

AVAILABILITY OF TEACHER USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECCE PROGRAMME IN NASARAWA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the Availability of Teacher use of Instructional Materials and Resources in the Implementation of ECCE programme in Nasarawa state. Two research questions were used for the study. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 12804 caregivers in Nasarawa State. A multi-stage sampling technique (comprises of proportionate, purposive and simple random sampling techniques) was used to sample ninety-three (93) Pre-primary schools and 388 caregivers for the study. The data collected was analyzed using Percentages, Frequency Count to answer the research. Findings of the study revealed that Instructional Materials in majority of ECCE Centres in Nasarawa State were available for the programme implementation based on the ECCE benchmark of 50% and on average, there was regularity of Monitoring of the ECCE Programme by relevant Officers in Nasarawa State as the percentage monitored was above the ECCE benchmark of 50%. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that, availability of instructional materials and monitoring by relevant

officers of ECCE programme as prescribed by the NCCE-ECCE (2012) standard was greatly achieved in Nasarawa state.

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the need to provide care and education for the child (the young mind) is important because childhood education provides a solid foundation for future development of the child and the entire society depends on it. It is in recognition of this fact that different education programmes have been developed and implemented to achieve proper child education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization-UNESCO (2005) declared that education is the right of every one, especially vulnerable group, women and children. It is in this light that the Federal Republic of Nigeria in National Policy on Education FRN-NPE (2013) clearly states that education is an instrument "par excellence" for effective national development.

In Nigeria, Education is in levels ranging from Pre-Primary to University education. Pre-primary or Early Childhood education is the education the child receives before entering into the primary school (NPE, 2004). It includes the Crèche, the Nursery and the kindergarten. In the same vein, Maduawesi in Awotu (2015) defines Early Childhood Education as, a semi formal education arrangement usually outside the home, whereby young children of about three years are exposed through play-like activities in group setting to mental, social and physical learning suited to their development level. Early childhood education therefore can be seen as the education provided for children between 0-3 years of age in day care centres and for children between 3 years to less than 6 years in Nursery schools. It is a community based low-cost project for the holistic development of the child from 0-6 years in Nursery schools and comprehensive approach to policies and programme for children from birth to 6 years of age, their parents and care givers with the purpose of protecting the children's

rights to develop their full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potentials.

Schools were set up to take care of early childhood education in form of nursery school or pre-primary school. The resemblances of it during the colonial era were the Kindergarten and infant classes, which consisted groups of children considered not yet ready for primary education. As grouping for instruction in schools was not age-based during that period, some children aged six or even more, could be found in some of the infant classes (Tor-Anyiin, 2008). With the phasing out of infant classes, some parents began to feel the need for nursery schools. During the period before independence (pre-independence) all efforts for provision of early childhood education were confined to the voluntary sector. It received very little or no support from the government (Tor-Anyiin, 2008). This situation continued until 1977 with the introduction of the National Policy on Education by the then military government of Nigeria that early childhood education was given official recognition and linked with the child's educational performance in Primary school. Gradually, early childhood institutions sprang up, and by 1985, Nigeria had about 4200 early childhood educational institutions and subsequently in 1992, the number increased to about 8,300 (Tombowua, 2013). Similarly in 2015, Nasarawa State had about 1,310 Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) Centres and 24,178 pupils enrolled (Universal Basic Education Commission-UBEC, 2015).

Nowadays, early childhood educational institutions are located in various places and buildings in campuses of universities and colleges, premises of some industries and business organizations, church premises, residential buildings with unprecedented expansion owing to the high demand for early childhood care and education by parents (Ejeh,2006). The Federal Government of

Nigeria, (2004) in the National Policy on Education recognises the fact that formal education of a child apparently starts from about the age of 3 years hence, the prescription of pre-primary education as contained in policy document. It is strongly believed that economic prosperity and the reduction of global poverty cannot be accomplished unless all children in this country can at a minimum age complete a basic education of good quality (Tombowua, 2013). To this end therefore, the objectives of pre-primary education according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in the National Policy on Education-NPE, (2013) are to;

- i. Effect a smooth transition from home to school;
- ii. Prepare the child for the primary level of education;
- iii. Provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farm, in the market or offices);
- iv. Inculcate social norms;
- v. Inculcate in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys and so on;
- vi. Develop a sense of cooperation and team spirit;
- vii. Learn good habits, especially good health habits and;
- viii. Teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes and forms among others through play. NCCE also states that pupils should be encouraged to acquire reading and writing skills and knowledge which are expected to complement the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Commission for College of Education, FRN-NCCE, (2012) set out National bench mark for the implementation of ECCE Programme. Implementation is the conversion or transformation of general policies to concrete public policies. It includes those actions that are geared towards

the achievement of the objectives of the policy. It involves outlining the activities in the programme as well as persons responsible for carrying out the activities (Achebe, 2004). Some of the salient benchmarks for implementation of ECCE programme as prescribed by NCCE-ECCE standard 2012 are as follows:

- i. Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) should be adopted as minimum teaching qualification in compliance with the provision of NPE and to ensure quality delivery in Pre-primary education, teachers in formal schools, retired nurses and retired teachers who already possess the minimum teaching qualification should be given preference in terms of appointment as ECCE teachers, induction course of one or two weeks should be organised for newly recruited teachers;
- ii. Makes provision in teacher's education programmes for specialization in early childhood education;
- iii. Ensure that the main method of teaching at this level shall be through play-like activities and that the curriculum of teacher education is oriented to achieve this, and to regulate and control the operation of pre-primary education, teachers of pre-primary schools are adequately trained and the essential equipment and materials are provided;
- iv. Ensure that the medium of instruction is principally the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community.
- v. Pupils/Teacher Ratio of 20:1 for 3-5 years pupils;
- vi. Pupil-friendly environment should be provided, that is conducive learning environment, adequate learning materials being supplied promptly.
- vii. Ensure availability of Playground Facilities in the centre such as sea-saw, slide, swing and so on;
- viii. Ensure the availability of Classroom Furniture/Infrastructural Facilities.

- ix. Monitoring officers in Local Governments (LGs) should visit ECCE Centre at least once a month. Officers from State Universal Basic Education Board-SUBEB should go at least, once in a quarter to each LG; External bodies that is Federal Inspectorate Division of State Ministry of Education, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) are to go monitoring at least twice after 5 years; The LGs should report to State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) on monthly basis. The SUBEB should report to Federal Ministry of Education yearly. International Development Partners (IDPS) are free to monitor if they wish. Monitoring Vehicles are to be provided, at least 3 per State including Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Engine powered speed boat should be provided to the states in the riverine area in addition to vehicles, among others.

In order to determine the effectiveness of ECCE programme, NCCE-ECCE (2012) stated that periodic assessment of the programme needs to be carried out. Assessment is a systematic and objective process of examining a design completed or on-going project or programme with the aim of determining its efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Emaikwu (2011) sees assessment as data-gathering strategies, analysis, and reporting processes that provide information that can be used to determine whether or not intended outcomes are being achieved. It is a fact finding activity that describes conditions that exist at a particular time. Of concern to the researcher is the need for assessment of ECCE Programme in Nasarawa State in line with the prescribed benchmark which include: teachers qualification, method of instruction, medium of instruction, teacher to pupils ratio, availability of instructional materials, availability of playground facilities, availability of infrastructural and regularity of monitoring of the programme. through the review of literature,

the researcher observed that, there have been researches conducted in different States of the Federation to assess the implementation of this programme among which are Chachaga LGA in Niger state; Uhunmwode LGA of Edo State and Epe LGA in Lagos State. The findings in these areas indicate that, though there has been collaborative effort/input of all stakeholders, including the government, parents/guardians, and school authorities, not much has been done in the proper implementation of ECCE in these areas despite the global commitment. Extensive literature search showed no evidence of empirical assessment of the implementation of the ECCE programme in Nasarawa State since its inception. It is against this backdrop that the researcher carried out an assessment of the implementation of ECCE programme in Nasarawa state relative to the benchmark specified.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the available instructional materials in the early childhood Care Education Centres in Nasarawa State?
2. What is the regularity of monitoring by the monitoring officers in Early Childhood Care Education in Nasarawa State?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive design is one which aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the facts or features of a given population. It was descriptive because the study collected data from the representative population in order to enable the researcher make valued judgement as to whether implementation of ECCE programme in Nasarawa State is in line with the approved standard in achieving the programme objectives.

Population of the Study

The population for the study is twelve thousand eight hundred and four (12,804) Caregivers in Nasarawa State comprising of eleven thousand five hundred and twenty-six (11,526) caregivers and one thousand two hundred and seventy-eight (1278) Head Teachers of all the one thousand two hundred and seventy eight (1,278) Public Primary Schools in the education zones in Nasarawa State (SUBEB, 2017). The population comprises of 4268 teachers from Southern Education Zone, 4628 teachers from Western Education Zone and 3908 teacher from Northern Education zone.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was 388 Caregivers. The sample size was obtained using Taro Yamane formula. The sample size comprises of sixty (60) Head Teachers and three hundred and twenty-eight (328) Teachers. (See appendix C page 95). In order to arrive at the sample, a Multi-stage sampling procedure was used. It was Multi-stage because, the sample for the study was drawn at different stages. At the 1st stage, Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 93 Public Pre-Primary schools, 30 from Southern Education zone with 4268 caregivers, 38 from Western Education zone with 4628 caregivers and 25 from Northern Educational zone with 3908 caregivers. At the second stage, proportionate Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the number of the caregivers (head teachers and teachers) in each of the zones. This sampling technique was employed to ensure appropriate number of caregivers in the three Educational zones was represented

At the last stage, simple random sampling technique was employed to select the 388 respondents. By this method, the researcher wrote 'A' and 'B' on different pieces of paper and put them in a basket. After thoroughly shaken the basket, the

caregivers were asked to pick a paper one after the other. Only those that picked A were administered the questionnaire.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two self-constructed instruments were used for the data collection, these were, the Questionnaire and Checklists. The questionnaire was divided into five sections: A, B, C, D and H while the checklist had three sections: E, F and G each focusing on the purposes of the study as described below:

Section A: Qualification of Caregivers

This section of the questionnaire was used by the researcher to collect information from the Caregivers (teachers and head teachers) about their educational qualifications. The section has eight (8) items.

Section B: Teacher-Pupils Ratio

The Teacher: Pupils Ratio Questionnaire has two (2) items and it was used by the researcher to elicit information on number of pupils to a teacher in each class in ECCE centres in the study area.

Section C: Checklist on Adequacy of Instructional Materials

This section (CAIM) has twenty-six (26) items in which information on availability of instructional materials in early childhood care education centres was checked upon by the researcher.

Section D: Checklist on Infrastructural Facilities

The checklist on infrastructural facilities consisted of thirteen (13) items and was used by the researcher to collect information on the availability of infrastructural facilities in ECCE centres in the study area.

Validation of the Instruments

To ensure that the instruments measure what they were meant for, the instruments were subjected to face and content validation by three (3) experts, one from the Department of Educational Foundations and General studies and two from Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations and General studies, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. The experts were requested to assess the relevance of the items in addressing the research questions bearing in mind the purposes of the study. Suggestions from these experts such as, getting more comprehensive list of instruction materials for the teaching of ECCE and current text books of ECCE; grouping of items separately for different respondents; getting the implementation blueprint and using the benchmark specified for some variables of the study, for instance, Teacher-Pupil ratio were suggested. The instruments initially had 100 items out of which 77 passed the validation process. These suggestions were effected in the development of form draft of the instruments.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, it was trial tested on a sample of 67 respondents in Benue state who are not part of the study but have similar characteristics with the subjects under study. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. An overall reliability index of 0.87 was obtained which shows that the instrument was highly reliable. This is according to Alonge (2004) who stated that, for an instrument to be considered highly reliable, it must attain a reliability index of between 0.8-1.0. No reliability index for the checklist was established since it was only but an observational tool to check for the availability of the needed information.

Method of Data Collection

The data for the study was collected with the aid of six (6) research assistants who were briefed by the researcher on how to carry out the administration. The direct delivery and retrieval method was employed in the administration of the questionnaires. The Checklist was used by the researcher to collect other needed data which could not be accurately gotten with the use of questionnaire such as information on availability. The percentage return rate obtained after collection was 100%.

Data Analysis Techniques

The Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Frequency Counts and Percentages to answer the research questions raised for the study and Bar Charts and Pie Chart were used to represent the data analysed. An average percentage of 50% which is the minimum benchmark for implementation of the ECCE programme in each prescribed standard was used. A benchmark of 50% and above was considered implemented while below 50% was considered not implemented as regards to the items. For the items measuring availability, 50% and above was considered available for implementation while 50% below was considered not available for implementation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the findings of the study. The results of this study have been organized to answer the research questions using Frequency Counts, Percentages and representation of some tables using Bar Chart and Pie Chart.

RESULTS

The results were presented in line with the objectives and research questions as shown on table 1

Research Question 5: What are the available instructional materials in the early childhood Care Education Centres in Nasarawa State?

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages of the available Instructional Materials in the ECCE Centres.

S/N	Instructional Materials	No. Available	% Available	Decision
1	Picture Roll	51	55%	AV
	Toys and models	73	79%	AV
2				
3	Television	6	6%	NA
4	Time and Visitor book	93	100%	AV
5	prescribed texts on language of immediate environment	72	77%	AV
6	Chalkboard	93	100%	AV
7	Story books in the class	69	74%	AV
8	prescribed mathematics text for each pupils	88	95%	AV
9	News papers, Magazines.	36	39%	NA
10	Display of charts and drawings in the classroom.	69	74%	AV
11	Mini Library	16	17%	NA
12	Abacus/Counters	8	9%	NA
13	Sentence Cards	51	55%	AV
14	Sound box	85	91%	NA
15	Sand paper	12	13%	NA
16	Flash card	11	12%	NA
17	Paints and brushes	14	15%	NA
18	Blocks for shapes and colours	61	66%	AV
19	Plastic letters and numbers	59	63%	AV

20	Plain paper	34	37%	NA
21	Crayons and pencils	34	37%	NA
22	Puzzles	14	15%	NA
23	prescribed English text for each pupils	83	89%	AV
24	Abacus	19	18%	NA
25	Computer	69	74%	AV
26	Radio	29	27%	NA
Grand				
%			51%	AV

KEY: AV: Available NA: Not Available

Table 1 shows that, 12 out of 26 items were not available with percentage of availability ranges from 6% to 37%. The available ones are 14 items with the percentages ranging from 55% to 100%. The grand total of the availability is 51% which show the learning materials on a whole were moderately available for implementation.

Research Question 8: What is the regularity of monitoring by the monitoring officers in Early Childhood Care Education in Nasarawa State?

Table 8: Frequencies and Percentages of Monitoring of ECCE Programme by Relevant Officers in the State.

SN	ITEMS	No of Centre Sample	No of times specified for Monitoring	Total Centres Monitored/Not Monitored(M&NM)	Percentage Monitored	% Not monitored
1	NCCE	93	1 x in 5 yrs	20 73	22%	78%
2	SUBEB	93	4x a yr	68 25	73%	27%
3	LGEA	93	12x a yr	93 0	100%	0%
4	NCCE/SUBEB	93	1x in 5 yrs	12 81	13%	87%
5	Foreign Sponsors/UNICEF	93	2x a yr	15 78	16%	84%
6	Community Officers	93	52x a yr	80 13	86%	14%
	Grand %				52%	48%

Table 2 shows that NCCE monitored 20(22%) of the ECCE centres out of the 93 centres; SUBEB monitored 68(73%) of the centres; LGEA monitored 93(100%) of the ECCE centres; NCCE/SUBEB monitored 12(13%) of the centres; NCCE/Sponsors/UNICEF monitored 15(16%) and Community Officers monitored 93(86%) of the ECCE centres in Nasarawa State. Grand percentage of monitored ECCE Centres is 53% which means that ECCE centres in Nasarawa State were regularly monitored by relevant officers in the state.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the study, discussions were made on each of the research questions of the study.

The findings of research question five in table 5 revealed results on the availability of instructional materials in the ECCE Centres in Nasarawa State. As revealed on table 6, most of the instructional

materials as prescribed by NCCE-ECCE standard were available. These among others include, Toys, Models, prescribed text on language of immediate environment, story books, sound box, sentence cards, display charts, shapes and crayon colours, plastic letters and numbers, picture rolls, time and visitor book were available in most of the various centres as envisaged by the researcher. The availability of these materials facilitates the achievement of the goals of education. The provision of these teaching materials according to NCCE-ECCE (2012), acts as stimulant in making people literate and also creating the required environment for effective teaching and learning. However, this finding is at variance with that of Viatonu et al (2011) who reported that there are inadequate instructional materials in ECCE Centres. The researchers call for Government to make available, instructional materials for effective implementation of ECCE programme. The findings also contradicts that of Osho et al (2014) who asserted that basic resources for teaching in ECCE Centers are sparsely available for effective implementation. Instructional materials facilitate learning and make whatever the teacher teaches real and give the learners the opportunity to manipulate the materials. As stated by NCCE-ECCE (2012), these materials are indispensable for effective teaching and learning in the ECCE Centres.

The findings on research question nine on table 8 regarding monitoring by relevant officers showed a reasonable regularity of monitoring by the relevant monitoring officers. The findings revealed that SUBEB, LGEA and Community officers monitored the ECCE programme in Nasarawa State as specified by NCCE-ECCE (2012). NCCE-ECCE curriculum specified that monitoring in ECCE is compatible to the school based management committee, which specified the following regularity of monitoring: NCCE once a year, SUBEB four times (yearly), LGEA twelves times (yearly), and community fifty-two times (yearly). The revelation from table 9 as

regards monitoring by relevant officers is in line with study carried out by Charles et al (2016) who found that both head teachers and pre-primary classroom teachers agreed to a great extent that the public pre-primary schools are supervised by the relevant monitoring officers. The findings also agree with that of Mark (2014) who in his study revealed a significant monitoring of ECCE centres by relevant authorities. However the findings contradicts that of Tombowua (2008) and Agi (2015) who in their separate studies, found that there was inadequate monitoring of the pre-primary section of the public primary schools and literacy centres respectively. Hence in terms of monitoring of the ECCE programme in Nasarawa State, the implementation of the programme can be considered a success.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that, effective implementation in terms of availability of instructional materials and monitoring by relevant officers of ECCE programme as prescribed by the NCCE-ECCE (2012) standard was greatly achieved in Nasarawa state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the findings, it was recommended that, availability of instructional materials and monitoring by relevant officers of ECCE programme as prescribed by the NCCE-ECCE (2012) standard was greatly achieved in Nasarawa state.

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Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Yakubu Machuwe Mikailu et al., (2019) Availability of Teacher Use of Instructional Materials and Resources in the Implementation of ECCE Programme in Nasarawa State. *J. of Education and Leadership Development Vol. 11, No. 1, Pp. 52 – 71*
