

IMPACT EARLY CHILDCARE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION ON THE READING PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

BY

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Abstract

This study examines early childcare development and its impact on the reading performance of children with learning disabilities in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. This study used co-relational design. The population of this study includes all children with learning disabilities in primary two, Methodist Primary School Apaara and Anglican Primary School Ajaagba. A sample of thirty (30) children was selected for the study using stratified random sampling. Three research hypotheses guided the study. The results showed that There is no significant difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early childcare facility; There is a significant relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility; and there is no significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility and those that are not exposed to early childcare facility. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the government should make early childcare facility available as well as financial provisions for field-trips, office visits and other out of classroom teaching/learning activities for teachers

Keywords: Early Childcare Education, Reading Performance and Learning Disabilities.

Introduction

Early Child Care Education is seen as the first phase in a life-time of continuous learning experience from birth to old age. It is therefore conceptualized as encompassing the care, development and education of the children requires environments in which children feel secure, are stimulated, and have opportunities to explore, to question, to experiment to play and to symbolize. In addition to all these, a child needs an intimate interactive relationship with one or more care givers as was the case in African homes. Where the responsibilities of all adults in the home were to care for the child, this caregiver can guide the child to constitute a culture. When children receive too little attention, they believe that what they do not matters; they may soon stop trying (Ama, 2012).

At the OAU summit in 1990, African leaders adopted the African charter for popular participation in development. All this activity and apparent commitment could lead us to take a highly optimistic view: that a formidable alliance of children, their families, communities and political leaders appear to be poised to harness all available energy and resources to ensure lasting and positive changes to the condition of children. The Jomtien Declaration on Education for All” recognized the importance of early childhood development. It state that “learning begins at birth” thereby making the early childcare the bedrock of basic education programme worldwide.

The research has been influenced to embark on this field of study having observed children of Methodist primary school Apaara and Anglican primary school all from Oyo East Local Government of Oyo stat exhibiting sever reading difficulties. There are very many children attending schools in Nigeria today who experience learning difficulties because of unfavourable environmental conditions. Such children have not been exposed to enough spoken English language, before school and thus their inability to understand the class teacher or to read or write in English.

So also is the change in schools for children from rural to urban schools. The in exposure of children to reading materials outside school hours, the literate level of parents as well as lack of home tutoring are among the many impediments to learning achievement of most children.

Such children make up a large proportion of the pupils Nigerian class teachers “learning to read and reading to learn” represents two great intellectual milestones in the human search for knowledge. This truism often overbooked in educational circles with dangerous consequence. The task of teaching children how to read is pursued wholeheartedly, or even left to the whims and caprices of individual teachers, parents or guardian who may not fully appreciate the great intellectual significance of their seemingly simple task.

“Reading to learn” can be hazardous and frustrating, particularly for beginners and all who are badly taught or improperly guided. Learning to read in both mother-tongue and a foreign language enables the child to achieve an important aspect of learning readiness. Reading problem constitutes one of the most frequently experienced difficulties of the learning disabled child or youth, since so much learning is dependent on his reading ability.

According to Umolu and Mallam (2005), the term “dyslexia” often used in discussion of reading disabilities indicates primary or paramount presenting symptom of difficulties in learning to read. Early childhood intervention and pre-school to formal school systems

demands skills needed to function successfully in school. Learning and experience play increasingly dominant roles in development as children grow older, while early foundations quickly develop into habitual patterns and have long life influence on children's personal and social adjustments. Development psychologists and social educators are increasingly showing interest in the relationship between development and learning. The variation in development patterns of children bring about the individual difference in physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of an individual and subsequently learning.

Wide reading failures exists in our formal school system. This problem is complicated by the unavailability of quality reading instruction in school, especially the primary level which is the bedrock of our educational system. There are many children "at risk" who must be rescued. The development of reading readiness skills is an integral part of learning. The early childcare project seeks to promote the holistic development of children from (0-6) to six years of age through health, nutrition, socio-emotional and psychomotor development activities (Meyers, 2000).

In further pursuance of the world priority given by various state nations toward meeting the convention for the rights of children objectives 1 Newspaper in its May 6, 2002 edition, page 63; reports the united nations special session on children held from May 8th to 10th 2002: to discuss critical issues affecting children. According to carol Bellamy, UNICEF executive director, "Our Aim at the special session was to convince world leaders that investing in children in their number one responsibility and the only lasting strategy for reducing poverty, stopping aid and avoiding conflict. One of the strategies is the global movement for children initiative, the "say yes for children campaign", which emphasizes the essential goal of improving the lives of children as laid out in the "convention for the rights" of children. Since September 1990, when it first started the special session on children as been a global joint commitment to promote the well-being of children.

The News watch also reports that the United Nation Secretary 1 general in his report to the special session accordingly stated that "there is no task more important than building a world in which all of our children can grow up to realize their full potential in health, peace and dignity". Nigeria as a member nation of course attended with an eleven-man delegation headed by president himself: Outcome initiatives are yet to be made matters of policy. Nevertheless, Olusegun Adeniyi, a member of the delegation reports this day May 16, 2002, page 72 several meetings attended in New York on Nigeria's position on some of the care issues.

Twenty-seven goals were outlined, aimed at child survival, child protection, child participation and child development. From the fore-going, the researcher seeks to study into early childcare programme and its degree of influence on the reading ability of the Nigerian school child.

Statement of the Problem

Schools are environments that establish a series of developmental tasks for children. The nature of these tasks are varied. Schools demand cognitive performance, cooperation and competition. Language stimulation is important and it is focused on the development of skills of listening, speaking and writing. There are parts of the daily life of the child and the educational experience is also based on them.

The school child is therefore unable to learn anything meaningful in school if he cannot read. The whole essence of attending school is defeated. The Nigeria regular classroom teacher does little or nothing to create ways of stimulating children through play and fun activities. Looking at picture and handling books are stimulating for reading. Children enjoy looking at pictures and making up stories. Children who have been taught counting and recitation of the alphabet perform better in primary schools. The present environment of the pre-school age child (two or five) is often dangerous, unsupervised and unstimulating. What effects does this mishap have on the child when he begins primary school education.

John Dewey advocated the child-centred school that gave full emphasis to real interest of children and to learning through doing. The concern of the early childcare is the development of reading skills and the use of appropriate toys to assist the child acquire some reading skills. Even though access to public school education has been greatly improved by the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) with collaborative efforts by the World Bank, enrollment figures are seemingly encouraging; however the quality of instruction is yet to improve. It is against this background information that this study intends to carry out an investigation into the influence of early childcare development and education on further learning.

Purpose of the Study

The early child care programme came into being in order to assist and bring early childcare within the reach of the majority of Nigerian children particularly those in the rural and low socio-economic areas. Hence, the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC) in collaboration with United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) is implementing a low cost

community based and non-formal day care programme. Locally sourced educational materials are introduced to care-giver as venues for cognitive, effective and psychomotor development of child. The specific objectives of this study are to if:

1. There is significant difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early childcare facility.
2. There is relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility.
3. There is significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early childcare facility.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility.

Methodology

This study used co-relational design. This is because this study fits into characteristics of co-relational design where the academic achievement of a group that were exposed to early childcare who were not exposed to the same facility. Additionally, past academic records of the two groups as well as a teacher made test will largely be used.

Within the confine of this study, the independent variable is define as early child care education while the dependent variable is academic achievement of children with learning disabilities.

The population of this study includes all children with learning disabilities in primary two, Methodist Primary School Apaara and Anglican Primary School Ajaagba. A sample of thirty (30) children was selected for the study. This figure comprise of fifteen (15) children that were not exposed to early child care education. Their chronological age ranges between seven (7) and ten (10) years. These children were exclusively learning disabled with no any other disability. The children include both boys and girls from low, average and high,

literature and illiterate families, representing a blend of socio-economic and literacy status in Nigeria

The sampling technique that was used in selecting subjects that participated in this study was stratified random sampling. This is essentially necessary to give each child reading difficulties an equal opportunity to be included in the sample. This implies that no child with reading difficulties will be omitted deliberately except by chance. In using this technique, the researcher firstly enlisted all children in primary two identified as having reading difficulties and will pick every fifth name of the list. Those found within the large number will largely was used for study. This technique was similarly used to select children that were exposed to early childcare education.

The instruments used for this study included the teacher made test and the present and past academic records of children available in the two schools.

The researcher first of all obtained a letter of introduction from the College introducing the researcher to the school authority and seeking the co-operation of the headmaster and participants with the researcher before the commencement of the study. The intervention period was scheduled for every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The means score of each of the group was compared.

The statistical technique used for this study will be t-test and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) of significant difference. The simple rule to guide the decision will be if the calculated value is equal or greater than the table value, then the null hypothesis. H_0 will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_i) will be accepted or upheld.

Results

The results were arranged according the stated hypotheses as follows:

Demographic Data Analysis

Table 1: Sex of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
female	18	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the table above, 12 (40.0%) of the teachers and parents are males while 18 (60.0%) are females.

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early

childcare facility.

Table 2: t-test analysis of difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early childcare facility

Variable	N	X	S ²	df	A	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Children with access to ECC facility	15	3.33	1.45	28	0.05	1.01	1.96	Accept the null hypothesis
Children without access to ECC facility	15	3.62	1.24					

The data in Table 2 indicates that the t-calculated value which is 1.01 at 28 degree of freedom and 95% level of significance is less than the t- critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This revealed that there is no significant difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early childcare facility.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility.

Table 3: PPMC Analysis of reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility.

		Children with access to ECC facility	Children without access to ECC facility
Children with access to ECC facility	Pearson Correlation	1	0.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000*
	N	30	30
Children without access to ECC facility	Pearson Correlation	0.031	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000*	
	N	30	30

Table 3 showed that there is a positive, weak significant relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility ($r = 0.000$; $p < 0.05$) and those children who do not have access to early child care facility, we therefore reject the null hypothesis.

Consequently, there is relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility.

Table 4: t-test analysis of significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility.

Variable	N	X	S ²	df	A	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Children with access to ECC facility	15	3.33	1.45	28	0.05	1.01	1.96	Accept the null hypothesis
Children without access to ECC facility	15	3.62	1.24					

The data in Table 4 indicates that the t-calculated value which is 1.01 at 28 degree of freedom and 95% level of significance is less than the t- critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This revealed that there is no significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility.

Discussion of results

Table 1 above revealed that there are more females in the study than their male counterparts with female taking 60.0% and male’s takes 40.0%. Table 2 indicated there is no significant difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early childcare facility. Table 3 showed that there is a significant relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility. The children reading performance may be based on other factors which are not captured in this study. This may include teachers’ factors and school environmental factor as submitted in the work of Umolu & Mallam (2015).

Furthermore, table 4 indicates that there is no significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility and those that are not exposed to early childcare facility. Reading readiness skills of children can be developed through other strategies which are not in the scope of this study. Such strategies may include but not limited to playway method or drama method as suggested by the work of Meyers (2000).

Conclusion

The following conclusion was drawn from the study;

1. There is no significant difference in the reading performance of children that have access to early child care facility and those children who do not have access to early childcare facility
2. There is a significant relationship between the reading habit of children exposed to early childcare facility and those children who do not have access to early child care facility
3. There is no significant difference in the development of reading readiness skills of children exposed to early childcare facility and those that are not exposed to early childcare facility

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that government should have the political will and act swiftly by appointing independent supervisors to monitor and evaluate teachers in schools in respect of effective teaching of reading because of its strategic importance to national development. The government should give financial rewards and awards to teachers who use effective teaching strategies for teaching of reading in schools. Also, the government should make early childcare facility available as well as financial provisions for field-trips, office visits and other out of classroom teaching/learning activities for teachers and there should be in-training and retraining programmes for teachers so as to update their knowledge and skills on the use of effective instructional strategies for effective teaching.

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