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3. IFY-EMEKA OKAFOR-OKWUCHUKWU – Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance & Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt.
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6. EKECHUKWU, ROSEMARY – Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
7. JOSIAH OWOLABI - Department of Educational Foundations National Open University of Nigeria, Victoria Island, Lagos.
8. SAMUEL OLUFEMI ADENIYI - Department of Educational Foundations University of Lagos.
9. SALADIN, K. - Bauchi State Ministry of Education, Bauchi, Faculty of Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi.
10. MOHAMMED, I. – Department of Science Education, Faculty of Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi.
11. JIBRIN, A. G. – Department of Science Education, Faculty of Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, Nigeria.
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13. PRINCESS ODEGWA OKIY – University Library, University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State.
14. OGBENI, TEGA - Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance &Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt.

15. UGWU, CHINELO JOY – Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance & Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt.

16. LONGE, O. O. – Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos.

17. LAWAL, K. K. – Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos.

18. ONUCHI-MARK, A. J. - Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos.

19. CHINEDU OGOKE – Department of English and Communication Studies, Federal University Otuoke.

20. ABIGO, ENE EMILIA – Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt.

21. PETER C. EKECHUKWU – Department of Educational Foundation, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

22. DIENYE, V. U. - Department of Educational Foundation, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

23. ALIU, ABDULRAHAMAN – Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State.

24. KADIR, RASHEEDAT BUKKY - Government Day Secondary School Oke-Aluko under Kwara State Teaching Service Commission.

25. AKILU ISMA'IL - Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State.

26. HALIRU SHEHU – Department of Curriculum Studies, Sokoto State University, Sokoto.

27. NASIRU, MUHAMMAD DOGONDAJI - Department of Science Education, Sokoto State University, Sokoto.

28. ONYEKOSOR, DORIS AZOM – Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt.

29. MADUMERE-OBIKE C. U. – Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt.

30. RIHANAT ADUKE AHMED – Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

31. MULKAH, ADEBISI AHMED – Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

32. GANIYU BELLO – Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

33. JACK GLADYS UZEZI – Department of Science Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria.

34. SONGO, PETER – Department of Science Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria.

35. SHUAIB, S.B. - Department of Science Education (Agricultural Education Unit), University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

36. ADESANYA, E.O. – Department of Science Education (Agricultural Education Unit), University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

37. AFOLABI, K.O. – Department of Science Education (Agricultural Education Unit), University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

38. JIMOH, S.B. - Department of Science Education (Agricultural Education Unit), University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

39. RAJI, M. – Department of Science Education (Agricultural Education Unit), University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

40. ABDULWAHAB, RAFIU – Department of adult and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Kwara State.

41. AJAO, IBRAHIM SULAIMAN – Department of Primary Education, Federal College of Education, Oyo.

42. ADEBIYI, OLOLADE – Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

43. AFANGIDEH S.T. – Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

44. NWANKWO, NGOZI BEATRICE - Department of Curriculum Studies and Education Technology, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LECTURERS' PERCEPTION OF INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT AND USE OF INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA - Akporhonor, Blessings Amina Ph.D. & Allanah, Judith Uche 1

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF HUMANIST AND SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO COUNSELLING ON SUICIDE PREVENTION AMONG 21ST CENTURY YOUTHS IN OBIO-AKPOR LGA, RIVERS STATE – Ify-Emeka Okafor-Okwuchukwu M.Ed. & Dr. Onukwufor Jonathan N. Ph.D. 11

EFFECTS OF PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS ON PROCRASTINATION AND HARM REDUCTION AMONG STUDENTS WITH PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS - Ugwueze, Stella Ph.D. & Ekechukwu, Rosemary Ph.D. 21

THE EFFECTS OF MATHEMATICS ANXIETY, DECISION MAKING AND ACHIEVEMENT IN MATHEMATICS EXAMINATION ON STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS INTEREST IN MATHEMATICS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA - Josiah Owolabi & Samuel Olufemi Adeniyi 40

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BIOLOGY TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS AND RESOURCE KNOWLEDGE FOR TEACHING BIOLOGY IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAUCHI STATE – Saladin, K.; Mohammed, I. & Jibrin, A. G. 48

FACTORS INFLUENCING JOURNAL PUBLICATION CHOICE OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN SELECTED STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA - Ogunbodede, Kolawole Francis & Princess Odegwa Okiy 61

PARENTING STYLES AS DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH RESTIVENESS IN DELTA STATE - Rev Fr. Ogbeni, Tega & Dr Ugwu, Chinelo Joy 71

INFLUENCE OF COUNSELLING SERVICES ON THE PERSONAL - SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF ADOLESCENTS IN IKORODU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE - Longe, O. O.; Lawal, K. K. & Onuchi-Mark, A. J. 82

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA - Chinedu Ogoke 92

HEALTH EDUCATION: AN IMPERATIVE FOR ROUTINE MEDICAL EXAMINATION - Abigo, Ene Emilia 101

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABIA CENTRAL SENATORIAL ZONE
-Peter C. Ekechukwu & Professor V. U. Dieye 112

METACOGNITION AS TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH FOR STEM TEACHING - Aliu, Abdulrahaman, Kadir, Rasheedat Bukky & Akilu Isma'il 127

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF VISUAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TAMBUWAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA - Haliru Shehu & Nasiru Muhammad DogonDaji 138

DIGITAL ARCHIVING FOR THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE - Onyekosor, Doris Azom & Prof. C.U Madumere-Obike 143

USING ON-LINE GROUP DISCUSSION FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BIOLOGY IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA - Rihanat Aduke Ahmed, Mulkah Adebisi Ahmed & Ganiyu Bello 157

AVAILABILITY AND USAGE OF TECHNOLOGY-BASED MATERIALS FOR SCIENCE CURRICULUM DELIVERY: LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA - Jack Gladys Uzezi (PhD) & Songo Peter 167

WORK SKILLS REQUIRED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES IN SUGARCANE PRODUCTION ENTERPRISES FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA - Shuaib, S.B., Adesanya, E.O.; Afolabi, K.O.; Jimoh, S.B. & Raji, M. 178

STRATEGIES AT MINIMIZING OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN ILORIN METROPOLIS - Abdulwahab, Rafiu & Ajao, Ibrahim Sulaiman 193

FINANCING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AS GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN RIVERS STATE - Adebiyi, Ololade & Dr. S.T. Afangideh 202

INFLUENCE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE - Nwankwo Ngozi Beatrice 212

STRATEGIES AT MINIMIZING OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

Abdulwahab, Rafiu
Department of adult and Primary Education, Faculty of Education,
University of Ilorin, Kwara State.
rakunagie@gmail.com

&

Ajao, Ibrahim Sulaiman
Department of Primary Education,
Federal College of Education, Oyo

Abstract
This study examined the strategies at minimizing out of school children in Ilorin metropolis. One (1) research question guided this study. To achieve this, the descriptive survey research design was adopted which focused on Ilorin, comprises of three (3) local government namely; Ilorin East, Ilorin West and Ilorin South while it adopted proforma as an instrument for data collection. The proforma covers a statistical book titled; "Annual school census report by Kwara State Ministry of Education and State ministry of education and human capital development 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 Edition. The finding revealed that the rate of dropout among children in Public and Private schools in the three local governments' area in Ilorin metropolis was 31.9%.. To this end, the researchers recommends among others that, The UBE ACTS and other related matters of 2004 should sanction erring parents that prevent children from going to school especially through unscrupulous activities related to street hawking , child labour and all sorts of child molestation.

Keywords: *Strategies, Minimizing and out of School Children*

INTRODUCTION

Education is an impetus for a long-term development in every society. Any nations that lack behind in its educational attainment of its citizenry are most likely to be devoid of speedy growth and development in all ramifications. This is why Ozurumba (2006) described education as the process for development of the totality of individual intellectually, physically, morally, spiritually and psychologically to assist him/her live a useful and effective life and also enable the individual add to the development of the society. Mbanefo (2001) also acclaimed education to be a very potent instrument for growth and development of economic, political, social and human resources worldwide. Education is also regarded as a major indicator of a society's social well-being, standard of living and social justice (Abduallahi, 2005).

Primary education is the only level of education that is available everywhere in both the developed and the developing countries as well as in urban and rural areas (Akinbote, 2001). This explains why Primary education is the strongest system of education that offers the unique opportunity to contribute to the transformation of societies through the education of the children (UNESCO,

2001). To bridge the gap of social inequality in education, Federal Government has embarked on a massive expansion of access to Primary education.

The current UBE scheme which is an off-shoot of 1976 UPE include the first three years of secondary education (Enemuo, 2000) and were aimed at making basic education accessible to all children of school age irrespective of their social, economic, cultural or geographical backgrounds. According to UBEC (2014), the main objectives of UBE are to ensure unfettered access to nine (9) years of formal basic education; to provide free, Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age; to reduce drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency; and to ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

Studies have shown that enrolments in basic education worldwide have increased and there has been a sharp drop in the number of out-of-school and dropout children worldwide (UNESCO, 2007). The total number of school-age children not in Primary or junior secondary school is said to have fallen between 2002 and 2005 compared to 1999 and 2002. Additionally in spite of these promising trends, sub-Saharan Africa accounts for about over 72 million out of school children globally in 2005 (UNESCO, 2007). This follows that many Nigerian children still remain uneducated and are out of school with the level of effort put in place by the government in creating awareness and sensitization on the importance of basic education.

This could be generally as a result of negative challenges which include strategies put in by government by ineffective and inefficient implementation of the National policy on education (FGN,2004) and reforms in the Nigerian education system, poor economy and poor management, of scare resources (UNESCO, 2002). Poverty, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, culture and gender bias in content, teaching and learning process are some of the additional factors militating against out-of-school children education in Nigeria.

The Nigerian educational statistics of 1996 showed that only 14.1 million children are enrolled in Primary schools out of the 21 million children of school going age (Federal Ministry of Education, 1999). To cope with the changing realities and uncertainties of human life, education has been a weapon with which to equip the people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and habits for surviving in the modern world. Herein the entire world has shown concerns for "Education for All" (EFA) since 1968 (Obayan, 2002).

The highlight of the World Declaration on Education for All among other things includes: "satisfying basic learning needs requires an expanded vision which encompasses, universalizing access and promoting equity, focusing on learning, broadening the means and scope of basic education, enhancing the environment for learning and strengthening partnership" (Bernard Van Leer Foundation Newsletter p.5). This assumption formed the springboard of the

framework of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria in 1999.

Lewy (2003) described attitude towards education as being the subject's behaviours, their feelings expression regarding to affection and judgments, favourable or unfavourable, for the school and school experiences. The affective characteristics of it may be an important explanatory element of quality-education and investment of individual actors in the different dimensions that make up the school (Santiago, 1994).

In socio-economic aspect, previous studies show that family contexts that are less exciting and involved in their children's education are manifested in less positive attitudes toward education, less resilience levels (Abreu, Viega, Antunes & Ferriara, 2006) and have higher probability of dropping out of school, once they feel less support from their family and community (Rumberger, 2001), and tend to believe that having studies and complete school course are not important to have a job or maintain a career. Students who perceive more support from adults who live with them at school and colleagues have more positive attitudes and academic values and feel more satisfied with schooling (Akey, 2006). For example, Linnehan (Linnehan, 2009) found that parental educational level was associated with more favourable attitudes toward college (except for the Asian group).

Parental involvement and educational background in child's education could also not be over emphasized. In the study of Desforges et'al (2003), it was revealed that parental support indirectly influenced child's achievement through its positive and significant influence on students' academic self-concept and school behaviour. Similarly, Agrawal and Aggarwal (1997) noted that parental encouragement is positively related with educational development of a child. A child whose parents are highly educated develop positive attitude towards education than one whose parents are not (Yan, 2000). This is because the parents will be more concern and conscious about child's academic development and performance since they have gone through the process. On the other hand, gender has been found to some extent influence adolescents' attitudes towards education. Male child has been found mostly to have positive attitude and passion for education more than their female counterpart

It was expected that educational reforms or re-organization would be carried out to enable Nigeria's education cater for the future professional needs (Ayeni, 2000). Apart from the above, there is the need to lay a sound foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, character and moral training and the development of sound attitude, and above all, develop in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1981). To this end, this study deems it significant to investigate the strategies at minimizing out-of-school children in Ilorin metropolis towards basic education.

Statement of the Problem

The high dropout rates in Nigeria sharply contrast with the social and economic objectives that have been formulated by government officials and policymakers in order to achieve sustainable economic

growth. Most of those who do not attend school are children who have enrolled but have crossed the threshold from regular attendance to regular absence. Therefore, the needs to address the problem of out of school in Ilorin metropolis as a veritable tools towards the achievement of sustainable development goals as envisaged by the government in the ongoing Universal Basic Education Programme. In order to achieve this specific objective without boarder, pupils' attitude towards basic education which is the gap left behind that the researchers intends to fill needs to be understudied appropriately thereby providing remedial solution to the out of school children phenomenon in Ilorin metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

The specific purpose of this study intends to find out the rate at which children drop out of school in Ilorin Metropolis.

Research Question

1. What is the rate at which children drop out of school in Ilorin Metropolis?

Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive survey design while the research jurisdiction centered on Ilorin metropolis covering three (3) local governments; Ilorin East, Ilorin South and Ilorin West.

A Profoma was adopted in order to obtain valid information for the research through: the Profoma was obtained from Kwara State annual school census report 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 under Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, Ilorin , Kwara state the raw data obtained from the digest were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage.

Analysis and Results

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1: *What is the rate at which children drop out of school in Ilorin Metropolis?*

In order to answer this research question, mean of responses of the stakeholders to each item on the questionnaire that addressed the roles of stakeholders towards minimizing out of school children calculated and 2.5 was used as cut off because of the four (4) likert response format of SA (4), A (3), D (2), SD (1). The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 1: Summary Table of Analysis showing the total number of enrolment and promoted pupils in Public and Private Primary schools in Ilorin Metropolis in 2014-15 and 2015-2016

		Ilorin East			Ilorin South			Ilorin West			
SN	Class	Enrolment	Graduate	No of drop out	Enrolment	Graduate	No of drop out	Enrolment	Graduate	No of drop out	% of drop out
1.	Primary 1	4451	4399	52	5826	6991	-1165	10162	8759	1403	-1.7
2.	Primary 2	4545	4467	58	5956	6952	-995	9945	9175	770	-7
3.	Primary 3	4726	4395	331	6030	6834	-804	9792	8742	1050	4.42

4.	Primary 4	4541	4054	487	5726	5832	-106	9692	7890	180 2	27.4
5.	Primary 5	4099	2571	1528	4907	2161	2756	8445	4814	3631	136.5
	Grand %										31.9

Source: *Kwara State Annual School Census Report (2014 – 2016)*

Table 1 revealed the rate of drop out of school children in Ilorin metropolis, it is seen that the number of enrolment in Ilorin East was 4451 in Primary 1 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 2 in 2015-2016 was 4399 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 1 to Primary 2 was 52, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 1 to Primary 2 was 1.2%, the number of enrolment in Primary 2 was 4545 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 3 in 2015-2016 was 4467 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 2 to Primary 3 was 58, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 2 to Primary 3 was 1.3%, the number of enrolment in Primary 3 was 4726 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 4 in 2015-2016 was 4395 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 3 to Primary 4 was 331, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 3 to Primary 4 was 7.0%.

The number of enrolment in Primary 4 was 4541 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 5 in 2015-2016 was 4054 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 4 to Primary 5 was 487, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 4 to Primary 5 was 10.7%, the number of enrolment in Primary 5 was 4099 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 6 in 2015-2016 was 2571 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 5 to Primary 6 was 1528, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 5 to Primary 6 was 37.3%.

The number of enrolment in Ilorin South was 5826 in Primary 1 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 2 in 2015-2016 was 6991 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that there was an increase in pupils from Primary 1 to Primary 2 which resulted to 1165, this indicates that the rate of increase of pupil from Primary 1 to Primary 2 is 20.0%, the number of enrolment in Primary 2 was 5956 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 3 in 2015-2016 was 6951 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that there was an increase in pupils from Primary 2 to Primary 3 which resulted to 995, this indicates that the rate of increase of pupil from Primary 2 to Primary 3 was 16.7%.

The number of enrolment in Primary 3 was 6030 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 4 in 2015-2016 was 6934 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that there was an increase in pupils from Primary 3 to Primary 4 which resulted to 804, this indicates that the rate of increase

of pupil from Primary 3 to Primary 4 was 13.3%.

The number of enrolment in Primary 4 was 5726 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 5 in 2015-2016 was 5832 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that there was an increase in pupils from Primary 4 to Primary 5 which resulted to 106, this indicates that the rate of increase of pupil from Primary 4 to Primary 5 is 1.9%, the number of enrolment in Primary 5 was 4907 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 6 in 2015-2016 was 2161 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 5 to Primary 6 was 2161, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 5 to Primary 6 was 56.0%.

The number of enrolment in Ilorin West was 10162 in Primary 1 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 2 in 2015-2016 was 8159 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 1 to Primary 2 was 1403, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 1 to Primary 2 was 13.8%, the number of enrolment in Primary 2 was 9945 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 3 in 2015-2016 was 9175 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 2 to Primary 3 was 770, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 2 to Primary 3 was 7.7%.

The number of enrolment in Primary 3 was 9792 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 4 in 2015-2016 was 8742 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 3 to Primary 4 was 1050, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 3 to Primary 4 was 10.7%, the number of enrolment in Primary 4 was 9692 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 5 in 2015-2016 was 7890 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 4 to Primary 5 was 1802, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 4 to Primary 5 was 18.6%, the number of enrolment in Primary 5 was 8445 in 2014-15 and the number that was promoted to Primary 6 in 2015-2016 was 4814 for both Public and Private Primary schools, which shows that the total number of dropout from Primary 5 to Primary 6 was 3631, this indicates that the rate of dropout from Primary 5 to Primary 6 was 43.0%.

It can be deduced from the above discussion that the rate of dropout in Public and Private schools in the three local governments was 31.9%.

Summary of Findings

1. The rate of dropout in Public and Private schools in the three local governments' area in Ilorin metropolis was 31.9%.

Discussions

It is clear from the findings that there was low rate of dropout among school children in Ilorin metropolis; this is evident by the data collected from Kwara State Annual School Census (2014 – 2016). This implies that the total rate of dropout of children in Ilorin East was 11.5%, the total rate of dropout of children in Ilorin South was

4.1%, the total rate of dropout of children in Ilorin West was 18.78%. The grand total of 31.9% also indicates that the rate at which children dropout from school was apparently low. This finding is in line with the submissions of Christon, Sinlair, lehr, & Godler, (2001) that dropout is preceded by indicators of withdrawal (e.g., poor attendance) or unsuccessful school experiences (e.g., academic or behavioural difficulties) that often begin in elementary school.

It is clear from the findings that the major measures and strategies designed at minimizing out of school children include "the UBE Acts and other related matters enacted into law in 2004 which stipulated and enshrined that any parents / guardians who expose their wards to street hawking especially when they are supposed to be in school would be sanctioned and imprisoned should be redefined and implemented appropriately. The underlining child rights and labour laws should be operationally defined. Social services inconsonant with social welfare that would raise the hope and image of the child should be put in place.

Van Houtte (2004) opined that girls seems to have more positive attitudes, while boys are less motivated and have more negative attitudes toward school. In general, results show that girls do not require more time to study, engage less in cases of misconduct and behaviour, have less absenteeism, and also have more expectations about future and are more enthusiastic about further studies. On the other hand, boys are less committed to studies and give up more easily, once their representation of popular teen does not require having good grades and being committed to school.

Conclusion

There was low rate of dropout among school children in Ilorin metropolis; this is evident by the data collected from Kwara State Annual School Census (2014 – 2016). This implies that the total rate of dropout of children in Ilorin East was 11.5% while that of Ilorin South was 4.1% and Ilorin West was 18.78%. The grand rate of 31.9% also indicates that the rate at which children dropout from school was low.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should be able to foster the education of children by giving scholarship to less privileged and other vulnerable groups.
2. The environment where the child learn should be child friendly so as to retain best brain thereby reducing truancy
3. The ongoing free meal initiated by the federal government through states should continue
4. Law enforcement agencies , court order and religious ministries should contribute their quota towards ensuring public enlightenment campaign for mass enrolment of school children
5. Government, relevant agencies and spirited stakeholders that see to the welfare needs of the children should continue to put in their best towards ensuring a whole child in the society.
6. The UBE ACTS and other related matters of 2004 as stipulated should

sanction erring parents that prevent children from going to school especially through unscrupulous street hawking , child labour and all sorts of child molestation

7. The state should add the rate of dropout in the annual census research and report for onward decision making process.

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