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Parents and Teachers' Perceived Factors Hindering Students Enrolment in Basic Education in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

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Abstract

This paper examines parents and teachers perceived factors hindering students enrolment in Basic Education in Ilorin metropolis. The study adopted survey method of research to find out the parents' and teachers' perceived factors that hindered pupils' enrolment in basic education. Cluster sampling technique was used to sample 400 respondents consisting of 200 teachers and 200 educated parents. Also, purposive sampling technique was used to sample 200 illiterate parents; this made the total number of respondents for the study to be 600. A researcher made questionnaire titled Enrolment in Universal Basic Education (UBE) was used to elicit the needed data from the respondents. The data were analyzed using percentages and chi-square to answer the raised research questions. However, significant difference exist in the way teachers and educated parents on one hand and educated parents and illiterate parents on the other hand, perceived the influence of this factor of inadequate sensitization on pupils' enrolment in basic education. It was concluded that adequate sensitization of the public on UBE should be embarked upon for the success of the program. Thus it was recommended among other things that government should intensify its efforts towards getting Nigerians informed about UBE programs and the benefits acquirable from enrolling their children in schools; discourage early marriages among others.

Introduction

In support of the international principle of the Millennium Development Goals, Nigerian government built on its early 1950's policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) to map out logistics of providing basic education to all its school age children. The UPE program began in the old Western Region where the regional Ministry of Education initiated to the region's house of Assembly's and enactment a Comprehensive Education Law that came into operation on April 14, 1955. The law was specifically enacted to facilitate the activities/objectives of Universal Primary Education (UPE). As at that time, to motivate pupils' enrolment and attendance at UPE schools, the law shortened the length of the primary school course from eight to six years, abolished all school fees and made promotion from one class to the other automatic (Adesina, 2005). In addition, the regional government established Local Education Authorities (LEA) under education Act No 17 of 1952 and empowered the LEA to effectively monitor the progress of the scheme (UPE). Ejiogu (1991) reported that the regional government was so committed to bringing about total enrolment in the scheme that it appointed Local Education Officers at the ratio of 1 for every 40 primary schools.

These concerted efforts yielded positive results. Enrolment increased by 77.7% above the projected yearly pupils' enrolment of 170,000. In 1954, 446, 600 pupils enrolled and by 1955, it increased to 811,432 – an increase of 90% in one year (Ejiogu, 1991; Adesina, 2005). The success was attributed to conceived grassroots mobilization, sound policies and good finance of the scheme (Olagboye, 1998). The Western Region educational initiative gradually became national as it spread to other regions.

The Federal government under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon, was particularly influenced by the Western Region achievement to nationalize the UPE scheme in September 1976. The national efforts also, at initial stage, yielded result. Pupils enrolled massively. While the federal government planned for 2.3million pupils in the 1976 first phase of registration over 3million children eventually enrolled (Ejiogu 1991). The increase continued into the late 1990s. The 1990 enrolment figure of 13,607,249 increased to 16,190,947 (Adesina, 2005).

However, in 1996, the rate of enrolment started to decrease. That year, enrolment figure dropped to 14,078,473. This set-back was a serious regression as it came few years after nations of the world agreed to provide education for all by the year 2015. Earlier on in 1990, delegates from 155 countries as well as representatives from 150 organizations had agreed at the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand to

states in parts that:

A parent who does not enroll or who withdraws his/her child or ward from school commits an offence and liable to:

- (a) on first conviction, to be reprimanded;
- (b) on second conviction, to a fine of N2,000.00 or imprisonment for a term of one month or to both and
- (c) on subsequent conviction, to a fine of N5,000.00 or imprisonment for a term of two months or both (Agbonna, 2006).

To further checkmate the violation, government established a Monitoring Team charged with the responsibility of apprehending any pupil or student found roaming the streets during school hours; arrest the parents of such pupil or student and arrest any erring teacher who may contravene the success of the scheme.

Because government is aware of the fact that some socio-economic experience may hinder massive enrolment, attendance and completion of pupils of basic education age, government established some social welfare programs to assist pupils in difficult situations. A good example of such is the Home Grown School Feeding and Health Program (HGSFHP). The program was designed to reduce hunger among enrolled school children, improve their health through provision of good nutrition and ensure balanced mind for progressive and result-oriented learning/schooling (Agbonna, 2012).

In principle, these efforts towards ensuring enrolment for basic education are of good intentions. They symbolize government's sincere readiness to provide education to all, irrespective of socio-economic circumstances. These series of legal framework and sub-programs confirm that Nigerian government like many other nations of the world have come to share in the belief that only educationally empowered citizens can become functional, self-sustained, free from poverty and not criminal in minded.

However, evidence abounds that many Nigerian children of basic education age are not enrolled. Basic education in Nigeria today is for children between age 3 and 15. of the 144.4million Nigerians, 45 percent are within basic education age (Population Reference Bureau/PRB, 2007; Agbonna, 2013). Right from year 2004 a good number of these children have been staying out of school.

For example, between 2004 and 2006, enrolment of boys dropped from 80 percent to 64 percent - a drop of 16 percent. Between the periods, enrolment of girls also dropped from 80% to 60.4% - a drop of 19.6 percent. (Obayan 2001) Secondary schools in which basic education is now extended to be not spared of the drop. A report revealed that in 2004, enrolment in

secondary schools dropped drastically from 83.4% to 46% - mainly among female students (Adeniyi, 2008). The decline in enrolment continues into 2008. A UNICEF report indicates that as at May 2008, 10 million Nigerian children of primary and secondary education age are not enrolled in any school, specifically, 4.7 million of them are supposed to be in primary school (Adeniyi, 2008).

What could be responsible for this poor enrolment? One way to knowing the reason(s) is to investigate existence of possible factors that are capable of hindering pupils' enrolment in Nigerian schools. Knowing this will surely help government and stakeholders to identify the area that UBE policies should focus in order to ensure enrolment. Such research will however focus on parents and teachers as respondents to answer research questions why pupils are not enroll the schools. This is because the United National Declaration of the Rights of the child, 1959 under its principle 7 identifies parents as the first significant person in the provision of basic education to children (Tarrow, 1987). Thus, this study investigates parents' and teachers' perceived factors hindering pupil's enrolment in basic education program.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study.

- i. What do parents and teachers perceived as the main factor hindering pupils' enrolment for basic education in urban societies?
- ii. Is there any difference in what educated parents and teachers perceived as factors hindering pupils' enrolment for basic education in urban societies?
- iii. Is there any difference in what educated and illiterate parents perceived as factors hindering pupils' enrolment for basic education in urban societies?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were analyzed in this study.

- Ho₁:** There is no significant difference in the factors educated parents and teachers perceived as hindering urban pupils' enrolment in basic education.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant difference in the factors educated and illiterate parents perceived as hindering urban pupils' enrolment in basic education.

Methodology

The researchers employed survey method of research in the conduct of this study. The accessible population for the study comprised those living in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. Cluster sampling technique was used in sampling educated parents and teachers while purposive sampling technique was used in sampling illiterate parents. The educated parents and teachers were contacted at Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings of several schools within the metropolis. The illiterate parents were purposively sampled through their children attending public primary schools in the state. The research instrument (questionnaire) was sent to the illiterate parents through their children who could interpret and guide the parents' responses to the items in the questionnaire, at home. Six hundred (600) samples were drawn, of this total, 200 were teachers, 200 educated parents and the remaining 200 samples were illiterate parents. Sampling was limited to only parents and teachers in urban societies to give the researcher a complete focus on school enrolment as witnessed in the urban societies. This prevented the threat of differential selection in the study.

A researcher – made questionnaire titled Enrolment in Universal Basic Education (EUBE) was used in eliciting data from the respondents. The instrument has three sections. Section 'A' gathered respondents' demographic data while the section 'B' has four (4) items covering four areas or sources of likely hindrance to enrolment in basic school education. Respondents were asked to tick only one among the four categories of sources of hindrance that they believed could most hinder pupils' enrolment in basic education in their community. Response to this section were used in answering research question one.

The validity of the instrument (EUBE) was determined using content validity approach. Its reliability was determined using test re-test approach and the instrument was found with reliability co-efficient of 0.65.

A descriptive statistic (frequency count and percentages) was used in analyzing data gathered for answering the research question number one; while chi-square statistic was used in analyzing data related to hypotheses one and two.

Results

The first part under this section presents the descriptive statistics analysis of respondents' support for the capacity of each of the factors to hinder enrolment in Basic Education UBE.

Table 1: Description of perceived hindrance to UBE enrolment

Factors	Teachers (n = 200)		Illiterate parents (n = 200)		Educated parents (n = 200)		Combination of sample (n = 200)	
(a) Social factor religious belief, early marriage teen pregnancy	2	1%	6	3%	30	15%	38	6.33%
(b) Economic pressure: poverty, hawking, and child trafficking	64	32%	86	43%	33	16%	183	30.5%
(c) Sensitization: informing people about UBE and its program	132	66%	94	47%	61	30.5 %	287	47.83%
(d) Availability of infrastructure	2	1%	14	7%	76	38%	92	15.33%

Data on table 1 present percentages of respondents in support of different possible hindrances to enrolment in basic education. As shown on the table, the main factor that teachers identified as hindering the enrolment is poor sensitization of people about the UBE program and about its benefits to the enrolled children; 66% of the sampled teacher are of this opinion. However, 32% of sampled teachers believed the problem were economic pressure experienced by parents and their children. Only 1% of the sampled teachers believed that some religious belief, early marriage and teen pregnancy are capable of hindering pupils' enrolment in UBE.

On the other hand, 47% of sampled illiterate parents and 30% of educated ones identified the main hindrance to be poor sensitization, 38% of the educated parents believed the problem was as a result of inadequate infrastructure for UBE program. Only 15% of educated parents and 3% of illiterate parents support the opinion that religious belief, early marriage and teen pregnancy prevent enrolment in UBE.

Generally, 47.83% of the respondents (i.e. teachers and parents altogether) identified poor sensitization of the public as the major hindrance to enrolment in UBE. Thirty-point-five (30.5%) of the respondents identified economic pressure that parents and their children experienced as the second major hindrance. Only 15.33% put the blame on inadequate infrastructure while 6.33% of respondents blamed religious belief, early marriage and teen pregnancy.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀: There is no significant difference in the factors educated parents and

teachers perceived as hindering urban pupils' enrolment for basic education.

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis of Respondents Perceived Factors Hindering Enrolment in UBE

	SF	EF	SA	IRF	Grand Total	Df	X ² Cal. V.	X ² Tab. V.
Teachers	2 (16)	64 (48.5)	132 (96.5)	2 (39)	200	3	87.35	7.82
Educated Parents	30 (16)	33 (48.5)	61 (96.5)	76 (39)	200			
Total	32	97	193	78	400			

Significance > 0.05

Key

- SF = Social Factors
 EF = Economic Pressure
 SA = Sensitization/Advocacy
 IRF = Infrastructure Related Factors

The analysis on Table 2 justifies the need to reject hypotheses one (H₀). This is because, the X² (chi-square) calculated value (87.35) is higher than the table X² (chi-square) 7.82 This indicate that there is a significant difference in what educated parents and teachers perceived as factors hindering enrolment in basic education in urban societies.

Table 3: X² Analysis of Respondents Perceived Factors Hindering Enrolment in UBE

	SF	EF	SA	IRF	Grand Total	Df	X ² Cal. V.	X ² Tab. V.
Educated Parents	30 (18)	33 (59.5)	61 (77.5)	76 (45)	300	3	40.64	7.82
Illiterate Parents	6 (18)	86 (59.5)	94 (77.5)	14 (45)	200			
Total	36	119	155	90	400			

Significance > 0.05

As shown on Table 3, the X² calculated value (40.64) is higher than the X² table value (7.82) thus, H₀ is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference in what educated and illiterate parents perceived as factors hindering urban students' enrolment for basic education.

Discussion

Article 26 (2) of the united Nations Organizations' (UNO) Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948, identifies education and particularly the one made accessible to all, irrespective of socio-economic backgrounds, as

what can bring about the full development of human personality and strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom and as what can promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among people of all nations, racial and religious groups (Tarrow, 1987).

Parents and teachers are in the best position to help the nation growth and development (Tarrow, 1987). And in the best position to help the nation identify why many Nigerian youths are still not enrolled in Basic education (Tahon 1987). This is because they are directly responsible for pupils enrolment and retention as revealed in this study. The highest percentage (66%) of sampled teachers, 47% of illiterate parents and 30.5% of educated parents believed that pupils are not enrolled because people responsible for their education (parents in particular) are not well informed about the UBE program thus, they may not really know the advantages their children stand to gain if enrolled in the educational program. This lack of information may also mean that the people are not aware of the child-friendly programmes that are built into the scheme and if known, would have encouraged their release of their children/ward for the education.

The only close factor identified as responsible for the fall in enrolment is the economic pressure that parents experienced and which made them engaged their children/ward in business activities when they were supposed to be in school. Yet the first identified factor subsumes the others. If persons are well informed of the UBE anti-economic pressure programmes for indigent students the economic-pressure wouldn't have been strong enough to hinder the enrolment.

The significant differences found in what teachers, educated parents and illiterate parents perceived as factors hindering pupils enrolment in the education as revealed through the hypotheses testing in the study further point to the fact that the educational status of the parents (education illiterate) and being a teacher or a parents are contending factors as perceived factors hindering enrolment in basic education.

A lot of benefits are derivable from acquiring education. A part from the fact that it aids personal development, it also brings about national development. However, the first step required to be taken before one can benefit from any educational program is to enroll. Enrolment is an expression of interest in any educational program. Because of the importance of enrolment in any education, government and other educational stakeholders will need to take all possible steps towards enhancing enrollment in Nigeria Universal Basic Program in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Nigerian government should intensify its efforts to sensitize parents and children alike on the personal and national importance of acquiring basic education. Such sensitization should enlighten Nigerians on the available facilitating programs for UBE in the country.
2. Nigerian government should practically tackle socio-economic factors facing parents so as to reduce incidence of poor enrolment in basic education in the country.

Conclusion

Part of the Millennium Development Goals is the need to improve provision of education and channeling the same towards eradicating ignorance and thereby be able to develop in citizens the right health and economic behaviours. Achieving these however require that government improve enrolment in basic education by sensitizing the public on the UBE program and the benefits therein.

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