

## **Influence of Child Right Education and Social Studies on the Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State**

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### **Abstract**

Child right education is a means of teaching the child his rights, duties and obligations in the society through the process of teaching and learning. It offers the child the opportunity to know himself, whom he is, socialize within the immediate environment and community. Child right education unlocks the doors of prosperity for the child and can be seen as the fulcrum on which the wheel of the socio-political, economic, religious and cultural life of every child rotates. Social Studies is the study of man in his physical, social, economic, political, religious and cultural environment. It looks at man's activities in the family, community, kingship, state and nation. The paper x-rayed the concepts of child right education and Social Studies. Expo facto research design was adopted by the researchers. The population consisted of sixteen thousand six hundred and forty-one (16641) pupils while a sample of three hundred and ninety-one (391) pupils were used using multi stage random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection were Child Right Education Questionnaire and Social Studies Achievement Proforma (SSAP.) Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. Findings revealed among others that there is significance difference in Social Studies mean achievement scores of pupils adequate and inadequate child right education and also that child right education has significant influence on pupils' achievement in Social Studies in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. Conclusions were made with useful recommendations that enhance effective child right education in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Child, Right, Influence, education

### **Introduction**

Child's rights education refers to education and educational practices in schools and educational institutions that are consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Howe, and Covell (2017). Similarly, Krappmann and Lothar (2018) see child right education as a form of education that takes seriously the view that children are bearers of human rights, that children are citizens in their own right, that schools and educational institutions are learning communities where children learn (or fail to learn) the values and practices of human rights and citizenship, and that educating children about their own basic human rights is a legal obligation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Childhood years have been identified as the most vulnerable years of one's life, the child to a very large extent depends on the parents or guardians for survival. Any omission or commission on the part of the parents or guardian can make or mar the child for life. Article 1 of the World Declaration on the Right of the Child to Education (1990) stated that under Public International law, the child is recognized as among the vulnerable persons whose rights must be protected (Uzoagba, 2018).

For a person to understand and appreciate the entirety of his rights as a human, he must be educated first. To deny a person education especially in his early years is akin to denial of life. Umobi (2013) opined that education is the greatest force that can be used to bring about change and also the greatest investment that a nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources. He further stated that a nation whose citizenry are majorly uneducated is sure to be under developed and stagnated. Illiteracy has been traced as the root cause of poverty and education is identified as the surest route out of poverty especially for most children in the developing countries.

Article 1 of the World Declaration on the Right of the Child to Education (1990) under Public international law recognizes childrens' right to education as a fundamental human right which guarantees the full enjoyment of all other rights as contained in international legal instruments. In fact, under international law, every individual irrespective of race, gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religious or political preference, age or disability is entitled to a free elementary education. This right was explicitly enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 in Ebirim and Uzoagba (2018) and it stated thus, "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages, Elementary education shall be compulsory.

Folorunsho (2010) stated that right to education is one of the fundamental rights recognized and guaranteed in international and regional instruments. Nigeria as a signatory to most of the human rights instruments is expected to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of the relevant provisions of the conventions that guarantee right to education of the child. Provision of education in Nigeria therefore ought to be a right of the child, and should therefore be available and accessible to the Nigerian children as a proof of the protection of the said right. Academic performance is the knowledge and skills that pupils have mastered in a subject or a course. It is basically a measure of how well pupils have performed in the various assessment items set for them based on some educational criteria determined by professional educators, (Narad & Abdullah, 2016). Without quality education, a child faces considerable barriers to employment and earning potential later in life. A child is more likely to suffer adverse health outcomes and less likely to participate in decisions that affect him – threatening their ability to shape a better future for himself and his societies, (Howe and Covell, 2017).

Social Studies as an academic discipline has the potentials to create awareness on the rights of a child especially educational right. Social Studies teaches respect, honesty, discipline, good character formation, integrity and proper socialization. All these virtues constitute what the child learn in the family and which help him to know his rights in the society at large, (Uzoagba, 2018). Social Studies is the study of man in his social and physical environment. The discipline

is not taught in isolation but in relation to man as far as it is concerned with human activities. Man is a rational being that functions in economic, political, social, cultural and technological environments. In this context, Akpabio (1984) in Ebirim and Uzoagba (2018) clearly states that Social Studies is concerned with man's way of life in his environment. He further stated that Social Studies at primary level aims at creating awareness and understanding of the evolving social and physical environment as a whole, developing a capacity to learn and acquire certain skills that are essential to the formulation of satisfactory professional life and the forming of sound judgment e.g. (observation, analysis and inference); ensuring the acquisition of knowledge that is relevant and regarded as an essential prerequisite to personal and development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind, developing in the children positive attitudes to citizenship and a desire in them to make a positive personal contribution to the creation of a united Nigeria, developing a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of all members of the local community and the wider national and international communities so that they would become aware of the problem of this country and the world in general and developing in children an appreciation to the nation's cultural heritage and a desire to preserve such heritage. Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) remains a key expression of children's rights in education. The promotion of values, outlooks, and attitudes that are concerned with furthering the objectives set out in the Convention are vital in assisting educators to ensure that their curricula remain accountable to their prime constituencies: children, their parents/caregivers, and the wider community, (Ray, 2015).

In Owerri Municipal Council today, children are deprived of their rights to education and learning for various reasons such as child labour, poor family background, divorce among others, (Ebirim & Uzoagba, 2018). This poses lot of challenges to their general wellbeing. It is against this background that the study therefore, examined the influence of child right education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State.

### **Child**

According to Howe and Covell (2017), the term "child" comes from the Latin *infants* which means "the one who does not speak". For the Roman, this term designates the child from its birth, up to the age of 7 years. This notion evolved a lot through centuries and cultures to finally designate human being from birth until adulthood. *A child is any human being below the age of eighteen years.* The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child. Biologically, a child is anyone between birth and puberty or in the developmental stage of childhood, between infancy and adulthood. Children generally have fewer enforced rights than adult and are classed as unable to make serious decisions and legally must always be under the care of a responsible adult, *ibid.*

## **Rights**

The Black's Law Dictionary the ninth edition defines Right among others to mean something that is due to a person by just claim, legal guarantee, and moral principles. A power, privilege or immunity secured to a person by law; a legally enforced claim that another will do or will not do a given act, or a recognized and protected interest the violation of which is wrong. The Black's Law Dictionary further classified right inter alia in terms of perfect and imperfect rights, Legal right, positive and negative rights, natural right and absolute rights viz; perfect right, meaning right that is recognized by the law and is fully enforceable while imperfect right is one though recognized by law but is not enforced.

Furthermore, there are positive rights; rights that entitle a person to have another do some act for the benefit of the person entitled and negative right; rights that entitles a person to have another refrain from doing an act that might harm the person entitled. Also, there are legal rights, rights that is created or recognized by law. Absolute right is a right that belong to every human being such as the right to personal liberty etc and lastly natural right; those rights that is conceived as part of natural law and that is therefore thought to exist independent of right created by government or society such as the right to life, to liberty etc, Black (2009).

## **Child Rights**

According to Ebebe (2016) child right is a legal entitlement and morally justified way of handling a child or a minor so that they will feel secure and protected. Child's rights includes the right to association with both parents, human identity as well as the basic needs for physical protection, food, universal state-paid education, health care, and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child, equal protection of the child's civil rights, and freedom from discrimination on the basis of the child's race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, color, ethnicity, or other characteristics. Interpretations of children's rights range from allowing children the capacity for autonomous action to the enforcement of children being physically, mentally and emotionally free from abuse, though what constitutes "abuse" is a matter of debate. It also includes the rights to care and nurture. The children's rights movement is considered distinct from the youth rights movement. The field of children's rights spans the fields of law, politics, religion, and morality.

Put simply, child rights are the human rights of children. Every child, regardless of their age, race, gender, wealth or birthplace, has rights. These rights are enshrined in international law in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It recognizes all children must be treated fairly, equally and with dignity. The child rights convention laws are non-discriminatory and are always in the best interests of the child. The UN's child rights state that children are entitled to special protection and assistance because they are considered vulnerable. According to the CRC, all children should grow up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity, and all nations have a responsibility to provide these rights by the law of the UN, <https://www.worldvision.com.au/child-rights>.

## **Child Rights Education**

Child's rights education is education where the rights of the child, as described in the Convention on the right of the child (CRC) is taught and practiced in individual classrooms. But in its most developed form, children's rights are taught and practiced in a systematic and comprehensive way across grade levels, across the school, and across school districts. Child rights education is a part of educational and learning activities within the category of human rights education. At the same time, it mostly refers to activities by children to learn about their own rights that are indispensable in their day to day lives. It can be said that such education is a crucial part of learning activities at present when children cannot live or study without feeling safe and secure. With full-blown child's rights education, child's rights are not simply an addition to a particular subject or classroom. Rather, the rights of the child are incorporated into the school curricula, teaching practices, and teaching materials across subjects and grade levels and are the centerpiece of school mission statements, behavior codes, and school policies and practices, Covell, Howe and McNeil (2010).

## **Social Studies**

According to the National Council for the Social Studies (2009), Social Studies is "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence", within the school program. It provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, as well as appropriate contents from the humanities, mathematics and natural sciences. Mezieobi, Fubara & Mezieobi (2013) defined Social Studies as an integrative field of study which probes man's symbolic relationships with his environment, endows man with the reflective or contemplative capacities, intellectual, affective, social and work skills, to enable him to understand his world and its problems, and to rationally solve or cope with them for effective living in the society.

Ezegbe (2008) explain Social Studies as the study of man within his environment, physical, social, economic, psychological, religious, political, cultural, scientific and technological. Social Studies is the study of how man exists in his environment, deals with the multitude of factors that bears on man's existence. It involves man's activities, the activities he engaged in and why he engages in them. These include what he does, why he does them, what he believes in and why he believes in them; his problem and of different subjects aimed at inculcating national consciousness and national unity, imbibing the right type of values and attitude for self and national survival, the acquisition of necessary skills, ability and competences which individuals need to be able to contribute to national development.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Every child has right to education. Education empowers the child to be self sufficient, creative, resourceful and acquire skills that will make him an informed person who should contribute to

family, community and national development. Child right education is one of the most important aspects of education that needs to be properly looked into since education is a major instrument used to inculcate in an individual the right attitude, morals, norms and desirable behaviours. A child is supposed to get acquainted with proper education as it is one of the fundamental human rights. But contrary to this, implementation of child's right to education in Nigeria remains a mirage. Many children face different challenges on daily basis in their quest to enjoy their right to education; such challenges include poverty, family background, death of the bread-winner of the home, child labour, divorce. All these remain some of the most obstinate barriers to child's right to education. Compounding these challenges faced by the average Nigerian child, it has become a difficult task to make sure that pupils get the proper education they deserve and be able to enjoy the right they have as Nigerian Child and pupil.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of child right education and Social Studies on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. Specifically, the study intends to find out:

To determine the mean difference in the Social Studies achievement scores of primary school pupils with adequate child right education and inadequate child right education.

### **Research Question**

What is the mean difference in the Social Studies achievement scores of primary school pupils with adequate child right education and inadequate child right education?

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significance difference in the mean achievement scores of primary school pupils with adequate and inadequate child right education.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted ex post facto research design. The study was carried out in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State. The population of the study consisted of 16,641 primary six pupils in Owerri Municipal and 391 pupils (using Taro Yamane) formed the sample which were selected using multi-stage random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were Child Right Education Questionnaire (CREQ) and Social Studies Achievement Proforma (SSAP). The CREQ was validated by experts and the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 Alpha level of significance.

### **Data Analysis**

**Table 1:** Mean achievement scores of pupils in Social studies with adequate and inadequate child right education.



Child Right Education	n	x	SD	Mean Difference
Adequate	201	78.1	8.21	21.9
Inadequate	190	56.2	10.6	

Table 1 show that pupils with adequate child right education had mean achievement score of 78.1 and standard deviation of 8.21. While those with inadequate child right education had mean achievement score of 56.2 and standard deviation of 10.6 in Social Studies, given a mean difference of 21.9 in favour of pupils with adequate child right education.

**Table 2:** t-test result on the significance difference in the Social studies mean achievement scores of pupils with adequate and inadequate child right education.

Child Right Education	n	x	SD	T	df	Time	Decision
Adequate	201	78.1	8.21	22.765	389	1.96	Reject $H_0$
Inadequate	190	56.2	10.6				

From the t-test analysis in table 2, the statement of hypothesis was rejected; implying that there is a significance difference in Social Studies mean achievement scores of pupils with adequate and inadequate child right education. This is because the t-calculated is greater than the t-critical at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This implies that child right education has significance influence on pupils' achievement in Social studies in Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State.

### Discussion of Findings

Research question one which sought to find out the mean difference in Social Studies achievement scores of primary school pupils with adequate child right education and inadequate child right education. Findings revealed that there is significance difference in Social Studies mean achievement scores of pupils with adequate and inadequate child right education and that child right education has significant influence on pupils' achievements in Social Studies in Owerri municipal council of Imo State. This is in line with the findings of Ekomaru (2019) which stated that most children drop out of school because they lack the knowledge of their rights to education as enshrined in convention on the rights of the child (CRC).

### Conclusion

Child right education is pivotal to the holistic development of children in any human society. This is because children holistic development impacts on the development of a nation's human and material resources, as children are reputed universally as the leaders of tomorrow. Thus, issues bordering on their rights and general wellbeing should not be trifled with in Nigeria as a

nation. Therefore, school authorities, government, parents and stakeholders in educational sector should join hands in addressing the issue of child right education.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that:

1. The Government should set up a sustainable adult literacy programme incorporating, apart from basic literacy, dissemination of information to promote the implementation of children right to education
2. The teachers, principals, NGOs, Naptip and parents should join hands to create awareness on child rights education in all the schools across the nation.
3. Priority interventions should take the form of concrete and goal-directed attitudinal changes, particularly religious practices affecting adversely, the children right to education.
4. Strategic programme identifications should take the form of public enlightenment not only through the media but also through personal contact to parents, guardians and religious leaders.
5. The government should implement policies that should promote child right education in the society.

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