

Parent Awareness of Child's Rights Policy Documents in the Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State

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Abstract: *Children in different parts of Nigeria are experiencing various kinds of violence and abuse more or less daily. Therefore, the researcher investigated parent awareness of child's rights policy documents. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The accidental sampling technique was used to select 120 respondents. Parents Awareness on Child Rights (PACR) was used to collect the data. The lecturers validated the instrument. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to establish the reliability coefficient. 77. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage scores and mean and inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test all hypotheses raised at the 0.05 level. It was found, among others, that parents were unaware of the child rights policy in Moro Local Government Area (Mean=2.41). It was concluded that educational background and experience equipped parents with knowledge regarding children's rights. It was recommended, among others, that awareness should be spread through street campaigns*

Keywords: Child, Child right, Parent awareness, Policy document

Introduction

The child is the bedrock and sustaining pillar of any society; if there would be continuity of human society, children are the most excellent assurance. The implication is, that children stand for the sustainability of human culture. Therefore, today's children should be given the consideration and attention they deserve to have a sustainable future. Where children's rights are established and they feel protected, there is assurance that children would thrive better in such a situation or society. According to Kuruvilla (2018), age is a criterion for defining a child. Childhood in this age span ranges from birth to puberty. There is a debate around this distinction of age. Some argue that a child comes into existence and childhood starts before dawn. Some researchers argued that childhood's period extends until one gains all legal rights as an adult. In India and Nigeria, one is still a child till 18 years of age; in Iran, it is 15 years; in Scotland, it is 16 years; in Japan, it is 20 years; in Egypt, it is 21 years.

The word "Right" originates from a Latin word "rectus", which means correct, straight, right, and wrong. It may also indicate in accord with law, morality and justice. As a norm, it may mean that a person has a just and valid claim, whether it be land or privilege of doing something or saying something, such as the right of speech. A request in its general sense is either the liberty (protected by law) of acting or abstaining from working in a particular manner or the power (enforced by law) of compelling a specific person to do or refrain from doing a specific thing. Accordingly, a Legal Right is a capacity residing in one person of controlling, with the State's permission and assistance, the action of others. Thus, every right involves a person invested with the right, or the person entitled, a person or persons on whom that right imposes a correlative duty or obligation; an act of forbearance which is the subject matter of right and in some cases an object, that is, a person or thing to which the right has reference, such as ownership. Therefore, a request is a well-founded claim; when civil law recognises a given claim, it becomes an acknowledged claim or legal right enforceable by the State (Parton 2016)

Protection of human rights means ensuring that people enjoy the entitlements of decent human living. States should make laws to ensure equal opportunities of human rights, not limiting it to provision the structural, legal platform for the citizens but to pave a path of human rights supporting culture. The provision of a human rights facilitative environment is the core function of any state and protects human rights as the basic civic principle. It is the state function to maintain, preserve, and protect people's lives through human rights violators. However, it is observed that many GOs and NGOs are taking part in protecting people's human rights. In any society, every human being must respect others rights, which calls for protection and sanctions for violations (Alfandari 2017).

Child and adult rights seem different terms, but these are human rights and sides of one coin. A child is part of a family and community have specific rights and responsibilities at the developmental stage. Being vulnerable part of society, children have specific rights which help children to maximise their full potential. In society, children must not be viewed or referred to as helpless, deserve for charity or property family. Children should enjoy the minimum standard of life (basic human rights principles) rather than privileges (CRC, 2006).

Irrespective of gender and age, every child is unique in character and has equal importance to human dignity and respect. Moreover, children must be allowed to share in all matters and decisions. Children must be heard by elders of their ideas (CRIN, 2007). Children also should be free from any form of violent behaviour, mistreatment, cruelty and neglect. Several terms like abusive

and ill-treatment with the children or vehemence are rotating in society, and all are used to refer to physical, sexual, spiritual and emotional abuse.

The primary aim of child protection to provide shelter and safeguard from all forms as mentioned above to the victim segment of the society and to develop human dignity in all settings despite any race, community, department, under private or government authority in the result of carelessness or consciously. CRC had already been chalked out various means to ensure child protection from all the aforementioned forms of abuse, violence and neglect, especially in Article 19. The Convention was enforced in 1990 under Human Rights Chapter IV, following article 49(1) (UNCRC). There are 140 signatories" States while 197 gave ratification, acceptance, accession or succession of Convention (UNCRC). In the research literature, rights in UNCRC are categories into three main parts, known as the "3 P"s": provision of basic needs (e.g. food, services relating to education, health, leisure etc.), protection (against harmful acts or practices, social or emotional abuse) and like adults, children participation in communities (Marcu 2011)

Relevance of Child Right Policy Document cannot be overlooked; Münger and Markströ (2019), citing the importance of educated citizens noted, equal access to education, and an informed citizenry will enable Nigeria participate in the 21st century global economy We cannot afford to have an ignorant population if we want to become the giant of Africa. The multiplier effect of an educated citizenry leads to an exponential growth in human capital, knowledge, talents, skills, intellectual property and entrepreneurial development, first in the homes, society and nation, as witnessed in India and China today. A World Bank comparative analysis of China, Africa and the Asian Tigers' growth rates reveal that Africa has stagnated, the Asian Tigers soared, with China driving the growth. If Nigeria had the same education policy as Asia, the macroeconomic results would be exponential. Denial of education is no longer just a human rights issue but an economic issue, with multiplier effects on the national economy and GDP. There is no gainsaying the fact that improved lives reduce poverty.

According to Nwatu, Ajibo, Malachy, and Odo (2020), Nigeria has approved all the United Nations Convention on the Child's Rights (1991). This implies that henceforth the country has committed itself to a code of binding obligations towards her children. Among these obligations are raising awareness and the involvement of civil society, including children, in realising 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 to facilitate its implementation under Nigerian law (UNICEF, 2007; Jacomy and Stevens, 2005). The Nigeria child right Act (CRA) was enacted in December 2003 by the Federal Government. This legislation was adopted to implement principles enshrined in international instruments, including the 1989 Convention on the Rights of a 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 to extend protection to all Nigerian children and, therefore, needed to be adopted by the states.

Tostensen, Stokke, Trygged, and Halvorsen (2011), on child rights document policy, reported that Mozambique has a more vital legacy of state intervention as shown in the database, includes comparatively more state institutions as implementing agencies. After the change Government in 2003, Kenya appears to have moved ahead of most African countries in terms of child-friendliness 53 as reflected in its high ranking on the Index of Child-Friendliness. Furthermore, Kenya has a vibrant civil society. Sudan has a recent case of civil war and humanitarian crises. It is noteworthy not only by its vast territorial size but also by its dual system of governance in the North and the South. Sudanese civil society is comparatively weaker than the two other African countries, but key Norwegian and Swedish CSOs have longstanding.

Children spend most of their time in school than at home; the Parent are the shapers of children's behaviour and influence children's views and concepts. The teachers plays more significant role in providing appropriate materials that promote children's development. Children interest to academics sometimes depends on how the teacher relate with that child. Thus, the teacher plays a vital role in protecting the child's rights. Teachers can either make or mar a child, this is so, because a teacher may decide to positively influence or have impact in the child's life or otherwise. The Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), 1990 opined that an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding should be available to learners for full and harmonious development of a child's personality.

It has been identified that lack of awareness about the issue of child right act, especially by the parents, has been militating against the implementation and enforcement of the Act. Suppose parents have little or no knowledge of what is required of them in upholding the rights of children and their own responsibility as stipulated in the Act. In that case, it might be challenging to prosecute anybody. Therefore, it is imperative to state that one's knowledge and awareness about a given issue or concept would in no measure influence what would be their attitude to that issue and how one would behave or act by it. Olumodeji (2008) indicated that society should give serious consideration to the welfare of every child because once the needs of the child are met at the appropriate time, it will influence all the aspects of their development and the general well-being of the society as a whole. Little wonder that children receive different forms of treatment from the community.

Unfortunately, children have often been neglected in many societies like Nigeria, with their welfare being trampled upon. In view of this, it was Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba (2010) who gave prominence that child's rights have not been respected in Nigeria. In such a situation, the development of the society will be catastrophic, not a sustainable one, or more precisely, if drastic actions are not taken to review the present situation, the social catastrophe is inevitable. Therefore, the scholars, mindful of the findings, emphasised that careful attention needs to be focused on this issue if children are truly taken as the future of any nation. Njoku and Oladiji (2009), despite the enormity of the challenges the 21st-century face urged for serious action on the propagation and implementation of the Child Rights Act in all the regions of the country.

Furthermore, Akor (2009) reported that most parts in Nigeria, children are subjected to several dehumanising conditions when they, for example, are caught street hawking. However, according to the findings, some parents believe that the children's efforts were to augment the family income. This view could imply that parents are not aware that such an Act is against the Child Rights Act (Law), and there are penalties attached.

Even though these rights statements and the other documents advocating rights of a children in Nigeria are legally binding, still, there is quite number of children that are out of school, hawking about on the streets when they are supposed to be at school, or other children who do not have access to health care services, and the innumerable number of children who experience one sort of abuse or another daily, ranging from assault, rape to other forms of violence. It is so bad, that cannot open a page without listening to the news or hearing the reports of one form of abuse or maltreatment against the children. It is expected that having adequate knowledge and awareness about the rights accorded to the children would improve the quality of life of the children and the society as a whole. The knowledge and understanding are expected to begin with parents who serve as primary caregivers for their children. Therefore, it is necessary to examine this aspect just as Covell and Rowe (1999) have pointed out that people, especially parents, should be well-informed about the children's rights, not basically for legal reasons but to increase people's positive attitude toward these rights. To this end, the parent awareness on child rights policy is given priority in this research work, As established above. Many researchers have worked on child's rights in different fields; none has written it in the location chosen for this study to cover.

Statement of Problem

Children in different parts of Nigeria are experiencing various kinds of violence and abuse more or less daily. It is almost impossible to open the pages of the dailies or listen to the news on either the radio or television without running into one form of abuse against children or another. As children are reported of being raped, kidnapped, brutalised, or neglected in these media, many of them are seen hawking or begging around the streets. In contrast, myriads of them are supposed to be at school. The implication is that many of the rights spelt out in the Child Rights Act are being violated by those who are expected to uphold them. If people, especially teachers, parents and children, are aware and have adequate knowledge of these rights, probably the violation might not be as intense as it is. To allow the situation to continue would amount to the non-realisation of a more promising future for the children under consideration and the society at large. Therefore, the researcher wants to investigate parent awareness of child's rights policy documents in the Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following research question is raised to guide the study

1. To what extent is the Parent aware of Child Rights Policy in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypotheses are formulated for this study

1. There is no significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on educational background in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State
2. There is no significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on experience in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population were parents in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, the sample for the study consisted of 120 parents. Accidental sampling technique was used to select Parent as respondents for the study. Parents Awareness on Child Right (PACR) was designed and used by the researcher to elicit information from the selected Parents. It was validated by the lecturers in the department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to establish the reliability coefficient at ($r=0.77$). Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage scores

and mean and inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test for all hypotheses raised at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: To what extent is the Parent aware of Child Rights Policy in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Table 1: Showing the frequency counts, mean and percentages on parent awareness of Child Rights Policy in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Are you aware that the convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children from all forms of physical abuse and injuries	57(47.5)	21(17.5)	22(18.3)	20(16.7)	2.96
2	Do you know that the policy aims to provide special protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances that affect their normal development and over which they have control and to assist the concerned agencies in their rehabilitation	7(5.8)	5(4.2)	26(21.7)	82(68.3)	1.48
3	Are you aware that the positive and Non-violent approaches allow children to develop appropriate thinking and behaviour in the short and long term and foster discipline	19(15.8)	14(11.7)	12(10.0)	75(62.5)	1.81
4	I am aware that the children should not be subjected to dehumanising conditions through hawking	51(42.5)	30(25.0)	15(12.5)	24(20.0)	2.90
5	I am aware that the child Rights Policy Documents affords children the right to freedom of education	43(35.8)	46(38.3)	25(20.8)	6(5.0)	3.05
6	The Child Rights Policy Documents provides children with the right to a standard of living that is good to meet their physical and mental needs	11(9.2)	7(5.8)	16(13.3)	86(71.7)	1.53
7	The Child Rights Policy Document provides that children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment	16(13.3)	17(14.2)	28(23.3)	59(49.2)	1.92
8	I do not know that the children have the same rights irrespective of their family personality	36(30.0)	42(35.0)	29(24.2)	13(10.8)	2.84
9	I do not know whether or not child labour, like hawking and the like, is enshrined in the policy	53(44.2)	26(21.7)	31(25.8)	10(8.3)	3.02
10	Are you aware that child trafficking is a crime under the law	48(40.0)	19(15.8)	45(37.5)	8(6.7)	2.89
11	Are you aware that the Child's Rights (CRC) convention aims to protect children from mental violence?	58(48.3)	53(44.2)	4(3.3)	5(4.2)	3.37
12	Neglect or negligent treatment maltreatment is also not allowed in the child rights policy	3(2.5)	9(7.5)	39(32.5)	69(57.5)	1.55
13	Policy documents also protect a child from sex exploitation	6(5.0)	16(13.3)	34(28.3)	64(53.3)	1.70
14	Sexual abuse is one of the principles embedded in the policy	2(1.7)	18(15.0)	23(19.2)	77(64.2)	1.54
15	Are you aware that hawking during odd hours is not suitable for children	78(65.0)	35(29.2)	3(2.5)	4(3.3)	3.56
Weighted Mean						2.41

Decision rule: Not aware: 00-2.49, Aware: 2.50-4.00

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 1 shows the respondents responses on the parents' awareness of child right policy. It was indicated that Parent was not aware of the following items: Do you know that the policy aims to provide special protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances that affect their normal development and over which they have control and to assist the concerned agencies in their rehabilitation(Mean=1.48), Are you aware that the positive and Non-violent approaches allow children to develop appropriate thinking and behaviour in the short and long term and foster discipline(Mean=1.81),The Child Rights Policy Documents provides children with the right to a standard of living that is good to meet their physical and mental needs(Mean=1.53),The Child Rights Policy Document provides that children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment(Mean=1.92),Neglect or negligent treatment maltreatment is also not allowed in the child rights policy(Mean=1.55),Policy documents also protect a child from sex exploitation(Mean=1.70), and Sexual abuse is one of the principles embedded in the policy (Mean=1.54). While, the following Parent aware the following items: Are you aware that the convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children from all forms of physical abuse and injuries(Mean=2.96),I am aware that the children should not be subjected to dehumanising conditions through hawking(Mean=2.90),I am aware that the child Rights Policy Documents affords children the right to freedom of education(Mean=3.05),I do not know that the children have the same rights irrespective of their family personality(Mean=2.84),I do not know whether or not child labour, like hawking and the like, is enshrined in the policy(Mean=3.02),Are you aware that child trafficking is a crime under the law(Mean=2.89),Are you aware that the Child's Rights (CRC) convention aims to protect children from mental violence? (Mean=3.37), and Are you aware that hawking during odd hours is not suitable for children (Mean=3.56). In the light of the result, the parents' were not aware of child right policy in Moro Local Government Area. The weighted mean (2.41) which is a numeric indicator that parents' were not aware of child right policy in Moro Local Government Area.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on educational background in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State

Table 2: Showing the summary of Analysis Variance (ANOVA) on significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on educational background in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Source	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
Between Groups	1705.140	3	568.380			
Within Groups	16757.660	116	144.463	3.934	.010	rejected
Total	18462.800	119				

The results of analysis of variance as presented in Table 2 reveals that the calculated value of F was 3.934($F_{3,116}=3.934$) and observed probability value is .010 which is less than the fixed probability value of 0.05($P<0.05$). This indicated that the null hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on educational background in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State was rejected. This implied that there was significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on educational background in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State ($F_{3,116}=3.934$, $p<0.05$). In the light of the result, there was significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on educational background in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 3: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc pairwise Comparison of educational background

Qualification	Mean Score	SSCE	NCE	Others	B. Ed
B.Ed.	43.13				*
NCE	35.44			*	
Others	35.38		*		
SSCE	32.13	*			

Table 3 revealed that the significant difference exposed by table 3 is as a result of the significant difference among the following educational qualification: B.Ed, NCE, Others and SSCE. It was indicated that parents who have B. Ed qualification (Mean = 43.13) qualification have significant on the levels of awareness of child right policy in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on experience in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State

Table 4: Showing the summary of Analysis Variance (ANOVA) on significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on experience in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State

Source	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
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Between Groups	3788.376	4	947.094			
Within Groups	14674.424	115	127.604	7.422	.000	rejected
Total	18462.800	119				

The results of analysis of variance as presented in Table 4 reveals that the calculated value of F was 7.422($F_{4,115}=7.422$) and observed probability value is .000 which is less than the fixed probability value of 0.05($P<0.05$). This indicated that the null hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on experience in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State was rejected. This implied that there was significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on experience in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State ($F_{4,115}=7.422$, $p<0.05$). In the light of the result, there was significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on experience in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 5: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc pairwise Comparison of years of experience of Parent

Experience	Mean Score	1-5years	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16-20yrs	21yrs above
21years above	48.47					*
16-20years	35.69				*	
11-15years	32.39			*		
6-10years	33.00		*			
1-5years	31.12	*				

Table 5 revealed that the significant difference exposed by table 5 is as a result of the significant difference among the following years of working experience: 21years above, 16-20years, 11-15years, 6-10years and 1-5years. It was indicated that parents who have 21years above experience (Mean = 48.47) parent years of experience have significant on the levels of awareness of child right policy in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara state

Discussions of findings

Findings emanated from this study revealed that there was significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on educational background in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State ($F_{3,116}=3.934$, $p<0.05$). This was in agreement with the view of Research conducted by Voicu, Anghel, and Savu-Cristescu (2015) revealed that the factor of educational level of Parent positively correlated with high level of knowledge of children's rights, but not with growing level of recognition of the importance, application, and promotion of rights in child care practice and education. There are many factors that influence a family's ability to both facilitate a child's growth and development and participate in parent and teacher education programs. Issues of diversity, communication, meeting preferences, resources, time, knowledge, and personnel affect family involvement (Bruckman & Blanton, 2003).

The study revealed that stated that there was significant difference in Parents awareness of Child Rights Policy based on experience in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State ($F_{4,115}=7.422$, $p<0.05$). This is in relationship with the submission of Voicu, Anghel and Savn-Cristescu (2015) who analysed factors that influence parents' and teachers' attitude and behaviour towards children's right. The study revealed that parent's and teacher's attitude towards children's right is conditioned by the dominant cultural model in the family. This implies that parents respect and protect the right of children based on their experience and prevalent culture of the environment. Louisa, Malachy, Henry and Casmir (2020) who conducted research on the level of knowledge and awareness of the basic provision of child right act among secondary school students, submitted that the parents and teacher's role and that of the social workers in promoting child right awareness and implementation. The study showed that majority of the secondary school students were aware and knowledgeable of the basic provision of child right act through the experience of their parents

Conclusion

It can be explicitly stated that educational background and experience of the parents' criteria that which equipped Parent with the adequate knowledge regarding children's rights in all the dimensions such as health, education, equality and protection need of children regarding the awareness of child's rights policy documents in the Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Recommendations

It was recommended based on the findings that:

1. Seminars and workshop should be organised for parents on the children right policy
2. Parents with less or without any qualification and experience should be encouraged to enroll in adult education or formal education where they are going to learn about their rights and the child rights and protections

3. Awareness should be spread through the street campaigns

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