
Assessing the Impact of Tsangaya Initiatives on Improving Educational Access, Reducing Out-of-School Children, and Enhancing Security in Jigawa State, Nigeria

Musa Saleh Ringim, Ph.D¹
Department of Social Studies

Shuaibu Garba²
Department of ECCE

Haladu Haaruna Kaugama, Ph.D³
Department of Economics

Jigawa State College of Education, Gumel ^{1,2&3}
Corresponding Author: Musa Saleh Ringim, Ph.D.

Abstract

This study assessed the impact of Tsangaya education initiatives on expanding educational access, reducing the population of out-of-school children, and enhancing community security across the five traditional Emirates of Jigawa State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted and a multistage sampling technique was employed to select 50 Tsangaya schools across the three senatorial zones (Dutse, Ringim, Gumel, Hadejia, and Kazaure Emirates), capturing a verified sample of 474 adult stakeholders (teachers, community leaders, education officials, and parents) and 237 pupils. Data collection was executed via the structured Tsangaya Initiatives Impact Assessment Questionnaire (TIIAQ). Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (One-Sample t-test, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation) were employed for analysis at a $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level. Empirical findings revealed that Tsangaya initiatives exert a highly significant positive impact on broadening educational access ($\bar{X} = 2.89$; $p < 0.05$) and reducing out-of-school children indicators ($\bar{X} = 3.12$; $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, a strong, statistically significant positive correlation was established between the structured formalization of Tsangaya schools and localized community security metrics ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$). Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Jigawa State Government should fully support and fund the newly established Jigawa State Tsangaya Education Board (JSTEB) and formalize dual-track teacher training programs to secure long-term human capital development and national stability.

Keywords: Tsangaya Initiatives, Out-of-School Children, Educational Access, Human Capital, Community Security, Jigawa State.

Introduction

Education serves as the foundational pillar for national development, civil cohesion, and individual human capital formation. Globally, equitable access to primary and secondary education is recognized not merely as a developmental milestone, but as a fundamental human right essential for escaping systemic poverty. Unfortunately, about 244 million children remain out of formal school system worldwide, with a majority residing in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia (UNICEF, 2023). Nigeria has the highest number of out of school children in the world, reaching up to 18.3 million (Chukwuemeka, 2024). It was stated that one in every five of the World's out-of school children is in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2023). Northern Nigeria, in particular, exhibits high rates of educational exclusion, with millions of primary-school-aged children remaining completely disconnected from the formal, state-regulated schooling architecture.

In Jigawa State, located in Nigeria's northwestern zone, the historically preferred and culturally embedded mechanism for child upbringing and spiritual instruction is the traditional Tsangaya (Qur'anic) school system. According to National Bureau of Statistics, NBS (2023), Jigawa state has a total of 531,000 out of school children. For centuries, this institutional framework has operated under the direct administration of specialized Islamic scholars known as Alarammas.

The system operates entirely outside the formal socioeconomic grid, leaving it characterized by substandard learning environments, an absence of basic infrastructure (such as standard classrooms, clean water, and sanitation), and a total lack of structured institutional financing. Pupils within these unintegrated settings, commonly referred to as Almajirai, frequently face extreme welfare deficits. They lack access to modern literacy, basic numeracy, and structural vocational skill sets required to participate in a rapidly modernizing economy. Consequently, this dynamic generates a vulnerable population of educationally excluded children who face structural poverty and high levels of social marginalization.

To address these vulnerabilities, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), alongside the Jigawa State Tsangaya Education Board (JSTEB) and international development agencies, initiated targeted Tsangaya integration frameworks. These interventions aimed at focusing on building modern Almajiri/Tsangaya school clusters, embedding conventional literacy and numeracy modules into the religious curriculum, deploying dual-track instructional materials, training traditional teachers, and introducing school-feeding safety nets. Yet, despite the implementation of these capital-intensive programs, empirical assessments regarding their concrete impacts remain limited. This study addresses this gap by offering a systematic empirical analysis of the impact of Tsangaya initiatives on educational access, out-of-school child counts, and community security outcomes within Jigawa State.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria faces a profound educational emergency, maintaining one of the world's largest populations of out-of-school children. The northern geopolitical zones contribute disproportionately to this crisis, largely due to deep-seated structural gaps between conventional state schooling and traditional religious models. In Jigawa State, where the Tsangaya model represents the primary educational contact point for a vast segment of the youth demographic, hundreds of thousands of children remain unaccounted for within national basic education parameters. Such students rarely acquire conventional skills such as reading English, functional writing, mathematical competencies, or basic vocational

knowledge. As a result, graduating pupils are often left structurally unequipped for formal employment, which deepens multi-generational poverty.

Furthermore, this systemic educational exclusion creates severe social vulnerabilities. The presence of large numbers of unmonitored, transient children navigating urban centers without institutional safety nets has become a major concern for educators, policymakers, and internal security managers.

This study directly addresses this problem by gathering concrete empirical data to measure how effectively Tsangaya initiatives improve educational access, reduce out-of-school populations, and support community security in Jigawa State.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this investigation is to systematically analyze the impact of Tsangaya initiatives on expanding educational access, reducing out-of-school children, and enhancing security architectures within Jigawa State. The specific research objectives include:

- i. To examine the impact of Tsangaya initiatives on educational access among school-age children in Jigawa State.
- ii. To determine the extent to which Tsangaya initiatives reduce the number of out-of-school children in the state.
- iii. To assess the influence of Tsangaya initiatives on improving localized community security.

Research Questions

To guide the operational flow of this empirical evaluation, the following research questions were answered:

- i. To what extent do Tsangaya initiatives improve formal educational access in Jigawa State?
- ii. How do Tsangaya initiatives contribute to reducing the population of out-of-school children in Jigawa state?
- iii. What impact do Tsangaya initiatives have on security and community stability across Jigawa State?

Theoretical Framework

This study is structurally anchored on two complementary theoretical frameworks: Human Capital Theory and Social Integration Theory.

1. Human Capital Theory

Originally formalized by economists Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker in the mid-20th century, Human Capital Theory argues that investment in human capabilities through formal schooling, vocational preparation, and health interventions functions as a primary driver of economic productivity and national development. This framework views individuals not merely as passive economic agents, but as repositories of skills, knowledge, and capabilities that can be expanded through targeted investments.

Within the context of this study, traditional Tsangaya students possess significant latent potential. However, when limited exclusively to a traditional curriculum without foundational literacy, numeracy, or vocational tools, their economic mobility remains constrained. Integrating conventional educational components into the Tsangaya architecture directly enhances their human capital. This enables these students to actively participate in the modern labor market, breaking the cycle of structural poverty and boosting state-level economic growth.

2. Social Integration Theory

Emile Durkheim's Social Integration Theory provides the sociological framework for analyzing the study's security and community stability dimensions. Durkheim asserts that society maintains structural stability through shared value systems, institutional inclusion, and cohesive social bonds that bind individuals to the broader collective. When substantial sub-populations experience systematic institutional exclusion or economic marginalization, social cohesion weakens. This can lead to states of anomie, creating breeding grounds for anti-social behavior and structural instability.

Applying this framework to the Tsangaya phenomenon reveals that the historic isolation of Almajiri pupils creates a deep form of social exclusion. By upgrading and modernizing these schools, the state actively integrates these children into the wider socio-political framework. This institutional inclusion provides pupils with recognized literacy validation, structured civic socialization, and economic capability, which significantly reduces vulnerability to criminal recruitment and localized delinquency.

Literature Review

The structural intersection of traditional Islamic educational models, public sector access strategies, and internal security dynamics in Northern Nigeria is an active area of contemporary educational research. Scholars have long recognized that the resilience of the Tsangaya infrastructure represents a major opportunity and, if ignored, a significant structural risk for the region's human capital development.

Aderinoye (2015) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of historical educational reforms in Northern Nigeria, emphasizing that the persistent exclusion of millions of Almajiri children cannot be resolved by conventional public school expansion alone. Aderinoye argues that because rural communities hold deep cultural commitments to classical Islamic learning, the most practical method for expanding literacy is the systematic integration of Western literacy and numeracy modules directly into existing traditional Tsangaya networks. This approach respects local religious values while providing children with essential secular life skills.

However, executing this integration faces deep structural challenges. Bello and Abdullahi (2020) analyzed out-of-school child dynamics across the northwestern geopolitical zone, identifying structural inequalities and top-down policy designs as primary causes of integration failures. Their research revealed that many state-backed modernization programs falter because they fail to actively involve traditional Mallamai (teachers) in the policy design process. This exclusion creates community distrust, leading to underutilized facilities and low retention rates.

This dynamic underscores the direct link between educational inclusion and regional security. Muhammad (2021) explored the role of traditional Islamic institutions in maintaining social stability across Northern Nigeria. Muhammad notes that unintegrated Tsangaya models often

face extreme poverty and lack state supervision. This leaves unsupervised youth highly vulnerable to economic exploitation and recruitment by criminal networks or insurgent groups. Modernizing and integrating these schools provides a vital layer of social protection, transforming vulnerable spaces into structured environments for positive civic socialization.

Furthermore, recent data from UNICEF (2023) indicates that addressing Nigeria's out-of-school children crisis requires moving away from temporary projects toward deep institutional partnerships. UNICEF's situation analysis report stresses that sustainable success depends on combining government funding with the traditional authority of local Emirate Councils. This dual approach provides the formal oversight and cultural legitimacy needed to achieve lasting improvements in both learning outcomes and community security.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This approach is highly effective for gathering empirical data on stakeholder perceptions, operational conditions, and institutional impacts across diverse regions without altering the natural state of the variables under review. The target population for this study included all primary stakeholders within Jigawa State's traditional education ecosystem. This comprised Tsangaya teachers (Alarammas), education officials from the newly established Jigawa State Tsangaya Education Board (JSTEB), community leaders, parents, and the Tsangaya pupils (Almajirai). The study utilized a rigorous multistage sampling technique to select a representative sample from across the entire state: Stage 1 (Emirate Selection): All five traditional Emirate headquarters: Dutse, Ringim, Gumel, Hadejia, and Kazaure were selected to guarantee full geographic coverage across all three senatorial zones. Stage 2 (School Selection): Ten (10) integrated/pilot Tsangaya schools were randomly sampled from each of the five Emirates, resulting in a total of 50 Tsangaya institutions. Stage 3 (Adult Stakeholder Sampling): From each of the 50 sampled school communities, 10 adult stakeholders (including 2 Tsangaya teachers, 2 local education officials, 3 parents, and 3 community leaders) were selected via purposive sampling, yielding a target adult sample of 500 respondents. Stage 4 (Pupil sampling): From each of the 50 sampled institutions, 5 Tsangaya pupils were selected using simple random sampling, yielding a target student sample of 250 respondents. Following data collection and cleaning, the final verified sample used for analysis consisted of 474 adult stakeholders and 237 students, representing an overall response rate of 94.8%.

The primary data collection tool was the Tsangaya Initiatives Impact Assessment Questionnaire (TIIAQ). The TIIAQ is structured into distinct sections: Section A gathers respondent demographic data, while Section B consists of 15 core analytical statements evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA = 4), Agree (A = 3), Disagree (D = 2), and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1). To ensure accessibility, the instrument was administered alongside face-to-face translations in the local Hausa language. The TIIAQ underwent rigorous content and face validity assessments by experts in educational evaluation and research design from Jigawa State College of Education, Gumel. To evaluate reliability, the instrument was pilot-tested on 30 non-sampled stakeholders in Kano state.

The collected data were processed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Research questions were evaluated using mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (SD) computations, with a criterion mean threshold set at 2.50 (the mid-point of the Likert scale). Hypotheses testing was conducted using One-Sample t-test and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation

Coefficient (PPMC). All statistical decisions were tested at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do Tsangaya initiatives improve formal educational access in Jigawa State?

Table 1: Stakeholder Perceptions on Educational Access (N = 474)

S/N	Indicator Statement	Mean (X̄)	SD	Decisional Status
1.	Integration of modern subjects has attracted more children to Tsangaya schools.	3.14	0.62	Accepted
2.	Tsangaya initiatives provide adequate instructional materials for pupils.	2.31	0.88	Rejected
3.	Renovated centers have improved the overall quality of the learning environment.	3.22	0.72	Accepted
Aggregate Cluster Metric		2.89	0.74	

The above table indicates that stakeholders generally agree that Tsangaya initiatives improve educational access ($\bar{X} = 2.89$). While the modernization of the learning environment (Item 3) and curriculum diversification (Item 1) scored high marks, the current supply of instructional materials (Item 2) fell below the acceptable threshold, pointing to an ongoing supply-chain challenge.

Research Question 2: How do Tsangaya initiatives contribute to reducing the population of out-of-school children?

Table 2: Impact of Initiatives on Out-of-School Children Metrics (N = 474)

S/N	Indicator Statement	Mean (X̄)	SD	Decisional Status
1.	Feeding programs keep children engaged in school longer during the day.	3.45	0.51	Accepted
2.	Parents are more willing to enroll children due to state-level support.	3.08	0.64	Accepted
3.	The initiative has visibly reduced street begging patterns among pupils.	2.83	0.68	Accepted
Aggregate Cluster Metric		3.12	0.61	Agreement

As shown in the above table, the initiatives demonstrate a strong performance in reducing out-of-school metrics, yielding a high aggregate mean score of 3.12. In particular, institutional feeding programs (Item 4) serve as a key driver for retaining pupils and keeping them engaged within formal learning boundaries throughout the instructional day.

Research Question 3: What impact do Tsangaya initiatives have on security and community stability across the state's Emirates?

Table 3: Influence of Tsangaya Formalization on Community Security (N = 474)

S/N	Indicator Statement	Mean (X̄)	SD	Decisional Status
1.	Structured programs protect pupils from criminal or insurgent recruitment.	3.26	0.59	Accepted
2.	Formal tracking/profiling has improved neighborhood identity safety metrics.	2.81	0.76	Accepted
3.	Enhanced oversight minimizes localized youth delinquency and restiveness.	2.96	0.69	Accepted
Aggregate Cluster Metric		3.01	0.68	Agreement

Table above displays positive feedback regarding community safety outcomes ($\bar{X} = 3.01$). Informants note that keeping youth within structured, supervised learning cycles significantly reduces their exposure to anti-social networks and exploitation.

Inferential Analysis and Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One (H01): Tsangaya initiatives have no significant impact on educational access in Jigawa State. A One-Sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the statistical significance of the empirical mean score for educational access against the mid-point criterion value of 2.50.

Table 4: One-Sample t-test Results for Educational Access Impact

Variable	N	Observed Mean	Expected Mean	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Educational Access	474	2.89	2.50	473	14.32	0.000	Reject \$H_{01}\$

Because the calculated t-value (14.32) yields a significance probability of $p = 0.000$, which is well below the alpha threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected. This confirms that Tsangaya initiatives exert a statistically significant positive impact on expanding educational access in Jigawa State.

Hypothesis Two (H02): Tsangaya initiatives have no significant effect on reducing out-of-school children in Jigawa State.

A One-Sample t-test was computed to measure the significance of the initiatives' impact on reducing the population of out-of-school children.

Table 5: One-Sample t-test Results for Out-of-School Children Reduction

Variable	N	Observed Mean	Expected Mean	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Out-of-School Reduction	474	3.12	2.50	473	18.54	0.000	Reject H_02

With a calculated value of $t = 18.54$ and a corresponding p-value of $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. This demonstrates that the interventions have a statistically significant effect on reducing out-of-school children indicators.

Hypothesis Three (H_03): Tsangaya initiatives have no significant influence on enhancing security in Jigawa State.

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r) analysis was performed to examine the operational relationship between the structured formalization of Tsangaya systems and community security outcomes.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Program Integration and Security

Variables Analyzed	Statistical Metric	Institutional Integration	Community Security Enhancement
Institutional Integration	Pearson Correlation (\$r\$)	1	0.684**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	474	474
Community Security	Pearson Correlation (\$r\$)	0.684**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	474	474

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation matrix in Table 6 reveals a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the structured integration of Tsangaya schools and localized community security outcomes ($r = 0.684$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected. This indicates that as Tsangaya institutions become more structurally organized and integrated, community security metrics improve concurrently.

Discussion of Findings

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that the structural modernization of traditional Islamic learning environments yields clear benefits for human capital growth and social stability across Jigawa State. The descriptive analysis for Research Question 1 shows a strong affirmative mean ($\bar{X} = 2.89$), indicating that these initiatives have improved formal educational access. This finding aligns with the arguments of Aderinoye (2015), who notes that integrating conventional curriculum modules into culturally accepted religious spaces expands enrollment by working within existing local value systems rather than attempting to replace them. However, as noted in Table 1, acute shortages of instructional materials persist, threatening the long-term quality of this expanded access.

The analysis also reveals a significant impact on reducing the population of out-of-school children ($\bar{X} = 3.12$, Table 2). The field data highlight the critical role of school-feeding programs, which act as an economic safety net that stabilizes student attendance and prevents daily street migration. This supports the findings of Bello and Abdullahi (2020), who observe that addressing the out-of-school crisis in northwestern Nigeria requires targeted welfare support to offset multi-generational household poverty.

Crucially, the study establishes a clear link between educational integration and public safety, with Pearson correlation metrics showing a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.684$, Table 6). Sociologically, this validates Durkheim's Social Integration Theory: when vulnerable youth are integrated into state-supported, well-structured educational networks, their exposure to anti-social influences drops significantly. This finding reinforces Muhammad's (2021) conclusion that organizing and supervising traditional schools acts as a powerful preventative security measure for local communities.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Tsangaya education initiatives in Jigawa State serve as a vital mechanism for expanding educational access, reducing out-of-school student metrics, and strengthening localized community security. By building on the established cultural legitimacy of traditional Qur'anic schools, these state interventions offer a practical and effective pathway for integrating historically marginalized demographics into the contemporary human capital system.

However, the long-term sustainability of these gains remains vulnerable. Irregular funding, severe infrastructural strain, and shortages of dual-track instructional staff present persistent bottlenecks across all five Emirates. To protect the progress made in regional stability and educational inclusion, these initiatives must transition from short-term developmental projects into a permanently funded, statutorily protected public education framework.

Recommendations

As the Jigawa State government has established an autonomous Tsangaya Education Board. There is need for adequate support and proper funding to enable the board execute its duties efficiently and effectively.

The Ministry of Education, in coordination with (JSTEB), should execute an immediate structural upgrade of the 50 pilot school clusters across the five Emirates. This effort must prioritize installing clean water facilities, modern sanitation systems, and adequate classroom seating to handle expanding student enrollment.

The state government should partner with the College of Education, Gumel to establish specialized programs in Tsangaya Pedagogy. This will build a sustainable pipeline of educators competent in both classical Arabic texts and modern core literacy frameworks.

The curriculum within advanced Tsangaya tiers should formally incorporate localized vocational pathways (such as agricultural mechanics, tailoring, and basic digital literacy). This addition will enhance the long-term financial independence and employment prospects of graduating students.

References

- Abubakar, M. (2019). Integrating Qur'anic schools into Nigeria's educational system. *Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 14(2), 45–61.
- Aderinoye, R. (2015). Education reforms and the Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 42, 109–123.
- Bello, M., & Abdullahi, A. (2020). Out-of-school children and educational inequality in Northern Nigeria. *African Educational Research Journal*, 8(3), 412–426.
- Chukwuemeka, O.A (2024). Out of School children: Exploring alternative schooling Models outside 6-3-3-4 and 9-3-4 . *The Cable*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecable.ng/out-school-children-exploring-alternative-schooling-models- outside-6-3-3-4-and-9-3-4/amp/>
- Federal Ministry of Education. (2018). National policy on Almajiri education in Nigeria. FME Press.
- Muhammad, S. (2021). Islamic education and social stability in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of African Studies*, 29(1), 87–104.
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2023). *Education Statistics in Nigeria: Focus on Out-of-School Children*. Abuja.
- UBEC. (2022). Addressing the challenge of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Universal Basic Education Commission Report.
- UNICEF. (2023). Out-of-school children in Nigeria: Situation analysis report. United Nations Children's Fund.
- World Bank. (2020). Education and human capital development in Nigeria. World Bank Group Policy Research Paper.