DOI: https://doi.org/10.67203/jerd.2025.qsqiziap

# ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS OF PHILANTHROPISTS IN THE EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN KONTAGORA AREA OF NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

The potentialities of man can only be fully tapped with education. The time and age of the learner to a greater extent determine the level of absorption, retention and usefulness to the generality of man. This study, therefore, investigated the impacts of Philanthropists on the Education of primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria, with specific focus on Kontagora Local Government Area. The objective of this research was to assess the extent to which Philanthropy has impacted the Education of Primary School Pupils in the study area. The population of the study covers all Primary Schools and individuals who are regarded as wealthy in Kontagora. A descriptive survey design was used to collect data from selected Primary Schools in Kontagora. The sample size of eighty (80) proprietors/head teachers and one hundred (100) teachers, considered as respondents, were randomly selected across the schools in Kontagora. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using mean scores. Analysis shows a mean score of 1.56, SD 0.21, DF 149, Z.Test 2.41, P.Value 1.2, which indicates rejection, which by implication shows a significant impact of philanthropy on education. The findings of this study revealed that there are hardly interventions from philanthropists in education at the Primary school level. It revealed that there is a significant impact of philanthropists on the educational development of pupils in Kontagora area. It is recommended among others that philanthropists improve their sacrificial efforts toward providing for the education of pupils in primary schools in the Kontagora area of Niger State, Nigeria.

**Keywords**: Family, Philanthropy, Primary Education, Pupils

## Introduction

The role of philanthropists as critical stakeholders in the knowledge industry is fundamental to the progress and development of children and society at large. This is the reason the national policy on education in Nigeria is aimed at creating an egalitarian society and provides free basic education for all (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2013). The changing landscape of the roles of philanthropists as actors in the development sector and the call for their active participation in education in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals have prompted renewed discussions on collaborations with critical stakeholders like the philanthropists on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Globally, Philanthropists are being called upon to solve some of the world's most complex social development challenges (Kotecki, 2018).

Initiative by prominent philanthropists, such as the Giving Pledge that was launched by Warren Buffett, Elon Musk and Bill Gates in 2010, to secure commitments from billionaires to give at least half of their wealth to charity is a good example of how well-meaning individuals around the world are helping developments in the education sector. In 2019, for example, 188 billionaires from 22 countries (The Giving Pledge, n.d.) signed the pledge which then, which was then expected to hit USD 600 billion by 2020. Given the substantial gap in government and donor funds for education reform in developing countries, many actors in the education community have made the case for philanthropy champions like Bill Gates, Warren and others to catalyse discussions and mobilise substantial investments for education in not only developing countries but rural communities in Nigeria (Brown, 2012; The Global Partnership for Education, 2017); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018).

In Nigeria and, in particular, Kontagora, the role of philanthropists in education reform is severely understudied and underutilised. This is because there is hardly any visible infrastructure donated to schools, especially to private schools in Kontagora, even when we have the presence of personalities like Col. Sani Bello, Abubakar Sani Bello, (the immediate past Governor of Niger State and Senator representing Niger South Senatorial District (zone C), Abdulmalik Malikiya, (the Speaker of the Niger State House of Assembly) and Corporate Bodies as A. A. Rano Group of Companies, SSASMA OIL, to say the least, are wealthy individuals and companies that could subscribe and support any initiatives to provide quality education for children of school age in Kontagora. This paper, therefore, provides advocacy that is expected to change the narrative towards the plight of the education of primary school pupils in Kontagora.

The concept of philanthropy is generally conceived as the voluntary or wilful giving of private resources, be it financial, human, or material, for the promotion of the common good. Scholars (Payton & Moody, 2008; Anheier & Toepler, 1999) are of the view that philanthropy is rooted in humanity, benevolence, and social responsibility, yet it also carries embedded cultural and political meanings. It is described as occupying the middle ground between the state and the market, filling resource and service gaps where government provision is insufficient. In educational discourse, philanthropy is often understood as the donation of funds or expertise to schools, scholarships, and educational reform initiatives (Bremner, 1988). The concept extends beyond mere charity to include structured forms of giving, such as endowed foundations and trust funds, that sustain long-term educational programs (Frumkin, 2006).

Philanthropy is increasingly recognised as a crucial actor in the educational landscape, filling gaps left by state and market mechanisms. Reckhow and Snyder (2014) argue that the expanding role of philanthropy has moved beyond charitable giving to active participation in shaping education politics and reform agendas. Similarly, Terway and Ridge (2019) describe philanthropy in education as both diverse and global, encompassing traditional donations, endowments, and innovative partnerships that often blur the lines between public and private interests.

**Roles of Philanthropists in Educational Development**

**Financing and Resource Provision**

Historical and contemporary evidence show that philanthropists build schools, libraries, and laboratories, as well as fund scholarships for underprivileged students. For instance, Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations in the early 20th century expanded higher education and scientific research in the United States and abroad (Bremner, 1988; Curti & Nash, 1965). Philanthropists contribute directly to education through scholarships, infrastructure, and financial aid. For instance, studies in China have shown that education philanthropy significantly improves the well-being of low-income and gifted students by enhancing access and building human capital (Children and Youth Services Review, 2019).

**Promoting Innovation**

Philanthropy has often funded experimental models of schooling and teacher education. Foundations have provided seed funding for new curricula, educational technologies, and alternative schooling arrangements (Frumkin, 2006). Foundations frequently sponsor pilot programs, curriculum reforms, and the integration of technology in classrooms. According to Erfurth and Ridge (2021), philanthropy often plays a “venture capital” role in education, testing new models that governments later scale up.

**Policy Influence and Advocacy**

Philanthropists also act as agenda-setters by funding policy research and advocacy. This influence has been both praised for enabling reform and criticised for advancing elite preferences in public education (Berman, 1983; Arnove, 1980). Beyond material support, philanthropists shape education policy through advocacy and research funding. Reckhow and Snyder (2014) highlight how large foundations use strategic grant-making to promote reform agendas such as charter schools and accountability systems. Lewis (2017) adds that philanthropic organisations are increasingly embedded in global governance initiatives like the OECD’s PISA for Schools, raising questions about the balance of public and private power in education.

**Human Capital Development**

Scholarships and bursary schemes provided by philanthropists have widened access to education for marginalised groups. Such interventions are viewed as significant contributions to social mobility and national development (Becker, 1993).

**Global and Crisis Response**

Philanthropy has also played a crucial role in sustaining education during crises. During COVID-19, OECD (2021) reported that philanthropic contributions supported remote learning initiatives, digital tools, and interventions to mitigate disruptions in low- and middle-income countries (Abdulbaqi et al., 2024). While philanthropy's contributions are significant, Lewis (2017) warns that philanthropists may prioritise their own preferences over community needs, potentially undermining democratic accountability. Terway and Ridge (2019) further note issues of equity, as philanthropic investments sometimes favour high-visibility institutions or urban centres rather than marginalised communities. Sustainability remains another concern: OECD (2021) cautions that short-term philanthropic projects can falter without long-term governmental integration.

**Statement of the Problem**

The acceptance of the idea that money makes things happen is becoming increasingly relevant. It is believed that philanthropists possess wealth, money and resources, contacts and competencies necessary to support children's development and learning (Jeffries, 2012; Lombardi et al., 2014). Unfortunately, as critical as the role of philanthropists is in the growth and development of education, these acclaimed impacts have not been so felt in the education of primary school-age children in Kontagora. Why this is so is a matter for conjecture and warrants serious questioning. To this extent, it is good to ask if there are philanthropic gestures to schools in Kontagora. Are schools properly utilising opportunities from donors? Is finance a reason for low pupil enrolment in Kontagora? Do philanthropists have any role to play in the education of primary school-age children in Kontagora? These and many more are questions that beg the answers in this study.

**Research Objectives**

The general objective of this research is to assess the impacts of Philanthropists on the Education of Primary School Pupils in Kontagora. However, the specific objectives are listed below:

1. To determine the enrolment rate of primary school pupils in Kontagora area of Niger state
2. To identify challenges in primary education in the Kontagora area of Niger state
3. Assess the impacts of philanthropists on education at the primary school in the Kontagora area of Niger state

**Research Questions**

1. What is the enrolment rate of primary school pupils in Kontagora area of Niger State?
2. What are the challenges of primary education in the Kontagora area of Niger State?
3. What are the impacts of philanthropists on education at the primary school in the Kontagora area of Niger state?

**Hypothesis**

1. There are no significant impacts of philanthropists on primary school education in Kontagora Metropolis of Niger State.

**Methodology**

The research was conducted using a survey research design. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to enable the researcher to obtain the necessary data on the variables under study. A 16-item structured questionnaires were designed and administered to respondents. The sample size of eighty (80) proprietors/head teachers and one hundred (100) teachers, considered as respondents, were randomly selected across the schools in Kontagora. The data were analysed using the mean score.

**Result**

**Research question 1: What is the enrolment rate of primary schools in Kontagora?**

**Table 1: Enrolment Rate of Primary School Pupils in Kontagora**

| S/N | Variables | Means (SD±) | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pupils' enrolment in primary school in Kontagora is poor | 1.76 (1.05) | Agree |
| 2 | Interest in school is very high among primary school pupils in Kontagora. | 2.42 (0.78) | Disagree |
| 3 | There is gross neglect of primary education in Kontagora | 2.25 (0.79) | Disagree |
| 4 | The government is totally involved in education at the primary level in Kontagora | 1.80 (0.65) | Agree |
| 5 | Primary schools in Kontagora receive willful donations in the form of supplies of textbooks, notebooks, pencils/birro, furniture, classroom block, medical, and sporting equipment from critical state holders in Kontagora | 3.69 (0.80) | Disagree |
| | **Cluster Mean** | **2.43** | |

Source: fieldwork, 2025

The result presented in Table 1 above shows a mean weight of 2.43 enrolment rate of primary schools in Kontagora. The result indicates that pupils' enrolment in primary schools in Kontagora is very poor. From the data, respondents with a mean score of 2.42 also indicated pupils don't have interest in school as while there is gross neglect of primary education in the community, with 2.25. A few of the respondents, with a mean score of 1.80, indicated that the government is involved in education at the primary level. The mass of the respondents, with a mean score of 3.69, strongly affirmed that primary school in Kontagora has not substantially received teaching aids, sporting activities, bursaries, or classroom blocks from wilful stakeholders/donors.

**Research Question Two: What are the Challenges of Primary Education in Kontagora?**

**Table 2: Challenges of Primary Education in Kontagora**

| S/N | Variables | Means (SD±) | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Inadequately qualified staff is a major problem of primary education in Kontagora | 1.76 (0.81) | Agree |
| 2 | Primary schools in Kontagora have conducive classrooms for learning to take place. | 3.44 (0.85) | Disagree |
| 3 | All primary schools in Kontagora have standard sporting equipment's | 2.37 (1.13) | Disagree |
| 4 | Staff remuneration is critical to the success of primary education, and all primary schools in Kontagora pay their staff well as at when due | 3.83 (0.42) | Agree |
| 5 | Staff motivation is central to effective service delivery at the primary school level, and primary school teachers are well motivated | 2.41 (0.82) | Disagree |
| 6 | Parents and philanthropists play a crucial role in primary education in Kontagora | 2.68 (1.16) | Agree |
| | **Cluster Mean** | **2.74** | |

Source: fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 shows different variables pointing to challenges of primary education in Kontagora. Data gathered from the respondents with a mean score of 1.76 (0.81±) has strongly indicated that in adequate qualified staff is one of the key problems of primary schools in Kontagora. Respondents with a mean score of 2.37 from the sample population disagree that primary school in Kontagora doesn't have conducive classrooms for learning to take place, as while standard sporting activities. Critical to success of primary education and all primary school is their remuneration highest mean score of 3.83 was recorded from the respondent that Kontagora pay their staff well as at when due, respondent with mean score of 2.41 went further to disagree with the statement that staff motivation is central to effective service delivery at the primary school level and that primary school teachers are well motivated. The majority of the respondents have accent that parents and philanthropists play a crucial role in primary education in Kontagora (Table 2)

**Research Question 3: What is the Contribution of Parents and Philanthropists to Education in Kontagora?**

**Table 3: Contribution of Parents and Philanthropists to Education in Kontagora**

| S/N | Variables | Means (SD±) | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Parents are very understanding and supportive of the primary school's management | 2.35 (1.03) | Disagree |
| 2 | During price and speech day, well-meaning individuals donate handsomely to support pupils who have done well and people who have needed help | 3.05 (1.15) | Disagree |
| 3 | Primary schools in Kontagora have, over time pass received financial support, blocks of those primary schools for classrooms, computer laboratory donations, boreholes, scholarship/bursary, solar panels and electric installations, and supply of school uniforms are regularly donated to primary schools in Kontagora | 3.31 (0.77) | Disagree |
| 4 | Parents usually come to school to fight teachers who punish their children for misbehaving in school. | 3.27 (0.73) | Disagree |
| 5 | Primary schools in Kontagora are all performing to an optimum standard | 3.47 (0.62) | Disagree |
| | **Cluster Mean** | **2.74** | |

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The result from table 3, which answered the research question on the contribution of parents and philanthropists to education in Kontagora, data gathered from the respondents with mean score of 2.35 from the sample population showed that parents are not supportive of primary education neither did well-meaning individuals committed and supportive of pupils who have done well during price and speech day as showed in Table 3. The result with a mean score of 3.05 from the sample population indicates pupils who have done well in learning hardly got support during price day and night from well-meaning individuals and philanthropists. Respondents with a mean score of 3.31 from the sample population have strongly disagreed that primary schools in Kontagora in the past have never received financial aid, blocks of those primary schools in classrooms, computer laboratory donation, boreholes, scholarship/bursary, solar panels and electric installations, or the supply of school uniforms. The majority of the respondents, with a mean score of 3.27 has strongly disagree that parents never fight teachers who punish their children. Respondent with a mean score of 3.47 has also affirmed that primary schools in Kontagora are not performing to the optimum standard.

**Test of Hypothesis**

**Table 4: Ho: There is no Significant Impact of the Philanthropist instrument on Primary School Education in Kontagora**

| Variables | Mean | SD | DF | Z. Test | P. Value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sample size | 1.56 | 0.21 | 149 | 2.41 | 1.21 | Rejected |

From Table 4 above, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is a significant impact of philanthropic gestures on the education of primary school pupils. By implication, philanthropists can impact the primary education of pupils in the Kontagora area of Niger state.

**Discussion of Findings**

This study is an assessment of the impacts of the family and philanthropists on the education of primary school pupils in the Kontagora area of Niger State, Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that the enrolment rate of primary school pupils in Kontagora is very poor; pupils don't have interest in school; the government is involved in education at the primary level; primary schools in Kontagora have not substantially received teaching aids, sporting activities, bursaries, and classroom blocks from willing stakeholders/donors. These conclusions corroborate the earlier assertion of Cohen (2014): Dean(2013).

The study also revealed that there are challenges inhibiting primary education in Kontagora; inadequate, qualified staff as key problems of primary schools in Kontagora; primary schools do not have conducive classrooms for learning to take place; primary school teachers are not well-motivated. These results confirm the earlier study by The Global Partnership for Education(2017).

The study further revealed that parents and philanthropist are not supportive of primary education neither did they support pupils who have done well during price and speech day; especially, the private primary schools in Kontagora hardly receive financial aid/grants, donation of classrooms blocks, laboratories, boreholes, scholarship/bursary, solar light and electric installation, supply of school uniform; parents aggress teachers who punish their children; primary schools in Kontagora are not performing to optimum standard. These reports support the claim of Johnson(2018); Nurhayati (2021) in the literature reviewed.

**Conclusion**

This study assessed the impacts of family and philanthropists on the education of primary school children in Kontagora. The usefulness of the family and philanthropists is significantly understudied and underutilised in Kontagora. This trend has not improved education in the area. It has led to poorer academic performances and poor school administration, thus exacerbating dropout rates. Without effective interventions, the cycle of poverty and illiteracy is likely to continue, adversely affecting subsequent generations. Educators and community leaders need to collaborate on strategies that alleviate economic burdens and promote the importance of education for children.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested for the government, private school authorities, family/philanthropists and other stakeholders in the education sector to ensure improved and quality education in Kontagora;

1. The government should implement social welfare programs aimed at supporting low-income families to reduce their financial needs.
2. Private School owners should provide platforms, working out a robust plan/initiatives that would enhance commitments and collaborations from the community, which will generate donations and support to schools in Kontagora.
3. Collaborate with philanthropists/NGOs to provide vocational training and skills development programs for school children, such that they would provide alternative sources of income.

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