The Influence of Orphanage Homes on The Social and Cognitive Development of Children in Stem Education

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Abstract- This study examined the influence of Orphanage homes on the Social and Cognitive Development of Children in STEM Education. Three research question were raised to guide the study, while one was hypothesized. A sample of 100 Orphanage home children were purposively selected from 4 Orphanage Homes in the south-south region of Nigeria. The mean and standard deviation were employed for data analysis, and the findings of this study reveal that the orphanage homes influence the cognitive skills development of the child to a high degree. Most difficulties encountered by children in orphanage homes are restricted movement, lack of inadequate workers, clothing, freedom of choice, parental care, feeding, accommodation, and poor educational background. However, financial problem, child abuse, isolation from the society, child slavery, low self-esteem, emotional trauma, and discrimination were rated as the least difficulties encountered. It was found that there's no significant difference in the Social and Cognitive skills development of children in the orphanage home in terms of sex. The instrument used for the study was validated by three experts. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, mean, and deviation for the research questions and the hypothesis was tested using the independent sample t-test of 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Federal government through the concerned ministry should be more involved in the activities of the orphanage homes and provide the basic needs of orphanage homes. Also, children's opinion and interest should be considered important in the day-to-day activities of orphanage homes. Finally, there is also a need to create sub-families in orphanage homes with house parents to serve as guardians to the orphans.

I. INTRODUCTION

An orphan is a child who has lost one or both of their parents and may not receive adequate care or attention (UNICEF, 2023). Typically, orphans are young individuals under 18 years old (World Bank, 2021). Some parents, due to challenging circumstances, secretly abandon or leave their children in unwanted places (UNICEF, 2020). Reports indicate that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, millions of neglected orphans exist worldwide (UNAIDS, 2016). This number encompasses various groups, including internally displaced children, war refugees, child soldiers, institutionalized orphans, and homeless children (UNICEF, 2022). These children face unique challenges and are often deprived of essential resources and support (Save the Children, 2023). It is crucial to address the diverse needs of orphaned children and ensure they receive proper care, support, and opportunities for a better future (World Health Organization, 2023).

An institution or home dedicated to caring for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or other difficult circumstances is commonly known as a residential care facility or a children's home. While the term "orphanage" historically referred to places that housed children without parents, it is now less commonly used due to the recognition that most children in such facilities have living parents or relatives (Dozier et al., 2012; Williamson & Greenberg, 2010). The approach to child welfare and support for abandoned or vulnerable children varies across nations and even within nations. In many industrialized countries, there has been a shift away from government-run orphanages in the latter half of the 20th century (Berens & Nelson, 2015; Van IJzendoorn et al., 2011). This change is based on growing awareness that institutional care can have negative effects on children's social and emotional well-being (Johnson et al., 2006; McCall et al., 2016).

Instead of relying primarily on orphanages, government funding and efforts are now often directed towards strengthening families and providing support systems that can help prevent child abandonment or

neglect (Chiang et al., 2017; Goldman et al., 2020). This approach aims to address the root causes of family breakdown or instability, providing families with the resources, services, and interventions they need to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children (Betancourt et al., 2013; Fluke et al., 2020). It is important to note that while orphanages are being phased out in many developed countries, they may still be present in some regions of the world where alternative support systems are not as well-established (Petrowski et al., 2017; Whetten et al., 2014). Efforts are underway globally to promote alternative care options, such as foster care, kinship care, and community-based support programs, which prioritize the well-being and development of children within a family setting whenever possible (Bunkers et al., 2014; van IJzendoorn et al., 2020). The care and support provided by orphanages play a crucial role in the lives of children who have lost their parents or whose parents are unable to care for them. Orphanages are local organizations that take responsibility for the well-being and upbringing of these children until they reach the age of eighteen (Desmond et al., 2020; Petrowski et al., 2021).

They serve as a place of residence and settlement, ensuring that the children's basic needs, emotional support, and developmental requirements are met (James et al., 2012; Merz & McCall, 2010). Orphanages can be operated in different ways. Some may be based on goodwill, while others may be privately or publicly owned. They can also be managed by charitable organizations or religious groups, depending on the specific setup (Garcia Quiroga & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2016; Petrowski et al., 2017;). In order to provide proper care, orphanages hire staff members who have received appropriate training. The staff of an orphanage typically includes therapists, activists, social workers, a director, and auxiliary nurses, among others (Groark et al., 2013; McCall et al., 2019). Each member of the staff has specific roles and responsibilities in the care of the children. These duties may involve tasks such as bathing, feeding, and changing diapers, as well as maintaining a clean and safe environment for the children. The staff also organizes structured plays and activities to promote the children's development and provides counseling or therapy when needed (Sosik et

al., 2016; The St. Petersburg-USA Orphanage Research Team, 2008).

The activities and interactions of the care providers in an orphanage have a significant impact on the children's well-being and development (Lionetti et al., 2015; Smyke et al., 2012). Through their care, the staff members strive to meet the children's needs and ensure their safety. By providing a nurturing and supportive environment, they aim to help the children grow and reach different developmental stages (Groark et al., 2011; McCall et al., 2013). It is important to note that the approach to caring for orphaned or vulnerable children has evolved over time. In recent years, there has been a global shift towards prioritizing family-based care over institutional care, such as placing children in foster families or supporting extended family members to care for them (Goldman et al., 2020; van IJzendoorn et al., 2020). This approach recognizes the importance of maintaining children's connections to their families and communities while providing them with a safe and supportive environment (Berens & Nelson, 2015; Dozier et al., 2014).

Therefore, this study aims to address the following pertinent questions:

Research Questions

The following Research Questions were formulated to guide this study, with one hypothesis:

1. To what extent does the orphanage home influence the child's social and cognitive development?
2. What difficulties do orphanage homes encounter in terms of the social and cognitive development of the child?
3. Is there a difference in the social and cognitive development of children in orphanage homes based on sex?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the social and cognitive development of children in orphanage homes based on sex.

Literature Review

Depending on whether the term is used epidemiologically, legally, or socially and culturally, there are various ways to describe an orphan. According to Shelly and Powell (2003) the term "orphan" is derived from Greek and Latin and designates a kid who has lost one or both of their parents. While UNICEF (2017) describes an orphan as a child under the age of 18 who has either lost one of their parents or both of them, and the most recent figures show that there are more than 153 million orphans in the world.

Furthermore, Hepburn (2001) says the term "orphan" is a social construction that varies across cultures and countries. According to Skinner et al. (2006), the definitions of the orphan child used by the community and by outside groups differ. For example, orphanhood in Malawi has a much larger cultural meaning than it does on a national level. Losing one or both parents is a social and economic process that goes beyond the specific biological circumstances (Chirwa, 2002). While some people only use the term "orphan" to refer to children who have lost one parent, others reserve it for those who have lost both parents. According to the National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (2004), in Namibia, an orphan is a kid under the age of 18 whose mother, father, both parents, or primary caregiver have died. Here, the key variables include the orphan's age and parental loss.

Foster et al. (1997) and UNICEF (1999) both note the vulnerability of orphans, which includes youngsters without parents. The classification of a double orphan is complicated by the fact that some children have parents whose whereabouts are unknown, one parent is deceased, and the family caring for the child is unaware of the other parent's vital state (Guarcello et al., 2004). A child may also be more vulnerable than a child who has lost both parents since parents whose vital status is unknown, even if they are still alive, do not take part in providing for, supporting, and protecting their children. This study will make use of the terminology provided in the 2004 Namibian National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children.

Concept of Orphanage Homes

Children whose parents have passed away or whose family histories are hazy live in orphanages. These governmental or nonprofit organizations exist to care for and protect children whose parent(s) have passed away. Orphanages are simply institutional facilities, whether privately owned or legally established, whose purpose is to support, care for, and raise kids whose backgrounds are unknown, whose parent(s) have passed away, or whose parents are unable to provide for their needs. Rhodes et al. (2003) stated that the most well-liked form of alternative care for children are orphanages, and according to Cantwell (1998) "orphanage care is an authorized placement with a foster family, supervised by the Social Services, and usually involving financial compensation to cover the additional expenses incurred."

It helps foster parents as well as children who have suffered abuse or neglect from their biological families and adoptive parents (Barbell & Freundlich, 2001). Kid fostering, in the context of West Africans, refers to the transfer of a child from their biological parents to a household that serves as a substitute for their care and upbringing (Olusanya & Hodes, 1999). A typical orphanage home is a service that aids in addressing issues in the lives of the children and their families (James et al., 2014; Petrowski et al., 2021). These institutions serve as a foundation and residence for children whose biological parents are either deceased or unable of caring for them (Desmond et al., 2020; Goldman et al., 2020). Professionals who care about the children's proper upbringing, like doctors, teachers, and vocational trainers, are employed by some of these fake children's homes. Wisegeek (2015) claims that orphanages serve as a foundation and residence for kids whose biological parents are either deceased or unable of caring for them. Many of these facilities employ various professionals to support children's development, including healthcare providers, educators, and vocational trainers (Groark et al., 2013; McCall et al., 2016).

The need for childcare has significantly expanded as a result of the enormous number of vulnerable kids, orphans, and kids with special needs who have been dispersed throughout Nigeria. Howard et al. (2007) conducted a study in Malawi to examine the attitudes of caregivers about orphan care. At 34 primary and secondary schools, 371 primary caregivers completed

a qualitative cross-sectional survey. The sample size consisted of 212 foster parents caring for double orphans, 85 parents who had adopted children or had single orphans, and 74 parents who did not foster any orphans. A 114-item questionnaire was given to them to gauge their wellbeing, needs, resources, perceptions, and experiences with orphan care. The findings indicated that elderly, widowed, or single women, who were frequently poor, made up most caregivers. This study demonstrated that there was a significant desire to foster and care for the orphans, with the only obstacle being a lack of funds. This provided a compelling case that guardians enjoyed or were willing to assist orphans.

However, one Burkinabe study on caregiver perspectives had some inconsistent results. The study disputed the idea that children are always worse off in institutions. For the qualitative research study, 100 primary carers of orphans who took part in a sponsorship program—through which they received money for the child's basic needs—were interviewed. The study's conclusions showed that the majority of the carers in Burkina Faso preferred that the orphan reside in an orphanage rather than their own home, despite the fact that they were receiving financial support (Sanou et al., 2009). This result contrasted with that of Howard et al. (2007), who discovered that caregivers were merely reluctant to care for the children because they had the financial resources to do so. However, this data demonstrates that caregivers are still more inclined to give a child to an orphanage even when they get financial support via sponsorship. Thus, an artificial home known as an orphanage home is necessary.

The Roles of Orphanage Homes

A home for orphans is the most common type of alternative childcare. Rhodes and colleagues (2003). Cantwell (1998) stated that "orphanage care is an authorized placement with a foster family, supervised by the social services, and usually involving financial compensation to cover the additional expenses incurred." While Barbell and Freundlich (2001) opined that it helps children who have been subjected to abuse or neglect, as well as their foster parent and their birth parents' and relatives' families.

The underlying assumption that underpins this objective is that "poor support to orphan children in orphanage homes will result in low outcomes in education, care and support, and protection." (2006 Brigitte). In his research in Namibia, Brigitte (2008) hypothesized that orphanages play a significant part in caring for children who lost their parents as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. He asserted that the number of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) has significantly increased. He further stated that "Many solutions have been considered to meet their basic needs, with orphanages being the most well-liked in Africa." He made the argument that when one or both parents die, the children may become part of the core of other vulnerable children, such as street children, runaways, thrown away children, or school dropouts.

According to data from 19 Demography and Health Survey investigations carried out in 10 countries between 1992 and 2000, it was found that orphans are less likely to be enrolled in school than non-orphans are (Case et al., 2004; Lloyd et al., 2010). Further investigation indicated that foster youth frequently underperform academically compared to their classmates, which lowers the percentage of students graduating from high school (Berger et al., 2015; Pecora et al., 2012). Most Psychological Challenges facing orphaned children in the orphanage home resulted from limited funds, instructional environment and ineffectiveness of care givers in handling the psychological emotions of the Orphaned children (UNICEF, 2022).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design. This design was chosen for its ability to investigate a small sample that could be representative of the larger population. The primary objective was to examine the effects of orphanages on children's cognitive and social development in south-south Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The Population of the study consist of the eight (8) orphanages in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, in south-south Nigeria.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

For this study, a sample of one hundred (100) orphanage home children was used, and they were purposively selected.

Research Instrument

This study's main tool is a structured questionnaire titled the Influence of Orphanage Homes on the Cognitive and Social Development of Children Questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into Sections two sections (A and B). In Section A, respondents were asked for personal information which includes, age, gender, religion. While in Section B, they were questioned about how orphanages in the Edo State district of Oredo Local Government Area influence the cognitive and social development of the children who lived there. The respondents responded to the items using the four points Likert Scale of Always (A), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N).

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by three experts in the field. Appropriate corrections were made on the questionnaire by them and effected before it was used for the study.

Reliability of the instrument.

25 copies of the instrument were administered to four (4) orphanage homes, and the Cronbach Alpha reliability statistic was used, which gave a value of 0.81.

Method of data collection

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the children in the orphanage homes with the assistance of the caregivers and workers in the various orphanage homes used in the study.

Method of Data Analysis.

Mean and standard deviation were used for research question 1, while frequency count and ranking were for research question 2. The data collected was analyzed using frequency counts, mean and deviation for the research questions and the hypothesis was tested using the independent sample t-test of 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Research Question One: To what extent does the orphanage home influence the child's social and cognitive development?

Table 1: The Extent of the Influence of the Orphanage Home on the Child's Social and Cognitive Development

Social Skill Development	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
Are allowed to interact with their peers	3.99	0.99	Always
Are allowed to play	3.70	0.85	Always
Exhibit aggressive behaviour like fighting	2.42	0.89	Rarely
Exhibit leadership character in settling dispute	3.04	0.79	Sometimes
Exhibit some forms of bullying	1.69	0.85	Rarely
Cluster	14.87	2.00	
Cognitive Skills Development			
Exhibit problem-solving skills	3.29	0.73	Sometimes
Exhibit good study habits	3.41	0.78	Sometimes
Engage in spelling bee competition	2.11	1.22	Rarely
Engage in Route memorization	2.35	0.96	Rarely
Are allowed to Read	3.76	0.57	Always
Cluster	14.91	3.21	

Table 1 shows that the children in orphanage homes in Oredo Local Governmement area are always allowed to interact with their peers, and to play. They sometimes exhibited leadership character in settling dispute. However, they rarely exhibit aggressive behavior like fighting, and some forms of bullying. The cluster mean of 14.87 indicates that the orphanage homes influence the social skill development of the child to a high degree. For cognitive skills development, the children in orphanage homes are always allowed to read. They sometimes exhibit

problem-solving skills, and good study habits. But they rarely engage in spelling bee competition, and route memorization. The cluster mean of 14.91 indicates that the orphanage homes influence the cognitive skills development of the child to a high degree.

Research Question Two: What difficulties do orphanage homes encounter in terms of the social and cognitive development of the child?

Table 2: The Difficulties that Children in Orphanage Homes Encounter in Terms of the Social and Cognitive Development.

Challenges	Frequency	Ranks
Parental care	56	6
Feeding	42	7
Accommodation	40	8
Clothing	72	3
Health care facilities	66	4
Lack of inadequate workers	76	2
Restricted movement	87	1
Financial problem	30	10
Child Slavery	22	13
Child abuse	27	11
Poor educational background	39	9
Freedom of choice	61	5
Emotional trauma	18	15
Isolation from the society	23	12
Low self esteem	21	14
Discrimination	16	16

Table 2 shows that most difficulties encountered by children in orphanage homes in Oredo Local Government area is restricted movement, lack of inadequate workers, clothing, freedom of choice, parental care, feeding, accommodation, and poor educational background. However, financial problem, child abuse, isolation from the society, child slavery,

low self-esteem, emotional trauma, and discrimination were rated as the least difficulties encountered.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the social and cognitive development of children in orphanage homes based on sex.

Table 3: Independent Sample T-Test of the Difference in the Social and Cognitive Development of Children in Orphanage Homes Based on Sex

	Sex	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value	p-value	Remark
Social	Male	49	15.22	1.77	1.861	0.066	Not significant
	Female	51	14.19	2.15			

Cognitive	Male	49	15.14	2.85	0.653	0.515
	Female	51	14.73	3.45		

Table 3 shows the t-value of 1.861 and a p-value of 0.066 for social skills development. This is an indication that no significant difference exists in the social skills development of the male and female children in orphanage homes (p<0.05). In the same vein, the t-value of 0.653 and p-value of 0.515 for cognitive skills development is an indication that male and female children in orphanage homes do not differ in their cognitive skills development (p<0.05).

Discussion of Findings.

The findings in from research question one shows that the orphanage home influences the social and cognitive development of the child to a high degree. It agrees with Biehler and Snowman (2000) whose study revealed that if children in orphanage homes needs are not met the children will suffer socially, cognitively and emotionally.

The findings from research question two shows that there's restrictions in movement, shortage of staff and shortage of the child's basic amenities. However, the least difficulties are finance, child abuse, Isolation from the society and psychological effect. It agrees with UNICEF (2022) which state that most Psychological Challenges facing orphaned children in the orphanage institution resulted from limited funds instructional environment and ineffectiveness of care givers in handling the psychological emotions of the orphaned children. It also agrees with Goldberg et al. (2021) whose research stated that Orphan children's wellbeing and development are threatened due to several difficulties, such as poverty, neglect, abuse and malnutrition, among many others

The findings from the hypothesis revealed that male and female children in the orphanage homes do not differ in their social and cognitive skill development, this disagrees with the maladaptive theory Schema (2013) which stated that orphan girls are more likely to experience maladaptation than Orphan boys.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the orphanage home, to a high degree, has an influence on the social and cognitive development of the children. Furthermore, it indicated that most difficulties encountered by children in orphanage homes are restricted movement, lack of inadequate workers, clothing, and freedom of choice, parental care, feeding, accommodation, and poor educational background. However, financial problem, child abuse, isolation from the society, child slavery, low self-esteem, emotional trauma, and discrimination were rated as the least difficulties they encounter. It further proved that there is no significant difference in the Social and Cognitive skills development of the male and female children in orphanage homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government through the concerned ministries should be more involved in the activities of orphanage homes and provide their basic needs.
2. Children's opinion and interest should be considered important in the day-to-day activities of the orphanage homes.
3. Finally, there is also a need to create a small family in orphanage homes with house parents, like volunteer parents, to serve as guardians to the orphans.

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