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ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN ILORIN WEST AND SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

BY

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During this study an attempt was made to determine and compare the implementation of pre-primary school curriculum in Ilorin South and West Local Government Areas of Kwara State. In a survey research, the instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The number of teachers used were 100 (One hundred). Ten randomly selected pre-primary schools (five) (5) in Ilorin South and five (5) in Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State constituted the sample size. The findings showed that facilities like plastic/paper letters, number posters and charts, television and blocks of different shapes and colours were available in the pre-primary schools in Ilorin South and Ilorin West LGAs. Also, teachers made use of academic resources to enrich learners' understanding. The study recommended that government should provide a well-prepared curriculum and instructional resources for all teachers in pre-primary school in order to ensure the full implementation of the curriculum.

Keywords: Basic education, Early childhood development, Early childhood care

Introduction

Learning in the home begins at birth and under the supervision of the family until the child becomes ready for integration into the formal education system. The formal schooling starts with pre-primary education also known as early childhood education. Pholphirul (2017) stated that pre-primary education means the education of children aged between three and five years. Its main objective is simply to help the child to like schooling. Hence, programme provisions include plays, oral language development, art and music. In affirmation, Haslip and Gullo (2016) stated that early childhood education and pre-primary education are widely recognized as having significant impact on the subsequent performances of children in basic education programmes. They lay the foundation for acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. They considerably reduce drop out and repetition rates and, if well managed, they generate a positive disposition of the child towards learning and attending schools.

The above assertion is corroborated by Akinrotimi and Olowe (2016) who stated that the major purpose of pre-primary education is the holistic development of the child. This is particularly necessary in the developed countries where many parents for social and economic reasons could no longer provide the needed stimulating environment for the child's holistic development. The pre-primary school establishment should therefore take care, not only of the intellectual aspects of the child's development but the health, nutrition, social, emotional as well as the physical aspects of the child which should adequately be taken care of in a child-friendly environment. By so doing the child would have been exposed and adequately equipped for the education task ahead after the pre-primary level of education. However, such holistic

development could be enhanced or marred depending on the government policies and implementation strategies.

Educational policy, in the words of Ogbonnaya (2010), refers to specific goals arrived at and must be pursued through educational institutions. It can refer to a proposal, an on-going programme, or the goals of a programme, or major decisions. Educational policy concerns the formulation of a decision, its implementation and evaluation. That implies that policies are put in place with attendant expectations or programmes for the implementation of such policies. Undoubtedly, early childhood education has the potency of affecting the future of any nation, serving as a foundation upon which all other educational levels rest thereby nurturing children with skills, attitudes and competences necessary for individuals and national development.

Early childhood care and education in recent times has been formalized by most countries thereby allowing private and public investment in helping children to optimize their potentials and to augment care from family for systematic social, physical, cognitive, and emotional development (Osei-Poku & Gyekye-Ampofo, 2017). In 2010, the United Nations (UN) set a goal for every member nation's achievement of set goals that will enhance the life of all humans especially the very poor. With the achievement of universal education set as a goal, the UN would ensure that by 2015, children everywhere will be able to complete full course of primary schooling. The provision of the same or similar pre-school education for all children therefore becomes a prerequisite in the achievement of the goal. This is because pre-school forms the foundation upon which all the educational levels rest, contributing to the overall success of training. Early childhood education nurtures the children with skills and attitude that prepare them for formal educational.

In order to train children with equal or similar early childhood education to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and for holistic national development, it is imperative that public and private pre-schools provide the same or similar experiences and opportunities for all children to fully explore their potentials. Irrespective of their social, economic, ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Differences in children's early childhood experience play a formative role in shaping school readiness and largely explain the skill gaps at school entry (Willoughby, Oyanga & Merseth King, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood education or pre-primary education must support children to develop their ability to work up on and communicate their own impressions through creative process with various forms of expression. The Nigerian pre-school curriculum is very flexible in terms of content coupled with the absence of external examinations to assess pre-scholar's development for primary school education. Assessment of pre-scholars is done informally by adopting methods such as observation, conversation, gallery works (where children go around to appreciate other's work). This therefore provides freedom for providers of pre-school education to develop their own curriculum based on different philosophies and methodologies which create variations in the knowledge and skill level of pre-scholars in Nigeria, which may negatively affect the child's interest in formal education especially at the primary school level.

Loughby, et al (20019) asserted that disparities in quality and design across programmes make difficult to taste out effects for specific types of programmes and to generalize from one study to another. This research is therefore aimed at studying educational provision in pre-schools in Ilorin as a means of identifying and documenting any disparities between them with regards to curriculum, teaching and learning material, facilities and teacher expertise using some selected primary schools in Ilorin South and Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to carry out a comparative study of the implementation of pre-primary school curriculum in Ilorin South and Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State. Specifically, this study:

1. identified the academic resources available for curriculum implementation at the pre-primary education level in Ilorin South and West Local Government Areas of Kwara State.
2. assessed how academic resources available are used for curriculum implementation in the pre-primary education in Ilorin South and Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State.

Research Question

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the available resources used in curriculum implementation of pre-primary schools in Ilorin South and Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State?
2. How the academic resources available are used in implementing the curriculum of pre-primary schools in Ilorin South and West Local Government Areas of Kwara State?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey type. The descriptive survey is described by Daramola (2019) as a set of questions or statements that are given to people to find out their opinion, attitude and behaviour with respect to a particular issue. The population for this study consists of teachers in all pre-primary schools in Ilorin South and Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State. One hundred (100) respondents were drawn from the population through simple random sampling techniques. This affords every individual in the target population an opportunity of being selected. All pre-primary schools in Ilorin South and Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State were stratified into public and private.

Ten schools were randomly selected from each stratum. This gave the total of ten (10) schools. Ten school teachers were randomly selected from each school making a total of 100 pre-primary teachers used for the study. The instrumentation used for the collection of data is a self-administered questionnaire which was sub-divided into two. Sections A and B. Section A contains information on respondents' personal data such as sex, age and qualification, while section B contains twenty (20) structured items based on the Likert four scale model to elicit the respondents' view on the subject matter. Percentage was used to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Results

This section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents.

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of the Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	40	40.0
	Female	60	60.0
	Total	100	100.0
Qualification	ND/NCE	38	38.0
	HND	26	26.0
	BA/BSC/BED	36	36.0
	Total	100	100.0

From Table 1, it can be seen that male respondents are 40% (40) and female respondents are 60% (60). This indicates that there were more female respondents than male counterparts who participated in this study. It can also be seen from the table that respondents who have ND/NCE qualification were 38% (38), those with HND qualification were 26% (26), while those with BA/BSC/BED qualification were 36% (36). This indicates that majority of the respondents have ND/NCE qualifications.

Two research questions were raised in this study. Research question one was answered using percentage while research question two was answered using the mean rating.

Question One: What are the available resources used in the curriculum implementation in the primary schools in Ilorin South and Ilorin West Local Government Areas, Kwara State?

Table 2: Percentage Analysis on the Available Academic Resources in the curriculum Implementation of Pre-primary schools

S/N	Resources	A (%)	NA (%)
1	Plastic/paper letters and numbers	86	14
2	Posters and charts	77	23
3	Televisions	65	35
4	Blocks of different shapes and colours	62	38

Table 2 shows the response on the available academic resources in the pre-primary school classes. It can be seen that 86% (86) of the respondents noted that plastic/paper letters and numbers are available, 77% (77) of the respondents noted that posters and charts are available, 65% (65) of the respondents noted that televisions are available and 62% (62) of the respondents noted that blocks of different shapes and colours are available. This therefore shows that the available academic resources in the pre-primary classes are plastic/paper letters and numbers, posters and charts, televisions and blocks of different shapes and colours.

Question Two: How the academic resources available are used in implementing the curriculum of pre-primary schools in Ilorin South and West Local Government Areas of Kwara State?

In order to answer this question, the response of respondents was subjected to mean rating analysis. With a benchmark mean of 2.5. Therefore, any item with a mean below 2.5 is not considered as one of the ways by which teachers use the available academic resources to teach, while any item with a mean of 2.5 and above is considered to be one of the ways by which teachers use the available academic resources to teach. The result can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean rating analysis on how teachers use the available academic resources to teach

Items	Mean
Teachers use academic resources as an example for the pupils to enhance learning	2.88
Teachers use academic resources to make subject topic clear to the pupils for better understanding	2.65
Teachers use academic resources to teach once a while	2.43

From Table 3, it shows the response on the ways by which teachers use the available academic resources to teach. From the table, it can be seen that all the items except item three are agreed by respondents as ways by which teachers use the available academic resources to teach. It can be said that teachers use academic resources as an example for the pupils to enhance learning and they also use academic resources to make subject topic clear to the pupils for better understanding.

Summary of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that facilities like plastic/paper letters and numbers posters and television and blocks of different shapes and colours were available in the pre-primary schools. This position is not in line with Olayemi and Omotayo (2012) findings that pre-primary schools in Kwara State were not well equipped with adequate learning resources. The study also agrees with the study of Fakeye, (2010), who find out that most of the pre-primary schools do not have television hence are not delivering as expected of pre-primary schools in the 21st century. It was also added that those who have learning resources do not use them for teaching but solely for decorative purposes.

The finding revealed that teachers use academic resources as an example for the pupils to enhance learning and they also use academic resources to make subject topic clear to the pupils for better understanding. This finding supports the outcome of Sheu and Ijaiya (2015) study that the quality of education that the children receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack of learning resources and overall facilities in which learning takes place in school. On the other hand, the outcome of this study is against the findings of Saikwa and Offe (2016) who found that educational centres had inadequate resources for infection prevention among early childhood education centre in Ghana.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was however concluded that instructional facilities such as plastic/paper letters and numbers posters and charts, television and blocks of different shapes and colours were available in the pre-primary schools to implement early childhood education curriculum. It was also concluded that teachers' use of academic resources to enhance learning and they also use academic resources to make subject topic clear to the pupils for better understanding.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should provide a well-prepared curriculum for all the teachers in primary school in order to enhance the full implementation of the curriculum.
2. Schools should be well equipped with instructional resources so as to promote teaching and learning at the pre-primary school level.
3. Qualified teachers who possess ICT skills should be employed in pre-primary schools in order to handle educational resources effectively in the implementation of early childhood education programme.

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