectively. The significant difference between the teacher-student was established by means of the independents t-test analysis. Results in the table above showed significant difference between the two variables. This was confirmed by the t-cal 2.382 > 1.65 of t-value and it was found significant such that the null hypothesis was rejected (t-cal > t-value, df = 6; P < 0.05).

#### **Hypothesis Four**

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant difference in the achievement of student in rural and urban school.

**Table 4: Student achievement in rural and urban schools**

Variation	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	f-cal	t-cal	t-tab	Signf
Urban	31.1250	3.88534	6	1.870	1.65	P < 0.05
Rural	25.2750	4.90264		1.870		

The significant difference was established by means of the independents t-test. Results in the table above showed that there is significant difference between the two variables, this was confirmed by the t-cal 1.872 > 1.65 of t-value and it was found significant such that the null hypothesis, was rejected (t-cal > t-value, df = 6; P < 0.05).

## Hypothesis Five

H<sub>06</sub>: There is significant difference in the achievement of male and female students.

**Table 5: Male and female students achievement in both rural and urban schools**

Variation	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	t-cal	t-tab	Signf
Male	67.2500	23.88534	5.587	1.65	P < 0.05
Female	203.0000	4.90264	5.587		

Results in the table above shows that female mean score is greater than male (203.0000 > 67.250). Therefore there is significant difference between the two variables, these were confirmed by the t-cal 5.587 > 1.65 of t-value such that the null hypothesis, was rejected (t-cal > t-value, df = 6; P < 0.05).

## Discussion of Results

The study investigated the status of education in rural and urban schools. Documentary evidence provided data on the following variables: enrolment rate, dropout rate, teacher-student ratio and students' achievement.

The findings revealed that enrolment was higher in urban schools (N = 812) in the sampled year (SS III of 2010/2011 session) than in rural schools (N = 269). The means ( $\bar{x}$ ) 630.250 and 300.25 were found to be significant at P < 0.05 level. The higher level of students' enrolment in urban schools attests to the fact that increased urbanization pervades in Africa as revealed by the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs reported by Adeyemo (2010). One of the nine countries projected to contribute 29 percent of the world urban population between 2025 and 2050 is Nigeria. For example Lagos State an urban agglomeration (where this study was conducted) which had 10.2 million inhabitants is projected to be a home to about 15.8 million people in 2025, Cairo and Egypt have expected 11 million and 10 million inhabitants respectively in 2025. Taking a stand from the magnitude, and considering the annual rates of growth, a red sign pops up for the

African continent and Nigeria in particular especially as regards equitable distribution of educational services.

The findings of the study also revealed no significant difference in the dropout rates of students in rural and urban schools. This is at variance with previous studies which revealed that dropout rates are higher in rural schools (Bouslby, 2005; Crompton, 1993; Pane, 1991 and Boilma, 1999).

The findings of this study might not be unconnected with the comatose economy in Nigeria which has stifled the economic power of most families who are now finding it difficult to send their children and wards to school. A recent report says two-thirds of the countries citizens live in poverty as a result of an endemic corruption. This is an embarrassment to a country who is a major oil producer, oil revenues amount to less than 100 per capital per year and provide little benefit to the majority of the country's 140 million citizens (The Punch, 2008).

The significant differences recorded in the study-teacher ratio in favour of rural schools may be due to the smallness of the classes./ as noted by Nelson et al (2005) most rural schools tend to be smaller than urban schools. This is also evidenced in the enrolment pattern showing higher number of students in urban schools. Epstein (1988) noted that the size of classes in rural schools should actually be an advantage but that this is doused by other challenges such as lack of qualified teachers and libraries. This view is supported by Maquet 1971 who noted that science students in rural schools are sometimes taught by non-science teachers which results in limited ability to pursue certain areas of post-secondary education. Nelson et al (2005) also noted that rural schools are unable to attract and retain specialized and that the few teachers for the few students are largely deficient in pedagogy.

An analysis of the examination results of students in rural and urban schools revealed significant difference in their educational achievement students in urban schools out-

performed their counterparts in rural schools in all subjects. This is in agreement with previous studies in this area. For example, the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) revealed that students in urban schools in Canada performed better than those in rural schools in mathematics, reading and science (Boulsby, 2005). According to Jacques (1971) noted that the inability of students from rural schools to practice important cognitive skills such as reading, writing, computation, listening, speaking and problem solving outside the classroom is responsible for poor academic performance.

According to Cazal (1992) many urban schools have access to and use information and communication technology (ICT) while rural schools are still hampered by internet connectivity. Besides transportation to work can be problematic for rural teachers.

The study revealed significant difference in the educational achievement of male and female students in the sample in favour of girls. This is contrary to the findings of studies which have shown that girls do not perform as well as the boys especially in co-educational institutions (Gorman et al, 1999). However, other studies (Ofsted, 1993) recorded significant difference in both performance and attitude between sexes in favour of girls. As noted by Okebukola (2002) \*\*\*\*\* these research efforts reveal a range of differences in achievement between boys and girls without situating the evidence within a theoretical frame that can affect some relative explanation of the relative weakness of the boys. The better performance of the girls in this study could be due to the effect of the socio-economic background of the boys sampled in the study as this has been established as having some correlation with academic performance.

This study has confirmed that rural-urban differences in education persist in Nigeria in the areas of students' enrolment, teacher-student ratio, dropout rate and educational achievement. The uninspiring score card is indicative of the nation's lack of preparedness to join the rest of the world in ensuring that by 2015, "children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. It is obvious that the equal distribution of educational services and abysmal dropout rate in schools is as a result

of the endemic corruption which has stifled the economic power of most families who are now finding it difficult to send their children to school.

It is obvious that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is not working because corrupt officials are impeding its effectiveness. As a Nigerian jocularly noted that corruption is a lucrative business. It is embarrassing that in a country who is a major producer of oil, oil revenues amount to less too per-capital per year and provide little benefit to the majority of the country's 140 million citizens. The story of corruption in Nigeria is well known and we can only join our voice to those of other well-meaning Nigerians in making the clarion that anti-graft agencies should prosecute corrupt officials fiddling with everybody's tax.

The study has also revealed that girls are not innately inferior to boys in educational ability. The government should therefore secure the continuing support of parents for the enrolment of the girl-child in school. Attention should also be drawn to the issues that inhibit the education of girls and worsen in Nigeria viz: high demand for girl child labour for household, early marriage, sexual harassment school, wrong interpretation of religious and gender stereotyping.

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