

ASSESSMENT OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES TO WESTERN EDUCATION AS CORRELATE OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN DANGE-SHUNI LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF SOKOTO STATE-NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined parents' attitudes to Western education in some communities of Dange Shuni Local Government, Sokoto state that are known to be conservative to social change. It investigated the impact of such attitudes on the academic performance of pupils in primary schools. Descriptive Survey Design using Qualitative and Quantitative methods was used. The study population consisted of 506 pupils, 167 teachers, and 2550 parents in primary schools in the 11 wards as obtained from Dange-Shuni Local Government Areas of Sokoto state. A Multi-stage method involving Purposive sampling and Simple Random was used to sample 124 Male parents, 118 teachers, and 244 pupils. Researchers-designed questionnaires, in-depth interview guides, and academic performance tests in English and

Mathematics were used as data collection instruments. Thematic method was used for Qualitative analysis while frequency, mean score, and Product Moment Correlation Coefficient 'r' were used to analyze Quantitative data. One of the findings was that Parents have negative attitudes toward Western education based on religion and occupation. On that basis, the study recommended, among other things, that Stakeholders like the State Ministry of Information, Dange-Shuni Local Government information department, mass media, traditional rulers, and religious leaders need to put more emphasis on public enlightenment campaigns aimed at sensitizing parents at grass root in order not to equate western education with Christianity, thus the need to develop positive attitudes to western education.

Keywords: Western Education, Educational Practice, Parental Attitudes, Academic Performance

Introduction

The two main education systems in Nigeria are Islamic Education and Western education. They are foreign systems of education introduced in Nigeria that met the existing Traditional education. Islamic education was the main education system in Northern Nigeria, especially after establishing the Caliphate in 1804. This education system has its basis in Islamic religion and thus draws its curriculum from the Holy Qur'an. For this reason, people in the North who are predominantly Muslims embraced Islamic Education to acquire knowledge for worshipping God (Allah). As noted by Blessing and Adejoke (2015), the Northern protectorate was largely dominated by the Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri-speaking people, who had for over a thousand years (700-1914) been wrapped with the Islamic religion, Koranic Education, and Arabic Literacy, and committed to Islamic and Arabic education, tradition and culture. Based on this existing religious foundation and education, the North rejected Christian Missionary education when it was introduced to the area.

Many reasons were, however, responsible for the early resistance to Western education in Northern Nigeria. Prominent among the factors cited in Blessing and Adejoke (2015) was that Western education was equated with Christianity because Christian missionaries introduced it.

Consequently, Western education continued to grow rapidly in Southern and Eastern Nigeria as against what was obtained in the North then. However, after independence, the quest for educational development of all regions became a priority because education is widely considered an instrument of excellence for achieving national development (Kamaldeen, Buhari, & Parakoyi, 2012)

Therefore, it was initiated by successive administrations to ensure school enrolment, retention, completion, and performance in basic education. Aside from the Universal Primary Education (UPE), the Basic Education Bill was enacted in 2004 by Nigeria's National Assembly to ensure that every citizen has access to 9-year basic education. The Universalization of Basic Education and many other efforts in Northern Nigeria and Sokoto state, in particular, led to public enlightenment and sensitization on the value of Western education, the establishment of schools even in rural areas, the provision of learning facilities in schools, and course programs aimed at education for all like the Universal Basic Education scheme among others. However, issues of out-school-children, low enrolment, and retention in primary schools prevail in many communities. Similarly, the academic performance of pupils in many primary schools is a source of concern. For instance, an early grade study in Mathematics and English language involving a total of 993 pupils in public primary schools in both rural and urban areas in Sokoto State conducted by USAID (2018) reveals, among other things, the following findings:

1. Pupils struggle with the most basic task of identifying numbers. 66.1% of primary 2 and 43.9% of primary 3 pupils could not locate any number, including the number 2.
2. 80% of pupils in primary 3 cannot read any word correctly in one minute.

Against the background of poor performance, this study investigated parental attitudes toward Western education as it relates to the academic performance of pupils in Dange Shuni Local Government Education Authority of Sokoto State. Many empirical studies on parental attitudes to Western education were conducted in different contexts. For instance, in the context of Santoshpur village of Sundargarh district of India, Samal (2012) found that the overall attitude of parents towards education was moderately favorable and positive towards schooling and education of their children, while Regasa and Taha (2015) found among Primary Schools in Sodo Zuria Woreda, Southern Ethiopia that attitudes and opinion of parents towards female education affected the academic performance of female students negatively so that the academic achievement of female students is very low. In Nigeria, Hammajam, Moh'd, and Idris (2015), in a study conducted in Chibok Local Government of Borno state, made three main findings regarding the present study research problem, namely that attitudes of parents have great influences on the attainment of western education of their children and parents in Chibok local government area are so positive towards western education. It was found that the impact of parents' low economic status creates implications for formal education.

In Sokoto state, the setting for this study, stakeholders have raised concerns over poor academic performance at some communities' primary education levels. For example, as already established, an empirical study involving primary school pupils in Sokoto state (which the study area included) revealed poor academic performance of learners who struggled with simple and most basic tasks of identifying numbers and reading correctly. The decline in academic performance at any level of education cannot be attributed to a single factor. Still, the interplay of many variables and parental attitude to education may be one of them.

Therefore, this paper's main thrust was to investigate parental attitudes on western education as it relates to academic performance of pupils in some communities in Dange-shuni Local Government of Sokoto state that are known to hold conservative attitudes to social changes. There is a lack of research in this area because, to the best knowledge of researchers, such research problem about the study area is not investigated.

Research Questions

The Research Questions for the study are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of parents on Western education?
2. How do Parental Attitudes toward Western Education relate to the academic performance of pupils?

Research Hypothesis

The following Hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between parental attitudes to Western education and the academic performance of pupils.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the structural, functional paradigm as a theoretical basis. The functionalist theory looks at social systems as having certain needs and society as a system of social structures (education, economic, legal, and political). If these needs are being met, then it is the social structures that meet these needs. The structures are thus functional in that they help society operate. Because society is composed of different parts, and the proper operation of these parts is necessary for the smooth operation of society as a whole, the interdependence of the components is an important feature of functional analysis. The roles taken by society's people, institutions, and organizations are all interdependent, leading to what Haralambos and Holborn (2015) called "value consensus," which forms the fundamental integrating principles in society. If members of the society are committed to the same values, they will tend to share a common identity, which provides the basis for unity and cooperation.

There are several key assumptions in Structural Functionalist theory. One of these is that society strives toward equilibrium. That is, the parts in the social system must function and contribute their quota towards the survival of the society. This is to say that a problem in one system can affect another. Thus, the family and the school are important parts or institutions that are critical to pupils' educational achievement or academic performance. Based on functionalist theory, these two institutions must function properly and harmoniously. This implies that any dysfunction at the family level, like poor parental attitudes toward education, can affect the academic performance of pupils in the school, and thus, the equilibrium is lost. Consequently, in the area which this research intends to study, several families or homes hold negative attitudes toward Western education because of the belief that the system came through Christian missionaries whose main initial motive was to convert indigenes to their religion.

Research Methodology

A descriptive research design was used for the study. Qualitative and Quantitative data were collected simultaneously. The study population comprised 506 pupils, 167 teachers, and 2550 parents in primary schools in the 11 wards, as obtained from Dange-Shuni Local Government Education Authority and National Population Commission, respectively.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select primary 3 and 4 in one school from each of the eleven wards, making eleven schools. On the other hand, primary 3 and 4 were purposively selected because there are no classes five and six in some newly established primary schools. The population of each of the eleven (11) households was obtained from a National Population Commission to sample parents. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample 5% of male parents from each ward, giving a total of 124 because Creswell (2013) recommends the selection of fewer participants for qualitative study. Male parents were selected because culturally they have more say in children's education. Similarly, 50% of the population of pupils in each school was used as a sample. However, for teachers, the Research Advisor (2006) table of determining samples from a given population was used to sample the study population. The table recommended a sample of 118 teachers to represent 167 total population. A Proportionate sampling technique was used so that the higher the population of teachers in a particular school, the higher the number of teachers sampled.

Table 1: Sample of the Study

S/No	School	Teachers		Pupils		Parents	
		Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
1.	Katsira	39	28	55	28 (50%)	255	13 (5%)
2.	Jurga	7	5	28	14 (50%)	125	6 (5%)
3.	Salau	3	2	65	33 (50%)	67	3 (5%)
4.	Tabkinkaiw a	27	19	143	72 (50%)	54	3 (5%)
5.	Tudu	5	4	20	10 (50%)	276	14 (5%)
6.	LuggarTsara	43	30	8	4 (50%)	120	6 (5%)
7.	Ruggar Dutsi	5	4	16	8 (50%)	208	10 (5%)
8.	Rafin Jidda	3	2	24	12 (50%)	820	41 (5%)
9.	Batta	21	14	24	12 (50%)	87	4 (5%)
10.	Sambo Darni	2	1	49	25 (50%)	436	22 (5%)
11.	Fajaldu	12	9	74	37 (50%)	102	5 (5%)
	TOTAL	167	118	506	244	2550	124

Research Instruments

The research instruments were the Parental Attitudes to Western Education Questionnaire for Teachers, In-depth Interview for Parents, and Academic Tests in English Language and Mathematics Subjects for pupils. The questionnaire was based on a 4-point Likert scale, consisting of two sections, sections A and B. Section A is on the respondents' demographic data. In contrast, section B deals with teachers' views on parents' attitudes to Western education and their pupils'

academic performance. While -the academic performance tests were administered to measure the pupils' academic performance.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Content validity of all the instruments was ascertained by experts from the Faculty of Education and Extension Services Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, and English Language and Mathematics Teachers whose suggestions were incorporated in the final drafts of the instruments. Reliability indexes of 0.64 and 0.64 for the Questionnaire and Academic Tests were obtained through the Test-re-test method using Spearman Rank Order Correlation. The Qualitative instruments guide's reliability was ensured by repeating questions in a slightly different form during the interview, as Best and Kahn (1986) recommended.

The questionnaire and the academic performance tests were administered to the respondents through direct administration with research assistants. Similarly, 11 Focus Groups of 6 parents were formed in each of the 11 wards from which in-depth interviews were conducted. During the interviews and discussions, devices such as Audio Voice Recorder and Field Note were used to record and note issues raised.

Method of Data Analysis

The qualitative data was collected and analyzed using the qualitative method of data analysis, whereby all the information collected was transcribed, and the transcription was studied in detail under major themes and sub-themes. The quantitative data collected were analyzed using Pearson moment correlation coefficient and frequency and weighted mean score set at 2.2 benchmarks. The weighted mean is the sum of all mean scores divided by several items. Table 2 implies that any item within or above the 2.2 is agreed upon and vice versa. P-value was used to test the null hypotheses given a significant alpha (α).

Results and Discussion

Results of data collected using Quantitative and Qualitative instruments were presented.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Table 2: Teachers Responses on Parental attitudes to Western Education

S/N	Items	Mean Score	Decision
1.	Parents believe practices of Western education are not in line with the teachings of Islamic	2.2	Negative attitude
2.	Parental attitudes are the reason for Low enrolment in your schools	3.1	Negative attitude
3.	Most Parents want their children to take after their occupation	3.1	Negative attitude
4.	Most Parents have negative attitudes toward Western education	2.2	Negative attitude
5.	Parents do not give maximum education support to their children	2.4	Negative attitude
6.	Academic performance of pupils in this over the years has been poor	2.5	Negative attitude
7.	Poor academic performance is because of the attitudes of parents toward Western education	2.2	Negative attitude
8.	Parents believe Western education would help their child to get ahead in life.	2.1	Negative attitude
9.	Parents believe children learn important life skills at school.	1.9	Negative attitude
10	Parents believe Children learn communication skills in school	1.8	Negative attitude
11	Parents believe Schools can develop positive values in children	1.8	Negative attitude
12	Parents believe Better educational qualifications will help them get better jobs.	1.9	Negative attitude
13	Parents believe Schools can teach children practical skills to solve real-life problems.	1.9	Negative attitude
14	Parents believe the content children learn at school is irrelevant to real life.	2.2	Negative attitude

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Weighted mean = 2.2

Data in Table 2 indicates items whose mean scores are above the weighted mean and those below. The data implies that items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 14) stated in the negative form passed the benchmark weighted mean of 2.2 while items (8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) displayed in positive form fell below-weighted mean of 2.2. The benchmark is the weighted mean obtained using the formula stated in explaining a method for data analysis.

Thus, with the above result, it can be said that Teachers in primary schools in the area believe that parents have negative attitudes toward Western education.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between parental attitudes to Western education and the academic performance of pupils.

This hypothesis was tested by subjecting the scores on parental attitudes to Western education and the academic performance of pupils to Pearson's correlation analysis, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between Parental Attitudes to Western education and Academic Performance of pupils

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Parental Attitudes	118	8.60	2.05	.629	.000	H ₀ Rejected
Academic Performance	118	5.28	1.64			

From the result of table 3, parental attitudes to Western Education and the academic performance of pupils were positively related, and the relationship was significant, Pearson's $r(115) = .629$, $p = .000$. This indicates a significant relationship between parental attitudes to Western Education and academic performance of pupils because the p-value is lower than the .05 level of significance. Therefore, H₀₁, which states that there is no significant relationship between parental attitudes to western education and the academic performance of pupils, was rejected. This also adequately answered research question two about the impact of parental attitudes to western education and the academic performance of pupils.

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Data from respondents (parents and teachers) through FGDs and in-depth interviews was analyzed. For confidentiality, the parents' names were represented by the pseudonym "R", meaning respondent, while that of teachers was represented by "T", meaning Teacher. Data obtained was analyzed through a detailed description of two major themes and sub-themes, the two research questions raised for the research. Each of these major themes were explained under sub-themes in the following ways:

1. Parental Attitudes towards Western Education.
2. Parental Attitudes to Western Education as Correlate of pupils' academic performance.

Parental Attitudes to Western Education

The above major theme can be explained under the following Sub-themes:

- i. Parental religion as a basis for Attitudes on western education.
- ii. Parental occupation as the basis for Attitudes on western education.

Parental Religion as the basis for Attitudes on western education

Investigations revealed that in villages like Katsira and Tutunbe, primary school session usually starts late, sometimes after 11 am, and thus last for only three to four hours (11 am to 1 pm). According to T1, interviewed in one of the primary schools:

Several attempts were made by both school management and the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) through enlightenment in order to prevent late coming and absenteeism but to no avail. Even at this moment that I am talking to you, (around 11:30 am), many children are yet to come to school. (Male T, holder of NCE, aged 57 years, Teacher in Tudu village).

Investigation revealed that this type of late-coming and absenteeism from school is linked to attitudes toward Western education. According to R4 in Katsira village:

Western education is related to Nasaranci (Christianity). We are concerned that the reason it was introduced to us was to substitute Islam with it. and that is why we place priority on Islamic education schools over the western, so that even if our children find themselves in the western schools, they may hardly be influenced. (Male R, graduate of Islamiyya School, aged 53 years in Katsira village).

Investigation found that the religious factor is more pronounced in two of the villages: Katsira in the Dange ward and Tudu in the Shuni ward. Tudu, for instance, there is an area called Shiyar Yan koli occupied by a compound family whose resistance to Western education is more pronounced. Despite the increase in awareness about the value of Western education as a vehicle for development at the individual and societal levels, many parents at Shiyar Yan Koli in Tudu, Shuni, still hold negative attitudes toward Western education. For instance, R22 interviewed narrated how Western education came to Hausa land (referring to Sokoto caliphate) as follow:

The reason for the battle between Whiteman and Sultan Attahiru I (referring to Giginya battle of 1903) was because they wanted to introduce western education along with Christianity. They later succeeded after defeating the Sultan. (Male R, graduate of Makarantun Allo, aged 60 years in Shiyar Yan Koli-Shuni).

This notion of Western education forms the basis for attitudes toward Western education by many people in some communities of the study area.

Parental occupation as the basis for Attitudes on western education

The eleven (11) towns where the primary schools are selected share the same socio-cultural and socio-economic similarities. They engage with their children in petty trading or retailing and agricultural activities.

Petty trading or retailing

There are many kinds of petty trading people engaged in the study area. However, This study focuses on trades that directly affect school enrolment and academic performance because children are actively involved in them. Observation in the study area reveals the following as some petty trading that affect school enrolment and children's academic performance. They include:

1. Hawking of breakfast local delicacies like pap (Koko), bean cake (kosai), tuwo, among others
2. Hawking of porridge (fura)
3. Hawking of spices and vegetable ingredients like tomatoes, pepper, onions, among others
4. Trading on market days. This occurs only on Wednesday, the day for Dange and Shuni local markets. Children living in the villages neighbouring Dange and Shuni assist their parents in the market.
5. Collecting of water for sale using donkeys and wheelbarrows.

Farming

In most parts of Dange-Shuni Local Government, large-scale farming is practiced only during rainy season. This is due to the absence of dams and irrigation structures that facilitate the dry season farming. However, pupils engage in hawking or petty trading as well as fetching of water due to its scarcity which serves as another challenge in the study. On the other hand, some pupils roam about the bushes and their parents do not care to caution them. For instance,, in Wababe village, many pupils caught or hunted rodents in the bushes during school hours. T7 interviewed had this view:

These children are pupils of our school. They don't come to school during rainy season because of agricultural engagement, and now that it is dry season and there is no any farm work, instead of their parents to send them to school, they engage in hunting and catching rodents. (Male respondent, Grade II holder, aged 47 years in Wababe village).

Parental Attitudes on Western Education as Correlate of Pupils' Academic Performance

Many factors affect academic performance positively or negatively. Pupils' punctuality can be considered one of the major determinants of their success in school or academic performance. On the other hand, this indicates that absenteeism and being late to school can negatively affect pupils' performance. However, absenteeism and late school are among the common problems of primary schools involved in this study. As noted earlier in this section, primary school sessions in most schools in the study area start late because children come late, and even where sessions are held, attendance is very poor. These problems may be associated with some variables, but from investigation, the major causes are parents' attitudes toward the education system. The following quotations reflect the views of some parents (R2, R10, R37, 40,45,47,49, R73, R89 and R101) interviewed who reveal their attitudes and the value they attach to Western education:

I always make sure that all my children attend Islamic education right from Makarantun Allo up to Makarantun Ilmi. It is then that I will start paying serious attention to their western education. If this is not done, children will not learn important acts of worship like prayer". (Male respondent, SSCE holder, aged 57 years in Wababe village).

These types of attitudes that the majority of parents hold about Western education are the reasons why late-coming and absenteeism prevail in primary schools. Negative parental attitudes to Western education may, therefore, be considered as one of the reasons for the poor academic performance of pupils as found from the academic performance tests conducted in English language and Mathematics.

Summary of Major Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. Parents have negative attitudes to Western education, which is based on religion and occupation.

2. The study revealed that negative parental attitudes toward Western education resulted in late-coming and absenteeism of pupils as well as late starts of school sessions, which were found to have an impact on the academic performance of pupils.

Discussion of Findings

Results in Table 2 revealed parents in the study area hold negative attitudes toward Western education based on religion and occupation. This is based on items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 14) stated in negative form that passed the benchmark weighted mean of 2.2, as well as items (8,9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) stated in positive form fell below-weighted mean of 2.2. It also corroborated with the finding from thematic analysis of qualitative data where some respondents, such as R6 in Katsira Village, termed Western education with the Hausa word “Nasaranci”, meaning “Christianity”. This finding, however, did not lend support from related studies by Samal (2012), Regasa and Taha (2015), and Hammajam, Moh’d and Idris (2015) in India, Ethiopia and Nigeria, respectively. But they indeed concur with the assertions raised by Virginia (2005) and other scholars about the negative attitudes towards Western education based on religion.

On the other hand, results from Table 3 revealed that Pearson’s $r(115) = .629, p = .000$. which indicates a significant relationship between parental attitudes and academic performance of pupils because the p-value is lower than the .05 level of significance. This further confirmed one of the findings of a related study by Moh’d and Idris (2015) that the attitude of parents has a great influence on the attainment of Western education of their children,

From the preceding discussion, the practical and theoretical implications of the findings of this study are obvious. The research investigated the parental perception of Western education about the academic performance of pupils in Dange-shunt LGEA, Sokoto state, Nigeria. Poor parental perception of Western education is believed to be one of the causes for low enrolment in schools in Northern Nigeria and Sokoto state in particular. Enrolment, retention and completion are broad educational issues that now become contemporary issues and variables under the concept of Out-of-School Children. Therefore, this study's findings have both theoretical and practical implications for stakeholders of basic education delivery in Sokoto state to improve enrolment, retention and completion in Basic Education.

Conclusion

The research examined parents' attitudes to Western education in some communities of Dange Shuni Local Government, Sokoto state, that are known to be conservative to social change. From the findings, the negative perception of parents on Western education resulted in a situation whereby children's schooling is being compromised with some occupations, such as petty trading and farming activities, which affect their school attendance and enrolment. In the study, negative Parental attitudes on Western education present a challenge to ensuring quality basic education for all. Such attitudes affect the academic performance of pupils in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are given:

1. Stakeholders like the State Ministry of Information, Dange-Shuni Local Government information department, mass media, traditional rulers, and religious leaders need to put

more emphasis on public enlightenment campaigns aimed at sensitizing parents at the root in order not to equate Western education with Christianity, thus the need to develop positive attitudes of western education.

2. There is a need for attitudinal change among Parents in the study area. Education should be perceived as an instrument for moral and character training and empowering children. Emphasis should, therefore be placed on children's schooling, which can help ensure positive academic performance.

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