Journal of Community & Communication Research
ISSN: 2635-3318
Volume 8, Number 1, June 2023
Accessible at: https://jccr.sccdr.org

ADULT EDUCATION IN ADDRESSING EFFECT OF OVERSCHOOLING ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on over-schooling among children which has a lot of effect on their development. It examined how adult education is used in addressing the effect of over-schooling on a child's development in the changing environment. It emphasized that adult education, using its typologies/programmes will help in creating awareness in society, specifically, the parents, teachers, and proprietors of schools, on the hazards that over-schooling causes to a child's development. However, the meanings of adult education, over-schooling, and child development were explained, followed by the causes of over-schooling on a child's development and how adult education will help in addressing these consequences. Following the findings from reviewed literature, it was recommended that government should monitor the implementation of the planned curriculum by schools; Proprietors and teachers should teach children with the stipulated guidelines in the National Policy on Education and also, adhere to the curriculum for pre-primary schools, rather than overloading it. Furthermore, adult education practitioners should create awareness of its effects, thereby minimizing the consequences on child development.

Keywords: *Adult education, over-schooling, child development.*

INTRODUCTION

The recent upsurge of over-schooling among children has become very rampant in Nigeria. Over-schooling implies excess academic activities and workload on the children. School children are engaged in many academic activities, such that their levels, ages, and time are not enough to sustain. This creates a gap in the full development of the child and in three domains of learning namely; cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Some developments come naturally in chronological sequences, but children jump into more advanced knowledge, without passing through some experiences. Children are not to blame for this because they cannot determine what they do at this stage. According to Shere (2012), the emotional and social maturity of a child provides an important underpinning for a child's development in all other areas. Sensitization through adult education is an effective strategy for addressing the consequences of over-schooling on child development.

Over-schooling among children has done more harm than good. The rate at which over-schooling is gaining ground in Nigerian educational systems, particularly at the pre-primary and primary levels is worrisome. Children are denied of their time for play, fun, rest, sleep, and the opportunity to engage in other areas, so as to have all round development. In many schools, there are homework clubs, Math clubs, and tutoring programmes after school. Many schools have stopped physical exercises to maximize academics. Consequently, the children are deeply tired and sleepy, irritable, and concentrate poorly because they are half–awake during the day.

Muraya (2014) stated that "the number of children breaking down citing academic pressures, is worrying and some children suffer silently in order to hold up the family pride. This is disheartening. Many parents are doing the unthinkable in order to support their children. When a parent gets home at 7:30 pm and sees his child with a lot of homework in all subjects, he opts to do the homework for his child so that they can go to bed early. Thus, it is not a hidden issue that parents do most of the homework given to their children and most homework is done using a dictionary, goggles, and other internet sources which a child cannot use.

Kariuki, cited in Muraya (2014) reported that 'as you boast to your friends that your child is expensive and academically endowed school across town, you have an unhappy and bitter child at home who wishes he did not have to attend school the next day. According to him, when faced with academic pressure from society and parents, the child becomes isolated and no longer finds pleasure in activities that he earlier amorously enjoyed, like playing.

The initial purpose of pre-primary education has been greatly abused and thwarted by school proprietors, teachers, and parents/guardians. According to FRN (2014), this level includes the creche (0 -2 years), the nursery (3 – 5 years), and the kindergarten (5-6years). The utmost aim of pre-primary education is not actually for teaching but to prepare children for smooth entrance to primary education. At this level, children are meant to learn the social norms, acceptable behaviours, rudiments of numbers, and identification of letters, colours, shapes, and forms, among others through the use of songs and play. This level of education aims at providing care, monitoring, and supervising the children while their parents are at their respective places of work. Here, the child's growth and development are monitored and guided. Adult education is a vehicle for social change and transformation. Adult education as an intervention has what it takes to groom and produce Nigerian youths and adults that will be able to withstand and face the challenges of the 21st century in Nigeria (Murtala and Bala, 2015). Zuofa (2007) defined adult education as education that encourages individuals to

enhance their abilities and potential through various forms of formal, informal, and non-formal education, based on their needs which in turn promotes their scope of facing challenges.

Over-schooling

There is no general consensus as to what over-schooling is. According to Joshua (2012), the concept of overcooling is not yet fully understood and explained in education literature. According to Hornby (2006), over-schooling has two key terms, "over" and "schooling". He defines "over" as being above, while "schooling is the act or process of being trained, instructed, taught or educated in school.

An individual can be said to be over-schooled when he/she is involved in teaching and learning beyond his level. In this context, over-schooling is defined by Etiubon (2012), Ibiam and Aleke (2012) as a strong push by over-zealous parents to make children succeed in their academic pursuit at all costs, an act of making children consider themselves exceptional in academic standards. Over-schooling also involves keeping these young children back in schools compulsorily for extra teaching (lessons) till 3-4 pm (Joshua, 2012). In line with the above, Umobong, Akubuiro, and Idika (2012) stipulated that almost 80% of children in Nigeria are forced to attend such lessons either on the school premises or at home, despite normal school hours.

According to Okonkwo (2014), some of the learning tasks and instructional activities including home works given to these vulnerable children are quite strenuous and embarrassing, far beyond the developmental tasks associated with their ages. This proves that there is a great disruption of the developmental task orientation that the psychology of learning has presented.

Causes of Over-Schooling

There are many causes of over-schooling among children in Nigerian society some of which include;

- Parents shying away from their parental responsibilities of having much time for their children.
- Avaricious want/the urge to make more money by schools and teachers. Most schools/ tutors use over-schooling as an avenue to make money by organizing after-school and holiday lessons for the children.
- Lack of monitoring of schools over the implementation of the planned curriculum by the government/the curriculum planners and absence of due sanctions to defaulters.
- The quest for academic diamonds and to maintain the family's pride and fame is another cause.
- Ignorance of the knowledge of what over-schooling is and its consequences on a child's development by the parents.

Effects of Over–Schooling on Child Development

1. Reduction of moral development. Over–schooling does not give much time for pragmatic moral practice even though the children might be taught morals theoretically. The physical environment is incomplete for such moral practice because the people around the children are mainly the tutors. Children live their homes early in the morning to school and come back late in the evening after which they face their take home academic assignments without having time to meet with those that will help them in their moral development. Over–schooling has brought rapid deterioration of morality.

Levy (2017) asserts that homework, no doubt is an important part of being successful inside and outside of the classroom, but too much of it can have the opposite effect.

2. Over-schooling causes stress on the child. Due to an overload of academic activities, children are faced with a lot of stress. This is supported by Dennis (2023) who opined that over-schooling among children is a primary source of stress, reduction in health, and balance. They do not have much time for rest, siester and exercises/play which help in balanced development. This is in line with Umobong, Akubiro and Idika (2012) that many children, as a result of being over involved in only academic activities, lose the simple pleasure of play. American Academy of Pediatrics report (2007) pointed out that for children and teens, too much work and too little play could backfire down the road. Muraya (2011) noted that Dr. Josephine Omondi a child psychiatrist at Kenyatta Hospital has warned that there has been an increase in psychological and psychiatric cases of children and adolescents arising from stressful lifestyles in school in a society that glorifies academic excellence.
3. Haphazard implementation of the curriculum. Over-schooling has led to unfocused academic aims and objectives. Suleiman (2022) pointed out that Ibiam and Aleke reiterated that most proprietors and teachers expose the children to real teaching of numbers and numeracy which is contrary to the government's provision; they expressed dissatisfaction as a contradiction of these provisions and the guidelines on the curriculum have resulted in teaching the children things that are actually beyond their intellectual development by overloading, over tasking and overburdening the children. In the same vein, Olaniyan (2015) reiterated that the teaching profession has to be goal relevant and be directed towards educational goals and objectives that are relevant to their jobs.
4. Over-schooling affects the learning of domestic and home responsibilities of a child. Over-schooling does not give time for a child to learn and carry out his or her domestic and house chores, like washing plates, clothes, farming, cooking, and cleaning the house and environment. Elisa (2023) stated that chores help develop responsibility and bolster a sense of belonging in children. When a child grows without learning these things expected of him/her at this stage, there is a gap in knowledge.
5. Over-schooling leads to examination malpractices because most of the school assignments are not understood and done by the children. When a child goes out from his/her learning environment (school) to take external examinations, the child is vulnerable to engaging in cheating in the examinations or may end up not being able to co-ordinate and come out with good results. This is in line with Omede and Jimba (2019).
6. Over-schooling affects the child's social development. It does not give the children time for social engagement outside school. Such social engagements include social activities such as children's dances, folklore activities, and other community civic activities that involve children. These improve the social life of the child. If a child grows without experiencing them, there is a gap because the child has not lived up to his/her expectations.
7. Over-schooling causes disorder in children. This is in line with Dr. Omondi as cited by Muraya (2014) that due to academic workload and lack of play time, children develop somatoform disorders which are a group of mental illnesses that cause bodily symptoms, including pain but cannot be traced to any physical cause.

Anierobi, Okeke, Nwikpo, and Unachukwu (2018) supported the above by saying that a child at 3-5 years is just at the age of self-image, the child is self-centered; therefore, educational approach

at this level of education should be based on playing, practical activities such as drawing and social interaction as part of the transition from home to school.

Adult Education as a Strategy for Addressing effects of Over-Schooling on Child Development in the changing environment

As crucial as the effects of over-schooling is to the growth and well being of children, it has been found to the best of the researchers' knowledge that research in this area is scanty. However, the following studies support this research.

In a study by Anierobi et al (2018) "Impact of over-schooling on the cognitive and psychological development of private primary school pupils. It was found that over-schooling leaves a child with less time to play, resulting in mental dullness and boredom.
Omede and Jimba (2019) and Okonkwo (2016) also supported this research.

Adult education has been at the forefront of addressing educational problems. Adult Education through its programmes/types can be used in checking the consequences of over-schooling on child development in the following ways;

- **Radio and Television Adult Education Programmes.** This type of adult education programme can be used to reach parents and guardians to educate them on what they should do to help ease the burden of over-schooling on children by teaching them the signs of school related stress. This will enable them to watch out for stress related behaviour like expressions of despair or hopelessness no matter how casual it may be. Substantiating the above, Nwaolikpe in Ojiakor, Anyanwu, Uwaoma and Duru (2020) stated that the use of media to create awareness is imperative.
- **Women Adult Education Programme.** Women's education is one of the critical needs of a country (Obih and Enwereuzor, 2012). Women's education is the inculcation of knowledge to women in order to improve their orientation. According to Ibe (2018), this inculcation makes them fit properly in society, vast in their perception of themselves, and also to widen their domestic, cultural, and societal responsibilities.
  In educating women, they should be given orientation that will change their wrong perception about over-schooling. Women should be taught the disadvantages and consequences of keeping their children beyond normal school periods in the name of extramural lessons or acquiring more academic knowledge. They should also be made to be aware of the need of having enough time with their children.
- Through adult education, workshop and seminars can be organized where parents, school proprietors, and school management will be sensitized on the need to reduce the over-schooling of children.

Recommendations

Based on the literature reviewed in this study, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. Awareness should be created in society on the causes and effects of over-schooling on children so that society, parents, teachers, and proprietors would see the over-schooling of children as a serious issue.
2. Teachers should give assignments that will not take more than 15-20 minutes, within the capacity and cognitive level of children, to avoid over-schooling when the children are at home.
3. Workshops and seminars should be organized by the Ministry of Education where educators should be taught the need to recognize children's emotional and social development.

4. Proprietors and teachers should teach children with the stipulated guideline in the National Policy on Education and also adhere to the curriculum for pre-primary schools rather than overloading it.
5. The government with the help of the curriculum planners should set up a monitoring team to checkmate the activities of private pre-primary and primary schools as well as the implementation of the planned curriculum to ensure that the initial aim of pre-primary and primary school in the National Policy on Education is not thwarted and that children are not over tasked and kept in school beyond normal school hours. Any school found defaulting should be sanctioned accordingly.
6. Parents should not shy away from their responsibilities of having much time with their children and exchanging it for paying for extra lessons after normal school activities.
7. Parents and guardians should watch for stress-related behaviours in their children.
8. Schools should have clearly spelled out timetables that will state the time for lessons, sports/ games/preps, and other out of class activities and should be monitored to ensure that school children have enough breaks and vacations
9. Copies of the National Policy on Education should be made available by the government to teachers and parents to be aware of what is required at each level.

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