

An Evaluation of School Resources in Pre-Primary Education: A Case Study of Badagry Local Government Education Authority of Lagos State

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Abstract

Education is the right of every child and must not be deprived for any reason. This assertion was made at the world Education summit. Early childhood care and Education therefore, has been discovered as foundation for learning throughout life and to promote holistic development in a child. The early life years of a child are very important for its later development, as the child grows his parents, peers and other members of the immediate environment influence his attitudes, habits and beliefs were also found in order to effectively and positively assist the child to develop properly, therefore there is need to truly knows and understand the child. This study evaluates the public pre-primary Education in Local Government Education Authority in Badagry. To find out whether or not the schools meet the guidelines as spelt out in the National minimum standard on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) 2007. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study, the samples design methods used comprises of 10 schools randomly selected from the LGEA in Badagry Local government Education. The instrument used was a checklist based on the content of the Environment model. Result of the finding revealed that the environment was not suitable for meaningful learning and instructional materials and facilities were inadequate. However, the teachers were qualified to teach the pupils. It was recommended that government should provide adequate toys, play materials and other instructional materials to meet the developmental needs of the children at this level of education.

Keywords: School Resources, Pre-primary Education, Evaluation technique, Badagry LGEA.

Introduction

Early Childhood Education is the foundation on which other forms of education are built i.e primary, secondary and tertiary education. As a foundation, it determines what the outlook of subsequent levels of education would be. Hence, it exposes the child to the outside world and trains the child to know their environment. Research evidences revealed that early childhood education has significant influence on all round development and the later life of a child (Agi &Ukoima 2018, Odiagbe 2015).

Early Childhood Education is a branch of education theory that relate to the teaching of children formally and informally from birth up to the age of eight years (National Association for the Education of Young Children 2018). It is described as an important period in a child's development. It refers to the development of a child's personality.

According to Oghogbo and Omonuwa (2017), the term early childhood education is often used to describe pre-school or baby/children programmes. They proceeded to say that psychologists and medical experts have since established that much of the first two years of life are spent in the creation of child's first sense of self or building of a first identity. It also refers to activities and experiences that are intended to effect developmental changes prior to their entry into primary school.

Elvis (2018), defined early childhood as the education given to children from birth through age six and focuses on the experiences of child in the age range. The early childhood years are more important than any other six years period in the life of human being in terms of the learning that occurs, the attitudes about learning and school that develop and the social skills that are acquired, to enables the individual to succeed in today's world.

Early childhood education according to Osanyin (2002), is synonymous to nursery, pre-school, pre-primary, kindergarten and so on. The early years are the formative period of a child's life when development is most

rapid. The justification for providing adequately for childhood years lies in the recognition and acceptance of the fact that early learning influences later learning.

Early Childhood Care and Education is an integrated holistic approach within a right perspective to ensure proper child care leading to the survival and maximum development and protection of the young child through child friendly, family focused and community based programme (UNICEF 1999). It has a global scope, and caring for and educating young children has always been an integral part of human societies.

Early childhood education often focuses on learning through play based on the research and philosophy of Jean Piaget which posits that play meets the physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs of (PILES) children. Children's curiosity and imagination naturally evoke learning when unfettered. Learning through play will allow developing cognitively (Early Childhood News 2016). This is the earliest form of collaboration among children. In this children learn through their interactions with others. Thus, children learn more efficiently and gain more knowledge through activities such as dramatic play, art and social games (Wunner Meinda 2009).

Learning resources are materials that can expedite learning through senses of hearing or seeing or both. They are anything that can be profitably employed to facilitate communication and learning.

The incessant increase and proliferation of pre-primary education in Nigeria society with high number of personnel as teaching and non teaching staff and some with adequate, not adequate, available and not available resources has become one of the major problems facing the early childhood education in Nigeria. The problem of resources in schools has been the focuses of stakeholders in education. Under such condition, the caregivers/teachers have been finding it difficult to employ play way method and participatory learning method (PLM) which enhances positive learning skills and requires adequate resources such as toys, audio visual recorder, computer, books among others. This would discourage the use of conventional method which would not promote the development of the relevant skills.

Learning resources is likened to the working tools needed for specific learning skills. Learning and learning materials must be presented and used simultaneously. Learning is through the process of seeing, learning, listening, tasting and doing.

All these elements are so intricately interwoven and make learning become stimulating, natural and easy. Okonkwo (2022), quoted UNICEF (2009), observed that quality education is lacking in some primary schools in Nigeria. This is as a result of inadequate classroom, space, furniture, equipment, teaching, learning materials, inadequate water provision, inadequate health sanitation facilities and very limited community involvement in education.

Education for Early Childhood care and education started at the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (March 1990). Affirmation was made at the conference that education begins at birth and that ECCE goes beyond pedagogy. They entails a lot more than educating the pre-school age child by also encompassing parenting and family life education.

In 2000, a world education forum was also held in Dakar Senegal. 164 countries including Nigeria pledged a global commitment to provide quality education for all children, youth and adult by 2015. Similarly, the first world conference on Early Childhood Care and Education took place in Moscow from 27-29 September 2010 jointly organized by UNESCO in the city of Moscow. The Federal Government of Nigeria through the Universal Basic Education Board act in the year 2009 gave directives to SUBEBS to establish the pre-primary schools in their respective states.

Evaluation as defines by Trava (1955) is a systematic process of determining what actual outcomes are but it also involves judgement of desirability of whatever outcomes are demonstrated to occur. Odiagbe (2015) quoted UNESCO ECCE unit (2002) asserted that evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weakness of programmes, policies, personnel products and organizations to improve their effectiveness. Generally, the purpose of evaluation is to provide information for decision makers, provide feedback to the relevant stakeholders in the education system i.e policy makers' curriculum developers and implementor, identify the potential problems in a programme for adequate modification and improvement and to provide comprehensive reports to funding agencies.

There are three major kinds of evaluation; these are formative, summative, and goal free evaluation that focuses on appraisal of quality that are still on course, summative evaluation which appraises the effect of a programme after some specific period of operation and Goal free evaluation that appraises both intended and unintended objectives of the programme. According to Smith (2006) when we evaluate we are saying that the process will

yield information regarding the worthiness, appropriateness, goodness, validity and legality of something for which a reliable measurement or assessment has been made.

Evaluation is one of the means or strategies to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of education. Therefore, the success of early childhood education in Nigeria school depends on the evaluation exercise carried out on the schools. Evaluation is therefore more demanding, it requires provision or valid information to justify effectiveness and suitability of a programme.

The need for adequate learning resources which pupils require to function to become active learners and to acquire relevant skills for their all round development is yet to be achieved in most of the Nigerian pre-primary schools. However, empirical evidence have shown that lack of these resources result to lack of quality education (UNICEF 2009, in Okonkwo 2022), since the formal integration of pre-primary education in public primary schools, most of the schools are still operating below the minimum standard as spelt out in the Federal Government National minimum standard on early child care centres ECCC of 2007 (Odiagbe2015).

This paper therefore focuses on the evaluation in terms of availability, adequacy, accessibility and usability in order to determine the strength and weakness of the public pre-primary schools in Badagry Local Government Education Authority based on the standard aspect out in the guidelines on ECCE.

Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the availability, accessibility, and utilization of school resources in pre-primary education in Badagry Local Government Education Authority. Specifically, the study sought to:

- assess the accessibility of school resources to pre-primary school pupils in Badagry Local Government Education Authority
- identify the types and quantity of school resources available in pre-primary schools in Badagry Local Government Education Authority.
- evaluate the utilization of school resources in promoting effective teaching and learning in pre-primary schools in Badagry Local Government Education Authority.
- provide recommendations for improving the availability, accessibility, and utilization of school resources in pre-primary education in Badagry Local Government Education Authority

Research Questions

Four research questions were raised to guide the study

- Do the facilities and classroom furniture meet the standard set by Federal Government?
- Do the teachers qualifications meet the standard set by federal government?
- Does schools has the recommended curriculum for pre-primary programme?
- Do the instructional materials meet the standard recommended?

Methodology

The research design employed for the study is survey type because some of the respondents were selected to represent the entire population. The population of this study consists of head teachers, teachers and pupils of the public primary schools with pre-primary education classes in Badagry Local Government Education Area of Lagos State. 10 schools were selected out of the public primary school in the Local Government Area using purposive random sampling techniques. The instrument used for the study was a checklist based on the content of the environment models as spelt out in the National Minimum Standard for ECCE in Nigeria (2007). It consists of Section A and B. in section A, the respondents were asked to fill their demographic data such as name of school, qualification and year of experience. While section B comprised of questions on organization of pre-school under the following sub-headings

- Classroom
- Play ground facilities
- Classroom furniture
- Teachers qualifications
- Availability of curriculum
- Instructional materials
- School records
- Teachers pupils ratio.

These eight headings were grouped under four research questions.

The method of data analysis for the study was descriptive statistics such as simple percentage and frequency counts. These were presented in a tabular form of three columns, the first column presented the observed environmental condition in the school and the third, the decisions on the availability whether the condition met the standard in the guideline or not.

Research Question One

Do the facilities and classroom furniture meet the standard set by the federal? Government

Table 1 showing play ground facilities and classroom furniture

A well fenced & play ground	4 out of the 10 schools visited have no fence 7 schools have play ground while 3 did not	Not adequate	Not meet standard
Play ground grasses and installed with facilities such as Swing Slide Sea-saw Sand box	 None None None None	Not available	Not available
Merry-go around Beam	None None	Not available	Not meet standard
Attract of hard surface for pushing along wheeled toys	None	Not available	Not meet standard
Facilities provided ensure safety of children	None	Not available	Not meet standard
Provision of chairs and tables suitable for children ages and carry no sharp edges	Most of the schools visited have long chairs and table but not adequate		
Large tables with drawers for teachers' use	All the schools have tables and chairs for teachers	Available	meet standard

Result

The result of the study shows that the schools visited lack adequate facilities that will prepare the children for primary education. The walls of the classroom were not painted with attractive decoration and toys suitable for the pupils at this level.

Research Question two

Does the school has the recommended curriculum for pre-primary education programme.

Table II Showing Teachers Qualifications

NCE is the least qualification recommended for preprimary education	All schools have qualified head teachers and teachers with at least national certificate of education	Meet standard
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Result

The result is quite encouraging. It shows that the teachers in pre-primary education have the minimum qualification set by the Federal Government.

Research Question Three

Does the school has the recommended curriculum for pre-primary education programme.

Table III showing Availability of the Curriculum

Have you seen a copy of ECCE curriculum	In all the school visited teachers have seen the copy of ECCE curriculum	Meet	Available
Do you have access to it	The teachers claimed to have access to it	Standard	Not accessible
Do you have a copy	They have no copy of it		

Result

The result of the study on research question

III shows that the teachers have seen the copy of ECCE curriculum but have no copy. This is fair but when their inability to have copy of it is not impressive because curriculum that serve as road map or guide in education is very essential for teachers to have their copy.

Research question four

Do the instructional materials meet the standard recommended by the federal government.

Table IV Showing the Availability of instructional materials

Picture roll	Not available	Do not meet standard
Toys	Not available	Do not meet standard
Television	Not available	Do not meet standard
Time book and visitor's book	Available	Do not meet standard

Result

The result on the table above shows that the school lacked the instructional materials which are very essential for pupils at this level of education except time and visitor's book. This is not encouraging hence, the schools is yet to meet the standard set by the Federal Government.

Discussion of Findings

The results indicate that since 2009 that Federal Government has joined other nation by establishing the ECCE in our existing primary Education in line with UBE Act of 2004. In terms of facilities and classroom furniture most schools in Badagry Local Government Education Area are yet to meet the standard. Though, the schools

have normal size of classroom but lacked good furnitures and well fascinating classroom environment suitable for pupils at this level of education. This corroborates the finding of Odiagbe (2015) the school room environment is far from being child friendly.

In all the sampled schools, the play facilities were not provided. This is not too encouraging because child's physical development is essential in pre-primary education. Similarly, picture roll, toys, television were not available in schools.

The result of the findings on research question II revealed that our public pre-primary schools have qualified teachers. This is also an expedient aspect of education because lack of skilled manpower would yield low quality. This is in line with Usman (2016) that they are the key factor that creates favourable teaching-learning nuclear and will make the instructional process easy, enthusiastically adapted and useful.

The result on research question IV shows that the sampled schools have copies of curriculum which the teachers claimed to have access to but do not have their personal copies. This is quite encouraging but government should endeavor to provide adequate copies for teachers because curriculum would always guide the teachers on what to teach, how to teach and when to teach and this will bring about an effective communication between teacher and learner.

On research question four (IV), it was discovered that the sampled schools lacked adequate instructional materials, no picture rolls, television and others. Verbal instruction without instructional materials would not yield good result because the popular chine thinker asserted that what I hear, I forget, what I see, I remember, what I do, I know.

Therefore, materials must be available for pupils to work with for better understanding. On a general note, the above findings revealed that the environment of pre-primary school in Badagry Local Government Education Area is not too attractive, suitable and fascinating or stimulating for the all round development of the pupils at this level of education, that is prepares the pupils for primary education. This implies that the government needs to brace up and double their commitment to this level of education in order to meet up with the set as stipulated by the universal basic education standard.

Conclusion

In conclusion the availability of facilities, good classroom with play materials, playground with facilities such as slide, sea-saw, merry-go-round, instructional materials for learning among others, would enhance children's development and proximal learning. Therefore, the public pre-primary school requires government attention for improvement and this well in turn brings about good product in all its ramifications.

Recommendations

- Government should give priority to education at this level, since it serves as the foundation on which other levels of education are built.
- Play way materials should be provided alongside a very good playground and other facilities as well as making provision for very conclusive learning environments as regards aesthetic and some other factors that will favour the learner's.
- The government should also look into the recruitment exercise and make sure that round peg is pushed in round hole by employing expert's professionals in the field of early childhood education.

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