

PERCEPTION OF SOME OF PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) IN DUTSE CITY, JIGAWA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to assess perception of some of private school teachers about ECE in Dutse city, Nigeria. This study investigated the perceived benefits, challenges, and solutions to Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Nigeria. A survey of 50 respondents revealed that intellectual development, socialization, and educational benefits are the most perceived advantages of ECE. However, lack of teachers, shortage of infrastructure, and poor teaching methods are identified as major challenges. To address these challenges, respondents suggested increased funding, training of teachers, and awareness creation. The findings align with existing literature and highlight the need for policy implementation, professional development, and resource allocation to improve ECE in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Child, private school, children, education, Jigawa, childhood education, preprimary.*

Introduction

Early childhood education or care (ECE) is the pioneer contact of children with the level of structured teaching and learning, with the objective of acclimatizing the kids with the school-like pressure and traditionally link the children with schools (Rabia et al., 2023; Srinavasacharlu, 2024). At this juncture, during the ECE stage, children are exposed to ground establishment of learning, a foundation that is expected to pay-off in the coming future (Aliyu, 2011; Abosede, 2017). ECE is a good step in ensuring that every child received the right to education that is why it was disclosed that, learning starts at the overview of basic education level (Rotshak et al., 2020). This signifies the importance of ECE. In this line, Rotshak et al. (2020) in their study about ECE at public schools in Nigeria revealed that, it is significant to involved the participation of parents, guardians, and as well caregivers so that provision of ECE facilities (parable, classes, instructional materials) are provided for the achievement of required objectives. ECE is a part and parcel of the National Policy on Education that is important to properly ensure the followings: and norms, encouraging all schools Transitioning properly from home to school, preparing of kids to the primary school learning, provide the kids with social culture and norms, encouraging all schools to have a level of pre-primary education, producing textbooks using Nigerian languages, encouraging team-work and group support, learning of healthy habits, preserving the children for their working parents, and achieving other objectives (Gubuola, 2017; Rotshak et al., 2020).

Musa et al. (2017) studied ECE in Nigeria and possible prospective contributions, and the work delineated that, most of the basic ECE services are rendered by the private sectors, the government is displaying ineffectiveness in its move to convert policies of ECE to matured practices. These two principal issues may lead to poor ECE provision in the country. Musa et al. (2017) outlined the objectives of ECE, such as proper transition from home to primary education, instilling social norms in kids, teaching children about right habits and healthy behaviors, instilling cooperation and teamwork habit in kids, and catering for kids for their working parents. Akinrotimi & Olowe (2016) identified the challenges militating ECE in Nigeria as follows; scarcity of resources, poor curriculum, lack of professionalism, poor supervision, scarcity of staff, and poor funding among others. Abosede (2017) in a work that relates about quality control in ECE in Nigeria, states that, it is important to recast the present state of ECE in the country, and for the benefit of the positive future this is imperative. The governments are having poor strategies, the proprietors or managers, parents and other stakeholders must come together for holistic approach in amending the ECE operations. However, most of the studies about ECE in the country are not empirical, mostly every region may have its own distinctive problems, so the need or more empirical studies is paramount. The objective of this paper is to assess perception of some of private school teachers about ECE in Dutse City, Nigeria.

Research Questions of the Study

The following are research questions of the study:

What are the benefits of ECE as perceived by private school teachers in Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria?

What are the problems of ECE as perceived by private school teachers in Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria?

What are the solutions to ECE problems as perceived by private school teachers in Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria?

METHODS

The study area for this work was Dutse City, Nigeria. The utilization of cross-sectional survey for generating baseline data has been practiced over a long period of time in educational researches (Sarkingobir et al., 2023), therewith for the sake of this work, this type of study design has been applied.

The sampling method was done by following the strategy of convenience sampling due to time and material factors and for getting key information; therewith, a total sample of 50 ECE teachers was part of the study. The tool that was utilized in conducting this study was the prepared questionnaire that was tested through pilot study and expert validation. The questionnaire basically consisted of sections, section A is for characteristics of the respondents, section B is for questioning about benefits of ECE, section C is accorded for problems of ECE, and section D is about possible solutions to ECE problems. The gathered questionnaire was analyzed by applying the descriptive statistics methods.

RESULTS

The result for this study was shown in Tables 1-4.

Table 1: Characteristics of the respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	20	40.0
Female	30	60.0
Religion		
Islam	40	80.0
Christianity	10	20.0
Tribe		
Hausa	20	40.0
Fulani	15	30.0
Yoruba	15	30.0
Igbo	5	10.0
Educational status		
NCE	40	80.0
Degree	5	10.0
Secondary	5	10.0

Benefits of ECE

Table 2: Perceived benefits of ECE

Parameter (benefit)	Frequency	Percentage
Intellectual development	18	36.0
Socialization	12	24.0
Educational benefit	13	26.0
Physical benefits	7	14.0

Perceived Problems of ECE

Table 3: Perceived problems of ECE

Parameter (problem)	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of teachers	30	60.0
Shortage of infrastructures	15	30.0
Method of teaching	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

Possible Solutions to ECE Problems

Table 3: Perceived solutions to problems of ECE

Parameter (solution)	Frequency	Percentage
More funding	30	60.0
Training	13	26.0
Awareness creation	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0

DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the characteristics of respondents involved in this study. The respondents are 60.0% females, and 40.0% males; 80.0% Muslims, and 20.0% Christians. In terms of tribe, 40.0% are Hausa, 30.0% are Fulani, 30.0% Yoruba, and 10.0% are Igbo. Educational status of the respondents shows that, 80.0% are NCE bearers, 10.0% are graduates, and 10.05 are secondary school leavers.

Initially, the finding here answered the question “**What are the benefits of ECE as perceived by private school teachers in Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria?**”

In Table 2, the benefits of ECE listed are: Intellectual development, socialization, educational benefit, and physical health benefit. These benefits are similarly found by Mahadi, (2008); Adewale (2022), and Aliyu (2011). Secondly, the result here answered the question “**What are the problems of ECE as perceived by private school teachers in Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria?**” Table 3 shows the perceived problems affecting ECE in the Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria. The submissions are in the order of as follows: lack of teachers (60.0%), shortage of infrastructures (30.0%), and poor method of teaching (10.0%). The findings about the problems faced by ECE found in this work are in conformity with other research works, such as Rotshak et al. (2020) reporting that challenges of implementing ECE properly in Nigeria include, staff scarcity, scarcity of qualified caregivers, paucity of curriculum books for ECE; Omotuyole & Okudo (2014) decried the paucity of professional development among ECE teachers in the country.

Similarly, the results here answered the research question “**What are the solutions to ECE problems as perceived by private school teachers in Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria?**” Table 4 show the possible solutions submitted by the respondents in order to amend he challenges of ECE in the state. The submissions are in the order as follows: Provision of more funds (60.0%), training of teachers or caregivers about ECE (26.0%), and awareness creation about ECE (14.0%). The solutions options stated by respondents in this work are better to address the prevailing ECE problems in the country. These suggestions are equally suggested by a study performed by Abosede (2017). Abosede (2017) suggested the provision of environment involving human and material resources to cater for ECE. Government should provide regulations that will help in upgrading the states of ECE services in the country. Akinrotimi & Olowe (2016) suggested that, the agencies responsible for basic education should provide the teachers with professional development to be employed, caregivers should be trained, and curriculum should be distributed more practically. Musa et al. (2017) outlined the prospects of ECE for future development as follows: governments should translate ECE policies to actions, and curriculum should be provided (because it is scarce). Nevertheless, ECE is intended to provide a holistic development to kids from birth to primary school entering age (8 years for example) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Because there is strong attestation that early years’ experiences, are very vital for development of countries, and for the individuals in terms of items such as cognitive, perception, language, and social development or functioning (Musa et al., 2017). ECE provides the kinds with a landslide entering into primary schools through good habits, healthy lifestyle habits, social values, teamwork, experience, among others (Musa et al., 2017; Ogunkoya, 2022; Lemea-Adoma, 2024). It is important to emphasize on ECE improvement, because poor experience during early years of life are leading to devastating consequence that are long-lasting, and good experience are potentails for good future (Sarkingobir et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Nigeria, as well as the challenges and solutions to its effective implementation. The findings emphasize the need for increased funding, training of teachers, and awareness creation to address the challenges facing ECE in Nigeria. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders must work together to prioritize ECE, provide resources, and support the development of young children. By doing so, Nigeria can reap the benefits of ECE, including improved cognitive, social, and emotional development, and set the foundation for a brighter future for its citizens.

LIMITATION

It is inevitable that this research will have some limitations, and this is normal. It is a survey and is not as powerful as experimental study.

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