
**ASSESSMENT OF AWARENESS OF PARENTS ON THE
RIGHTS AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS IN PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN IFE CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
OSUN STATE**

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Abstract

The paper assessed the level of awareness of parents as regard to the rights and protection of their children. The study therefore, examined the factors hindering the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child in Ife Central Local Government Area, Osun State. It also determined the ways by which awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area can be raised. It further examined whether gender predicts the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child. The study employed survey research design. The population of the study comprised all parents in the study area. The sample for the study consisted of three hundred parents who were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique from both rural and urban in the study area. The research instrument used for the study was titled "Assessment of Awareness of Parents on the Rights and Protection of Pupils Questionnaire" (AAPRPPQ). A pilot study was carried out outside the scope of the study to determine its reliability of 0.74. The results of the study showed that poor implementation of the Child's Right Act

and traditional as well as environmental factors are responsible for the poor awareness of parents on the right and protection of Nigerian child.

Keywords: Parents, child's rights, awareness, protection.

Introduction

Every society is populated by human beings that ensure the continuity of the society where parents, children and significant others play critical role for the success or otherwise of the societal growth and development. In humans, a parent is regarded as the caretaker of a child (where child refers to offspring, not necessarily by age). A biological parent is a person whose gamete resulted in a child, a male through the sperm, and a female through the ovum. Parents are first-degree relatives and have genetic meet. A female can also become a parent through surrogacy. Some parents may be adoptive parents, who nurture and raise an offspring, but are not actually biologically related to the child. Orphans without adoptive parents can be raised by their grandparents or other family members.

However, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. The convention affirms children's entitlement to development, protection, participation and non-discrimination. It also acknowledges that the realization of these rights for children can only be accomplished through care and assistance of adults. Nigeria ratified the UN Convention on the Child's Rights in 1991. This implies that the country had committed itself to a code of binding obligations towards her children. Among these obligations are the raising of awareness and the involvement of the civil society, including children, in the realization of children's rights. Following the submission of her initial progress report, the Committee on Children's Rights recommended, among other things, that the country should domesticate the Convention in order to facilitate its implementation under Nigerian law (UNICEF, 2007; Jacomy & Stevens, 2005). The Nigerian Federal Government enacted the Child's Rights Act (CRA) in December 2003. This legislation was

adopted to implement principles enshrined in international instruments, including the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 1990 African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (CRCW), which Nigeria ratified in 1991 and 2000, respectively. Since the Nigerian Constitution mandates that the legislative jurisdiction on matters affecting children belongs exclusively to states, the federal law was insufficient as a means to extend protection to all Nigerian children and, therefore, needed to be adopted by the states. Today many states in Nigeria have adopted the Child's Rights Act even though some states are yet to adopt the Act.

In Nigeria today, although 26 states have ratified to adopt or adapt the Act, the implementation has continued to be a problem. Some scholars observed that one of the problems confronting the implementation of the Act is because people are not aware of the Act as well as having no adequate knowledge of the basic provisions of the Act. The Director General of the Legal Aid Council in Nigeria, Mrs. Joy Bob-Manuel is of the view that the Child's Rights Act has not received sufficient awareness and acceptance since its domestication because of a general but undue apathy as a result of lack of understanding and full appreciation. According to her, the child as a vulnerable member of the society falls into special needs group and must not be left without proper care and it is this objective that the CRA sets out to achieve (Bamgboye, 2011).

There have been various suggestions as to how to go about achieving the goals of the Child's Rights Act. Education has been seen by scholars as the key to achieving these goals. According to Covell and Rowe (1999) educating people on the rights of the child is important not only for legal reasons but also for its potential in increasing rights-respecting attitudes and behaviours. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, like all signatories, Nigeria is obligated legally to take measures to increase public awareness of children's rights as described in the Convention. According to Article 42 of the Convention, state parties are to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means to their citizens.

In some societies, children generally are poorly treated with little or no warmth, affection, and compassion while little recognition and less tolerance is accorded and extended to them in homes and at public places. That is why children are vulnerable to all forms of inhuman and reckless abuses. Also, they are inexplicably denied of their basic and fundamental rights, perhaps, due to their status as minors. However, a small minority that gets the attention of the criminal justice system is so fortunate to form a fraction of the legitimized target. Such ones are lucky enough to escape all the harshest and most destructive impulses that are inadvertently directed against their peers and contemporaries as a whole. A close look at the role of policy makers and those that shape the direction of children reveals that they have constantly failed to allow children to express their views or participate in making decisions that really affect them. In many societies, children's views are seldom considered, tolerated or taken seriously by their parents, guardians or committee of friends. Thus, there is always a general apathy that children are only to be seen and not to be heard. In Nigeria, Africa of course, in most world societies, children's views or ideas are considered *non compos mentis* when compared with their mental capacity and the reasoning and intelligent thinking of adults as rational human beings. This is a violation of the provisions of Article 4(2) of the African Charter.

According to the state of the world children 2000 report, since 1924 when the league of nations adopted the Geneva declaration on the rights of the child, the international community has made a series of firm commitments to children to ensure that their rights to survival – health, education, protection and participation among others are met and these rights are to be saddled and be aware by parents who have the major responsibility of protecting the children to ensure the rights are met. The most far reaching and less comprehensive of this commitment is the convention, on the rights of the child, adopted by the UN general assembly in (1989) and ratified by 192 nations/countries. As the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in history, the convention, together with its optional protocol lay out in specific terms the legal duties of Government and parents to the children. Hence, children survival,

moral development and protection become a matter of moral and legal obligations to the government. The act recognizes the right of the children restores their confidence, self esteem and improve their status. It equally enables children to enjoy their rights fully as it provide special measure for the care and protection. The act demands that in all actions concerning the child, his or her best interest welfare and well-being must be of paramount consideration.

There have been so many cases of child rights violation by parents when handling their wards. Studies have shown that many parents have violated the rights of many Nigerian child in the course of their duties/responsibilities and these have great negative effects on those whom their rights were violated and the society in general. It is however not certain whether the parents are aware that children have certain rights as provided for in the Child Right Act (CRA) of 2003 in Nigeria most especially in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State, hence this study.

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. investigate the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child;
- ii. examine the factors hindering the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child;
- iii. determine the ways by which awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area can be raised; and
- iv. examine whether gender predicts the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child.

Research Questions

- i. What is the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area?
- ii. What are the factors inhibiting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State?

- iii. What are the means through which awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child can be raised?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between male and female parents' awareness on the rights of the Nigerian child.

Methods

The study adopted survey research design. The population comprised 300 parents in Ife Central Local Government Area. The research instrument used for data collection was developed by the researcher and it was tagged "Assessment of Awareness of Parents on the Rights and Protection of Pupils Questionnaire" (AAPRPPQ). It consisted of four sections. Section A sought for socio demographic information of the respondents, section B contained 7 questions on the awareness of parents on the rights of the of the Nigerian child, section C contained 7 statements on factors hindering parents awareness while section D also contained 7 means of promoting the awareness among parents within the study area structured in a Likert pattern. The respondents were to indicate their level of agreement to each item from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD) options. The instrument was pilot tested, and data were collected to determine its reliability which was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient that yielded the value of 0.74. The data gathered after the study were analysed using percentage, mean and analysis of covariance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area?

In order to answer this research question, data collected on level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child were subjected to descriptive analysis and the result is presented.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child

| S/N | Level of Awareness | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | Low | 85 | 28.6 |
| 2. | Moderate | 150 | 50.5 |
| 3. | High | 62 | 20.9 |
| | Total | 297 | 100.0 |

Table 1 shows the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area. It can be observed from the table that the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State is moderate at 150(50.5%).

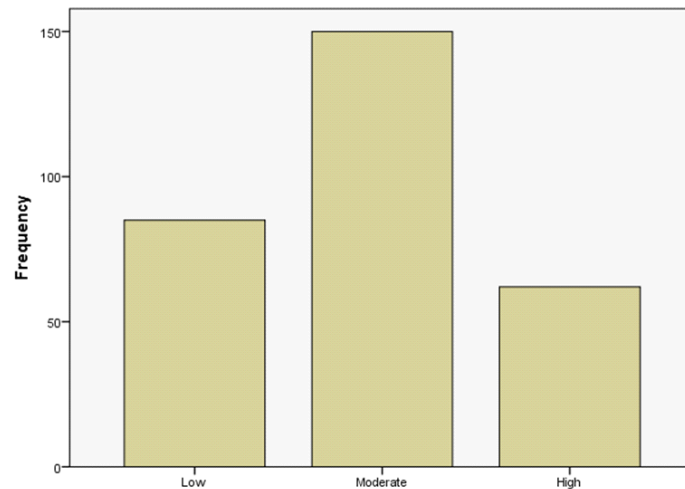


Figure 1: Bar chart showing the Level of Awareness among Parents on the Rights of the Nigerian Child

Figure 1 shows that the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child is moderate within the study area.

Research Question 2: What are the factors inhibiting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State?

In order to answer this research question, data collected on the factors inhibiting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child were subjected to descriptive analysis and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the Factors Inhibiting the Awareness of Parents on the Rights of the Nigerian Child

| S/N | Factors | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----|---|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | High level of poverty | 223 | 75.1 |
| 2. | Education background of parents | 199 | 67.0 |
| 3. | Traditional cultural practices of parents | 185 | 62.3 |
| 4. | Poor implementation of the Child Rights Act | 257 | 86.5 |
| 5. | Political instability | 189 | 63.6 |
| 6. | Community and environmental factors | 239 | 80.5 |

Data presented in Table 2 shows the factors inhibiting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State. It can be deduced from the table that high level of poverty, education background of parents, traditional cultural practices of parents, poor implementation of the Child Rights Act, political instability and community and environmental factors are the major factors inhibiting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area at 223(75.1%), 199(67.0%), 185(62.3%), 257(86.5%), 189(63.6%) and 239(80.5%) respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the means through which awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child can be raised?

In order to answer this research question, data collected on the means through which awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child can be raised were subjected to descriptive analysis and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of the means through which Awareness of Parents on the Rights of the Nigerian Child can be Raised

| S/N | Means | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|-----|---|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | Proper implementation of the Child Rights Act | 259 | 87.2 |
| 2. | Alleviation of poverty | 222 | 74.7 |
| 3. | Public awareness campaign most especially through media houses | 267 | 89.9 |
| 4. | Educating parents on the Child Rights Act | 270 | 90.9 |
| 5. | Government should ensure that the principles and provisions of the Child Rights Act is widely known by appropriate and active means to the citizens | 271 | 91.2 |
| 6. | Creation of community responsibility for child protection | 231 | 77.8 |
| 7. | Proper monitoring of the Child Rights Act | 259 | 87.2 |

Table 3 shows the results of the means through which awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child can be raised within the study area. It can be drawn out from the table that 259(87.2%) of the respondents were of the opinions that proper implementation and monitoring of the Child Rights Act are means of improving awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian

child even as 222(74.7%) underlined alleviation of poverty. Also, 267(89.9%) of the parents said that public campaign through media houses, 270(90.9%) educating parents on Child Right Act, 271(91.2%) stressed the need for government to intervene. On a final note, 231(77.8%) of the respondents pointed out that creation of community responsibility for child protection is another means of promoting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between male and female parents' level of awareness on the rights of the Nigerian child.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child based on gender were subjected to t-test analysis and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Difference between Male and Female Parents' Awareness on the Rights of the Nigerian Child

| Parents | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|---------|-----|-------|------|-------|-----|----------------|
| Male | 129 | 24.44 | 4.28 | 2.291 | 296 | .710 |
| Female | 168 | 23.75 | 4.95 | | | |

($t=2.291, p>0.05$)

Data presented in Table 4 showed that there is no significant difference between male and female parents on the rights of the Nigerian child at ($t=2.291, p>0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between male and female parents on the rights of the Nigerian child is hereby not rejected. The result implied that gender is not a predictor of the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child.

Discussions

This study primarily focused on the level of awareness of parents on the rights and protection of the Nigerian child. Result of the

study showed that the level of awareness among parents on the rights of the Nigerian child in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun is moderate. This result corroborates the findings of Olumodeji (2008) who found out that child's rights and welfare matters should be issues of urgent concern in any society. However, an international organization called Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia, Canada (2011) found out that knowledge of the UN Conventions on the Rights of the child and children's rights generally is lacking at all levels in most society in Canada.

The study also revealed that high level of poverty, education background of parents, traditional cultural practices of parents, poor implementation of the Child Rights Act, political instability and community and environments are the major factors inhibiting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area which supports the findings of Akwara (2010) who pointed out that the rights of the child is being taken for granted in Nigeria. However, Njoku and Oladiji (2009) stressed the challenges facing children in the 21st century are immense and will need to be faced if we are to achieve the goal of the Child's Rights Act. In the same vein, Lachman (2002) opined that child labour, and poverty are major challenges facing child rights and protection.

Findings of the study further revealed that proper implementation and monitoring of the Child Rights Act, alleviation of poverty, public awareness campaign most especially through media houses, educating parents on the Child Rights Act and creation of community responsibility for child protection are the major means of promoting the awareness among parents on the child rights of Nigerian child. This result is in line with the findings of Covell and Rowe (1999) as they asserted the need to be educating people on the rights of the child is important not only for legal reasons but also for its potential in increasing rights-respecting attitudes and behaviours.

Results of the study finally indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female parents' awareness on the rights of the Nigerian child.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this investigation, the study therefore concluded that the level of awareness among parents on the rights and protection of the Nigerian child in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun is moderate while high level of poverty, education background of parents, traditional cultural practices of parents, poor implementation of the Child Rights Act, political instability and community and environments are the major factors inhibiting the awareness of parents on the rights of the Nigerian child within the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion in this study, the following recommendations were made: (a) Government should organize workshops and seminars through Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN) and other agencies and professional organization from time to time to educate parents on the rights and protection of the Nigerian child and (b) Awareness should be carried out through media houses to enlighten the society at large on the rights and protection of the Nigeria child.

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