Contemporary Challenges Associated With Border Security Operations to Promote Socio-Economic Development at Aflao Border in Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose: The study investigated challenges associated with border security operations to promote socio-economic development using an integrated border management model at Aflao Border in Ghana. Using a mixed method approach, which is in line with the transformative philosophical underpinning.

Methodology: Both interviews and questionnaires were employed as data collection tools. The population was sampled from four security service institutions manning the operations at Afloa border. Given the premise that border security forces were selected from the four coordinated security forces. The study respectively drew 112 security personnel drawn at random from the Afloa border. Using the sampling ratio proposed by Cochran (1963: 75) to arrive at variability p = 0.5 (maximum variability) and with the desire of 95% confidence level and ±5% precision. The sampled population was composed of 106 border security personnel, and 6 senior border security personnel serving in the hierarchy of the General, Patrol, Intelligence, and Anti-Human Smuggling and Trafficking Units at the borders were interviewed to furnish the qualitative data for this study. The study adopted a descriptive research design using personnel from the Ghana Immigration Service, Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority, Ghana Police Service, and Ghana Armed Forces in charge of security at the Aflao border.

Findings: The study concludes that specific challenges which confront the border security apparatus are, in order of priority, inadequate logistics and equipment, inadequate coordination among border officials, and inadequacy of border security personnel.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Improve border control, the government should make needed resources available by providing modern equipment/gadgets and logistics for patrol teams and the operations of the security system.

Keywords: *Border Security, Operations, Socio-Economic Development*

Introduction

Background to the Study

The concept of migration is seen as beneficial, especially, to the economic development of countries of origin due to remittances and diasporic investments. Apparently, migration assumes a security dimension due to threats of entry of criminals and terrorists. Hence, security implications that migration brings to bear on national borders (Wohlfeld, 2014). Human mobility is said to be one of the developments characterizing the 21st century as technology increases (Ferreira & de Castro, 2016). The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) disclosed estimates of increasing international migration with figures in 2017 amounting to 258 million which is unequaled by that of 2010, 222 million, after rising from the 173 million figures in 2000. With the increasing volumes of migration comes pressure on national borders and the need for border security systems that withstand undesired entry. Although both developed and developing countries face enormous difficulties in managing their borders historically, studies like Walters (2006) and Kogut (1991) affirm that many countries in Africa have not shown that border control and management are a priority to them.

Unfortunately, Ghana is constantly battling with maintaining security at the borders to withstand transnational criminal activities which are gaining momentum at the border in recent times. The Aflao border that bounds Ghana and Togo in the east of Ghana is the major land border followed by the Ivory Coast border at Elubo in the west and the Burkina Faso border at the Paga border in the north. Numerous unapproved routes along the borders make the work of security officers on the borders an all-important task. This has necessitated the renewed call for enhanced security at the borders because of the influx of illegal transnational trade and other activities in Ghana. Also, caution about terrorist attacks across the sub-region is increasing the amount of vigilance at the borders and all this lies in the purview of security officers on the borders. Currently, Ghana has been working in its attempts to manage the security situation at the borders. The Immigration Service Act, 2016 (Act 908), primarily mandates the Ghana Immigration Service to undertake preventive and defensive measures toward safeguarding the integrity of the borders. Also, the Border Patrol Unit (BPU) personnel are trained in armed combat. With a growing need to ensure the security of the borders, there is a coordinated system where the Ghana Immigration Service leverages the support of the Ghana Police Service and Ghana Armed Forces to provide the needed security. Despite these interventions, Walther (2022) disclosed examples from the Horn, North, and West Africa including Ghana that African countries are in the difficult situation of having to pursue their regional integration efforts without having the resources or the willingness to control their borders. In other words, the question of regional economic integration is rarely accompanied by an effective securitization of borders. Therefore, the aim of this study investigates the security situation at the borders from the contemporary view of security officers in order to appreciate the challenges and recognition of the Afloa border in Ghana.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the security structure used in border security operations at the Aflao.

2. To determine the mechanisms, logistics, and equipment for control of movement at the Aflao border.

3. Challenges associated with Control of Movement at the Borders

Problem statement

Generally, developed countries are noted to be maintaining better territorial integrity as a result of border security that meets international standards. A standard that developing countries are struggling to get there (Ikome, 2012). For instance, the vertical walls or fences erected by the United States on its borders with Mexico with surveillance systems and border patrol to restrict irregular entry can be seen as a defensive control of movement, albeit offensive (Chaichian, 2013). Also, the term 'Fortress Europe' which describes the European Union's security mechanism to prevent, especially, migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea into Europe is indicative of the premium that has been put on territorial integrity. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, countries have a limited system of controlling mobility at borders, and this rather puts security officers to the test at the borders. This situation worsens especially being a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ghana finds itself in a community that is conscious of expanding trade among member states. Due to relatively stable political and economic conditions, the country is often attractive to other nationals leaving its borders having to engage with the movements of migrants (Lamptey, 2013). In countries like Ghana where resources are limited, it does not make sense to spend a lot of money on border security operations that are not effective. Accordingly, Walther (2022) is critical of the current border security operations and regional integration efforts without having the resources to control their borders. Therefore, this study investigated the challenges and recognition associated with border security operations to promote socio-economic development at Afloa in Ghana.

Brief literature review

It is widely conceived by researchers that security is a nebulous term (Buzan, 1991). However, several studies have tried to provide ways to safeguard the security and prevent it from fragility. This, to Ajayi (2015), has made it imperative for contemporary states to provide security for the lives and property of citizens. Bodunde, Ola, and Afolabi (2014) define security as freedom from threat and the ability of states to maintain independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile while at the same time keeping stability and survival as the bottom line. To Afolabi (2015), security has more to do with the processes connected with assuaging any kind of threat to people and their precious values. William (2008) also defines security as the alleviation of threats to cherished values, especially those threats which threaten the survival of a particular reference object. So, although security has several dimensions, the involvement of military factors holds a significant place in many people's perceptions of security.

With regard to security at a border, one finds that migration has been part of human existence which is embarked on for diverse reasons. Castle, De Haas, and Miller (2013) show that migration entails the movement of people, goods, and services across borders of all kinds ie internal, international, or continental and there are, inter alia, economic reasons and safety reasons characterizing migration. As migrants are bolstered by these reasons, it creates substantial pressure on borders (Phukan, 2013). A likelihood that is well documented by Scott (2016) is that, aside from the benefits of migration, some migrants could engage in activities that threaten life and livelihoods given certain conditions. These negative migrant activities coupled with the pressure on borders arouse security concerns of which border security becomes a prominent feature. Bakewell and De Haas (2007) found that borders within Africa have high mobility trends owing to several conditions including labour demand, migration volumes of refugees, and economic dynamics, and showed that these factors determine border crossings. Brettell and Hollifield (2014) also found that cross-border movements and its effects on African borders are determined mainly by involuntary conditions such as conflict and disasters which often cause people to migrate to neighbouring countries (Phukan, 2013). One thing that has spurred cross-border migration attributed to any of the factors aforementioned is globalization.

The issues of logistics and equipment-related challenge surrounding border security is identified by various researchers as a problem which plagues African borders. The availability of logistics and equipment to the security forces along borders is critical to the integrity of the borders. Hence, this subsection is to understand what the issues are like in this direction. Quartey (2019) clearly stated the fact that lack of facilities and equipment to secure and manage borders is among the sources of African border insecurity. He also identified other problems closely associated with this. There is poor intelligence sharing and this has to do with, first, unavailability of the intelligence; and second, lack of equipment that would enable or facilitate the sharing. The problem of lack of modern technology, including communication devices, is supported by Weber (2015). Furthermore, Okumu (2011) highlights lack of office space and accommodation for border security personnel. He maintains that, if there are any such facilities, they are dilapidated houses with collapsing walls and leaking roofs. He also pointed out that there is lack of transport along the border which he attributes to absence of motorable routes. Beyond this, however, lack of vehicles can cause the problem. But the researcher also shows that lack of political will and commitment is involved in this trouble. This implies that closely connected with the logistical and equipment-related problem is the failure of leadership to prioritize the provision of tools for the operation of border security. Sosuh (2011) was quite unwavering in pointing out that the problem of logistics plagues all the institutions involved in border security, particularly, in Ghana. Flynn (2000) also makes similar assertion. For instance, the problem of inadequate residential and office accommodation citing a case of the Ghana Immigration Service section at the Tema Habour where congestion at the office caused some of the staff on duty to sit under trees. She maintains, the case is no different from that of border patrol teams or is, perhaps, worse. Still about the border patrol teams, she describes it a woeful situation that vehicles, border video surveillance gadgets or Close

Circuit Television (CCTV) and mobile scanners were unavailable or in short supply. She further points out an imminent danger posed to the combative border patrol teams when they are under resourced with military equipment to combat armed criminals. In such situations, security personnel are unable to defend themselves and their efforts at securing the borders is thwarted.

*Theoretical Framework of the Study*

The study was lensed by two theoretical perspectives ie, coordinated border management approach and integrated border management approach. The coordinated border management approach provides prior knowledge to begin conceiving of border security or control as a system with existing parts whose work must be brought together into a coherent whole. This approach, therefore, helps to run the day-to-day affairs along the border more efficiently than would a single agency tasked to perform the border security function. Due to the robustness of this approach, it offers practical interpretations, operational arrangements, such as joint mobile teams, joint risk management and targeting areas that would not have been addressed using ordinary administrative approach or concept (Niamir-Fuller, 1999; Elmane-Helmane & Ketners, 2012). The thinking into border security system offered by the coordinated border management approach can be found to have found expression in the arrangement of Ghana in which border security taskforce, normally, comprising a combination of personnel from the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), Ghana Police Service (GPS), and personnel of Ghana Armed Forces. The idea is that, the taskforce coordinates the efforts, skill and equipment of the various state institutions for the purpose of providing security at the country's borders. It is imperative to note that Ghana's border security system has units such as General Duties, Patrol, Intelligence and Anti-Human Smuggling, and Trafficking Units over which the Ghana Immigration Service has primary oversight. The coordinated approach warrants that all these units be coordinated and their operations efficiently channeled to providing border security. One advantage of the coordinated border management approach which cannot be mistaken or overlooked is the avenue for information sharing. On the borders, the Patrol Unit is in charge of making unapproved routes inaccessible or a high-risk to portal.

With regard to Integrated Border Management Approach, the approach of integrated border management is, obviously, an upgraded form of border management. The idea behind this approach is widely accepted and the superior mode for border management in maintaining internal security of a country. This is primarily because, the approach is a master in its own right in the prevention and detection of irregular migration and border-related criminal issues (Leonard, 2009; Carrera, 2007). The integrated border management approach comes to the border security front by, first, prescribing the existence of a border control system which is on top of checks, surveillance, analysis of border risks or threats, and intelligence matters on the border. Integrated border management model is an upgrade of the coordinated border management system in that, added to the coordination of the operations of various units, departments and agencies who have an interest in border control, the integrated model focuses on detecting and understanding cross-

border crimes by liaising or coordinating with all authorities in law enforcement (Leonard, 2009; Carrera, 2007). In other words, the coordination that would otherwise take place in the coordinated model is scaled higher up to include security and law enforcement agencies who are primarily not responsible for border security per say. Inferring from the above, in Ghana, the Ghana Immigration Service can coordinate not only with the Ghana Police Service and Ghana Armed Forces, but also with institutions like the National Investigations Bureau (NIB), formerly Bureau of National Investigations (BNI), and perhaps Ghana National Fire Service, Attorney-General's Department, just any institution that at the time being can be said to have material relevance for some investigation or intelligence needed by the security unit at the border. The integrated border management model, therefore, relies on communication technology, equipment and skilled personnel in order to steer its affairs. Another distinguishing feature of the integrated border management model is that it thrives on an access control model by which it cooperates with countries security systems and allows other countries to cooperate with its systems. This mutual cooperation is with respect to information sharing, border surveillance, application of free movement agreements, trade relations and so forth (Leonard, 2009; Carrera, 2007).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The integrated border management approach discussed in the immediate past subsection represents the conceptual framework adopted to guide this study. The integrated border management approach basically considers border security or control as an integration of law enforcement, security agencies, all concerned institutions, without neglecting border security systems of related countries, in a properly coordinated border management system. This border management approach provides room for active internal engagement of various security units that operate on the borders. In the case of Ghana's borders, this implies identifying the various bodies or establishments in the border security system and ensuring that there is a constant engagement and flow of information within the system. The integrated approach additionally incorporates external engagement where Ghana's border security system has to be involved in an active communication and information sharing about cross-border movements and activities. This provides a mutual support between countries to understanding the nature of threats they are confronting as well as obtain intelligence on whence come those threats. This idea is illustrated in Figure 2.1 to guide the study.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study
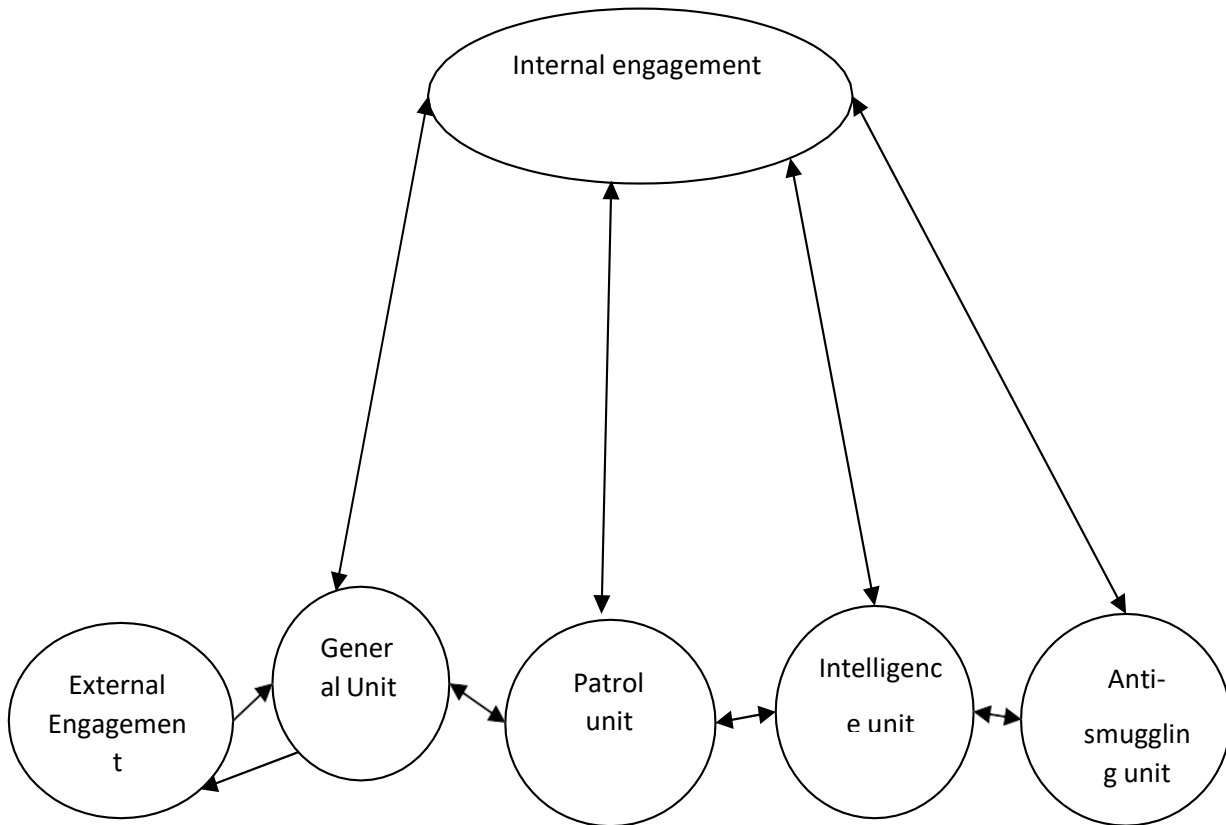
Source: Author's construct of the integrated border management model.

Figure 2.1, the local border security system comprises the General unit, Patrol unit, Intelligence unit, and Anti-smuggling unit. All these units have their own needs to enable them function. This system engages also with other internal agencies, captured as Internal engagement in terms of information sharing and intelligence. The integrated system also demands that the local border system accesses and grants access to external border security systems of other countries, also to promote information sharing and intelligence gathering. It is within this context that this study is undertaken.

Summary of Methodology

A transformative worldview was adopted to answer the research questions with regard to challenges and recognition of the Aflao border, thus making the study reflect both inductive and deductive. A mixed approach was followed in the study, which is in line with the selected philosophical underpinning. Both interviews and questionnaires were employed as data collection tools. The population was sampled from four security service institutions manning the operations at Afloa border. Given that the population under study was quite heterogeneous in terms of the security workforce, stratified random sampling was employed in the study. The baseline

supposition was the conception that the border security forces would not be understated. Given the premise that border security forces were selected from the four coordinated security forces. Each security service was considered a stratum. The study respectively drew 112 security personnel drawn at random from the Afloa border. Using the sampling ratio proposed by Cochran (1963: 75) to arrive at variability p = 0.5 (maximum variability) and with the desire of 95% confidence level and ±5% precision. Hence, this study was based on a sample population of 112 security personnel. The sampled population was composed of 106 border security personnel, and 6 senior border security personnel serving in the hierarchy of the General, Patrol, Intelligence, and Anti-Human Smuggling and Trafficking Units at the borders were interviewed to furnish the qualitative data for this study. The study adopted a descriptive research design using personnel from the Ghana Immigration Service, Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority, Ghana Police Service, and Ghana Armed Forces in charge of security at the Aflao border. This study, therefore, covers officers of the security agencies who have roles to play at the Aflao border.

Data analyses and discussion

The results are discussed according to the objectives of the study

The percentage returns from all four security services were not the same, the highest return of 31 was from the Ghana Immigration Service, and Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority respectively. Followed by 23 personnel from the Ghana Police Service, and 21 from the Ghana Armed Forces. The gender composition of the respondents is shown in Table 1. The gender distribution shows that 64 (60.4%) percent of respondents were males and 42 (39.6%) were females. This suggests that the majority of respondents were male. Perhaps, it could be due to the rationale that wholistically, security service is a male-dominated business; hence, the majority of the respondents were men. Out of the total respondents 112, 21% representing the second highest were between the ages of 26 to 30 years whiles the majority of 49% were between 31 to 39 years. On the other hand, 17 representing 16% were in the range of 18 to 25 years, and a minority of 5 representing 5% were 50 to 60 years. Thus, the youthful service personnel availed themselves of the study more than older security personnel. This also suggests that the border security personnel involved in the study is dominated by energetic security personnel who are strong enough to contribute their quota to the socio-economic development of the Aflao border community and Ghana at large. The study also showed the number of years the border security personnel have spent at the Aflao border. In this regard, the results showed that 12 representing 11% had spent more than ten years at the border, followed by 14% that has been at the border 7 to 10 years, 48% representing the majority had been at the border for 4 to 6 year, and 26% had been at the border for the least number of years ie 1 to 3 years.

Table 1: Border security services and response rate (n=106)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Total	**106**	**100.0**
Sex		
Male	64	60.4
Female	42	39.6
Age (in years)		
18-25	17	16.0
26-30	22	20.8
31-39	52	49.1
40-49	10	9.4
50-60	5	4.7
Educational level		
Middle/JSS/JHS	5	4.7
Secondary/SSS/SHS	61	57.5
Vocational/Commercial/Technical	12	11.3
University/Tertiary	26	24.5
Marital Status		
Never married	41	38.7
Informal/Consensual	8	7.5
Married	52	49.1
Separated/Divorced	3	2.8
Widowed	2	1.9
Security Agency		
Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority	31	29.3
Ghana Immigration Service	31	29.2
Ghana Police Service	23	21.7
Ghana Armed Forces	21	19.8
Period served at the Borders		
1-3 years	28	26.4
4-6 years	51	48.1
7-10 years	15	14.2
10+ years	12	11.3

Border security personnel self-reported abilities on the Security Structure used at Aflao

border

This part of the analysis identified the existing security structure at the Ghanaian borders in response to the first objective of the study. In this present study, the security officers engaged at the borders comprised the Ghana Immigration Service, Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority, Ghana Police Service, and Ghana Armed Forces personnel, all of whom had a certain role to play in managing security at the borders. In the context of border management, the Ghana Immigration Service, by operation of the Immigration Service Act, 2016 (Act 908), and the Customs Excise and Preventive Service, per the Customs Act, 2015 (Act 891) are the principal agencies with responsibilities at the border. The Ghana Immigration Service is statutorily responsible for regulating and monitoring the entry, stay, employment, and exit of foreigners in the country. The Customs, on the other hand, is responsible for regulating all goods or commodities across borders as well as verifying the authenticity of documentation of import and export commodities and collecting duties on them.

All the respondents (100%) share the view that the security of the borders is a shared responsibility.This claim entails the fact that no respondent mentioned one agency to be the sole responsibility holder for everything on the border. This was corroborated by the insight obtained from the interviews in which it was apparent that the integrity of border security is a concerted effort of the Customs, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana Police Service, and Military. A response that exemplified this position held by all the interviewees is:

The reality is that border control and security lie in the purview of the Immigration, Customs, border police, and the military as a backup. As security officers, our work on the border is coordinated on different layers according to the security needs of the Ghana Immigration Service and Customs Division. So, there is the General Duties aspect of our work, and there is the intelligence unit, border patrol unit, human trafficking unit, andso on (Respondent #3, male aged 43 years, Intelligence Unit, interviewed August 2021).

Another interviewee pointed to the fact that the security structure can be construed in layers saying,"the Army provides military force to counter difficult threats", the police are there to "arrest offenders" and process them for court, and with the backing of the police and military, "Immigration officers can deal with all situations" that throw them a challenge (Respondent # 6, male aged 39 years, Border Patrol Unit, interviewed August 2021).

Another interviewee maintained:

Customs and Immigration officers can never do the work alone because there are matters which go beyond them. Police and military officers are often attached to the operational wings of security at the border. So, technically, the operations at the border can be classified as General Duties, Border Patrol, Intelligence, and Anti-Human Smuggling and Trafficking into which the operations of the police and military forces are coordinated for total border security management (Respondent #1, male aged 47 years, General Duties Unit, interviewed August 2021).

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The mechanisms, logistics, and equipment for control of movement at the borders

This subsection aimed to highlight the modus operandi of the security officers in view of cross-border movements. This is to further deepen understanding of what the security arrangement is like at the borders.

Although the Ghana Immigration Service takes charge of recognizing movements across borders recognizing only migrants with valid travel documents such as passports, travel certificates, and so on,the situation on the ground may not be dissimilar. This study posed the question in relation to the document people enter Ghana with. In other words, the travel documents which are often checked by the security detail at the borders are presented in Table 2.

According to Table 2, the data obtained shows that more than three out of every five (64.2%) respondentsregard a passport as the major document used by migrants to cross borders. One's ability to migrate in and out of Ghana with such a document, once it is valid, is guaranteed by the ImmigrationService Act, 2016 (Act 908). This implies that the security system at the borders is largely dealing with the recognized document type in determining cross-border movements. About one in five (22.6%) of the respondents use ECOWAS Card with so little as 12.3% using National ID Card.

Table 2: Documents used by Migrants for crossing the Border

Document	Frequency	Percent
Total	**106**	**100.0**
Passport	68	64.2
National I.D. Card	13	12.3
Ecowas Card	24	22.6
Others	1	0.9

The use of equipment or gadgets by the border security personnel

The objective study enquired about the use of equipment or gadgets by security personnel. The results are given in Figure1. Only 39 percent of the respondents responded in the affirmative. The results indicate that the majority (61%) ofthe respondents deny the use of equipment or gadget to aid the process of migrants crossing the borders.
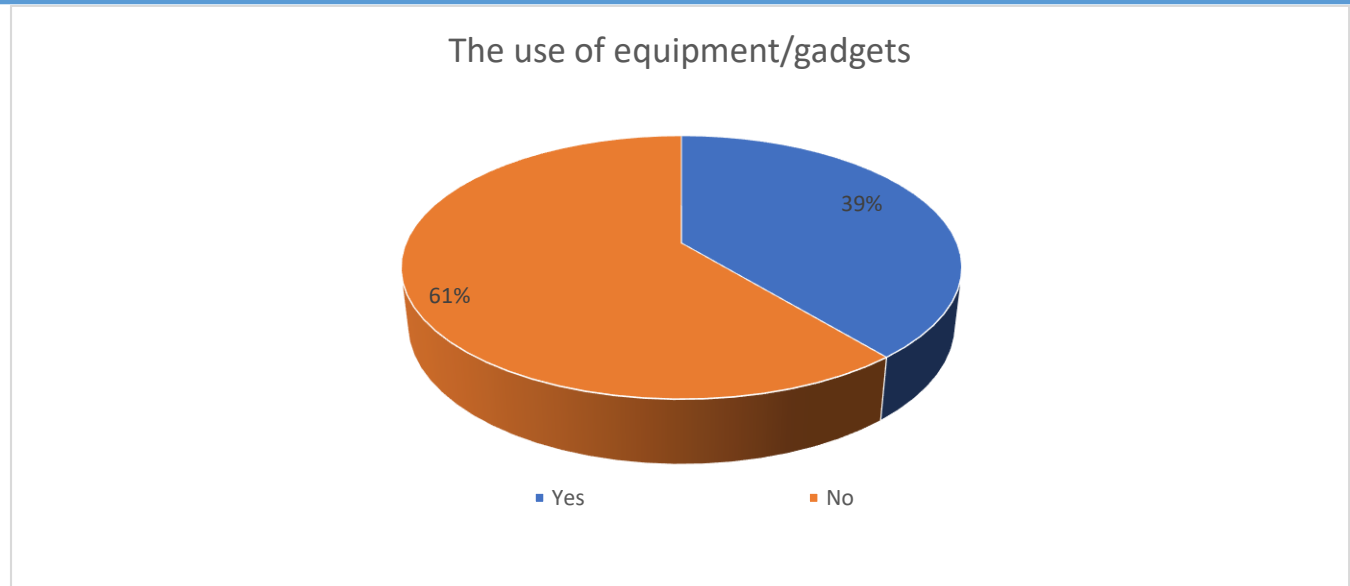
Figure 1. *The use of equipment/gadgets*

The study went further to enquire about the objects that are subject to screening and search at theborder before permitting movement. The results are presented in Figure 2. According to Figure 4.2, the majority (86.8%) of the respondents showed that travel documents are mostly subjected to search or screening while luggage/baggage are screened or searched only half the times (43.4%) that travel documents receive that attention. There was 67% of the respondents indicated that searching luggage and screening travel documents are done side-by-side. This implies that searching or screening of travel documents is most often used as a check along the border while searching or screening of luggage/baggage is done half the times as is done for travel documents.
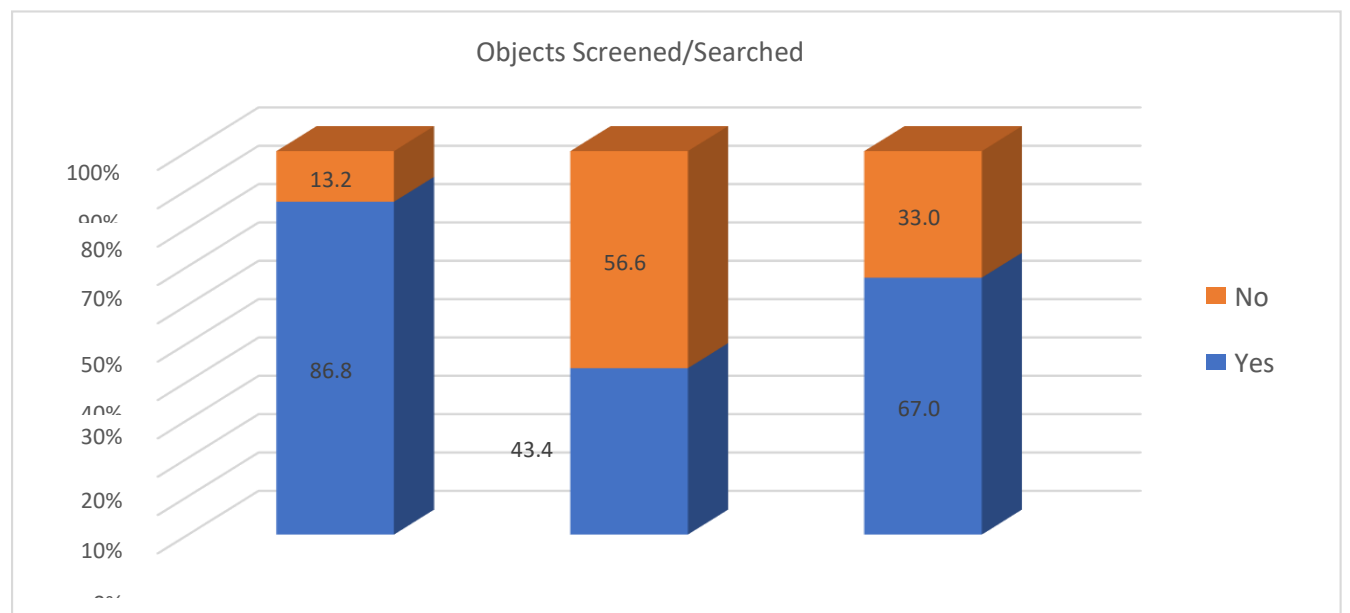
Figure 2: Screening and Search

In consonance with the above, one intelligence officer commented on the issue saying as follows:

Using equipment like body scanners, sensors, and metal detectors to check migrants along our border would be a novel experience for our border security system. It would certainly improve our work. However, we donot have any of such devices to detect anything (Respondent # 3, male aged 43, Intelligence Unit, interviewed August 2021).

Security personnel's appreciation of cross-border movement patterns

The nationals that frequently use the Aflao border

This subsection paves the way to appreciate what the security personnel in this study think about the cross-border movement pattern. The first step was to find out where the cross-border travelers come from. Figure 3 presents the information in this direction. The results indicate that the majority (76.4%) of the respondents indicated that travelers across the borders often come from ECOWAS member countries, but are non-Ghanaians. Already, Ghana has earned for itself a reputation as 'the gateway to Africa' as is frequently touted. Countries in the West African Sub-Region recognize Ghana as a business hub because of its relatively stable economy. It has become a preferred destination for economic activity for ECOWAS nationals. This is also fueled by the recent designation of the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area in Ghana (AfCFTA). The manner in which Ghanaians frequent the borders indicated only about one out of every five (18.9%) of the respondents think that Ghanaians patronize the borders mostly.
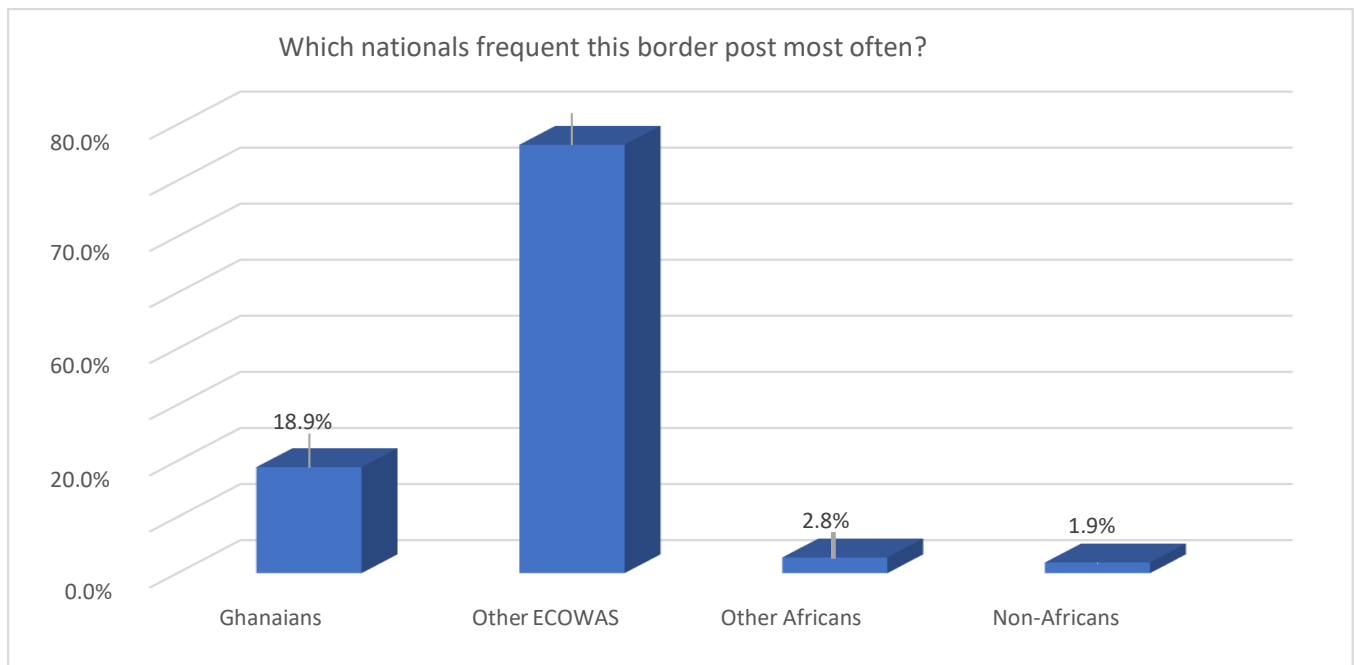

Which nationals frequent this border post most often?

80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
20.0%
0.0%

18.9% (Ghanaians)
(Other ECOWAS)
2.8% (Other Africans)
1.9% (Non-Africans)

Figure 3: Nationals mostly Frequenting Ghana's Borders

The rationale for movement across the Aflao borders by the ECOWAS nationals

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Following the inquiry above, the purpose for which Ghana's borders are engaged by these non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals was solicited and the results are presented in Table 3. The results showed that the purpose of non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals engaging with Ghana's borders, according to the largest section (49.1%) of the respondents, is business. This is followed by visits (20.8%); tourism (16%), and transit (9.4%). So, business purposes take precede over any other matters necessitating cross-border movements, particularly, for non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals from the viewpoint of the security personnel.

Table 3: Evaluation of the Migrants' Purposes for engaging Ghana's Borders

Purpose	Frequency	Percent
Total	**106**	**100.0**
Business	52	49.1
Visit	22	20.8
Tourism	17	16.0
Transit	10	9.4
Work	4	3.8
Medical	1	0.9

The prominence of business purposes in the cross-border movements on the Ghanaian borders was corroborated in the interviews. An important aspect of the interviews concerning this matter states: This Aflao border is notoriously busy, and booming with activity because the Nigerians use this site a lot. They are so business minded they pass with goods to trade. Most people, even Ghanaians, go to trade in places like Nigeria, and Togo so they approach this border a good many times in commercial quantities. So, among all the reasons for crossing the border, trade, and business are paramount (Respondent # 6, male aged 39 years, Border Patrol Unit, interviewed August 2021).

Challenges associated with Control of Movement at the Borders

Nationalists posing most Challenges

This section addresses the third research question to do with specifying the challenges confronting the security officers in their effort to manage security at the borders or exercise control over cross-border movements. In answering the main question, "What are the challenges associated with the control of movement on the borders?" the respondents were asked if there were any real challenges confronting them at the borders. All (100%) of the responses garnered were undeviating in pointing out that there were real challenges with border control. Table 4 presents the results obtained as to which nationalists posed a greater challenge in this inquiry.

As a first step to narrowing down the challenges, the majority (67%) of the respondents identified non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals as the leading source of the challenges. Next to that, about a quarter (24.5%) of the respondents cited Ghanaians as the chief source of border challenges. This was followed by 4.7 percent and 3.8 percent of the respondents who mentioned other African and

non-African nationals respectively. The results of the study are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Nationalists posing most Challenges

Nationals	Frequency	Percent
Total	**106**	**100.0**
Ghanaians	26	24.5
Other ECOWAS nationals	71	67.0
Other Africans	5	4.7
Non-Africans	4	3.8

Aspects of the interviews made mention of the fact that nationals from ECOWAS member states, who are non-Ghanaians, particularly Nigerians, are frequent users of the borders, making their way in and out of Ghana. It is these nationals whose cross-border activities increase the challenges for the security system along the borders as it regularly has to deal with smuggling, use of unapproved routes, movement of criminals in and out of Ghana who are identified at non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals. This state of affairs is probably due to the open border policy as a result of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement within the sub-Region (Sosuh, 2011; Lamptey, 2013), which is seen as a fundamental to drive sub-regional integration. Agyei and Clottey (2007) noted that as a result of the implementation of the Protocol, population movements within the ECOWAS Sub-Region has constituted a relatively larger proportion of all immigrants in most of the member states.

A comment that typifies this assertion was made by an interviewee in the following terms: The Nigerians and other ECOWAS nationals are more frequent users of our borders. It makes logical sense to say that these ECOWAS nationals are the ones who expose the security arrangement at the borders to many challenges (Respondent # 1, male aged 47 years, General Duty, interviewed August 2021).

Another interviewee added some fine details to the assertion above and, also, highlighted the role of Ghanaians in the challenges they encounter at the borders. This point of view draws Ghanaians into the nationals that heighten the challenges to border security. The interviewee said:

It is apparent that ECOWAS nationals cross the borders mostly and so, the problems of irregular migration are mostly carried out by them. There is another phenomenon where non-Africans, particularly, Chinese migrants engage Ghanaians to facilitate their effort to move into Ghana through unapproved routes. This phenomenon feeds into the illegal mining issues involving the Chinese and the view that it is Ghanaians themselves who lead the Chinese into that enterprise (Respondent # 3, male aged 43, Intelligence Unit, interviewed August 2021).

There is, therefore, a concern expressed by border security of how Ghanaians are aiding irregular movement across the border, which is inimical to national security. Thus, although non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals are in the spotlight for increasing the challenges of border security officers by their irregular activities on the border, it does not exonerate Ghanaians from the illegitimate

mannerin which they facilitate the cross-border movement of some migrants.

The respondents were requested to indicate the specific challenges they faced as border security personnel. Most of the challenges are not new developments, they have been long standing ones that have persisted over time (Aning, 2005; Sosuh, 2011). Globally, border officials encounter a lotof challenges in controlling and managing affairs of borders (Flynn, 2000) especially, in developingcountries.

Border security challenges spanning across lack of modern equipment for operations; lack of coordination among border officials; logistical constraints; and inadequate personnel were identifiedby a larger section of the respondents as matters of concern. Figure 4.6 provides a pictorial view ofthe dispositions of the respondents along the challenges identified.

Challenges confronting Border Security Officers

Although all the challenges qualify as nagging challenges to border security officers, from Figure 4.6, logistical constraint was indicated by 97.2 percent of the respondents to qualify this constraint as the greatest challenge to the respondents. This was immediately followed by the challenge of lackof modern equipment sustained by as much as 93.4 percent of the respondents. This implies that thetwin challenges of logistical constraint and lack of modern equipment for operations are by no means little challenges to overlook as far as the security officers in this study are concerned.

The finding above speaks to the fact that logistics and equipment such as vehicles, patrol equipment,sensors, guns, and so on, are in short supply to the security officers. Studies like Sosuh (2011) and Okumu (2011) have well documented this challenge to security of borders, notably, in Africa. Thedifference in this present study is that logical and equipment-related constraints run paramount among the myriad of challenges that confronted the border security officers in this study.

According to an interviewee who was with the Patrol Unit of the security outfit at the Aflao border, equipment for the smooth operation of the security officers along the border are inadequate. He made this known in the following words:

Modern equipment for border control, as important as they are in controlling activities on borders today, are seriously lacking. Without the equipment, how can we control and protect the border even while we are clear in our minds about the challenges we have to deal with? (Respondent # 5, male aged 45, Border Patrol Unit, interviewed August 2021).
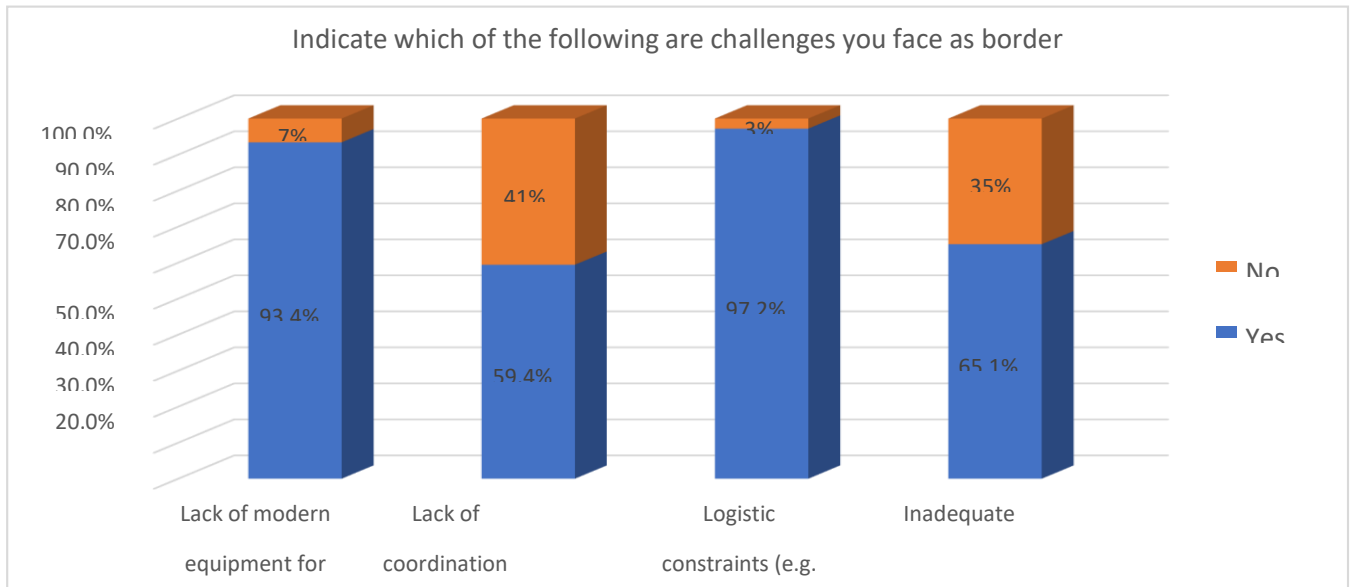

Figure 4. Challenges confronting Border Security Officers

Policy Implementation, Bribery and Use of Unapproved Routes

The study further enquired if there was some institutional arrangement which allow for effective policy implementation. Also, an enquiry was made into whether bribing of security officers and use of unapproved routes by border users were rife or not. The results obtained are presented in Figure 5.

More than half (53.8%) of the respondents affirmed the position that the border security system has an institutional arrangement which allows for effective policy implementation. In a sharp contrast, a high majority (93.4%) of the respondents indicated that there have been attempts directed to bribing security officers on the border. Similarly, as much as 97.2 percent of the respondents claimed people still use unapproved routes to cross the borders of Ghana.

The wide variation between the respondents' affirmation of the existence of institutional arrangement for policy implementation on the one hand, and bribery attempts and use of unapproved routes on the other hand, betrays the confidence among the respondents that the institutional arrangement for implementation of policy is potent as compared to bribery attempts on security officers and use of unapproved routes by border users. This implies that implementation of policy to address issues like bribery of security officers and use of unapproved routes is not as animated as the incidence of bribery and unapproved usage of the border.

Perception about bribery and corruption in the security services in Ghana is widely known

although empirical evidence to back them are often difficult to get (Norman et al., 2017). According to GhanaIntegrity Initiative (GII), Immigration officers are perceived to take bribe for smooth facilitation ofborder crossing at most borders and the Airport (GII, 2017). It was based on this notion that respondents were asked whether in their operations as immigration officials, they have been temptedwith bribes. The indication given by the security officers is that people have been attempting to bribe them. If so, then the problem of bribery knocks vigorously on the doors of the security officersat the borders and this requires some measure to counter it.

The respondents roundly indicated that crossing the border through unapproved routes is a major problem because of because of the existence of crimes with cross-border mobility. The data showsthere is no arguing the fact that illegal border crossing is associated with goods smuggling, drug trafficking, and human trafficking in most parts. Against these illegalities, the border security tries to manage illegal crossing by intensive patrolling of the borders, and blocking of illegal routes. Butthe majority (97.2%) of the respondents expressed concern that there are security threats if the border security does not exercise total control of the movements across the borders.
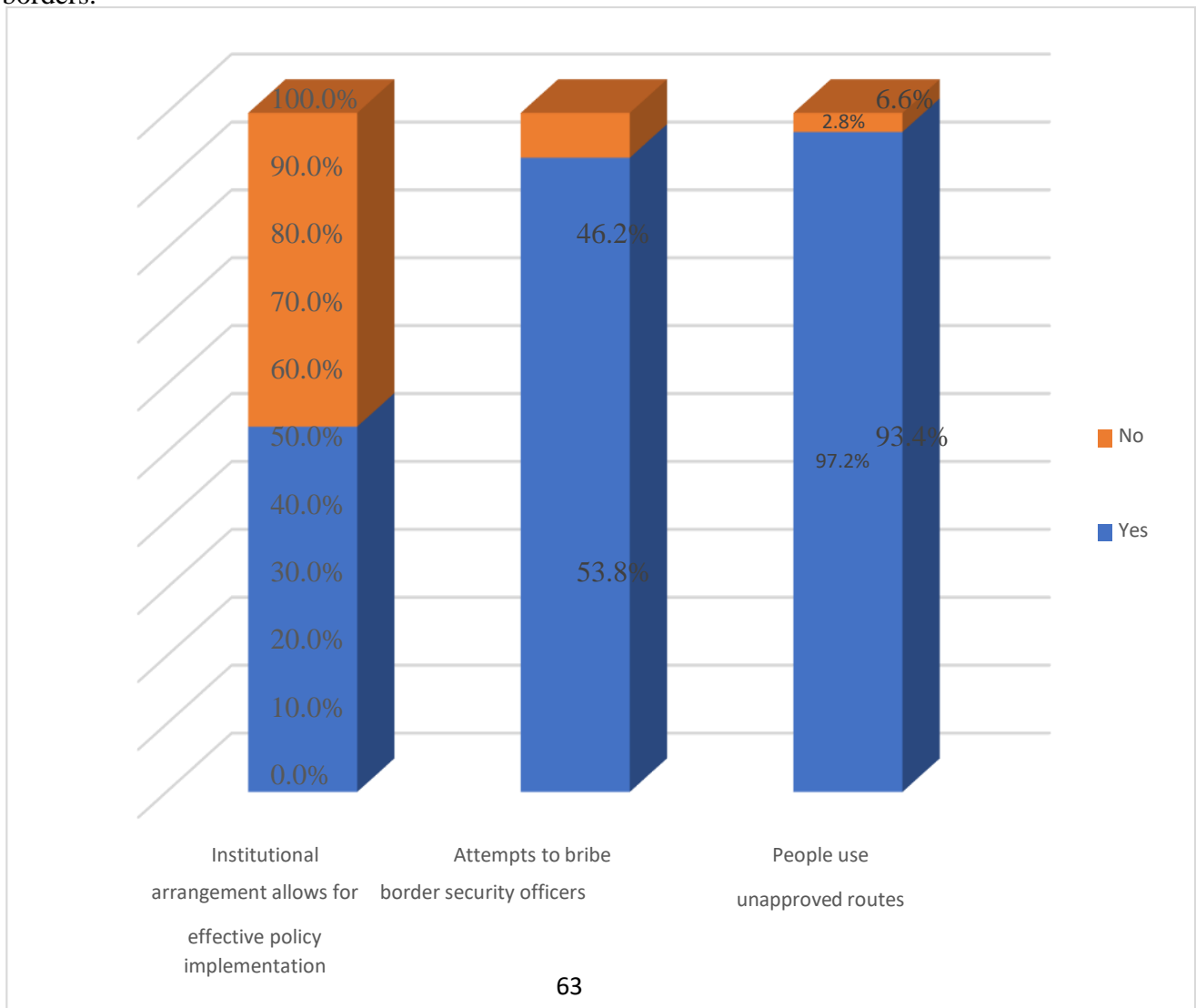
Figure 5. Policy Implementation, Bribery and Use of Unapproved Routes

Opportunity for improving Border Security Outcomes

This part of the study addresses the final objective of the study which is to identified opportunities for enhancement of border security. In ranking a set of measures that could create and optimize opportunities for improved border security, the following results illustrated in Figure 6 emerged. The largest proportion (98.1%) of the respondents considered continuous surveillance as an opportunity for improving border security. This was followed by 95.3%, 90.6%, 79.2%, and 67% of the respondents who, respectively, regarded application of sophisticated equipment, constant border patrol, further training, and mass education as opportunities for improving border security. These results imply that the respondents place continuous surveillance on top of the agenda. Immediately following that, the respondents regarded application of sophisticated equipment as an opportunity to improve border security. Placing third was constant border patrol. At the fourth position was further training for border officials, and finally mass education on border security issues.

Further indication provided in the interviews conducted show that, in order to summon the opportunities that there are for improving border security outcomes, attention needs to be given to resourcing the border security outfit. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Ghana Immigration Service plays an instrumental role in the security structure of the country. In view of that, resources should, as much as possible, be allocated to improve border infrastructure and facilities. Government should see border management as a national security issue and resource the Ghana Immigration Service to effectively and efficiently discharge its mandate of securing the borders.

Again, modern technology and equipment should be available for officials manning the borders which will help combat transnational organized crimes. Institutions like IOM and UNDP have been phenomenal in this regard.

The findings above, stress on the fact that the agencies in charge of enforcing security at the borders of the country are inadequately resourced, which negatively affects their efforts at improving security. Sosuh (2011) maintains that the Ghana Immigration Service is woefully under resourced in terms of vehicles, border video surveillance gadgets such as radar sensors, close circuit television(CCTV) and mobile scanners. So, the border security system is immersed in resource constraints which needs to be improved to provide some opportunity for ramping up the security of the borders.
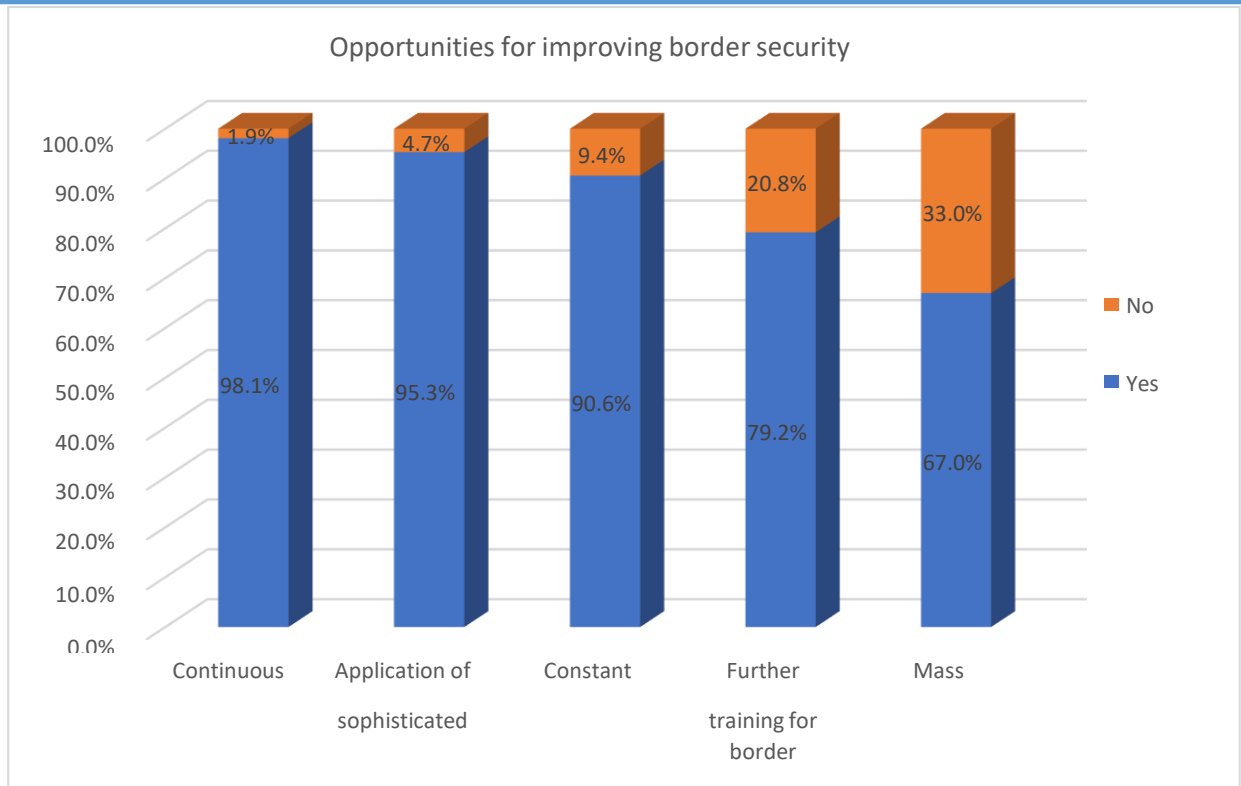
Figure 6. Opportunities for improving boarder security

Conclusion

Ensuring security at the borders is an important exercise because every state needs to guard keenlyits territorial integrity. This can only be done by assembling the appropriate security system to address issues that undercut this integrity. The present study has made a fair attempt at explaining the security structure at the Ghanaian borders, describing the mechanisms for control of cross-border movement on the borders, identifying the challenges facing security officers, and the opportunitiesfor improving border security. This helped to achieve the main objective of the study, viz, to appreciate the security situation at the borders taking cognizance of the challenges and opportunities for security officers.

The study reaffirms the view that security is a shared responsibility and the same applies to security on the borders of Ghana. The Ghana Immigration Service, Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority, Ghana Police Service, and the Military play complementary roles to support the mandated institutions, that is, the Ghana Immigration Service and the Customs to perform their functions peacefully in defense of the interest of Ghana. This concept also gives meaning to the formation of a border security task force whose primary function is to patrol the borders and prevent unauthorized entry and exit as well as control activities of criminals along the borders.

Although border security officers undergo training on border management and full familiarity

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with documents and manuals (like Act 908 and Act 891) that could guide their operations along the border, they are unable to effectively perform their functions at the border. Notably, they screen travel documents without the necessary equipment, are marginally able to inspect luggage/baggage, and efficiently conduct surveillance operations. Activities of some non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals posed the biggest challenge to the border security system. Ghanaians who assist illegal entry and/or exit from Ghana also pose a challenge to the security system. This action is responsible for the entry of Chinese immigrants who get involved in illegal small-scale mining activities in the country.

The specific challenges which confront the border security apparatus are, in order of priority, inadequate logistics and equipment, inadequate coordination among border officials, and inadequacy of border security personnel. On the issue of bribery of border officials, the security officers indicate their discomfort with attempts to bribe security officers but express little confidence in any arrangementto implement policies that can improve upon the situation and operations of the border security system. In spite of the challenges, there are possible opportunities for improving border security. The security officers projected improvement in surveillance capabilities as the first way to go in terms of improving the security of the Aflao border in Ghana.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, a few recommendations have been proffered as follows:

First, to improve border control, the government should make needed resources available by providing modern equipment/gadgets and logistics for patrol teams and the operations of the security system. The specific equipment and logistics should be based on the needs of the security personnel. Surveillance devices, sensors, and so on would qualify as very important gadgets in thisdirection. This would help to solve the problem found in this study regarding the inadequacy of resources for the border security apparatus.

Second, Government should collaborate with international organizations such IOM, UNDP amongothers, to train border officials to enhance their techniques and skills to address cross-border crimes through detection and prevention. Regular in-service training programs and refresher courses should be organized for the security officers to build their capacity and bring them up to speed with best practices in controlling cross-border movement. This is to stem the problem of lack of trainingfound in this study.

Third, in consonance with integrated border management, the government should constantly operationalize the idea of merging officers of the Ghana Immigration Services, Ghana Police Service, and Ghana Armed Forces among other relevant institutions into a single body to manage the security of borders of the country. This would pave way for collaboration and coordination, reduce inter-agency rivalry, and perceived supremacy, and set the stage for the institutions to share facilities, resources, and intelligence. A classic example is the US Customs and Border

Protection (CBP). This is to beef up the security strength and readiness to deal with security issues which might increase with the increasing engagement on the border, especially, non-Ghanaian ECOWAS nationals. This is without prejudice to these nationals as Ghanaians, especially, border residents were found to be another source of the security challenges along the borders. The cooperation is meant to provide the best complement of personal strength and concerted effort to withstand any border security challenge thrown at the border security system.

Additionally, since cross-border crimes and security threats traverse national borders and no countrycan fight them alone, it is imperative for the Government of Ghana to fashion out a strong co- operation with neighbouring countries in addressing crimes based on intelligence.

Finally, the Government of Ghana through the interior ministry should resource the Ghana Immigration Service as well as the Customs Division of Ghana Revenue Authority to enable them to discharge their legitimate duties at the borders across the country especially the Aflao border whichis the busiest land border in the country. This will go a long way not only to boost revenue generationbut also to reduce if not eliminate criminal activities at the borders.

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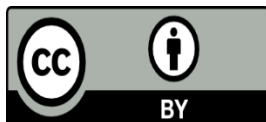Sosuh, M.M. (2011). Border Security in Ghana: Challenges and Prospects. KAIPTC Occasional Paper No.32

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