

Educational Challenges Encountered by Orphaned Undergraduates of a Public University in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Over the years, the educational related problems been faced by orphans during their tertiary education seems to under explored. However, there is a need to investigate this phenomenon in order proffer a precise solution. In respects to the forgoing, this study examined educational challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates of a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study with a sample of 258 undergraduate orphans were selected through accidental and snowball techniques. Data were collected with Educational Challenges Questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean ranking was used to answer the research question while hypotheses were tested with t-test and ANOVA. Results showed that orphaned undergraduates encounter difficulties in getting ICT facilities, financial support, accommodation/hostels, upkeep/welfare, learning resources and many more. Furthermore, the result revealed a significant difference in the educational challenges of male undergraduate orphans and their female counterpart. Also, there was a significant difference in the challenges based on their level with 100 and 500 level undergraduate orphans encountering greater difficulties and respectively. It was therefore recommended that relevant authority should provide basic needs like learning resources, ICT facilities and financial support to support them.

Keywords: educational challenges, orphans, undergraduates, public university, education

INTRODUCTION

The provision of education is a core social responsibility of parents towards their growing children. However, the provision of education for children of schooling age by parents is beyond enrolment as parents are equally expected to provide for their children various educational resources and materials which will aid retention and successful completion of their educational experience. In other words, it is through the provision of educational resources such as note books, text books, school uniforms, school sandals and school bags among others that children will have an effective and smooth formal educational experience. The dependence of students on sponsors such as parents is most explicit in children in basic and elementary education as it equally influences their performances and avoids dropout.

Moreover, the provision of education by parents for their children is not to be stopped or restricted to elementary/basic and senior secondary level of schooling but should involve the provision of

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education at the higher and tertiary level. This is to ensure sustainability, self-dependence and socio-economic relevance for children through skills, knowledge and attitude acquired during the course of university degree. In other words, parents or guardians are to equally contribute significantly in the pursuit of university degree for the children and wards in their care. Despite the dependence of children on their parents in the enrollment, retention and completion of education, some children are still deprived of access to parental care and other expected provisions from parents. Children lose access to their parents as a result of several factors such as accidents, maternal death at child labour (child birth), war and communal conflict, abandonment due to poverty and others. Also, some other conditions such as terrorism and insurgency, natural disaster, substance abuse, crime, terminal illness/diseases, traditional belief system, violence and others have deprived numerous children access to their parents. Such children, especially those below the age of 18 years are regarded as orphans because most of such children awaits maturity (Jekayinfa, 2013; Elegbeleye, 2014; Balogun, 2015; Shoyemi, 2017).

An orphan is a child who have no access to his or her parents as a result of death. According to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, (2007); Shoyemi, (2017) an orphan in Nigeria is a child or any individual (male or female) below the age of 18 years and are also known as minors. In other words, orphans in the Nigerian context are children below the age of 18 and have lost one or both of their parents to death. Such children can be classed into single or double orphans. Single orphans can be further divided into two which includes paternal orphans (children whose fathers are deceased) and maternal orphans (children whose mothers are deceased). Double orphans also known as total orphans on the other hand are children who have lost both parents (father & mother). Shoyemi (2017) further opined that there are other forms of orphans which are not common as compared to those explained above. These are children in the category of social and near orphans. However, irrespective of the category of orphanhood which children fall into, there is a common social and educational experience which cuts across most of them and such is not palatable.

The perspective of Hampshire, De Ver Dye and Wakabi (2008) was that orphans are disadvantaged in numerous ways. These disadvantages encountered by orphans are in economic, social and educational dimensions. Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyange (2016) explained specifically that orphans encounter difficulties ranging from sexual abuse, lack of care from other family members, inadequacies of food and financial resources and high labour demand at various home. Most explicit among the challenges encountered by orphans is in their inability to secure education at various levels which makes retention and completion/graduation almost impossible for them (Ncamisile, 2015). Similarly, Kafwa (2005) argued that compared to non-orphans, orphaned students especially those without finically capable caregivers and guardians in this part of the world are more likely to terminate their education and drop out of school. However, orphans who refuses to dropout but continue with schooling are eventually exposed to an evident stress/pressure in the formal educational experience.

In the same vein, Elope (2013) reported that Nigerian children who have lost one or both parents are prone to academic stress which eventually leads to poor school performance or the lack of education. Tagurum, et al., (2015) corroborated the foregoing as it was observed that, the death of parents usually affects and frustrate the education of children adversely making access tough and sometimes impossible. This is especially in the aspect of financial challenges which makes a significant percentage of such children drop-out of school. Those who decides to remain mostly have the experience of educational difficulties such as inability to pay tuition fees regularly and consistently, the lack of learning resources which includes school uniforms and learning stationery among others (Wiseman, 2002; United States Agency for International Development & Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2008). Other hitches encountered by orphans in school according to Nwokoro (2011) are insufficient food, clothing, and shelter/accommodation resources. However, deficiency of identified resources causes psychological discouragement which in turn negatively

affects the studies of orphans and occasionally majority unwillingly dropout of school (Wiseman, 2002; Ibeh, 2011; Keat, 2014; Oyedele, Chikwature & Manyanga, 2016).

The educational difficulties which orphans encounter is not only restricted to preliminary level of formal learning. USAID (2004) submitted that the percentage enrollment of orphans for higher education (into various tertiary institutions) is far below their counterpart who are not orphans. Beyond that, students of tertiary institutions (universities, colleges of education, polytechnics etc.) whose parents are deceased equally suffer similar challenges rooted in financial inadequacies. Financial difficulty for orphans in tertiary institution is a cause of their inability to pay tuition fees regularly, purchase learning needs, feed and secure accommodation (Ncamisile, 2015). Furthermore, Rashed, Rabiul and Rabiul (2018) opined that a large number of orphaned students in tertiary institutions irrespective of their level of learning are in need of various assistance in order to have an untruncated academic experience and avoid dropout. Also, there are instances where students of tertiary institutions embark on part-time jobs to ensure that their educational needs are met and their pursuit of higher degree is not truncated.

The educational difficulties which orphans in Nigerian tertiary institutions encounter is occasionally determined by varying factors such as gender, number of parents deceased and their academic level among others. Rashed, Rabiul and Rabiul (2018) found that the educational challenges which sometimes leads to dropout experienced by orphans in tertiary institutions is not restricted to any gender as both males and females suffer similar fate. In other words, male likewise female orphans in tertiary institutions are unable to get access to adequate learning materials needed for the pursuit and successful completion of their higher educational qualifications. Contrary to the forgoing, Home Grown School Feeding (2016) opined that female orphans are most likely to suffer greater educational challenges than their male counterparts. This is arguably as a result of socio-cultural belief system which invokes practices such as gender relegation frequently putting the female gender at disadvantage. Thus, according to the forgoing perspective, the access to education for female orphans is more limited with a higher drop-out rate.

Still on the educational challenges of orphans as related their gender, the perspective of the United States Agency for International Development and Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (2008) is different from the above. It was submitted that there were no differences in the educational discouragements and challenges which male and female children encounter after the death of (one or both) parents. It is observed that there is an indiscriminate educational challenge among female and male orphans in Nigeria as a great deal of them recorded poor attendance and drop-out of school among other numerous educational issues.

Regarding differences in the educational difficulties encountered by orphaned children as determined by the number of parents deceased, the perspective of the Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (2008) is that among various categories of orphans schooling in Nigeria, it appears that children who are double orphans (children whose fathers and mothers are deceased) experience greater academic pressure thus having higher drop-out rate than their counterparts which are in the category of single orphan (children with only one parent) either paternal or maternal. Also, it has been observed and reported that paternal orphans (children whose fathers are dead) suffer greater educational challenge and are more likely to quit and relinquish school than maternal orphans (children whose mothers are dead) due to greater pressure as regards meeting up to various socio-economic and educational demands.

Hampshire, Pagnier, Kurzinger and Kahn (2008) in a study which entails multiple African countries reported some controversial findings. It was observed that there were no significant differences in the school enrollment and opportunities available to maternal orphans, paternal orphans, double orphans and non-orphans in Tanzania while in Burkina Faso there was observed differences. It was found that

paternal orphans where exposed to greater educational pressure thus the experience of higher dropout and poor attendance rate as a result of difficulty from finance and others.

Nigeria like all other African countries is not exempted in educational difficulties encountered by orphans in schools. As a result of the hitches which Nigerian orphans encounter in education, Government ministries; development partners and donor organizations; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) among other stakeholders have given attention to their education through various means such as the development of scholarship schemes (Shoyemi, 2017). According to Spring (2016), other policies, strategies, structures and systems taken to assist in the condition of orphans in Nigeria includes the establishment of OVC division within the FMWASD (National Steering on OVC); OVC Stakeholders Forum (National plan of Action for OVC 2006-2010); National OVC Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and OVC Advocacy Package among others.

More specifically on the education of orphans, the Nigerian government through the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD, 2007) instituted section 4 (Sub-section 4.2.6) of the National Guidelines and Standard of Practice on Orphans and Vulnerable Children. The policy makes provisions in order to support the enrollment, retention and completion of pre-primary, basic (primary, and junior secondary), and senior secondary education of orphans. It is evident that numerous stakeholders have given greater attention and concern to pre-primary, basic and senior secondary education of orphans with little or no emphasis on the education of orphans in tertiary institutions. Therefore, there is need to give consideration to the educational challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in universities among other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is based on the forgoing premise that this study aims at analysing the educational challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria. The differences in the educational challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university were analysed on the basis of their gender. Having established that orphans are in differs academic levels studying various courses, this study aimed at examining the differences in their educational challenges based on their academic level. Lastly, the study investigated the differences in the educational challenges encountered based on the type of orphan (single or double). The research question below was formulated to guide the conduct of this study.

Research Question

1. What are the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study

H₀₁: there is no significant difference in the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara States, Nigeria based on gender

H₀₂: there is no significant difference in the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara States, Nigeria based on academic level

H₀₃: there is no significant difference in the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara States, Nigeria based on type of orphan

METHOD

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This is because it allowed the researchers to discuss an existing social and educational phenomenon through the collection of data directly from the targeted population. The population consisted of all undergraduate orphans in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria. The sample frame (population) of undergraduate orphans in the public university of study was not readily available, thus, was not accessible to the researchers. However, 258 undergraduate orphans were sampled across various faculties, departments and levels with the use of accidental and snowball sampling techniques. The techniques are being used as a result

of the unavailability of sampling frame and the unknown identity of the respondents. Accidental sampling was adopted as the researchers and research assistants occasionally meet respondents by chance and unintentionally. Also, snowball sampling was adopted as various individuals and orphaned undergraduates referred researchers to other undergraduate orphans to be sampled for the study.

Furthermore, a researcher designed instrument titled “Educational Challenge Questionnaire” (ECQ) was used to collect relevant data. It was divided into two sections. Section A which contained respondent’s demographical characteristics and was completed by orphaned undergraduates. Section B contained 12 items on educational challenges which was equally completed by the same category of respondents. The instrument had 4-point Likert type response option of Always (A), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N). Before the administration of the instrument, four expert judgments were consulted for the purpose of its face, content and construct validation. Also, Guttman Split-Half reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained for the reliability of the questionnaire. Analysis of data was done with mean rating used to answer research question while independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA statistics were used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 significant level.

FINDINGS

Research Question: What are the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Table 1

Educational Challenges Encountered by Orphaned Undergraduates

Educational challenges encountered by undergraduate Orphans	Mean	Ranking	Remarks
Difficulty paying for accommodation/hostel	2.80	3 rd	Challenge
Difficulty to pay tuition fees	2.64	6 th	Challenge
Difficulty to purchase adequate learning materials and stationery, text-books, note books etc.	2.77	5 th	Challenge
Inadequate feeding	2.61	10 th	Challenge
Difficulty in getting ICT facilities like Laptops, Phones and others	3.09	1 st	Challenge
Difficulty in mobilization/transportation to school	2.50	11 th	Challenge
Difficulty in paying for course projects and assignments	2.63	8 th	Challenge
Difficulty in paying for various dues such as departmental and faculty levies	2.62	9 th	Challenge
Inadequate upkeep and welfare resources	2.78	4 th	Challenge
Lack/inadequate financial support and assistance	2.90	2 nd	Challenge
Inadequate clothing materials to wear for school and lectures	2.50	12 th	Challenge
Inadequate educational encouragement from other family members and community	2.64	6 th	Challenge

Note. If \bar{x} is 2.5 and above (Challenge) / but if \bar{x} is less than 2.5 (Not Challenge)

Table 1 show the educational challenges which is encountered by undergraduate orphans in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria. The result shows that respondents encounter various educational challenges difficulties ranging from paying for accommodation/hostel (\bar{x} =2.80), paying tuition fees (\bar{x} =2.64), purchasing/securing adequate learning materials and stationery, textbooks, notebooks and others(\bar{x} =2.77), inadequate feeding (\bar{x} =2.61), inadequate access to ICT facilities like laptop, phones and others (\bar{x} =3.09), uncertainty mobilization/transportation to school (\bar{x} =2.50), difficulty in paying for course projects and assignments (\bar{x} =2.63), difficulty in paying for departmental and faculty levies/dues (\bar{x} =2.62), inadequate upkeep/welfare resources (\bar{x} =2.78), inadequate financial support and

assistance (\bar{x} =2.90), inadequate clothing materials for school and lectures (\bar{x} =2.50) and inadequate encouragement from other family members and community (\bar{x} =2.64).

Testing Hypotheses

H₀₁: there is no significant difference in the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara States, Nigeria based on gender.

Table 2

Independent T-Test Analysis on Differences in Educational Challenges Encountered by Orphaned Undergraduates Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	Df	Cal.t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	128	33.8125	9.18639	256	2.316	.021	Rejected
Female	130	31.1308	9.40673				

*Significance: P<0.05

As shown on Table 2, the t-test calculated value is 2.316 while its p-value is .021 at alpha level of 0.05. the null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value 0.021 is less than 0.05 alpha level (.021<0.05). Thus, there is a significant difference in the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria. The difference in academic challenges

is in favour of male orphans with higher mean (\bar{x}) of 33.8125. This means that males and females sampled are significantly different in their academic challenges encountered in the public university in Kwara State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: there is no significant difference in the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara States, Nigeria based on academic level.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance on Differences in Educational Challenges Encountered by Orphaned Undergraduates Based on Academic Level

Sources	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	1059.819	4	264.955	3.113	.016
Within Groups	21536.294	253	85.124		
Total	22596.112	257			

*Significance: P<0.05

Results in Table 3 show F-value of 3.113 and p-value of 0.016 which is lesser than 0.05 (0.016<0.05). Since 0.33 is lesser than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant difference in the educational challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria based on their academic level.

Table 4

Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) Showing Differences in the Educational Challenges Encountered by Orphaned Undergraduates in A Public University in Kwara State, Nigeria Based on Academic Level

Level	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
100	49	28.7551	
500	17	29.9412	
300	55		33.2727
200	44		33.4545
400	93		33.9247
Sig.		.575	.086

Table 4 presents Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) result to show group means that led to the significant difference noted in the ANOVA result of table 3. The DMRT results indicated that the educational challenges encountered by undergraduates in 300 level (\bar{x} =33.2727), 200 level (\bar{x} =33.4545) and 400 level (\bar{x} =33.9247) is greater compared to undergraduates in 100 and 500 level with the means (\bar{x}) 28.7551 and 29.9412 respectively.

H₀₃: there is no significant difference in the academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara States, Nigeria based on type of orphan.

Table 5

Analysis of Variance on Differences in Educational Challenges Encountered by Orphaned Undergraduates Based on Type of Orphan

Sources	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	167.385	2	83.692	.952	.388
Within Groups	22428.728	255	87.956		
Total	22596.112	257			

Significance: P>0.05

Results in Table 5 show F-value of 0.952 and p-value of 0.388 which is greater than 0.05 (0.388>0.05). Since 0.388 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the educational challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates of a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria based on type of orphan (paternal, maternal and both).

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is concluded that orphaned undergraduates in a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria encounter various educational challenges. Prominent among these challenges are inadequate ICT facilities, financial support/assistance as well as welfare resources. Furthermore, there is a difficulty in paying for accommodation/hostel and tuition. Also, orphaned undergraduates encounter difficulties in getting access to learning materials and stationery such as text and notebooks. There are differences in the educational challenges encountered by undergraduate orphans across gender and academic level. While male undergraduate orphans encounter more educational challenges than their female counterparts, orphans in 100 and 500 level encounter less educational difficulty than those in 200, 300 and 400 level. Also, there is no difference in the challenges encountered by orphans based on the type of orphan (paternal, maternal or both).

The arguments of Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (2008), Nwokoro (2011) and Tagurum, et. al. (2015) are unanimously in agreement with the above findings as both reported that orphans suffer educational challenges which spans from insufficient finance and support which further leads to their inability to pay for tuition and accommodation/hostel among other educational necessities. The findings of Rashed, Rabiul and Rabiul (2018) is equally germane to this study. The finding was that the educational challenges which children without parents suffer does not exclude those in tertiary institutions.

Also, it was found that orphaned undergraduates in the public university encounter difficulty in getting adequate learning materials and stationery such as text and note books or even more sophisticated learning facilities such as laptops, phones and other ICT gadgets. The foregoing is in consonance with the findings of Keat (2014) who found that schooling children who are orphans scarcely enjoy access to quality education as a result of various deficiencies especially of learning resources like school bags, textbooks, notebooks and others.

Beyond deficiency in resources which directly affects the academic of orphaned undergraduates, it was equally observed that a significant proportion of the respondents (orphaned undergraduates) experience inadequate upkeep as a result of deficiency in welfare resources such as feeding and clothing materials affecting their participation in lectures and school at large. This study is however in agreement with the findings of Oyedele, Chikwature and Manyanga, (2016) stating that orphaned children are faced with issues of insufficient needs. These are essential needs which most especially affects and aid their schooling directly and indirectly. Such needs include the likes of food, clothing, shelter/accommodation and psychological encouragement among others.

Furthermore, the study revealed a gender difference in the educational challenges which undergraduate orphans experience with difficulties more pronounced in males than in females. The forgoing is possibly because female orphans tend to receive more philanthropic and scholarship support and opportunities than their male counterparts (Mildred, 2013). It is equally possible that the various communities where orphans belong uphold the notion that male orphans can easily provide for themselves than the female orphans, thus, giving less support to them (Mildred, 2013). More support is given to female orphans in order to avoid their engagement in prostitution and their vulnerability to various dangers such as child marriage and sexual abuse among others (Mildred, 2013; Shoyemi, 2017). The findings above however contravene the study of Home Grown School Feeding (2016) who presents that female orphans suffer greater educational difficulties. It is also not in agreement with Rashed, Rabiul and Rabiul (2018) who reported no significant difference in the educational challenges of orphans based on gender.

Additionally, the study reported significant differences in the educational challenges which undergraduate orphans encounter in a public university across academic levels. The academic challenges encountered by orphaned undergraduates in 200, 300 and 400 level differs from the challenges experienced by their counterparts in 100 and 500 level. In other words, undergraduate orphans at 200, 300 and 400 level experience higher level of educational challenges compared to their counterparts in 100 and 500 levels. This is likely because undergraduate orphans in their first year (100 level) are pampered as their sponsors struggles to ensure that all educational needs are averagely provided for (The Punch News, 2017). As for the 500 level undergraduate orphans, it is possible that adjustment and adaptation has set in through self-sponsor by involving in menial jobs (car washing and house help among others) and networking with friends who could be of help having understood their backgrounds and prevailing challenges. The forgoing observation is in disagreement with Rashed, Rabiul and Rabiul (2018) who reported that there is no difference in the educational challenges which orphans in tertiary institutions encounter despite their varying academic level.

Finally, the study discovered that all category of undergraduate orphans (paternal, maternal and both) experience no significant difference in the educational challenges which they encounter in a public university in Kwara State. In other words, there are no significant differences in the educational challenges experienced by undergraduate orphans who have lost only their fathers, mothers or even both parents. The forgoing does not agree with the findings of Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (2008) which reported that among various categories of orphans schooling in Nigeria, children who are double orphans (i.e. children whose fathers and mothers are dead) experience greater academic pressure than their counterparts which are in the category of single orphan (i.e. children with only one parent) either paternal or maternal. The differences in findings is possibly because the study conducted by the Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (2008) was on a wider scope and greater sample size compared to this present study which considered only undergraduate orphans of a public university in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Therefore, it is hereby recommended that:

- Government support and assistance should not be limited to basic schooling; education should equally be encouraged to the tertiary level especially for financially handicapped orphans. Such

support should be through scholarships given to orphans who are willing and qualified to further their education to the climax;

- Department at state and federal governments' ministries/parastatals should be established charged with the responsibilities of insuring the education of economically weak orphans in tertiary institutions;
- Universities and other tertiary institutions should give concession to students of their institutions who have lost one or both of their parents and as such are struggling to meet up with the demands of education. The concession should be on the payment of tuition and accommodation/hostel fees and the provision of loan facilities for orphaned undergraduates. Such loans should be with little or no interest rates;
- Other stakeholders such as Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), international organizations and community partnership should give increased attention to the education of orphans at the tertiary institutions. Such could be done through the provision of scholarships and others.

IMPLICATION

Based on the findings and observations in this study, if the education (tertiary education inclusive) of orphans and other indigent children are not taken very seriously by stakeholders, there will be a regular decline in the enrollment, retention and completion on their part. Also, street hawking by underage children will continue to be on the increase. Furthermore, the absence of adequate formal education from basic to tertiary level for orphans will increase child marriage and teenage pregnancy among others in Kwara State and Nigeria at large.

SUGGESTION

Based on time and financial constraint, this research was limited in scope and sample. However, it is suggested that other studies be conducted considering other nature of tertiary institutions involving colleges of education and polytechnics among others. Also, private tertiary institutions need to be considered across various states of the federation.

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