

THE PERCEIVED ROLES OF SCHOOLS ON RIGHT-BASED APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN OGUN STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the roles and involvement of teachers towards the educational rights of children in primary schools. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 140 teachers in four local governments based on the four administrative divisions of Ogun state. A structured questionnaire was developed using an adapted UNICEF right-based educational framework and Epstein involvement model in collecting data. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and chi-square. It was found that 27.2% of the teachers were between the ages of 31 and 40 years, 27.2% were below 30 years, 26.5% were above 50 years. The teachers' teaching experience showed that 40.7% had 1 to 10 years of experience. Regarding years spent in the present school, the majority (71.3%) of the teachers reported that they had been in their present school for less than 6 years. The roles ensured by schools in children's right to quality education showed that less than half of the schools (44.8%) highly ensured their roles toward children's right to quality education while 39.0% ensured their roles in children's rights to education on an average level. The study therefore concluded that there is low awareness of children's right to education. It was therefore recommended that the government should re-address and re-orientate all pertinent stakeholders on the significance of not only being aware but also being committed to investing in children's education.

Keywords: children, educational rights, school, teachers, involvement,

INTRODUCTION

The school-age period is very crucial in forming the individual independent personality and defining the children's trends and directions in the future (Al Akroush and Al Zyoud, 2010). Within this developmental period of the children's life, it is a truism that parents are the first point of contact for children in shaping their future while teachers are the loco parentis in schools responsible for imparting educational knowledge to children while in school (Babalola, 2016). The role of stakeholders is crucial in protecting, ensuring and giving sound education to children and is an obligatory responsibility to achieve development in any nation (Amuda, 2011; Sixsmith

et al., 2007; Smith, 2000; The Bantawa Initiative and Francois-Xavier Bagnoud (TBI & FXB), 2010). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is central to the well-being of children in the post-war legal landscape thereby making different stakeholders take up their responsibilities (Arnott, 2007; Child Rights Information Network, 2007; Jacomy and Stevens, 2005). Specifically, articles 28 and 29 point out that primary education is compulsory for children of primary school age without disparity. To ensure that all children receive primary education, the Education for All (EFA) framework place significance on three key areas of education including the right to access to education, the right to quality education and the right to a stimulating learning environment (UNICEF and UNESCO, 2007). In essence, the UNCRC, CRA and EFA all stress the right of children to education and the roles of pertinent stakeholders.

In developing countries, statistics show a slight increase of 11% in the number of children attending primary school from 81% in 1999 to 92% in 2015 summing up to 58 million children not accessing education (World Bank, 2015). The school is an institutional space for communities of learners, including both students and teachers (Singh, 2014). For education to be effective in schools, the environment needs to be conducive to learning, allowing the pupils space and time to interact within the learning and teaching process. Creating and maintaining stimulating learning environments can be achieved through effective classroom organization, interactive and whole-school displays and a climate of innovation. According to Ames (1995) regular and effective communication from teachers about school improvement and achievement, in children's education promotes parents' sense of partnership with the school. A close-knit relationship between parents and teachers supports children's development and promotes the rights and well-being of the child in the community (Tan, 2019). Even with these, the goals will continually be minimally achieved without individual home parental involvement (Effiom et al., 2012).

In Nigeria, quality of education and underachievement in many subjects remains a public discourse with many children being victims of dropout, repetition rates, and less than one-fifth completing the primary cycle, with fewer girls than boys completing (Kimu, 2012). UNESCO (2015) further reported the uneven progress made towards education in Sub-Sahara Africa in terms of goals of early childhood and quality education among others which are insufficiently attended to. Children's needs and rights in reality have not been achieved by any country (Ayua and Okagbue, 1996; Munro, 2008). Schools' involvement and competencies are the basis for involvement and imparting knowledge to children (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003).

Further, Epstein et.al, (2002) discourse on involvement encourages the partnership and participation of parents with the schools their children attend. School-based activities like helping with homework, encouraging reading and school attendance boost the academic achievement of children who are already doing well and ensure fair and effective interventions for children with academic concerns. Although, it is obvious that parental involvement is the antidote to solving educational problems faced by children, but in cases where parents are illiterate, their involvement in realising their Children's right to education is diminished and thus the schools roles and involvement is crucial (Fan and Chen, 2001; Amuda, 2011). After parents, teachers are the next point of contact with children in schools as they can respond appropriately to the educational rights of children (Caddell et al., 2000; Okoye, 2011).

Based on previous studies, Temli, et al., (2011) carried out a study on primary classroom and social studies teachers' perceptions of moral education and their development and learning among 824 primary classroom teachers. Findings showed that most teachers regarded moral education as essential and wanted to deal with it in their classes, yet they complaint that both in-service and pre-service preparation had given minimum pedagogical emphasis on this matter.. Singh (2014) carried out a study in two private schools using 300 students, teachers and principals

on how learning takes place within a web of social relationships as teachers and pupils interact both formally and informally. Teacher's behaviour, good infrastructural, excursions were found out to be major stimulants in the schools for students whereas the methods of teaching like conducting activities, discussions, demonstrations were also considered as an important factors bring students to the classrooms. Further, teachers influenced the adults' perceptions of children's rights and created some observable tension between professional aspirations to provide for high-quality early childhood education and the reality of working in a sector that has never had quite enough funding (Te-one, 2011). In past decades, UNESCO (1998) the situational reports of world's teachers in pre-primary and primary education, show that unqualified teachers were recruited to meet the demands for shortage with failed benefits in terms of salaries, status, teaching and learning conditions, materials situations of schools. In terms of Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), parents make extensive contributions to their children's primary education through the PTA (Catherwood et al., 2003).

In Tonga Education Sector Study, it was found that over 68% of primary teachers were female, a proportion which has remained relatively constant over the past 5 years. Also, teachers in government primary schools are generally well-qualified with approximately 51% having diploma or Degree qualifications and only 5% being trained un-certificated teachers. The proportion of untrained teachers and trained un-certificated teachers in the non-government primary school system, however, at 38%, is relatively high. The Tonga report emphasized PTA to be responsible for the maintenance of school and rendering other supports like providing materials for teaching and learning. The school system is strengthened when parents and teachers collaborate together in order to encourage children to learn. On the other hand, the weakness in the school system shows lack of equipment and maintenance, lack of practical subjects; need to have well-qualified and motivated teachers in all schools and to retain good teachers in the study area which can enhance better pastoral care for students.

Different factors have been found to influence the right-based approach to education (RBAE). In low- and middle income countries, parents socio-economic status such as occupation, educational status; child labour and societal factors can influence the RBAE including, , among others (Amar et al., 2008; Diptee, 2014; Furlong, 2008; Reading et al., 2009). For instance, in Kenya, Lanyasunya (2012) distance, cost, domestic work, gender, guardian's education level and occupation, and mobility of the household were the main factors that affected access to basic formal education among the Samburu. The poor quality of the educational system and the low salaries and poor working conditions of the teachers are also noted to influence educational rights (Mukherjee and Das, 2008; Kim, 2011; 2009).

Guarcello, et al (2002) found out that poor families pull their children out of school to provide labour as a strategy to minimize income stress instead of encouraging them to stay on at school for a brighter future. In meeting these basic needs, societies have often tended to regard those of the child as merely secondary (Olumodeji, 2008). Effiom, et-al. (2012) discovered that conducive home environment with an equally conducive and stimulating school environment go a long way to ensure children's health. According to UNICEF report (2017), complete access to free quality education is a human right but there have been regressive trends in universal enrolment. For instance, between 2010 and 2013, children of school have increased from 4.2 % to 59.3%.

Thus, there is need for high quality teachers with appreciable responsibility towards achieving the rights of the child as stated in the goals of education for sustainable development, and as enunciated by UNESCO (2007) charter especially in developing countries'.

The study adapted the UNICEF Children's Rights to Education framework to address the following research questions for schools to meet the educational right of children in primary

schools in Ogun State.

- i. What are the roles of schools in ensuring the educational rights of children?
- ii. In what ways are schools involved in children's education?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between respondents' - teachers involvement and educational rights of children.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design. A cross-sectional survey design was used to examine the roles and involvement of parents and teachers in children's right to education in Ogun State.

Sampling and Sample size selection:

Teachers: A random selection of four Local Government Areas (LGAs) from the four administrative divisions of Ogun State including, Egba, Remo, Ijebu and Yewa-Egbado. Thus, the randomly-selected LGAs from the division include Abeokuta South, Ijebu-Ode, Sagamu, and Yewa-North (Igbogila). Seven primary schools were purposively selected based on schools with highest students' population in each LGAs using the list of registered schools in 2012 / 2013 academic session. This list was collected from SUBEB under the Ministry of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State. This gives a total of twenty-eight (28) schools. From each of the selected schools, five (5) teachers from primary one to five were randomly selected to give a total of 140 respondents.

Research Instrument: The personal characteristics of respondents include age, sex, religion, and educational status were nominal. Age was measured at actual age, sex as female (2) and male (1), and educational status was measured at was measured at the nominal level. The roles of schools were examined with the adapted UNCIEF Children's Right to Education Framework (2007). The adapted items focused on the right of child to access education and right to quality education. A 2-point scale response scale was adopted expressed as Yes (1) and No (0) to measure the respondents' roles in the right of child to education. An occurrence 3-point rating scale was adopted 0 = Never; 1 = occasionally; and 2 = Always) was used to measure involvement of respondents in children's educational activities.

Procedure for Data Collection: The primary data was obtained from the respondents during school hours by the researcher in the company of three research assistants who were briefed before the administration of the questionnaires. The respondents were properly instructed, and the administration of questionnaire was done on a voluntary basis.

Data Analysis: Data collected were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage counts, mean, standard deviation and the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

RESULTS

The personal characteristics result reveals that 27.2% of the teachers were between the ages 31 and 40 years, 27.2% were below 30 years, 26.5% were above 50 years. Majority (86.0%) of teachers were females while 14.0% of them were males. The highest educational qualification of parents shows that 70.6% of the teachers had NCE, OND and SSCE while 29.4% of them had HND, BSc. B.Ed. and post-graduate degrees. The teachers' teaching experience shows that 40.7% had 1 – 10 years experiences, 27.6% had 21 - 30 years' experience and 20.3% had 11-20 years' experience. Regarding years spent in the present school, majority (71.3%) of the teachers' reported that they had been in their present school for less than 6 years and 22.8% had been in the school for 6 – 10 years.

Roles of Schools in Children's Educational Rights

Table 1 shows schools' roles towards meeting the right to education. The right of access to education revealed that majority (92.6%) of the teachers' reported that primary education is compulsory for all school age children and 93.4% reported that it is the duty of schools to ensure regular attendance in school. Although, 89.7% of teachers reported that schools had not ensured any measures to encourage children coming to school on daily basis. However, school is making effort for equal opportunity for children in school irrespective of their gender, social status and physical abilities as reported by majority of teachers (89.0%) ranking 3rd.

Table 1: Roles of Schools in Children's right to Education

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage	Ranking
Right to Access Education				
1.	Ensure regular attendance in school	127	93.4	1 st
2.	Schools had no measures to encourage children coming to school on daily basis	14	10.3	2 nd
3.	School is making efforts for equal opportunity for children in school irrespective of their gender, social status and physical disabilities.	121	89.0	3 rd
4.	The school has done nothing to reduce drop-out rates of school children	93	68.4	4 th
5.	School condone children who give excuses of being absent in school (e.g. due domestic work)	89	65.4	5 th
6.	Government has made schools' location conducive and economical for every child	86	63.2	6 th
7.	Education does not have to be free in primary school	53	39.0	7 th
8.	School encourages males than female children in school	44	32.4	8 th

Right to Quality Education

1.	I assess and monitor each children's school work	134	98.5*	1 st
2.	Schools make text books accessible for children	131	96.3	2 nd
3.	Schools review the curriculum for primary school children	129	94.8	3 rd
4.	In schools, children have access to library facilities	126	92.6	4 th
5.	Schools remove barriers that could impede a healthy environment for children to learn	124	91.2	5 th
6.	School does not provides enough materials and equipment to impart children	93	68.4	6 th
7.	Schools ensure teaching aids are available for teaching children	90	66.2	7 th
8.	Schools have little input in teaching children morals	84	61.8	8 th
9.	It is the responsibility of the school authority to send teachers for in-service training	83	60.2	9 th
10.	Examination is not compulsory for children	65	47.8	10 th

Categorisation of the Roles of Schools in Children's Right of Access to Education

The categorisation of schools on the extent to which they ensured their roles in children's right of access to education. Majority of schools (55.1%) highly ensured their roles in children's right of access to education while 27.2% and 17.7% ensured their roles in children's right of access to education on a low and average levels respectively. The roles ensured by schools in children's right to quality education showed that less than half of the school (44.8%) highly ensured their roles toward children's right to quality education while 39.0% and 16.2% ensured their roles in children's right to education on an average and low levels respectively.

Schools Involvement in Children's Education

Table 2 presents the results obtained in the involvement of schools in children's education. What is interesting in this result is the fact that majority (97.1%) of teachers reported that they engaged and utilised PTA meetings to discuss with parents, ranking second. Furthermore, majority of teachers (94.1%) encouraged parents that are involved in their children's education and 89.7% do send for parents when children misbehave in the classroom. 89.0% of teachers also indicated that they followed the school policy to meet the educational rights of children.

Table 2: Schools Involvement in Children's Education

S/N	Involvement statement	Frequency	%	Ranking
1.	I engage and utilise PTA meetings to discuss with parents	132	97.1	1 st
2.	I do encourage parents that are involve in children's education	128	94.1	2 nd
3.	I do send for parents when children misbehave in the classroom	122	89.7	3 rd
4.	I follow the school policy to meet the educational rights of children	121	89.0	4 th
5.	I share with the students their educational rights	117	86.0	5 th
6.	Through school, I writes parents of the progress report their children	112	82.4	6 th
7.	I appreciate and praise children in my class when they do well and discourage them when they do otherwise	110	80.9	7 th
8.	I monitor how children play and interact with other children although there is no play-ground	104	76.5	8 th
9.	The school provides a functioning and well equipped up-to date books and periodicals which I use for children during their leisure period	95	69.9	9 th
10.	The school involve children and parents in decision making	90	66.2	10 th
11.	The teachers involve children in literary and debating society to enhance participation with other schools	87	64.0	11 th
12.	My school make provisions for in-school-training for all teachers	74	54.4	12 th
13.	My school continually review curriculum to meet the mental ability of children	60	44.1	13 th

Test of Significant relationship of Schools Roles in Children's Right of Access to Education and their Involvement

Results presented in Table 3 shows the Spearman rho correlation analysis between schools involvement and role in children's right of access to education. A significant relationship was found between schools roles in right of child to education and involvement at 0.01 levels ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.00$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.. This implies that the involvement of schools in children's education is not determined by the roles they ensured in children's right to education. Thus, schools will always be involved in education regardless of children's right to quality education.

Table 3: Test of Significant Relationship of Schools Role in Children's Right of Access to Education and their Involvement

Variables	Rho value	p-value	Decision
Schools role in children's right of access education involvement	0.24	0.00**	Significant
Schools involvement and role in children's right to quality education	0.10	0.24	Not Significant

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 – tailed); Decision crt null hypothesis when $p < 0.01$

DISCUSSION

The study examined the roles and involvement of schools in accessing education and receiving quality education. However, it was important to first establish the characteristics of teachers as respondents representing the schools. Teachers majorly have a background of NCE and OND. This could imply that the teachers have the necessary training and skills to start off and train students especially with many of them having less than 6 years of experience in their present schools. It was interesting to find that the teachers close to half of the teachers had less than 10 years of experience. However, this may not imply that their present school is their first place of assuming work. Further, research has shown that the consistency of students having the same teachers at early tend to develop their interest in the subject than when teachers are being changed often.

The first research question was to examine the roles of schools in ensuring the right of children to education. To achieve this objective, the study investigated the right of students to access education and quality education. In the current study, to access education, teachers are aware of the importance of education for every child. Although schools ensure regular attendance, however, there is no encouragement or the need to mandate students to come to school on daily basis. According to UNICEF (2007), compulsory free education is free of disparity among the children admitted into schools. This corroborates EFA (2007) notion towards education for all children in the world. Thus, to an extent, equality is evident in the study area. Another implication of these findings is that peradventure schools refuse to play their roles, which can hinder children from accessing school. Especially in rural areas where it has been reported that accessibility of children to school was low among farmers' children in Kenya (Lanyasunya, 2012). Further, it was found that the reduction of drop-out rate of children seems not to be a priority for teachers. In addition to this, data has shown a rapid decline in drop-out of school children to 27% in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2016). This is in line with the findings of UNICEF (2005), that the drop-out rate of

children is estimated at 30% while only 54% complete and move to junior secondary school. While the schools may not have any solution to reduce the drop-out rate owing to the fact that schools do not condone excuses for being absent, engaging children in domestic chores could be a source of hindrance to children accessing schools as evident in this study. The implication of this could mean that, despite the fact that chores given to children differ with age, labouring children generally have implications when it is done at the wrong time such as during school hours (Amar, et-al, 2008; Holgado et-al., 2012). Although, domestic chores has been given less consideration to negatively impact educational development but research has shown that it can negatively impact on children's educational activities (Holgado et-al., 2012). This finding further supports the idea

of Dyer (2007) and (Sabia, 2009) that domestic chores was being identified as labour that can make inclusion of children in the educational system difficult due to reduction in the time allocated for studies. Logically, performing labour activities in the morning, a time during which school activities are usually scheduled in the majority of the contexts, produces an immediate effect on the minor's absence from school when it coincides with school hours and therefore affects the indicators included in the academic performance factor. It is a complex relationship in which, as we have observed, such factors as the working conditions, the intensity and devotion to labour, and the distribution and time of the activities performed play key roles (Sabia, 2009). This is an important issue for future research of the impact of engaging children in domestic work during school hours. Although, previous research found that child labour, economic hardship, and early marriage were identified as reasons for low completion rate (Amar et al., 2008).

Further, the study investigated the roles schools ensured in the right of children to quality education. Majority of schools ensured their roles by giving quality education to children through assessment and monitoring children's schoolwork through provision of children with text-books. However, majority of the teachers reported that children have access to library. In addition to achieving quality education, it is expected that schools remove the barriers that could impede the healthy environment for children to learn. According to Singh (2014) one of the ways to remove barriers to education is by providing stimulants such effective teaching by teachers. Although, more than half of teachers mentioned the fact that it is the responsibility of the schools to send teachers for in-service-training, yet it seems impracticable at the moment. Lack of in-service training may make teaching repetitive without any motivation from teachers towards children in addition, for quality education, teachers removed barriers that can impede conducive learning atmosphere for children. According to Ali and Rizvi (2007) quality in education is determined by teachers' abilities, learners' characteristics and the specific context among others. While morals seems to still be underplayed as schools still have little input in teaching children morals which ranked 8th. This could imply that many schools has not yet understood the need to instil morals in children and was not part of their jurisdiction while on training. This corroborate the findings of Temli et al (2011) who found that most teachers regarded moral education as essential and wanted to deal with it in their classes, but the rancour lies on the fact that both in-service and pre-service preparation did not prepare them for the need to instil morals in children. Although, teachers thought that helping students acquire global values and leaving personnel moral dispositions out of the class were important assets during formal education, whereas they urged for the need on how to teach those values. One major finding is the fact that PTA meetings is being properly harnessed to engage parents in discussion forum. Generally from this study, schools are involved in the educational activities of children by engaging parents as well as the children. Schools involvement cut across partnership with parents through PTA fora to communicating through verbal and non-verbal means by encouraging and discussing with parents that are interested in children's education and writing of progress report respectively. Further, it was found that PTA meeting is an avenue for parents and teachers to interact about children's educational development.

This shows that PTA is a tool that both schools utilise to partner with parents for the educational development of children. This alludes to the findings of OECD (2003) that the quality of school- level governance in educational systems and a true partnership between school and parents is considered among the most effective solutions to improve the chances for students to have access to quality education, which all children in democracy are entitled to. This implies no entity or stakeholder on their own can provide quality education without the contribution of other stakeholders. However, the findings of Chen and Agbenyega (2012) negates this findings as parents involved found it difficult to collaborate with schools and the only

support parents gave to schools was only to assist children with school related activities for the period the children were away from school, such as homework, projects and among others. It was interesting to that schools rarely involve children and parents in decision making and engage children in literary and debating society. This implies that involvement of schools are important for learning and holistic development of children to be attained. But it is noteworthy that in this study, schools focus more attention on parents than the children's and teachers educational and personal development respectively. The findings of the correlation relationship revealed low significant positive relationship between schools roles in children's right of access to education and their involvement is moderate as well as schools roles in children's right to quality education and their involvement. This implies that the more schools ensured their roles in children's right of access, the more they will be involved in the children's education. Schools are able to explore the available resources to enhance children's education and give access to parents for collaboration. On the other hand, the involvement of schools in children's education cannot be determined by the roles they ensured in children's right to education. Thus, schools will always be involved in education regardless of children's right to quality education. Still, full involvement may not be guaranteed in such cases.

In conclusion, the outcome of this study it has promoted the significance role corporate role of children, parents and teachers in advancing the course of education and ensuring continuity in leaving the right legacy for others coming behind.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Progress in education can lead to benefits in other sectors, just as interventions in other sectors can contribute significantly to gains in education (UNICEF, 2007). There is need for active involvement of other stakeholders for strict adherence to the children's rights' to education. Also, reducing the low quality in education requires in-service training for teachers in order to equip students with quality education.

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