

**ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE CHILD RIGHT ACT IN ILA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OSUN  
STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study assessed teachers' perception on implementation of the child right act. The study was carried out in Ila Local Government Area of Osun State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of all secondary schools teachers in Ila-local Government Area of Osun State. As at the time of the study, there were 352 secondary school teachers in Ila Local Government Area of Osun State. A sample of 200 (100 males, 100 females) secondary school teachers was drawn from the population with the use of Stratified sampling technique, by taking teachers' gender into consideration. Questionnaire titled: "Teachers Perception on the implementation of the Child Rights Act (TPICRA)" was used for data collection, while the test-retest method of establishing reliability was used and it yielded  $r=0.75$ . Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, t-test and one-way Anova at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that teachers' have low awareness of the Child Rights Act, gender significantly influence the teachers' perception of the implementation of the child Right Act, male teachers had better perception than female teacher on the implementation of child Right Act. It was concluded that the secondary school teachers have low awareness of the Convention on the rights of the child, and gender influenced the teachers' perception, this affected the support for the implementation of Child Right Act in Ila Local Government Area, Osun State. It was therefore recommended that Government should encourage the female across Secondary Schools in Osun State to familiarize themselves with media, so as to be well-informed about*

*issues relating to Child Rights Act, and to channel their energy to improving the lots of children in the state.*

**Keywords:** Teachers 'assessment, Teachers' Perception, Implementation of child right act, Ila local government area, Osun State, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Education is a process of developing in individuals knowledge, information, beliefs, skills, attitudes, interests and abilities, so as to take such from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. Education is much more than an entry to the job market. Education has the power to shape a sustainable future and better world (Ki-moon, 2012). The teacher is the key personnel who play the important role to bring about transformation and one mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage.

Child Right Education is a requirement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UN, 1989). The Child Rights Act was promulgated by the countries of the world, and it effectively, consolidates all laws that incorporate rights of the children and navigates all generation of rights stemming from the survival, protection, development and participation which are founded on the "Best interest principles". Following this, most countries of the world had passed the act into law and it is in use (Verheyde, 2006).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in article 26(2) demands that education shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullness potentials. Articles 29 and 42 commit each sovereign state to make the principles and provisions of the CRC widely known to children and adults. Moreover, children are entitled to be informed of their legal rights and that they should respect human rights (UN, 2011). This makes the Child Rights Education (CRE) paramount.

The teaching of children's rights has been at the centre of many debates in recent years. It is argued that this will help children become democratically informed citizens. Krappman (2006) argued that children have the rights to be educated about their rights and to claim children's human rights. There was a view that Children who learn about their rights tend to be more supportive of human rights issues and even

volunteer in programmes that promote other people's rights. (Howe and Covell, 2010).

Rights protect children from potentially harmful situations. Hence, they should be taught at all levels of education, so that such rights become common knowledge. Teachers should be obliged to teach children about their rights and execution of their educational practices should be in line with the rights of the child. (Covell, Howe and McNeil, 2010).

Child Rights Education (CRE) has been defined by several authors. The CRE is the teaching and practice of children's rights in school and educational institutions as informed by and consistent with the United Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to UN (1989) CRE provides a lens for thinking about i) the content of education, ii) the process of education and iii) the purposes of education. In their view, all these identified variables have implications for what is taught, how it is taught and why it is taught. They pointed out that children's right education should be integrated into the school curricula in all subjects and school grades rather than confining it to one particular subject. This may help children to develop a deeper understanding of their rights. Thus, the Article 29 of the CRC insists upon the need for education to be child centered, child friendly and empowering, and it highlights the need for educational processes to be based upon the very principles it enunciates.

Although, teaching of the Child's Right Education has been introduced in Schools, across the world, for example , Canada, Finland , England and so on (Howe and Covell, 2007, Howe and Covell, 2013). The problem is that as much as the governments have advocated the teaching of children's rights, this has been met with much resistance (Howe and Covell, 2010). This has resulted in the general neglect of this crucial area. Although, not unusual due to several reasons, such as teacher's incompetence with the CRC (Osler and Leung, 2011). This becomes a problem because children do not fully know their rights (Newman and Newman, 2015).

One of the reasons for resisting the teaching of children's rights is due to the lack of teacher's understanding of CRC. Howe and Covell (2007) stated that teachers sometimes see children's rights as a threat to their authority as they are not trained to teach them. According to Cassidy, Brunner and Webster (2014), children get most of their

understanding of human rights from teachers and hence, Brown and Thys (2011) emphasized that teachers need to be well informed to teach children's rights effectively. Also, fear of the parents may hinder teaching children's rights because their parents may disagree with being taught and that children may assert more their rights, which may conflict with teachers rights as well as religious, cultural and parental beliefs (Rapoport, 2010 cited in Cassidy *etal*, 2014).

### **Benefits of Children's Right Education (CRE)**

Teaching children about their rights has a number of positive outcomes. Studies have shown that children who are exposed to CRE develop a more accurate and deeper understanding of their rights through their teachers rather than relying on the internet or their peers (Covell, Howe and McGillivray, 2017; Covell and Howe, 1999).Some of the benefits are:

- Children who know their rights tend to become more aware that other people also have rights just like they have, and that they need to respect them.
- Children's right education promotes right respective attitudes and good behaviour among children.
- The CRE can have a ripple effect as children become more supportive of human rights issues as well as improved academic performance as noted by Covell *etal* (2017).
- As children become more aware of the need to promote rights in their communities, they become more aware of how to develop attitudes that are pro-democracy as global citizenship (UNICEF, 2014).
- CRE can be incorporated into the school curriculum through existing programmes to avoid extra loads on the already overloaded teachers.
- Learners could also be given the opportunity to exercise their rights, take part in the decision making process and contribute to situations that affect them.

Nigeria, following the global attention on the rights of the child, ratified the International Convention on Rights of Child and consequentially enacted Child Rights Act No. 26 of 2003. Since then, initiatives have been taken by the government to sustain the rights of the Nigerian

Child. With the adoption of the Child Rights Law, all the states are to domesticate the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and pass it into law. Since, it will only be effective if the State Assembly enacts it. Despite the laudable benefits identified earlier, till date, only 16 out of the Nigeria's 36 States have passed the Act (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2001), but intense advocacy continues for the remaining states. This explains that the landmark in achievement of the legislative arm of government has not yet translated into improved legal protection for children throughout the federation.

The non domestication of the Convention on Child Rights has denied the Nigerian child of the protection that such rights can give. Children in Nigeria, has been facing continuous abuse, kidnapping, neglect and exploitation while some are raped, maimed and starved (Onome, 2018). Majority are deprived of education, as it is evident that, 10.5 million children are out of school in Nigeria, which constitutes almost 50% of the world estimate of out of school children (UNICEF, 2013). Thus, Life, survival, protection from violence, education that can enable children fulfill their potentials, expressing their opinions and being raised properly by their parents are usually deprivations faced by a child in Nigeria.

Education is a substantive right of the child in itself and also an enabling right, through which children develop the understanding and capacity to enable them to access other rights (CHRCE, 2012). The child rights education should be undertaken at the family, school, community, national and global levels (UNICEF, 2014). However, it was recommended that regardless of the level, a whole school approach to implementation will make the teaching more beneficial (Covell, Howe and McNeil, 2010).

The classroom teacher has the role of providing children and young people with knowledge, skills, understanding and developing attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of Human Rights and Rights of the child. This implied that teachers within the school system have a major role to play in the implementation of the CRC. This will strengthen the advocacy and awareness of such rights in the children which will eventually help them to defend such rights and prevent rights abuses. Moreover, teachers can resist, promote or shape CRE

within the schools depending on their own preconceptions about childhood, children's rights and nature of education.

As laudable and beneficial as the effect of CRE could have been, it has not been mainstreamed into the curriculum of teacher education in Nigeria. In practice the CRE emphasises learner's centredness, in terms of content and democratic strategies, which entails teacher being: i) a friend; ii) open to learning; and iii) making classes interesting and informative to learners. This would have created a good relationship between the teacher and students, and enhance positive attitudes towards children. Instead, teachers results to spanking, abusing the rights of the children and tends to be authoritarian in their practices in most schools. These, however, can impact on what is taught, breed lack of interest in the learners and may hamper the development of child's personality, talents mental and physical abilities to the fullness potentials. Therefore, this study assesses the teachers' perception on implementation of the Child Right Act. It investigates the level of awareness of the teachers on Convention on the rights of the child. It also finds out the effect of gender differences in the implementation of CRA.

#### **Research Question(s)**

1. What is the level of awareness of the teachers on Convention on the rights of the child?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the Child Right Act?

#### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers' gender on the perception on the implementation of the Child Right Act
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers' duties on the perception on the implementation of the Child Right Act.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference the mean ratings of the teachers' religious beliefs on the implementation of the Child Right Act.

**Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of study included all public secondary school teachers in Ila Local Government Area of Osun State. As at the time of the study, there were 352 teachers in the public secondary schools in Ila Local Government Area of Osun state (Source: Ila Local Government Education Authority, Osun Central Education District Office (OSED). A sample of 200 (100 males, 100 females) secondary school teachers were drawn from the population with the use of Stratified sampling technique, taking teachers’ gender into consideration. A questionnaire titled: “Teachers’ Perception on the implementation of the Child Right Act” (TPICRA) was developed and administered on the respondents. The TPICRA has two sections. Section A solicited for personal data of the respondents, while section B consisted of 13 items designed after the 5-point Likert scale format that solicited for information on teachers’ perceptions on the implementation of Child Act. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 was estimated using test-retest method of establishing reliability. Data collected were analyzed using, simple frequency counts, percentages, t-test and one-way Anova at 0.05 level of significance.

**Findings and Discussion**

Research Question 1: What is the level of teachers’ awareness on Convention on the rights of the child?

**Table 1: Analysis of the responses on teachers’ awareness of Convention on the rights of the child**

S/ N	ITEM	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I am aware of Child Right Act	50/25%	36/18%	4/2.0%	40/20%	70/35%
2	Child Right Education is a useful programme in the school system	27/13.5	20/10%	7/ 3.5%	38/19%	102/51%
3	Citizens’ education is	80/40%	78/39%	30/15.0 %	8/4%	4/2%

	enough to cater for the knowledge needed for CRE					
4	Implementing Child Rights Act will spoil the child.	68/34%	92/46%	6/3.0%	12/6%	22/11%
5	You believed in respecting the views students in decision making.	32/16%	22/11%	4/2.0%	82/41%	60/30%
6	I am aware that students should participate meaningfully in all aspects of classroom functioning	53/26.5%	40/20%	3/1.5%	34/17%	70/35%
7	I knew about CRE during my teacher training periods	17/8.5%	18/10%	47//23.5%	57/28.5%	42/21%
8	I knew about CRE through programmes aired on Media.	31/15.5%	22/11%	9/4.5%	60/30%	78/39%
9	I use to inform parents of the children's rights initiative and the rationale.	12/6%	30/15%	22/11%	72/36%	64/32%
10.	There is nothing bad	60/30%	82/41%	6/3%	38/19%	14/7%



	in the use of corporal punishment on students for any act of indiscipline					
11	I have been adopting teaching strategies like role playing; small group learning; or project based learning in the classroom.	30/15%	10/5%	56/28%	86/43%	28/14%
12	I view the adoption of Child Right Act as loss of authority of the teacher	67/33.5%	78/39%	9/4.5%	22/11%	24/12%/
13	Child Rights Act amount to giving undue advantage to the child	89/44.5%	63/31.5%	8/4%	24/12%	16/8%

Table 1 shows the analysis of the responses on teachers' awareness of Convention on the rights of the child. Collapsing the responses into three categories of agree, undecided and disagree, about 86(43.0%) of the teachers are aware of Child Right Act, 47(23.5%) indicated that Child Right Education is a useful programme in the school system, while 158(79.0%) indicated that Citizenship' Education is enough to cater for the knowledge needed for CRE. Moreover, about 35(17.5%) of the respondents got awareness of CRE during their teacher training periods, and 53(26.5%) got informed about CRE through the Media. Therefore, majority are not aware of the Convention on the rights of

the child. This implied that the secondary school teachers have low awareness of Convention on the rights of the child.

Table 1 also shows the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the Child Right Act. About 160(80%) hold the belief that implementing Child Rights Act, will spoil the child, about 142(71%) do not believe that children's views should be respected in decision making. Furthermore, about 136(68%) do not to inform parents about the children's rights initiative. Also, about 142/71.0% indicated that there is nothing bad in the use of corporal punishment on students for any act of indiscipline. About 114(57%) have not adopted teaching strategies like role playing; small group learning; or project based learning in the classroom, 145(72.5%) indicated the they viewed the adoption of Child Right Act as loss of authority of the teacher, while 152(76%) held the belief that the Child Rights Act amount to giving undue advantage to the child. Majority of the teachers held the perception that the implementation of Child Rights Act will spoil the child, amount to giving undue advantage to children and also make teachers lose their authority. Most of the teachers do not see anything bad in the use of corporal punishment on students for any act of indiscipline and they have not adopted the child centred teaching strategies. This implied that the secondary school teachers perceived the implementation as a programme that will spoil the child and give undue advantage to children.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers' perception on the implementation of the child right act based on gender.

**Table 2: t-test analysis of teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the child right act based on gender.**

Sex	N	Mean	S.D	df	t	Sig	Decision
Male	100	74.38	10.33	198	2.07	0.00	significant
Female	100	71.41	9.90				

Table 2 shows the t-test analysis of teachers' perception on the implementation of the child right act. The result shows that the  $t_{(198)} = 2.07$   $p < 0.05$  is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, there was a significant difference in the mean scores for male teachers and female teachers in perceptions on the implementation of the child right. The mean difference in the perceptions was in favour of the male teachers. This implied that male teachers have positive perceptions on the implementation of the child right act. Therefore, the null hypothesis is discarded.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the teachers' duties on the perception of the implementation of the child right act.

**Table 3: t-test analysis of the teachers perception on the implementation of the child right act based on duty undertaken in the school.**

Duty Undertaken	N	Mean	SD	df	t	sig	Decision
Duty post/Teacher	34	70.62	11.18	198	-1.430	.06	N/S
Subject Teacher	166	73.38	9.96				

Table 3 shows the t-test analysis of the teachers perception on the implementation of the child right act based on duty undertake in the school. The result shows that the  $t_{(198)} = -1.43$   $p > 0.05$  is not statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the mean scores for teachers with duty posts (principal /vice principal or head of department) and subject teachers (classroom teacher) in perceptions on the implementation of the child right. This implied that there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the child right act. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant differences between the mean ratings of the various religious believe of teachers on the implementation of the child right act.

**Table 3: One- way Anova analysis of teachers' perception of the implementation of the child right act based on religious beliefs**

Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-cal	p-value	Decision
<b>Between Group</b>	186.612	93.31	0.89	0.056	N/S
<b>Within Groups</b>	20516.19	197	104.14		
<b>Total</b>	20702.80	199			

Table 4 shows One-way Anova analysis of teachers' perception of the implementation of the child right act based on religious beliefs. The two independent variables produced no significant difference in perception of teachers on the implementation of Child Rights Act in Osun State Secondary Schools, ( $F_{(2,199)} = 0.89, p > .05$ ) This implied that there is no significant difference between the various religious beliefs, therefore null hypothesis is retained.

#### Discussion of Findings

The primary focus of this study was to determine the perceptions of secondary school teachers on the implementation of Child Rights Act. From the analyses, the secondary school teachers have low awareness of Convention on the rights of the child. This finding agreed with earlier research of Leung, Yuen, Chong (2011) in their Case Studies of Hong Kong Secondary Schools Intercultural Education, where it was found that teachers have low level of knowledge of human rights low in School- based Human Rights Education. This finding may not be a surprise since most of the teachers agreed that it was not part of their training when undergoing Teacher Education programme. So there was low awareness and low knowledge of the principles and focus of Child Rights Act.

With respect to secondary school teachers' perception of the implementation of Child Rights Act, teachers perceived the implementation as a programme that will spoil the child and give undue advantage to children. This is consistent with earlier research findings from different countries. Tibbits (2005), opined that teachers are seen

as obstacles to civic education through their roles as gate-keepers with an interest in retaining traditional forms of authority. Howe and Covell (2007) also stated that teachers sometimes see children's rights as a threat to their authority as they are not trained to teach them. Some researchers also argued that the programme can work well where teaching methods are participatory and teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic (Tibbits, 2005; and Jerome, Emrson, Lundy and Orr, 2015). Thus, democratic teaching strategies like role playing, group work, problem solving and others can help express their opinion and be listened to, instead teachers' conventional methods.

The study found significant difference in the perception of the teachers' on the implementation of the child right act, and that male teachers have positive perceptions. The earlier studies (Sixsmith, Gabhainn, Fleming and O'Higgins, 2007; and Okoye, 2011) agreed with this finding. The perception of the male teachers was better than that of the female teachers. The significant difference in male and female teachers' view of child rights might be influenced by their disposition to communication media like Radios, Television, Newspapers, and Magazines It could also be attributed to the fact that most male teachers have more awareness of child rights, than female counterparts. The finding also revealed that most of those with awareness on CRE got informed through the media. Female teachers may not be disposed to read newspapers or attend Conferences, Drama or cinema very often. Whereas reading of newspapers, attendance at conferences or watching television or drama can showcase awareness and sensitization campaigns.

### **Conclusion**

The Child Rights Act since its adoption by the Federal government of Nigeria in 2003 has not been passed into law in Osun State, and by implication it has not been mainstreamed into the schools system. About 16 states have passed it and children are enjoying the principles and practice. The fact remains that most of the rights of the secondary school students are being trampled upon. It will be better, if the students can get the knowledge and understanding of these rights, so as to prevent the abuse and exploitation of such rights. But gaps still exist to be filled in order to make the secondary school children identify and defend their rights. Those that supposed to keep them informed

about these rights were investigated to find out their level of awareness and perceptions about the implementation of Child Rights Act. Based on findings, this study is concluding that, the secondary school teachers have low awareness of the Convention on the rights of the child, and gender affects the teachers' support for the implementation of Child Right Act in Ila Local Government Area, Osun State.

### **Recommendations**

The findings of this study pose some implications for the Implementation of Child Rights Act in Osun State Secondary Schools. The following recommendations are hereby made in order to improve implementation process and make it more effective. Government should encourage the female teachers across Secondary Schools in Osun State to familiarize themselves to the Media, so as to be well-informed about issues relating to Child Rights Act, and to channel their energy to improving the lot of children in the state. Teachers should assist children in their learning through effective teaching strategies. Moreover, Teachers' should model human right values through their own changed behaviour and attitude towards spanking. Efforts should be made by government to mainstream the Child Rights Act into the school system. Non-governmental organisations should create awareness for all members of the society on the importance of Child Right Act. By so doing, the teachers and other people will be willing and ready to support the implementation of the Child Rights Act in the state.

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