



ASSESSMENT OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS' MOTIVE AND COMMITMENT TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the motive behind the establishment of private early childhood education centres by faith-based organisations in Osun State. It also determined the degree of commitment of faith-based organisations to the motive of establishing the centres. These were with a view to providing information on the justifiability of the involvement of faith-based organisations in the establishment of early childhood education centres in the State. The study employed the survey research design. The population for the study comprised managers of Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres owned by faith-based organisations in Osun State and the study sample consisted of 75 centre managers 75 ECE centres selected using multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used to collect data for the study was the Faith-based Early Childhood Centres Assessment Interview Guide (FECCAIG), which measured motive, and the degree of commitment. The results showed that the primary motive behind the establishment of ECE centres by faith-based organisations was the provision of children education opportunities (22.31%, 1st); followed by soul-winning (20.50%, 2nd); provision of a place to care for children of working class parents (17.44%, 3rd); empowerment of members in terms of job opportunities (16.34%, 4th); revenue generation (12.96%, 5th) and support for foreign missions (10.45%, 6th). The results also showed that the degree of commitment of faith-based organisations to their motives for establishing ECE centres was very high (76.8%). The study concluded that the involvement of faith-based organisations in the establishment of early childhood education centres in Osun State is worthwhile.

Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a phenomenon that has come to be in Nigeria. Also involved in ECE are the providers which include so many individuals and groups. This involvement suggests that it could be a profitable venture. The possibility of profitability might have motivated not only the private individuals or corporate organisations, but even the religious organisations who are establishing schools in recent times. In spite of the fact that schools established by early missionaries (Christian and Muslim) were taken over by the government, Churches that survived the activities of the early missionaries who initially had their schools taken over by government now establish and run private early ECE centres and schools. The same also applies to new generation Churches and Ministries, and Islamic Movements. While the motives and level of commitment of the early religious school owners are on record in literature, what has motivated religious groups, that is Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) in recent times to establish early child care centres has not been

sufficiently reported in literature, not to talk of the degree of commitment. By way of definition, the word motive, which is coined from "motivation," is a concept in psychology which refers to the reason one acts in a certain way or does a certain thing. Every human endeavour therefore is taken as a consequence of a motive, and the establishment of a school is not an exception. Some of the components of motive for FBOs' involvement in school establishment may include soul winning, children educational opportunities and revenue mobilisation, among others.

Historically, the Islamic education which existed in Nigeria before the establishment of western schools aimed at training people to develop Islamic studies and raise scholars to read and recite the Qur'an. A high degree of commitment was demonstrated to this cause as teachers used their houses as schools and they were not particular about how they were paid. The children were engaged in rote learning to read and recite the Qur'an, and also to pray in Arabic



- all these were done with great attention (Taiwo, 1980). The Christian Missions also established Churches and schools (Jayeola-Omoyeni & Omoyeni, 2014) to convert people to Christianity, and to train clerks, secretaries, teachers and interpreters who would manage the Churches and schools that had been established. There was also the commercial goal attributed to education then, as it was expected to produce people who would develop reliable industrial habits and be able to accept instruction in the new skills (Ifemeje, 1979). Similarly, like with every endeavour, anyone with a motive should be committed towards actualising the motive; hence FBOs are expected to show commitment to their motive for school establishment, which are therefore subjects of investigation.

Some of the indices of commitment that FBOs should have towards ECE may include time committed to the programmes, investments in school expansion and provisions to promote school enrolment and retention among others. In line with their motive, the early missionaries appeared to have been very committed, as Ifemeje further claimed "most of the pupils spent their time in memorising questions and answers from the Catechism, reading passages from the Bible and prayer books, and singing hymns" – suggesting the manner of engagement by the missionaries. While the pupils and students of the early schools were trained at no cost to the parents and guardians, there are reports suggesting that some of the schools are at present run as business ventures. Fees charged were so high (Omoegun, 2015), to the extent that some members (including those who had contributed to the building of the schools) find the schools expensive and unaffordable. Babayemisi (2015) in her study on Cost Analysis of Investment in Nursery Education by Parents and School Proprietors in Osun State found that religious organisations (FBOs) charged ₦25,086.43 on the average per child for a session.

The term "extortion" has been used to describe the manner in which rates, that is fees, are charged by the present mission schools (Nairaland, 2012) which are generally now regarded as profit-oriented. It is alleged that the proprietors are more interested in profits, creating an avenue for funding Church work, while ploughing back little into improving school infrastructure and teacher expertise although Croft (2013) maintains that it is a popular misconception that schools run as businesses..., or that they necessarily compromise educational outcomes in

pursuit of profit. When a report like this is given, it becomes a thing of debate whether the primary schools established by FBOs will have the same outlook in terms of fees. This raises the question of who among their poor members could afford enrolling children and wards in this type of school, even if it belongs to their Church. This brings to the fore the question of what their motives and commitment are, or could this be regarded as extortion? The researcher was spurred by these to want to find out what actually operates in terms of motive and degree of commitment in FBOs established ECE centres in Osun State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. investigate the motives behind the establishment of private early childhood education centres by faith-based organisations in Osun State; and
- ii. determine the degree of commitment of faith-based organisations to the motives of establishing the centres.

Research Questions

1. What are the motives behind the establishment of private Early Childhood Education centres by faith-based organisations in Osun State?
2. What is the degree of the commitment of faith-based organisations in terms of Board Constitution?
3. What is the degree of the commitment of faith-based organisations in terms of Quorum Formation and Frequencies of Meetings?
4. What is the degree of the commitment of faith-based organisations in terms of Provision of Resources and Support?

Methodology

The study employed the survey research design. The population for the study was comprised managers of Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres owned by Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) in Osun State. The managers were either the Vicar or Chairperson, Board of Management of the centres who were assumed to have the competence (actively involved in the management of the school) to provide information about the motive and degree of commitment of FBOs in ECE provisions in the State. The sample for the study included 75 managers of



Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres operated by Faith-based organisations in a multi-stage sampling selection process. At the first stage, five Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from each of the three senatorial districts (making 15 LGAs) in the State using purposive sampling technique - on the basis that they have a cluster of private schools that are established and are managed by faith-based organisations. At the second stage, 75 ECE centres across the 15 LGAs were selected using convenience sampling technique. At the third stage, managers of the 75 ECE centres were purposively selected - on the basis that they operate the already selected centres.

An instrument titled Faith-based Early Childhood Centres Assessment Structured Interview Guide (FECCAIG) was employed to assess the faith-based organisations' motives and commitment in the establishment of early childhood education centres. The instrument was validated by using the Lawshe's Content Validity Criteria and produced a Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of 0.9 which suggests the instrument was of good quality. The researcher with

the research assistants conducted the study of available ECEs within the selected local government areas by carrying out face to face interviews with the ECE centre managers. Responses were recorded by the researcher and the assistants by ticking appropriate options on the rating scale against each item immediately on a 4-point scale of "Very High," "High," "Low," "Very Low." The responses were collated, scored, coded and imported into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 to run descriptive analysis. The statistical properties employed included frequency counts, percentage and mean.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the motives behind the establishment of private Early Childhood Education centres by faith-based organisations in Osun State?

Table 1 provides the answer to the question by indicating the varying strength of each motive identified as measured by the FECCAIG.

Table 1: Ranking of Motive for private Early Childhood Education Centres' Establishment by Faith-based Organisations

| S/No. | Motive for School Establishment | Domain on Rating Scale | Percentage of Expected Total Score | Ranking |
|-------|--|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| i. | Children education opportunities | Very High | 22.31% | 1 st |
| ii. | Soul-winning | Very High | 20.50% | 2 nd |
| iii. | Provision of a place to care for children of working class parents | High | 17.44% | 3 rd |
| iv. | Empowerment of members in terms of job opportunities | High | 16.34% | 4 th |
| v. | Revenue generation | High | 12.96% | 5 th |
| vi. | Support for foreign missions | Low | 10.45% | 6 th |

By way of ranking, results from Table 1 indicate that provision of children educational opportunities was the primary motive (22.31%, 1st) of FBOs' involvement in ECE establishment. This was followed by soul winning (20.50%, 2nd), provision of a place to care for children of working class parents (17.44%, 3rd), empowerment of members in terms of job opportunities (16.34%, 4th), revenue

generation (12.96%, 5th), and support for foreign missions (10.45%, 6th).

Research Question 2: What is the degree of the commitment of faith-based organisations in terms of Board Constitution?

Figure 1 provides the answer to this question.

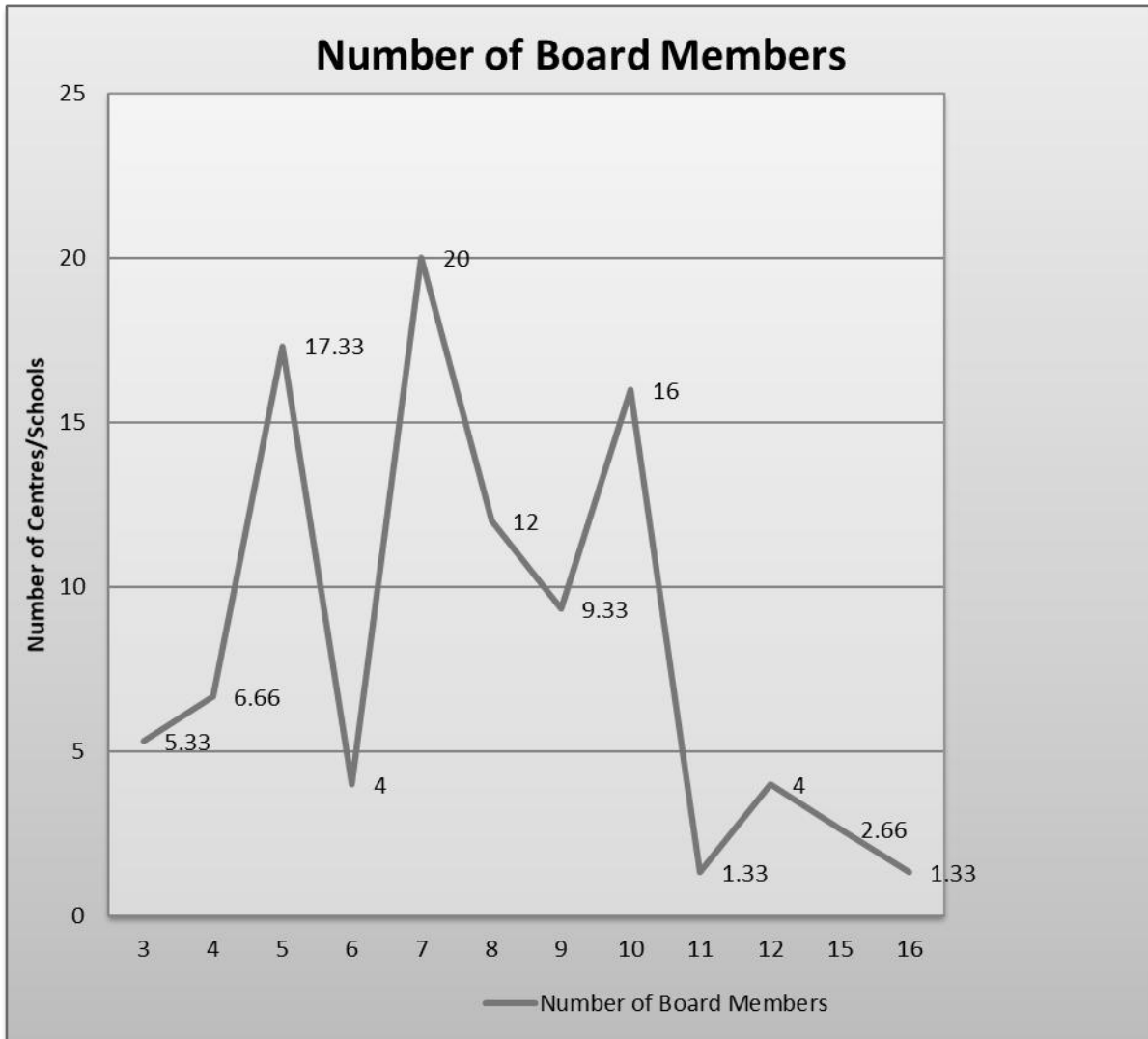


Figure 1: Graph showing FBO schools board members (expressed in percentages)

Results on the chart indicate that in Faith-based Organisations' early childcare centres and schools in Osun State, the number of schools with: three-man committee were 4 (5.33%), four-man committee were 5 (6.66%), five-man committee were 13 (17.33%) while six-man committee were 3 (4.0%). Furthermore, the chart indicates that seven man-committee were 15 (20.0%), eight-man committee were 9 (12.0%), nine-man committee were 7 (9.33%), 10-man committee were 12 (16.0%) while an 11- man committee existed in 1 (1.33%) centre. Twelve-man committee were 3 (4.0%), while 15-man and 16-man committees occurred in 2 (2.66%) centres and 1

(1.33%) centre respectively. The results thus indicate that seven-man committees which were 15 in number (20.0%) has the highest number of committee members on the boards of FBOs early child care centres in Osun state.

Research Question 3: What is the degree of the commitment of faith-based organisations in terms of Quorum Formation and Frequencies of Meetings?

Figure 2 provides the answer to this question.

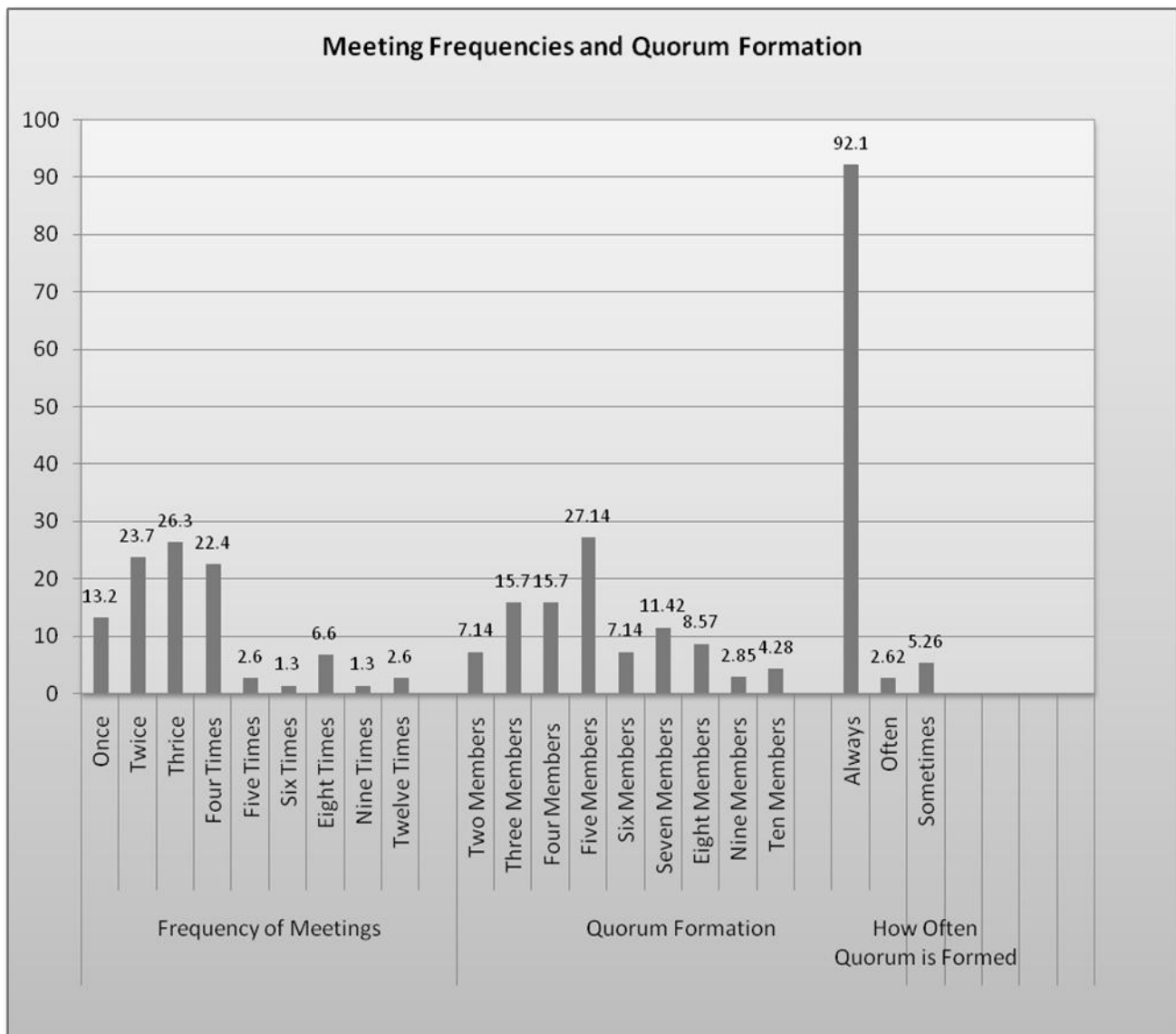


Figure 2: Degree of Commitment as measured by frequency of meetings, quorum formation and quorum formed at meetings (expressed in percentages).

Results on the figure 2 show that there are functional educational boards constituted by the missions to oversee schools and that all sampled schools have quorums from the membership size and hold meetings. The figure showed that in a term, meetings for which quorums were formed "Always" were 92.1%, meetings for which quorums were formed "Often" were 2.62% and meetings for which quorums were formed "Sometimes" were 5.26% by the FBOs school owners. Furthermore, reports showed that committee members held meetings from once to as many as twelve times per term in FBOs early childhood education centres.

Research Question 4: What is the degree of the commitment of faith-based organisations in terms of Provision of Resources and Support?

Figure 3 provides the answer to this question.

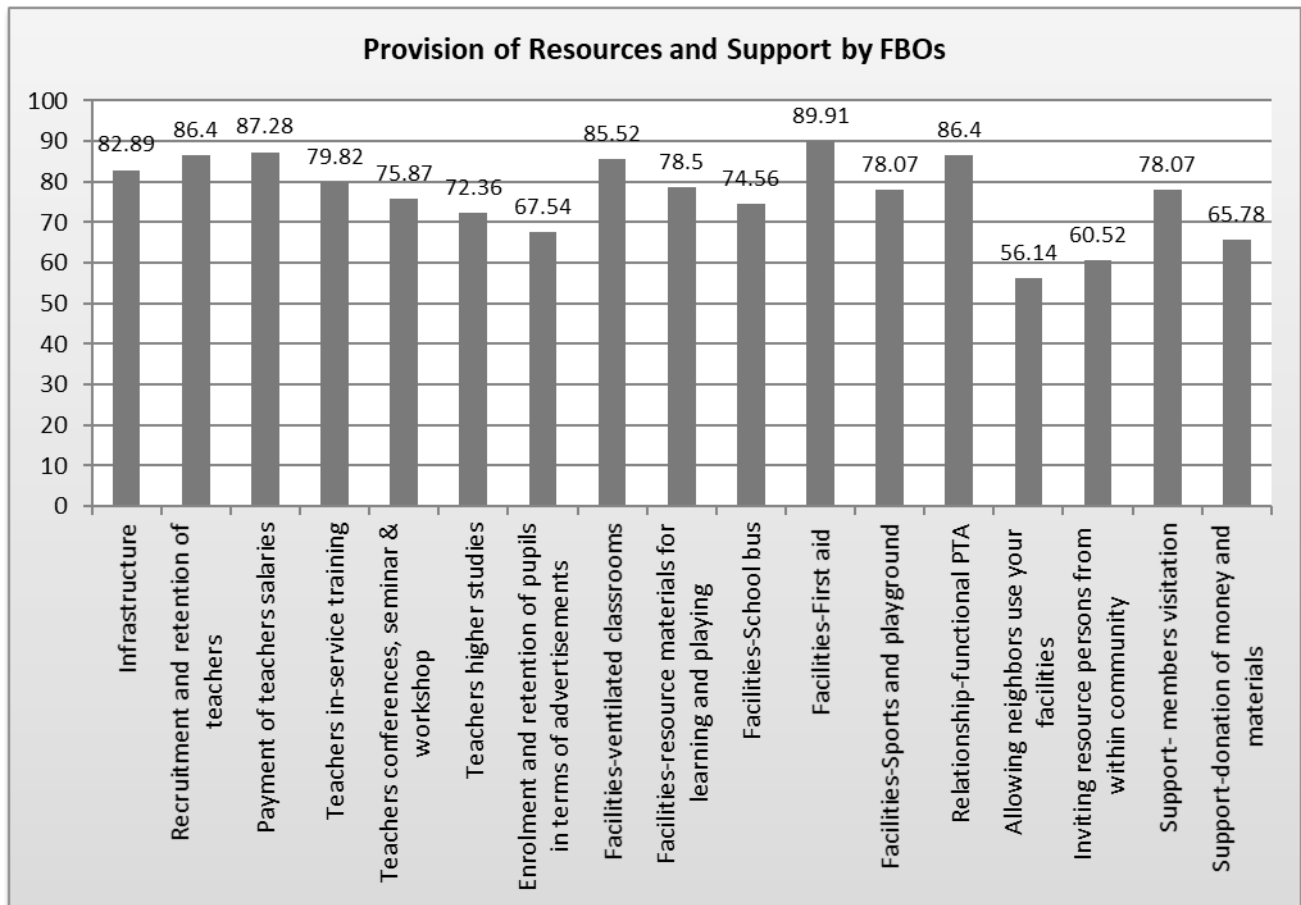


Figure 3: Degree of Commitment as measured by Provision of Resources and Support by FBOs (expressed in percentages).

Figure 3 indicates that the degree of faith-based organisations' commitment to infrastructure was high (82.89%) while degree of commitments to recruitment and retention of qualified teachers, and payment of teacher's salaries were also high (86.40%) and (87.28%) respectively. Also the degree of commitment of the FBOs to teacher development in terms of in-service training, commitment to teacher development in terms of conferences, seminars and workshops, and in terms of teacher higher studies were high (79.82%), 173 (75.87%) and (72.36%) respectively. The degree of commitment of the FBOs towards encouraging enrolment and retention of pupils in terms of advertisement by way of radio, signposts, fliers and billboards was also high. More so, the degree of commitment of the faith-based organisations to each of provision of facilities in terms of ventilated classrooms, resource materials for learning and play, school bus, first-aid, and sports/playground were also found to be high (85.52%), (78.50%), (74.56%), (89.91%) and (78.07%) respectively.

The degree of commitment of the FBOs to relationship with parents and community in terms of functional PTA was high (86.40%), while the FBOs commitment in terms of allowing neighbours use their facilities for wedding and other social events, and in terms of inviting resource persons from within the community to enlighten the school in relevant areas towards their relationship with parents and community were found to be moderate (56.14%) and 138 (60.52%) respectively. On support by mission members; the degree of commitment of the FBOs in terms of visits was high (78.07%), while the commitment of FBOs in terms of donation of free materials and money by members moderate (65.78%). The provision of first-aid facilities is the area where the degree of commitment of FBOs was found to be the highest (89.91%). Overall, the degree of Faith-based Organisations' commitment to the motive of establishing early childhood education centres was found to be high (76.80%).

Discussion of Findings



A study carried out in Malawi (Munthali, Mvula & Silo, 2014) revealed that proprietors had motive for centre establishment in varying degrees and the top on the list of motives was to provide pre-primary school learning to children. The findings are however in contrast to those of Burudi and Poipoi (2012) who found among reasons that the only strong reason for the establishment for early child care centres in Kenya was to care for the children. The researcher's findings agree with those of Munthali, Mvula and Silo (2014) to the extent that motive for centre establishment are in varying degrees, the strongest being provision of children education opportunities, followed by soul winning.

The studies carried out by Okewole, Iluezi-Ogbedu and Osinowo (2015), Akinrotimi and Olowe (2016) and Uzoka (n.d) found that there were inadequate learning resources in pre-primary school sections of most private schools in Osun State. Okewole, Iluezi-Ogbedu and Osinowo (2015) further found that pre-primary sections generally do not follow the recommended curriculum; these reasons seem to question degree of commitment. The researcher however is of the opinion that the degree of commitment of FBOs in terms of board constitutions (number of members), frequency of meetings per term, and provision of resources and support to staff, pupils and the environment is very high.

It could be deduced that the motive of FBOs in the establishment of early childhood education centres and their commitment to the motive are driven by a "high" need for achievement, rather than for power or association, in line with the motivation theory of need by McClelland (1961) which states that the needs for achievement, affiliation, or power are not inherent but are developed through culture and life experiences. Suffice to say that FBOs involvement and commitment to early childhood education might have been informed by their experiences that it is only when they make impact in people that they may win souls and expand the scope of their ministries using the avenue of early childhood education, just as observed in this study.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Premised on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the main motives for the establishment of early childhood education centres by faith-based organisations are the provision of children education opportunities and soul winning with a very high degree of commitment to the

motives. It is therefore recommended that the faith-based organisations should continue to be involved in the establishment of early childhood education centres and maintain the momentum of their commitment.

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