

Secondary School Students and their Families' Attitudes toward Schooling in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Using drama as an awareness creation tool, this study examined the influence of gender, age, class, socio-economic status, parent's level of education and religion on adolescents' attitude towards schooling. A total of 300 (150 JSS and 150 SS2) students (males=153; females=147) randomly selected from six coeducational secondary schools in Ibadan constituted the sample for the study. The adopted Attitude toward Education Scale by Glassey (1945) and Socio-economic Status Scale by Salami (2015) were used to collect the data. The results indicated that positive significant relationship existed between the adolescents' attitude towards schooling and gender, age, socioeconomic status, parent's (father's) level of education and religion but not with class which is negative. The results indicate the need to include the students' parental and personal-social factors when counselling students through drama and performances that show students and parents' negative attitude toward schooling.

Key words: Schooling, Drama, Attitude, Status, Students, Parents, Gender

INTRODUCTION

In developing countries, education is regarded as an important instrument for social, political, and economic development. It provides the skilled manpower needed in the countries and serves as a catalyst for change and process of socialization for the youth. For these reasons, most Nations in Africa devote a large percentage of their annual budgets for providing educational services (Fobih, 1986). For instance, of recent the Federal government of Nigeria has agreed to vote 26% of its annual budget for education (FGN/ASUU, 2001 agreement). Several educational reforms have been introduced into the country since Nigeria's independence. Recently, another reform has been the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme. All these reforms are intended to broaden and diversify the scope of education so that as many children as possible can benefit from education. To further show its commitment to education, there has been a steady increase in budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Education by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This is evidenced in subsequent budgetary allocation as shown below:

2016: N480.28Bn

2017: N550.60Bn

2018: N651.23Bn

2019: N634.56Bn

2020: N686.82Bn

(Ministry of Finance, Budget Office)

However, despite all these innovations and improved facilities, many children who attend school hardly complete

their education. Many of them are forced out of school prematurely for one reason or another. Consequent upon this, school dropout and early leaving of school have become a permanent feature of our educational system particularly at the Secondary School level (Ajibola, 2016, Osokoya, 1999, Yoloje 1998). The phenomena of dropping out of school and early leaving of school have been of great concern to parents, teachers, educational policy makers, the society and the government (Abodunrin, 1996; Akinbote, 1985; Avoseh, 1975, FGN/INICEF, 1993; Olaniran, Abodunrin, Ogundare, and Fadipe, 1996; Yoloje; 1975, 1980).

Of the various problems facing our educational system over the years, getting students to complete their education is the most recurrent. Early leaving of school or dropping out of school reduced the impact of school investment by reducing the sizes of classes, and the number of years the children need to become permanently literate (which in 1992, was put at 4 years by UNESCO). From the foregoing, one can conclude that schooling in Nigeria is insufficient. If we are to find solution to this problem there is a need to identify the precipitating factors that account for the plight of these students in the schools.

The purpose of the study was to investigate some personal-social and family environment factors that might contribute to the attitude towards schooling of the adolescents in secondary schools. Specifically, it is designed to examine the extent to which gender, age, class, socio-economic status, parents' level of education and religion influence the attitude of the adolescents towards schooling. Quite a number

of methods such as focus group discussions, community meetings etc. have been employed but ended up with insignificant results. This research however set out to use drama as an instructional method and awareness creation among the pupils in order to get them interested and have the desired result. This is born out of the fact that research discovers that the students of their age are more interested in dramatic activities, imbibe and learn more from it than the usual banking method system.

A number of researches on schooling or school dropout have emphasized to various degrees the causal factors. Some of the factors responsible for the high dropout rate in Nigerian schools as identified by some authors include parental socio-economic status/background, and parental educational level (Akano, 2013, Fobih, 1986, Seawell and Hauser, 1975). Other factors are inconsistency in government policy, financial problems, ill health, death of pupils, polygamy, pregnancy and early marriage of female pupils, religion, lack of interest and academic difficulties (Akinbote, 1985; Fobih, 1986).

In defining his concept of drama and the African worldview Soyinka (1976, p.42) recalls that the "affirmation of the communal self was the experiential goal" of the theatre right from inception. The whole essence of the theatre is to inform, enlighten and educate people. It also serves as a means of entertainment and relaxation for people in their various communities especially in Africa. In addition, theatre is a discipline that can be studied or learnt professionally as a trade. Base on the extreme dynamism of theatre as a profession, Clifford (1972) gives a sound summary of the functions of the theatre in society:

Theatre because it reflects nature and human behaviour has at times led the way in prompting revolutionary philosophies, economic theories and social reform. It has shown man, moral evils in human attitudes and behaviour. It chastised human conducts moral degeneration religious hypocrisy and political injustice and has helped in isolating personal mental disorders and in teaching psychological theories. It has appeared as a teacher communicator philosopher history and social worker literacy critique, moralist and an educator. (p.83)

Education is rather nebulous and not easy to define especially if one wants to consider it as an absolute terminology. There exist many definitions of the word education as there are philosophers. Also one's position on an approved or agreed definition of education is subject to change from time to time. Education can be said to be a means of impacting intellectual and moral training. Education is derived from the Latin word *educare* which means throwing out or lending out. These two concepts and therefore greater than schooling. Perhaps a more possible derivative is '*educare*' which means to educate to bring up or to raise up or elevate. Here education can be seen as the slow and skillful process of extracting latent potentialities of comprehension at the dedication. Another scholar Good (1969, p.24) posits that "it is the art of making available to each generation the organized knowledge of the past". However, Taiwo (2017, p. 42) opines that "it is the total efforts of community to raise its social, economic and political standards of life".

From the above definitions, one could see that perhaps the most important aim of education is to lift man to a higher level of understanding and awareness, a development of intellectual ability and the method of making him grow effectively within his society. Looking at definitions of the theatre and education, we observed a lot of similarities in the functions and relevance of education and theatre to the society. If the goal of education is to gear man towards leaving a harmonious life, raise a high moral standard, promote public enlightenment and civilized behaviour, as well as produce a healthy economic environment for the citizens, then these are also the goals and relevance of the theatre to the society. The argument here is that, in terms of both functions and operational method the theatre shares a lot of basic semblance with the process of imparting knowledge which is the educational process.

Using drama in the process of to create awareness towards improving education especially among the young people becomes a worthwhile endeavor in drama practice. As stated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2004) section one sub section four through nine, says

education is an instrument for national development. Education fosters the worth and development of the individual for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society...the development of the individual into sound and effective citizen and the full integration of the individual into the community. (p. 17)

This literally means that all means to have better education should be employed.

Drama can be an effective tool for education purpose if properly utilized in addition to teaching other strategies by the classroom teachers. Allen (1979) also affirm this when he says that "teachers and Drama teachers should ensure that the process of learning is a personal and active process not simply the absorption of an inherited body of knowledge" Drama in education therefore is the application of dramatic techniques into classroom learning situation to stimulate youngsters' imagination and creativity. It is a process centred technique that aims at empowering youngsters to think creatively from within their imaginative psyche. Drama is also used to expand learners' awareness to enable them to distinguish reality from fantasy.

METHOD

This is an ex-post facto study. In this type of research, the researchers do not have direct control over the independent variables since their manifestations have already occurred. We were interested in examining the phenomena under investigation using drama and data were collected after the phenomena had taken place.

Sample

The participants for the study were 150 Junior Secondary School (JSS 2) and 150 Senior Secondary School (SS 2) students selected by stratified random sampling techniques, from six secondary schools in Ibadan Oyo State, Nigeria.

Their ages ranged from 11 to 21 years with a mean of 15.1 years. Out of the total 300 students, 153 were females while the remaining 147 were males. It should be stated that over 400 students watched the drama presentation.

Instruments

In carrying out this research, two instruments were used. They are:

Adopted Attitude toward Educational Scale developed by Glassey (1945, as cited in Shaw and Wright, 1967). This was used to access the student's attitude towards schooling. Also, Socio-Economic scale by Salami (2015) was equally used to access the students' socio-economic status.

The *Attitudes towards Education Skill* is a 34-item scale that measures attitude towards education and the effect of education upon people.

The response expected is that the respondent checks (or ticks) those items with which he/she does not fully agree. He/she may place a question mark in front of the item if he/she is totally unable to decide.

The respondent's score is the median of the scale values of the items endorsed as "fully agree". Low scores indicate positive attitudes towards education. Each of the 34-items has its scale value.

The reliability of the scale was found to be .75 when it was administered to 150 SS 2 Secondary School students in Ibadan with an interval of the weeks. The construction of the scale ensured a high degree of content validity. This scale follows a certain Thurstone format that gives it some merit in its own right.

Socio-Economic Status Scale

A scale on drama social-economic status developed by Salami (2015) was adopted for the study. It was developed to measure the educational, occupational and social status of the parents of the adolescents after watching a dramatic piece on importance of education. The first part of this scale required the respondents to supply their sex, age, religion, class and school. The instrument had been shown to be valid, as several researchers among Nigerian samples with success have used it. The test-retest reliability of the scale when administered among 100 SS2 students in Ibadan, Oyo State was .73 with an interval of 3-weeks.

Procedure

Of all the arts, the theatre is unique not merely because it is a graphic summation of the other arts, a living, vital, dynamic synthesis, but, more fundamentally because of its ritualistic and communal essence. Every art, it is true to say is a subtle manifestation of the human emotion, of that human spirit distilled to a state of quintessential purity. But in no other art, plastic or literary, is this distillation process executed with the thoroughness and finesse of the theatrical medium. This is capable of a far-reaching impact because the theatre is a manifestation, not just of the individual human essence but of a cathartic and pulsating communal experience solemn, symbolic, educating and profound.

The two instruments were administered to the subject of the schools involved in the study by the researchers with the help of the class teachers in the schools. The researchers explained the various sections of the questionnaire to the subjects who were instructed not to leave any of the items unanswered. Multiple regression analysis (stepwise) was used to analyse the data collected. The criterion measure or dependent variable was attitude towards schooling of the adolescence while the predictor or independent variables were gender, age, class, social-economic status, parent's level of education, and religion. Results of the data analysis were presented in the next section.

RESULT

Attitude of Parents and Students toward Secondary School Education in Nigeria

Using a combination of independent variables to predict Adolescents' attitude toward schooling, this study adopted the regression analysis theory in investigating the sources of the displayed attitude of parents and students toward Secondary School education in Nigeria.

Table 1 shows that using the independent variables (gender, age, class, parent's education, parents' socioeconomic status, class and religion) to predict attitude towards schooling among Secondary School adolescents yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .403 and a multiple correlation square (R^2) of 0.139. This is statistically significant at .05 level.

The results in Table 1 also indicate that analysis of variance of the multiple regression showed a significant F-ratio [$F(7.258) = 7.126P < .05$].

Contributions of Independent Variables to the Prediction of Attitudes toward Schooling

Table 2 indicates the relative contributions of independent variables to the prediction of attitudes toward schooling.

Table 2 shows for each of the independent variables, the Standardized Regression Weights, (B), Standard Error of Estimate (SAB), Beta, T-ratio and the level at which T-ratio is significant. From Table 2, the T-ratio for socio-economic status, gender, religion, father's level of education, and age were significant at 0.5 level. The results in Table 2 also showed the relative contributions of the seven independent variables to the relationship between them and attitude towards schooling. From the values of the Beta weights and T-ratios for each variable, it is apparent that gender has the highest contribution followed by fathers' level of

Table 1. Summary of regression analysis on sample data

Source of variation	Df	SS	MS	F-ratio	Sig.
Due to Regression	7	8679.281	1239.897	7.120	.000
Due to Residual	258	44891.715	173.999		
Total	265	53570.996			

education, socio-economic status, religion, age with mothers educational level and class in that order.

Inter-correlations between the Independent Variables and the Adolescents' Attitudes towards Schooling

Table 3 shows the inter-correlation coefficients between the independent variables and the adolescents' attitudes towards schooling.

Most of the correlations was significant as 0.5 level. For instance, Father's educational level has $r = .223$, $p < .05$; Age has $r = .161$, $p < .05$; mother's educational level has $r = .126$ $P > .05$. Class has $r = .001$; $p > .05$, religion has $r = .26 < .05$; gender has $r = .243$, $p < .05$, and socio-economic status has $r = .247^{**}$ $P < .05$.

DISCUSSION

The major goal of this study was to find out the influence of gender, age, class, social-economic status, parent's level of education and religion on the adolescent's attitude towards schooling.

In Table 1, the total influence of these factors on the adolescents' attitude towards schooling accounted for only 13.9% of the overall causes. This means that 86.1% of the

factors responsible lies outside the findings of this study. Also, the observed F-ratio in Table 1 which is significant as 0.5 level indicates that effectiveness of the combined effects of the component variables in predicting attitude towards schooling of the students could not be attributed to chance. The results also show that gender is the most important contributor to the prediction followed by the father's level of education, social-economic status, religion, age, mother's level of education and class in that order.

The gender of the adolescents was shown to significantly relate to their attitude towards schooling. This study showed that the female adolescents have a better attitude than the male adolescents towards schooling. These results agrees with those of Thibert and Karsenti (1996) who found that girls are more satisfied with school life and that their schools-related attitudes are more positive than that of boys.

The results obtained in this study also showed that age was a significant contributor to the prediction of attitude towards schooling. This result agrees with that of Hasan (1970) who found increasing negative attitude to schooling as students proceed through the compulsory years of secondary schooling. However, Abiri (1966) find that boys' attitude improved with age. Furthermore, the results from this study showed that the parent's level of education and socio-economic status have a significant positive influence on the

Table 2. Testing the significance of regression weights

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients	Standard error	Standardized coefficient beta	t	p
Constant	74.803	7.978		9.376	0.000
Class	1.914	2.097	0.067	0.912	0.362
SES	0.355	0.134	0.157	2.644	0.009
Gender	5.192	1.656	0.183	3.136	0.002
REL	4.366	1.831	0.146	2.395	0.017
F.ED	1.351	0.707	0.163	2.911	0.047
M.ED	-639	0.677	-0.082	-9.45	0.346
AGE	-1.151	0.504	-0.163	-2.283	0.023

Sex: Male=1 Female=2

Religion: Islam=1 Christianity=2

Class: JSS2=1 SS 2=2

Table 3. Inter-correlation between the variables

Variables	Father's education	Age	Mother's education	Class	Religion	Gender	SES	Attitude
Father's education	-							
Age	0.089	-						
Mother's education	0.732**	0.180*						
Class	0.242**	0.599**	0.330**					
Religion	0.321**	-0.132	0.260**	0.012				
Gender	0.131	-0.112	0.134	0.024	0.201**			
Socio-economic status	0.248**	-0.077	0.272**	0.035	0.183**	0.104		
Attitude	0.223**	-0.161	0.126	0.001	0.26**	0.243**	0.247**	-

**correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*correlation is significant at 0.05 level. (2-tailed)

Most of the correlations was significant as 0.5 level. For instance, Father's educational level has $r = 0.223$, $p < 0.05$; Age has $r = 0.161$, $p < 0.05$; mother's educational level has $r = 0.126$ $P > 0.05$. Class has $r = 0.001$; $p > 0.05$, religion has $r = 0.26 < 0.05$; gender has $r = 0.243$, $p < 0.05$, and socio-economic status has $r = 0.247^{**}$ $P < 0.05$

adolescent's attitude to schooling. This is consistent with the works of Kaplan and Liu (1994), Padillia (1996), Newcomb (1997), and Akano (2013) who found in the researches that the most prominent and consistent effect of the family on the child's academic success at school has been the parents own educational level and socio-economic status.

One could rationalize this finding from the view that parents having high educational level are aware that without educational credentials the children may be deprived of access to higher levels of education and training which invariably will determine better career and employment opportunities. Parents of high level of education and higher socio-economic status also spend extra time and money to ensure that their children remain in school in order to improve their achievement.

The class of the adolescents was not found to significantly affect their attitude towards schooling. This is contrary to studies in the developed world like those of Wiley and Harnishfeger (1994) who believed that the rate of drop-out declined as one progresses through school and achieve success at each level of schooling.

Religion was one of the variables that significantly predicted the students' attitudes towards schooling. This finding supports the works of Yoloye (1975) and Fobih (1986) who had similar findings in their studies. Salami and Alawode (2015) explained the same finding by noting the incompatibility between Quranic and Western education. They thus observed that the students when exposed simultaneously to the two different types of education, that is, Western and Islamic education, found it difficult coping with western education and thereby found dropping out a lot of times inevitable

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, findings in this study demonstrates that:

- i. Gender, age, class, socio-economic status, parent's level of education and religion when taken together could effectively protect attitude towards schooling of the adolescents.
- ii. All the variables, gender, age, socio-economic status, parent's level of education and religion except class made significant contributions to the prediction. In particular, gender tended to be the most potent predictor of attitude towards schooling, followed by fathers' level of education, social-economic status, religion, age, mother's education level, and class in that order. These variables accounted for only 13.9% of the variance influencing attitude toward schooling. Further research need to be done in investigating other variables influencing the attitudes towards schooling.
- iii. In this study, drama has been used in exposing parents and students' lack of interest in Secondary School education in Nigeria.

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