

Effect of Material Facilities on Childhood Education in Primary Schools of Oyo State

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Abstract

This paper investigated the effect of material facilities on childhood education among primary schools in Idi-Ayunre in Oluyole Local Government area of Oyo state. The research design adopted for this study was the expost facto research design. The study adopted survey method in form of administering copies of structured questionnaire to randomly selected respondent. The participants for the study consisted of 150 primary school students (97 males, 53 females), and 50 teachers randomly drawn from five (5) primary schools in Idi-Ayunre in Oluyole Local Government Area of Oyo State. The participants responded to a self-constructed questionnaire titled “influence of material facilities on childhood education questionnaire” to elicit information on material facilities and childhood education. The data generated were subjected to descriptive analysis using simple percentile and chi-square test of association. The Chi-square value obtained is 35.465, $df=12$, at $p=0.000$. Since the p -value is less than .05, the stated null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This result revealed that material facilities are inadequately available for primary school pupils, and majority of these facilities are in manageable condition. It was revealed that material facilities do influence childhood education. Since material facilities are not made available to pupils in the area of study then the government and the community should work together to improved adequate facilities for the childhood education in rural Primary schools.

Key words: Childhood, Facilities, Primary school

Introduction

Childhood education is the education received by children during the early stages of their physical and mental development. It is also called primary education which is formulated in the national education system of 6-3-3-4 of six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary, and another three years of senior secondary education and four years of University education. Primary education is embedded in the political, cultural and economic condition of National development. It is considered all over the world as the educational foundation of building a capacity for life-long learning in individuals, develop knowledge, skills and foundation in people which will contribute to the general development of the community in which the individuals live by meeting manpower needs for improving the community life.

It is however important to note that the success of childhood education is dependent on the available material facilities in primary schools.

Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (1996) described the environment of an organization as all elements relevant to its operation and they include direct and indirect action elements. School facilities, constitute the major components of both direct and indirect action elements in the environment of learning. Several studies have shown that a close relationship exists between the physical environment and the academic performance of students. Nwagwu (1978) and Ogunsaju (1980) maintained that the quality of education that children receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack thereof of physical facilities and overall atmosphere in which learning takes place. The school facilities consist of all types of buildings for academic and non-academic activities, equipment for academic and non-academic activities, areas for sports and games, landscape, farms and gardens including trees, roads and paths. Others include furniture and toilet facilities, lighting, acoustics, storage facilities and parking lot, security, transportation, ICT, cleaning materials, food services, and special facilities for the physically challenged persons. These facilities play pivotal role in the actualization of the educational goals and objectives by satisfying the physical and emotional needs of the staff and students of the school. Knezevich (1975, p.563) emphasized

that the physical needs are met through provision of safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, a balanced visual environment, appropriate thermal environment, and sufficient shelter space for his work and play. His emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surrounding, a friendly atmosphere, and an inspiring environment. The educational system has undergone tremendous changes in the form of its philosophy, broadened goals and objectives, new approaches to service delivery and architectural design, quantum leap in school enrolment, multiplicity of curricula programmes and extra-curricula activities, introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and expanded academic support services such as guidance services to students, teachers and the community, integration of the school and community. The resultant effect of all these changes is the need for creative and innovative steps in the management of school facilities. For example, research findings have shown that students learn better when a combination of methods and materials are employed during teaching. Furthermore, emphasis has shifted towards giving individual attention to students as against teaching large classes which presupposes that all students in a class have the ability to learn at the same pace. The implication of the foregoing is that in designing school plant, provision should be made for individual and small group interaction and for large groups for academic and social activities. Fenker (2004) stated that facilities management is a process that ensures that buildings and other technical systems support the operations of an organization.

The International Facilities Management Association (2002) described facilities management as the practice of co-ordination of the physical workplace with the people and the work of the organization; it integrates the principles of business administration, architecture and the behavioural and engineering sciences.

Nigeria is currently facing a challenging time in providing her young citizens' quality education. Some important issues facing Nigeria's policy makers include ineffective planning and implementation of programmes, accountability, and management of scarce resources, shortage of highly qualified early childhood teachers, undefined curriculum and inclusion. In agreement with the above, Mindes (2007) added that early childhood

educators' challenges are enormous and they include parent partnership, respect for cultural diversity, appropriate early intervention assessment, and linking curriculum and assessment practices appropriately. Gbadamosi (2005) opines that children education is needed for cognitive enrichment, social, physical and emotional development. He stresses further that these developments cannot be realistic without adequate material facilities. In line with his opinion, it is believed that children learn faster from what they see and from what they are told, so there is need to expose them to different material facilities which can aid their learning process and reduce educational stress. Appropriate material facilities offer pupils the spirit of inquiry, creativity through exploration of their local environment and nature with the rudimentary teaching approaches of numbers, letters, shapes forms as models and evolutionary means for excellent educational performance and enhancement of moral rectitude in school children. It places the pupils at the center of learning activities and provides opportunities for adequate care, supervision and competitiveness of children to future task while their parents are at work.

However, the poor infrastructural amenities in the rural area have a bearing effect on the available material facilities to pupils, which includes: inadequate classroom space, furniture, equipment for teaching and learning, lack of easy access to safe drinking water, hygienic sanitation and health facilities, poorly- motivated teachers and use of substandard teaching methodologies employed by teachers. Schools that are characterized by the above educational materials are not likely to provide quality education for the children Olaleye(2011).

According to Ndukwe (2009), many of these schools have no adequate games and recreational facilities. This invariably leads to monotony of educational activities to the rural pupils, many of whose parents are illiterates and not well- schooled. At this junction there is need to investigate whether or not inadequacy and unavailability of material facilities could have influence on childhood education in primary schools of Oyo State

Research Questions:

1. What kind of relevant teaching and non-teaching materials facilities are available in the selected primary schools?

2. What are the importances of teaching and non-teaching materials facilities in rural primary schools?
3. What are the strategies of implementing teaching and non-teaching materials facilities on childhood educational curriculum
4. Do these facilities available in the rural primary schools meet the global standard of facilities that should be provided in primary schools?
5. What are the relevant steps needed to be taken in ensuring adequate impact of material facilities on childhood education in primary schools of Oyo state

Research Hypothesis

- There is no significant effect of material facilities on early childhood education.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because Reliable and adequate material facilities at the rural primary schools are crucial to excellent educational performance and acquisition of vocational skills that promote human capacity development and national development. Material facilities are pivot to equip children with the needed skills to function effectively in the society. It also lays the sound foundation for critical and reflective thinking among children as the future leaders in any nation. The poor administration, insufficient and non-efficient material facilities in addition to low funding of primary education in rural areas are limiting the potential of rural children to benefit optimally from the national policy of universal access to primary education. The study may stimulate the need to examine the primary education offered at the rural area through the material facilities provided in order to stem child labour and prepare a good stage for better productive lives in the rural children, parents and teachers.

Literature Review

Material facilities the term material facilities can also be referred to as school plant which includes the school building, playground, furniture, classrooms, library, chalkboard, instructional materials hostels, and swings

etc. Material facilities / school plant is also a term used by school board members and other staff when talking about the school building maintenance and part of a building . This can also be commonly characterized by school building and other features on the land where the school is located. Gbadamosi (2005) defined school plants as the buildings, classrooms, corridor, playground and others as the basic instrument in education.

Gbadamosi (2005) further explain that the relationship between material facilities and the school building cannot be far-fetched as it provides a well, suitable and conducive area for teaching and learning. The classroom is an organized part of the material facilities where teaching and learning takes place. Also, other aspects of the material facilities like corridor, football field, and volley ball pitch provide an avenue for pleasure as they serve as recreational places.

Childhood education is inseparable from material facilities. The roles of material facilities are expressly stated:

1. Support teaching and learning process
2. Provide avenue for recreational purposes e.g, Children playing with the swings

Childhood Education

Oatley and Jennifer.M (1995) asserted that early childhood education, as a branch of educational theory which relates to the teaching of young children until the age of about eight, with particular focus on education, notable in the period before the start of compulsory education.

Education starts from the cradle. Experts say catching children young with quality education remains a veritable tool to lifelong development. The future of a nation's socio-economic and political wellbeing lies with the quality of children's education because they are the future leaders. If they have a shaky foundation when it comes to education, it will surely affect their lives when they are adults and in turn the Nation.

The early years from birth to five years of age are an important time in any child's life. Children go through a huge variety of learning stage during this time, making great steps, and what they learn at a young stage offers an important foundation for their learning in later life. The learning process starts from home and then move to the school.

Early childhood education (ECE) is based on the idea that learning begins at birth, and that caring for children and educating them should be inseparable. The practice focuses on the years from birth to age eight, and people who have specialized degrees in this field often work in nurseries, daycare facilities, preschools, and kindergartens. Cathy Laszewski (2004).

Education and care for young children – three-, four- and five-year-olds – goes by many names: child care, day care, nursery school, preschool, pre-kindergarten, and early education. It is delivered in many settings: center-based, home-based or at the local public school, in urban, suburban and rural communities.

Early childhood education (ECE) is a critical first step in building the foundation for a child's learning and development. Much of the philosophy of early childhood education is based on the idea that children learn through play. Oyedeji (1999). By focusing on the types of play children engage in, or by participating and helping in children's play, parents and caregivers can learn to make the most of these activities and prepare children for future education. Developing an identity and sense of self is also central to education, where children are learning about whom they are, their relationships to others, and their culture and language.

Marily (2004), viewed a primary school, sometimes referred to as elementary school, as a school in which children receive primary or elementary education between the ages of about five to eleven, coming before secondary school and after preschool. It is the first stage of compulsory education in most parts of the world, and is normally available without charge, but may be a fee-paying independent school. It is a type of school which provides primary education to children, often in the age range from 8 and 12, following Infant school which covers the age range 5-7.

Education in Nigeria is vital and has been adequately challenged. The survival of this engine house which services the country should be of primary concern. According to Afigbo(2004), "education is the aggregate of ideas, methods, institutions, facilities and personnel, designed and deployed by society to teach its members how to get through life by doing or by nursing and realizing set goals" . If the foundation is shaky, what happens to the building? Primary education translates the ideas of

educational system into reality. It is to be noted that primary education or elementary education often in primary school or elementary school is typically the first stage of compulsory education, coming between early childhood education and secondary education.

In most countries, it is compulsory for children to receive primary education although it is permissible for parents to provide it. The major goals of primary education are achieving basic literacy and numeracy among all pupils, as well as establishing foundations in science, mathematics, geography, history and other social sciences. Basic sexual education is also received by pupils attending primary school. The relative priority of various areas, and the methods used to teach them, are an area of considerable political debate.

Ajibade, B. and N. Elemi(2012) stated primary education is provided in schools, where the child will stay in steadily advancing classes until they complete it and move on to high school/secondary school. Children are usually placed in classes with one teacher who will be primarily responsible for their education and welfare for that year. This teacher may be assisted by varying degrees of specialist teachers in certain subject areas, often music or physical education. The continuity with a single teacher and the opportunity to build up a close relationship with the class is a notable feature of the primary education system. Various forms of corporal punishment have been an integral part of early education. This practice has recently come under scrutiny and in many cases has been outlawed, especially in Western countries. Ajibade, B. and N. Elemi(2012).

School and Material Facilities

The school environment and facilities should be specifically designed to enhance teaching and learning, providing a bright, well-resourced and motivational environment of students. Schools and educational facilities include not only classrooms but also athletic facilities and playgrounds, and even libraries.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act (2004) has an expanded scope which includes programmes and initiatives for early childhood education and development. The UBE programme has made provision

for every public primary school to have a pre-primary school linkage to cater for children aged 3-5 years. This linkage will serve as a strategy for getting children ready for school and school ready for children (Hua, 2010).

An inventory of ECC faculty in Nigeria conducted by FGN/NERDC/UNICEF in 2003 showed that most of the ECC facilities are private owned (42% of the sample population are private owned and 34% by the government, followed by 21% by local communities). Now that the Early Childhood Development Programme is covered by the UBE law, government ownership at state/LGA/community level is certain to increase, particularly regarding centre's catering for the 3-5years olds. Early childhood care has been included in the Bachelor's degree curriculum of the Faculty of Education of some of Nigeria's Universities since 1991. The concept has also been integrated in the syllabus of Colleges of Education through out the country. In-services training on the early childhood development concept and learner centered pedagogy for handling young children is continually provided to teacher/caregivers in public ECC/ pre-school facilities in UNICEF supported I I I focus LGAs nationwide. However, only now it is being recognized that early childhood care and early stimulation is the basis upon which attainment of the child's fullest potential depends.

The Child Right Act (2003), the UBE Act (2004), the National Policy on Education, Food, Nutrition and Health are laws and policies which have given shape to different sectoral interventions on Early Childhood Care and development in Nigeria. Currently however, an Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) policy, that integrates interventions from the various sectors to promote an integrated holistic approach to the development of the child in its very earliest years.

Efforts are also targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children through community- driven and home based care and support for young children age 0-3 years supported by UNICEF in 222 focus communities nationwide has boosted access of very vulnerable and disadvantaged children to early childcare and early learning (UNESCO 2007). Launching of the children and AIDS campaign in Nigeria with increased focus, care and attention to children affected by the HIV and AIDS' scourge.

Increased advocacy has been mounted with government and other stakeholders to ensure that young children are fully protected from the scourge of the disease. According to UNESCO (2007), the curriculum for Early Childhood Education in Nigeria was reviewed and revised in 2003/2004 using an integrated bottom up approach, targeting children age 0-5 years. This revised curriculum has been approved for use by the government, and a training manual to facilitate use of the curriculum; is in process of development. the training manual is expected to promotes the integrated approach and cover all sectoral interventions- health, nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, psycho-social care, early learning and creating a conducive environment for them to service, live, learn and reach their full potentials.

A School that Matches Young Children

The first step in creating an appropriate environment for infants, toddlers, and preschool children is to examine how young children learn and develop. Each stage of development has unique characteristics that influence how a child will experience his or her environment. Rebecca (2004). For example, infants and toddlers learn about their world by acting on objects and materials in their environment. As the toddler feels the texture of a beach ball, pushes the air filled object, and rolls it across the carpeted floor, he constructs an understanding of the ball. Because infants and toddlers learn by interacting with the environment, their space must be designed with many opportunities for physically exploring real materials. Varied materials are stored where the child can easily select them. Other items are placed where they are not visible but can be retrieved when a specific activity or individual need occurs.

Preschoolers are active learners who continue to examine materials while beginning to use objects in more complex combinations. They are developing symbolic representation as they take on roles and participate in socio-dramatic play. Their language explodes during this period as they try to find “labels” for the objects and people in their world. Language gives young children the power to question and find answers.

Learning centers are effective ways to organize and support these developing abilities. The center areas clearly communicate to

preschoolers what activity occurs in this area and the available materials that will stimulate their play. Traditional centers as well as unique centers encourage language interactions, socio-dramatic play, and the construction of experiences based on their level of understanding. By adding literacy materials including books, paper and writing tools, this construction will include “reading and writing” opportunities.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study is the ex-post- facto research design. It is adopted because it a systematic means of data collection which can be used to collect data from sample considered to be representative of the group and to specify how much of such data will be collected and analyzed. It is employed for accurate assessment of the attributes of the population under study. The sampling technique adopted was simple random sampling technique. A total of 150 pupils and 50 teachers were randomly selected from five (5) primary schools, 30 pupils from each school. The main data gathering instrument used was a questionnaire titled “Effect of Material Facilities on Childhood Education Questionnaire”. Data obtained from the administered questionnaire was analysed simple percentage using chi square statistical tool to find out the relationship between educational facilities and childhood education.

Findings

Analysis of demographic data

The sex of respondents 53(35.3%) Female, and 97(64.7) of Male, Family type of respondents were Monogamy 105(70.0%), Polygamy 36(24.0%) and 9(6.0%), Occupation of the respondent 28(18.7%) Farming, 10 (6.7%) Hunting 19(12.7%) Carpentry, Fishing 82(54.7%) and Others (specify) 11 (7.3%)

Present class of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
No response	4	2.7
pry 1	11	7.3
pry 2	10	6.7
pry 3	17	11.3
pry 4	16	10.7
pry 5	12	8.0
pry 6	80	53.3
Total	150	100.0

The mean and standard deviation of the score were 1.647 and 0.479 respectively. The result is presented in table 4.2.1 below:

No	Item Description	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	Mean	Decision
1	Any instructional material will do for children in early childhood	20.7	15.3	37.8	26.1	2.31	Disagree
2	Children in rural primary school do not need formal academic instruction	9.9	15.3	39.6	35.1	2	Disagree
3	Whole group instruction and learning by cramming are not appropriate for childhood	14.5	22.7	40	22.7	2.30	Disagree
4	Assess childhood based on their inters, needs and ability is not necessary	7.3	15.5	31.8	45.5	1.85	Disagree
5	Our school does not have materials that will assist nursery children to develop their talent	20	21.8	20	38.2	2.24	Disagree
6	Our teacher have not been train on how to work with children	5.5	7.3	28.2	59.1	1.59	Disagree
7	We do not have a curriculum to use in teaching our children in early childhood	12.7	12.7	29.1	45.5	1.93	Disagree
8	No need to each children in our culture by involving the parent and community in our early primary stage	9.2	12.8	30.3	47.7	1.83	Disagree
9	I have received training in how to work with children in early childhood	8	13.4	38.4	40.2	1.89	Disagree

F= frequency P= Percentage

Teacher's data presented on table above shows that the mean responses of respondents to all the items are well below the mean rating 2.50. These findings seem to suggest that all the respondents conversely agreed that appropriate instructional materials, formal academic

instructions, use of teaching and learning strategies, use of hands-on materials, training of teachers, appropriate curriculum, and integration of families and communities are essential to early childhood education in the selected community. The 63.9, 74.7, 62.7, 77.3, 58.2, 87.3, 74.6, 78, and 78.6 percentage ratings on *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* responses further underscore the importance of innovative and integrative teaching practices in Early Childhood Education.

Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis I; there is no significant effect of material facilities on early childhood education in Oluyole Local Government area of Oyo state.

Chi-square was used to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in table 4.3 below;

Table 3: Effect of educational facilities on childhood education

Childhood Education	Educational Facilities			High Total	X ²	df	P
	Low level	Moderate level	level				
Primary one	2 (18.2%)	9 (81.8%)	0(0.0%)	11(100.0%)	35.465	12	0.000
Primary two	3(30.0%)	7(70.0%)	0(0.0%)	10(100.0%)			
Primary three	5(29.4%)	9(52.9%)	3(17.6%)	17(100.0%)			
Primary four	4(25.0%)	3(18.8%)	9(56.3%)	16(100.0%)			
Primary five	6(50.0%)	6(50.0%)	0(0.0%)	12(100.0%)			
Primary six	27(33.8%)	43(53.8)	10(12.5%)	80(100.0%)			
Total	50(33.3%)	78(52.0%)	22(14.7%)	150(100.0%)			

The table above shows the effect of material facilities on early childhood education in Oluyole local government area of Oyo state. The Chi-square value obtained is 35.465, df= 12, at p=0. 000. Since the p-value is less than .05, the stated null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It can now be concluded that material facilities do affect early childhood education.

Discussion of Findings

The findings made in this research had shown that material facilities are made available to pupils in the area of study. This is evident as majority

(83.3%) of the total respondents responded that material facilities are made available in their school, while only 16.7% responded that their school has no material facilities. Research has shown that higher classroom quality in early childhood learning environments is predictive of child cognitive and social outcomes, with children who experience higher quality doing much better than children in lower-quality early learning environments Burchinal, Howes, & Konto. However, the result of this research shows that the academic/classroom facilities available to the sampled students were in manageable/poor condition. This is evident as 14.7% of the total respondents responded that the material facilities available to them are in good condition. More than half (52.0%) of the respondents indicated that the facilities available are in manageable condition, while the remaining 33.3% responded that the facilities are actually in poor condition.

The research also shows that the schools under study have environments that are purposefully designed; this made it to be conducive for learning. This is evident as majority (63.3%) of the total respondents responded that the school environment where their school are located are conducive for learning, while 36.7% responded that the school environment are not conducive for learning. A purposeful environmental design in early childhood education is of great importance as it builds comfort for children and their parents. Teachers have minimized management issues, while there is support for children in their quest to construct knowledge. (Miller,2002).

Conclusion

From the above analysis questionnaire given to the teachers it could be determine from the respondent that any instructional material will not do for children in early childhood there is need for special instructional material and children in rural primary school do not need formal academic instruction they will probably need a play way academic instructional it could also be noted that whole group instruction and learning by cramming are not appropriate for childhood and assess childhood based on their inters, needs and ability is necessary. All the school visited does not have materials that will assist nursery children to develop their talent

and most of the teacher have not been train on how to work with children, most school in the rural do not have a curriculum to use in teaching children in early childhood and most of their parents are not involved in their child and community education and most of the teachers have not received training in how to work with children in early childhood.

Nevertheless, the researchers observed that preschool teachers studied acknowledged the use of a whole group instrument and rote learning strategies; which invariably contradicts the findings of Marcon (2002) and Sacks and Ruzzi (2005) studies. The need to innovate teaching practices in Nigerian preprimary institutions by modifying or doing away with the traditional teacher directed academic approach for a more result-oriented, child directed approach is imperative. The latter will make for an enabling environment where the need, abilities, interests and talents of the child are identified through individual instruction and assessment, and then maximized through teacher facilitated but unlimited learning activities that uses hands-on materials.

The Early Childhood Development programme is confronted with challenges of training, recruitment and certification of early childhood caregivers. Provision of continuous capacity building trainings, learning materials that are age appropriate and a nationally accepted child-friendly curriculum for teaching preschool children are indispensably needed. On the other hand, strong home-school partnership, long-term projects, the recognition of multiple symbolic languages possessed by children, and the role of child's environment as teacher must be prioritized. It is understood that Early Childhood Education should not be solely based on formal curricular, but on child-directed education. Government should reflect on early childhood policies and practices in developed nations like the United States to improve on current system.

Recommendations

- I. Capacity building workshops should be organized to train or retrain preschool teachers so as to address the observed gaps in and discrepancies between teacher qualification and experiences.

2. Teacher preparation programmes should give them better knowledge of children's development and of appropriate pedagogy for young children.
3. Higher classroom quality in early childhood learning environments is predictive of child cognitive and social outcomes
4. The federal government should fund high-quality preschools for all children to encourage the future leaders.
5. environments must be purposefully designed to made it to be conducive for young children learning
6. Innovative and integrative teaching practices on Early Childhood Education must be encouraged by the government.
7. Government should reflect on early childhood policies and practices in developed nations like the United States to improve on current system.

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