

## Social Studies Teachers' and Child Rights in Delta State

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated Social Studies teachers and child rights in Delta State. Survey design was used for the study. The population comprised of 558 Social Studies teachers in Delta State. The sample for the study comprised 140 Social Studies teachers using the multistage sampling technique. The research instrument for the study was the questionnaire. The instrument had a reliability value of 0.64. t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The result of the study revealed that: Social Studies teachers' differ in their view of child rights; Social Studies teachers' gender influenced their view of child rights; school location affected Social Studies teachers' view of child right. It was recommended that teacher's education should incorporate child rights education as an issue of importance; child rights content, principles and pedagogies, be integrated across all teacher education and curriculum drawing explicitly from human rights tools and literature.*

**Keywords:** Social Studies; Social Studies Teachers; Child Rights; Gender; School Location.

### INTRODUCTION

Children are considered as treasurable gifts from God. It is somewhat curious and disastrous that these same children are exposed to, maltreated, abuses and neglect. Children have the right to part take in decisions and policies that may have effect on their lives, survive, improve and develop, and be protected. Perhaps it is in acknowledgement of this reality and fact that Thompson (1992) explained that children's rights have been a world attention since 1979, when the United Nations designated that year as the Global Year of the Child and developed a list or record of child's rights.

Child Rights are fundamental and basic freedoms and the essential rights of all humans below 18 years. Atonuje (2011) observed that the violation of child rights takes different and numerous forms such as imposition of too much punishment (corporal punishment), refutation of students' access to learn, sexual abuse and harassment by teachers of opposite sex, cruel treatment of student, imposition of illegitimate or illegal fees and levies among others. These rights apply to all children, regardless of the child's parent's/legal guardian's, sex, race, colour, religion or other position/status.

For Njoku & Oladiji (2009), the challenges facing children in the 21st century are immense and will need to be faced if we are to achieve

the goal of the Child's Rights Act. In putting into practice child rights, teachers are considered to be the "chief implementers". This shows that teachers are capable of making their own contributes to the implementation of the child rights (Ertmer, 2005). Changing teachers' opinion of the child rights rest upon some changes or transformation in teachers' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). These attitudes and this knowledge then have an impact on classroom activities which, at the same time, have an effect on the successful or efficacious implementation of the child right curriculum in practice. Fullan (1993) argued that teaching at its core is a moral profession and posits an agent role for teachers in systemic change. Lots of studies have paid attention and concentrated on the role of teachers as human rights educators who understand the issues, create learning environments premised on human rights principles, serve as role models for students and inspire them to act and behave in ways that recognise the principles of human rights (Osler & Starkey, 2010 and Jennings, 2006).

Ahsan & Burnip (2007) suggested that teachers are not willing to teach the fundamental rights of the child. Harding & Darling (2003) argued that teachers' views are important in making any change in their classroom practices. This suggests that the view of teachers about child

rights may influence their capability and skills to adapt, including their classroom performance in the teaching and learning process. This is because teachers are the ones that work very closely with the pupils (Burke & Sutherland, 2004), and the classroom philosophy and environment are shaped by teachers' perception and teaching styles (Charema & Peresuh, 1996). To this end, the Social Studies teacher should not be left out. Moreover, it is worth bearing in mind that, while Social Studies teachers may be committed to values and principles that is in accordance with a rights based method, there may still be a deficit among teachers in relation to their view of the child rights. Teacher's views of child rights is important in this context. In this backdrop the study investigated Social Studies teachers' views of the child rights.

### Statement of the Problem

The future of a nation is in the hands of the children. Hence they are seen as the future citizens of a nation or country. Child Rights are the fundamental or basic freedoms and the innate rights of all individuals below 18 years. These rights are applicable to all those who are below 18 years, regardless of the child's, guardian/ parent race, ethnic nationality, colour, sex, faith or other status. Children rights need to be respected or cherished and protected by all in society. Teachers have a vital role in protecting or defending children's rights. Significant and positive impression can be made by teachers on the lives of children through their interaction with the children officially (formally) and unofficially (informally).

Ahsan & Burnip (2007) submitted there is unwillingness on the part of teachers to teach the fundamental rights of the child. Harding & Darling (2003) contended that perception or views of teachers' is very important and a key factor in bringing any change in their classroom practices. This suggests that the perception, sensitivity and feeling of teachers about child rights may influence their ability to adjust, and their classroom teaching of child rights. Teachers perception can also affect the success/fruitful implementation of the of the curriculum on the child rights, and as such, it is necessary to ascertain the views of Social Studies teachers on child rights. It is assumed that Social Studies teachers have different perception of the child rights. These existing views or opinion of teachers of the child rights may not relate to their classroom practices and with the real world issues. They may not give

adequate information to the pupils of existing fundamental rights of the child. It is based on this fact that this study is designed to investigate Social Studies teachers' and child rights.

### Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference in the view of Social Studies teachers on child rights.
- There is no significant difference between male and female Social Studies teachers view of child rights.
- There is no significant difference between urban and rural Social Studies teachers view of child rights.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study adopted the survey research design which was employed to ascertain Social Studies teachers view of child rights.

### Population of the Study

The population of this study entailed all Social Studies teachers in various public primary schools in Delta. The population consisted of five hundred and fifty-six (556) Social Studies teachers in Delta State.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for the study comprised of 140 Social Studies teachers that were selected from the various public primary schools in Delta State using the multistage sampling technique.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument for the study was the questionnaire tagged "Social Studies Teachers and the Child Rights" (SSTCR). The instrument was of two sections, 'A', and 'B'. Section 'A' contained personal information of the respondent, while Section "B" comprised of 30 items based on Social Studies teachers and the child rights. The Section "B" adopted the four-point scale as follows: SA (Strongly Agree) 4, A (Agree) 3, D (Disagree) 2, and S.D (Strongly Disagree) 1.

### Reliability of the Instrument

To make certain the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test method was used. The reliability estimate was computed using Cronbach Alpha Statistics which analysis gave an alpha value of 0.64.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected were analysed using t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the view of Social Studies teachers on child rights.

**RESULTS**

**Table1.** Summary of One-Samples t-test for teachers' view of child rights

Variable	N	X̄	SD	df	t.cal.	t-crit
Teachers View on child Right	140	113.63	7.30	138	3.88	2.04

The table shows the testing of Social Studies teachers' view of child rights for significance; the result indicates that there was significant difference in Social Studies teachers' view of child rights. The analysis shows a significance result as t-calculated value (3.88) is greater than the table value of 2.04, the null hypothesis is

rejected. This shows that there is difference in Social Studies teachers' view of child rights.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference between male and female Social Studies teachers view of child rights.

**Table2.** Summary of t-test of the difference between male and female Social Studies teachers view of child rights

Teachers	N	X̄	SD	df	t.cal.	t-crit	Remark
Male	60	54.03	7.28	138	9.22	2.04	Sign.
Female	80	59.60	7.32				

Table 2 shows the testing of male and female Social Studies teachers view of child rights by gender for significance. The result shows that there was significant difference between male and female Social Studies teachers view of child rights. The analysis shows a significance result as t-calculated value (9.22) is greater than the table value of 2.04, the null hypothesis is

rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between male and female Social Studies teachers view of child rights.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference between urban and rural Social Studies teachers view of child rights.

**Table3.** Summary of t-test of the difference between urban and rural Social Studies teachers view of child rights

Teachers	N	X̄	SD	df	t.cal.	t-Crit
Urban	76	65.43	7.41	138	28.59	2.04
Rural	64	48.20	7.14			

Table 3 shows the testing of teachers' view of child rights by location for significance. The result shows that there was significant difference between urban and rural Social Studies teachers view of child rights. The analysis shows a significance result as t-calculated value (28.59) is greater than the table value of 2.04, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between urban and rural Social Studies teachers view of child rights.

have information on child rights. Moreover, these teachers are in contact and deal with child rights issues either in their teaching and learning or in the mass media (print or electronic). This finding is in agreement with the works of Veiga (2001), Hart, Zneider & Pavlovic (2001), Sixsmith, Gabhainn, Fleming & O'Higgins (2007) and Okoye (2011) who reported difference in teachers' view of child rights, but in disagreement with Chiodo & Martin (2005), O'Brien & Jason (2011), Waldron, Kavanagh, Kavanagh, Maunsell, Oberman, O'Reilly, Pike, Prunty & Ruane (2011), Kiprotich & Ong'ondo (2013), and Samir (2003) who reported no difference in teachers' view of child rights.

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

**Social Studies Teachers View of Child Rights**

The findings of the study revealed that there is significant difference in Social Studies teachers' view of child rights and that teachers differs in their view of child rights. The finding is not a thing of a surprise because it is evident that individual teachers through books and media

**Gender and Social Studies Teachers View of Child Rights**

Regarding gender, this study revealed that there was significant difference between both genders on Social Studies teachers' view of child rights.

Thus, the results show that there is difference between male and female Social Studies teachers view of child rights which confirmed with conclusions found by previous studies. Conover & Searing (2000), Veiga (2001), Sixsmith, Gabhainn, Fleming & O'Higgins (2007) and Okoye (2011), in their studies on view of teachers on child rights demonstrated that there was significant difference according to gender. This is in agreement with the present study, while quite opposite results are reported by Hart, Zneider & Pavlovic (2001), Chiodo & Martin (2005), Abiola (2008), Ejieh & Akinola (2009), O'Brien & Jason (2011) and Oyeleke (2012) who reported no significant difference among male and female teachers in their opinion of the child rights. These findings could be attributed to the fact that most teachers are aware of child rights, for child rights are mostly covered by newspapers, Television, school books, the radio and other media like the posters, conferences and drama. Thus, be attributed to the coverage of children's rights by the communication media like television, newspapers, radios, etc. Having no significant difference between males and female teachers due to the outcomes of the study and mentioned researches proves that the view of child rights of teachers has no relation with gender.

### Location and Social Studies Teachers View of the Child Rights

Results of data analysed also revealed that school location of teachers affected their view of child rights. This means that teachers view of child rights was sensitive to the location of schools. The implication of this outcome is that teachers school location was a significant factor on teachers' view of child rights. This finding concur with those of Hart, Zneider & Pavlovic (2001), Samir (2003), Sixsmith, Gabhainn, Fleming & O'Higgins (2007), Abiola (2008) and Bassey, Arop, Akpama & Ayang (2012). This is expected, because it is commonly witnessed that those people living very close to both physical and social facilities and infrastructures have access and means to information than those people who are far off; and as such aware of child rights through coverage by newspapers, Television, the radio, posters, internet, etc. Rural areas in Nigeria lack both physical and social facilities/infrastructures, with little or no government presence and as result may lack information on child rights. The significant difference in teachers' view of child rights due to school location observed shows that teachers view of

child rights is influenced by the type of school under which teacher is located. Having significant difference between schools in urban centres and schools in rural centres due to the results of the mentioned researches proved that Social Studies teachers view of child rights has relation with school location.

### CONCLUSION

Social Studies teachers differs in their views on child rights. Some are aware and have insight of child rights, some others are not. Teachers gender was a factor in their view of child right. Male and female teachers differ in their view. Female Social Studies teachers had higher view of child rights than the male teachers. The hypothesis on the view of child rights was significant. Urban Social Studies teachers used in the study also have view of the child rights than teachers in rural school. The hypothesis on view of child rights was significant.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teacher education should incorporate child rights education as an issue of importance.
- Child rights content, principles and pedagogies, be integrated across all teacher education and curriculum drawing explicitly from human rights instruments and literature.
- Necessary information for proper understanding of the issues of child rights by teachers should be provided.
- Teachers capacity development programmes on child rights should be made a greater priority.
- Pre-service teacher's preparation programmes should include a course in child rights to equip the trainees and prospective teachers with skills for positive perception and wholesome personnel management.

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