

Teachers views on the influence of Kindergarten Education on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to investigate the Teachers' Views on the Influence of Kindergarten Education on the Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. A descriptive survey was adopted for the research, A total of 200 respondents participated in the study by responding to a questionnaire titled "Teachers Views on the Influence of Kindergarten Education on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils' Questionnaire" (TVIKEAPPSPQ), developed by the researchers. In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, draft copies were given to two experts at Kwara State College of Education and two lecturers at the Department of Counsellor Education University of Ilorin to determine the face and content validity of the instrument. The reliability co- efficient of 0.69 was obtained using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient Formula. Two (2) hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05alpha level of significance; Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. It was found that no significant difference existed on the influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils as expressed by teachers in Ilorin West Local Government on the basis of teaching experience and class taught. Also, kindergarten Education influenced the pupils reading skills and enhances pupils speaking skills. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others that good facilities and teaching materials should be provided by the government for teaching in Kindergarten schools; this will help in effective transition to primary schools.

Keywords: Kindergarten education, academic performance, primary school, teaching experience

Introduction

The development of any country depends on how educated the citizens are. This is why education is regarded as a weapon against ignorance, disease and poverty. It is a general consensus that education is a means through which an individual is guided to develop intellectually and for the upliftment of the society in which he or she lives. Education being an indispensable tool in nation building is a process of systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and acquisition of skill, potentials and abilities which will enable an individual to contribute efficiently to the growth and development of his society and nation. It involves all round development of an individual physically, socially, morally, intellectually, and mentally (Osakwe, 2006)

Pre-primary education as defined by Omozeghian (1995) is the education meant for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years. The National Policy on Education (2004) described pre-primary education as the education given in an educational institution to children aged 3-5 years plus prior to their entering the primary school. That is to say that early education is a special kind of education provided in an institution for children, prior to their entering the primary school. Early childhood education, in the context of formal education can be said to be a formalized educational process to which children between the ages of two and half through five plus are subjected to pre-school institution (Mezieobi, 2006). This is a social experience for children for their transition from home to school. The goal is that children should be taken care of and nourished in children's garden like plants in a green garden. The term kindergarten is used around the world to describe variety of different institutions that have been developed for children ranging from the ages of two to seven (Mezieobi, 2006). Children attend kindergarten to learn to communicate, play and interact with others appropriately. A teacher provides various materials and activities to motivate these children to learn the languages and vocabulary of reading, mathematics and science, as well as that of music art and social behaviours. For children who have previously spent some time at home, kindergarten may serve as an alternative home, to help them adjust without anxiety, when they are not with their parents. It may be their first opportunity to play and interact with a consistent group of children on a regular basis. Kindergarten may also allow mothers, fathers or other care-givers to go back to part-time or full-time employment. Educational status of parents has been found to explain academic behaviour of children. It has a positive significance on the academic performance of students. This supports the

null hypothesis that educated parents motivate their children to study harder and have better results (Mezieobi, 2006).

Early years in life are the most important to the formation of intelligence, personality and social behaviour of a child. The year a child reaches Kindergarten are among the most critical in his or her life to influence learning. That is why modern societies show serious concern for the education of their young ones by providing needed support to prepare them to succeed later in school (Ejioh, 2006). It is common practice in most societies to make provision for childhood education programmes for various sorts for children below the official school-going age (usually 6 years) mainly to prepare them for education in primary schools (Obidike, 2012). The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes the importance of early childhood education in Nigeria and as a result it was given prominence in the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2004) as one of the programmes in the Nigerian educational system.

Mahuta (2007) stated that the aim of Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) is to foster the proper development of the children, identify and address their problems, harness their potentials, mould their character, enhance their learning equip them for life, so that their actions are channelled towards positive personal, communal and global development in all ramifications of life.

Maduwei (1999) refers to early education care and Education as education offered to children who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school. He further maintains that it is a semi-formal education arrangement usually outside home where by young children from about the age of 3 years are exposed through play like activities in a group setting mental, social and physical learning suited to their developmental stages, until the mandatory age of government approved formal schooling.

Early childhood education experiences according to Barnard (2001), positively affect later home and school involvement in education. A child who fails to acquire early education may suffer emotionally, socially, intellectually and even physically if he is trusted into the primary school without a sustainable early childhood education experience that will give him a solid foundation in the primary school. Therefore, for the effective and efficient unlocking and development of a child's latent abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive values in the society in which he lives, early childhood education becomes very important. This is of utmost importance because researches on early childhood education have shown that early childhood education experiences have great impact on all areas of a child's development and that the first teacher is an extremely important person in the child's life. According to

Feeney, Christensen and Moravick (1987), early childhood education is an asset of immense value in the later academic performance. The transition from kindergarten class to primary school level has a great effect on the academic behaviour of pupils. It prepares them for the task ahead. While in the kindergarten level, children have already learnt how to communicate, play and interact with other children, this enables them to adjust properly into the primary school level (Feeney *et al.*, 1987).

Academic performance refers to the academic status of the students. The academic performance of students shows the degree of understanding and success in learning activities. According to Kolawole (2004), it determines the extent to which the instruction and objectives have been achieved as a result of teaching. Also according to (Aluko, 2004), academic performance is the level of achievement of students in their academic activities whether poor or good. It is the level of their responsiveness to what they are being taught in the school. Academic performance gives opportunity to the learner in every learning situation to appraise or verify his stand or his achievement in the tasks given to him.

Statement of the Problem

The educational system has been in a state of permanent crises that it has lost quality, efficacy and functionality over the years (Eriba, 2011). Early childhood education in Nigeria is not left out in this crisis which tends to make the gains of education less spectacular. The quality of the teachers determines the strength of any educational system and the values of the learners (Okoro, 2004). In Nigeria Kindergarten education today, the teacher quality is very low. It is only a few of the nursery schools especially those owned by educational institutions, wealthy individuals and private companies that can afford to engage the services of universities graduate teachers and holders of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) qualification.

Some pupils perform better than others in the same class; this may be due to their exposure to the kindergarten education (Feeney *et al.*, 1987). As a result, the researchers intend to investigate how kindergarten education can influence academic behaviour of primary school pupils.

Not much has been written on the teachers views on influence of kindergarten education on academic behaviour of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. This is the reason the researchers want to investigate the teacher's views on influence of kindergarten education on the overall performance of primary school pupils taken into consideration the variables of teaching experience, class taught.

Research Questions

The following major questions were formulated for the purpose of this study:

1. What is the teachers view on influence of kindergarten education on the performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin, Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference in the teachers view on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils on the basis of teaching experience?
3. Is there any difference in the teachers view on influence of kindergarten education on the academic performance of primary school pupils on the basis of class taught?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses have been formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the teachers view on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils on the basis of teaching experience.
2. There is no significant difference in the teachers' view on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils on the basis of class taught.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design that was used for this study is the descriptive survey method. In a descriptive survey method, the researcher collects information from a representative sample in which inferences are drawn about the perception of the population. The main purpose of the study was to find out the teachers views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government of Kwara State, Nigeria. Therefore, the research design that was adopted for this is a descriptive survey research design. The study used questionnaire in order to determine the opinions and views of the sample of interest to the research.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population for the study comprised all primary school teachers in Ilorin West Local Government while the target population consisted of two hundred (200) primary school teachers selected from Ilorin West Local Government of Kwara State. These respondents were randomly selected from ten (10) selected

primary schools in the local government. Information required was collected through the use of a questionnaire, while inferences were drawn from the result of the findings, which provided some insight into the general nature of kindergarten education experienced on academic behaviour of primary school pupils.

Instrumentation

The instrument that was used for the research was designed by the researchers and it is titled "Teachers Views on the Influence of Kindergarten Education on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils Questionnaire (TVIKEAPPSQ)".

The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A consists of two items on the respondents demographic data which are teaching experience and class taught, section B consists of 30 items on teachers view on influence of kindergarten education on academic behaviour of primary school pupils. The responses were fashioned after four point Likert rating scale where the respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with the 30 statements by ticking against each statement any of the following options: of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) as the case may be. The weight assigned to SA, A, D and SD were 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Psychometric Properties of the Instrument

Validity

Hassan (1995) explained validity to be the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Therefore, in order to ascertain the validity of the instrument of this study, the draft copy was given to two experts in the College of Education Ilorin and two lecturers at the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin. Both face and content validity were used for validating the instrument.

Reliability

Stangor (2004) opined that the reliability of a measuring instrument is the extent to which the instrument is free from random error, thus measuring over time the variables of interest. To establish the reliability of the instrument, test re test method was carried out to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. 200 questionnaire forms were administered to some selected primary school teachers who were not part of the respondents for the study. The instrument was

administered twice with the interval of three weeks. The two tests scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Correlation Coefficient Formula. The coefficient was found to be 0.69 which was good enough for the study

Results

The analyzed data were used to answer the three research questions posed earlier. The results were presented in Tables 1-4.

Table 1

Distribution of respondents based on Teaching Experience and Class Taught

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teaching Experience		
1-5 years	86	43.0
5-10 years	74	37.0
10 years above	40	20.0
Total	200	100.0
Class Taught		
Primary 1	31	15.5
Primary 2	39	19.5
Primary 3	53	26.5
Primary 4	21	10.5
Primary 5	24	12.0
Primary 6	32	16.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 reveals that 86 respondents representing 43.0% have 1-5 years teaching experience, 74 respondents representing 37.0% have 5-10 years' experience while 40 respondents representing 20% have 10 years and above teaching experience. 31(15.5%) respondents are teachers of primary one, 39(19.5%) respondents are primary two teachers, 53(26.55) respondents are primary three teachers, 21(10.50%) respondents are four teachers, 24(12.0%) respondents are primary five teachers and 32(16.0%) respondents are primary six teachers.

Table 2

Mean and Rank Order of Respondents on the influence of Kindergarten Education on pupils' Academic Performance

S/No	As far as am concerned, kindergarten education:	Mean	Ranking
1	enhances pupils reading skills	3.67	1 st
12	enhances pupils speaking skills	3.54	2 nd
3	Teaches the rudiments of numbers and letters	3.52	2 nd
5	encourages pupils to ask questions in class	3.46	4 th
10	prepares pupils adequately for primary school level	3.38	5 th
2	encourages pupils to speak fluently	3.34	6 th
15	encourages pupils to recite rhymes and poems fluently	3.32	7 th
8	encourages effective unlocking and development of a child latent abilities	3.30	8 th
6	encourages a kind of security for future academic performance	3.29	9 th
13	inculcate in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature	3.24	10 th
20	develop the habit of doing assignment from home	3.22	11 th
4	Instils confidence in pupils when in class	3.20	12 th
9	enhances pupils writing skills	3.17	13 th
11	Teaches pupils the rudiments of colours and shapes	3.14	14 th
18	Develops in children how to count numbers in adding and subtraction	3.12	15 th
17	Enhances adequate reasoning skills	2.99	16 th
19	Enhances pupils ability to interact freely with mates and teachers	2.95	17 th
7	Provides good foundation for the next level	2.68	18 th
14	Encourages pupils to take part in sporting activities	2.63	19 th
16	Prepares pupils for future career	2.38	20 th

The result on table 2 revealed that item 1 was ranked first with the mean score of 3.67 and states "enhances pupils reading skills." Items 12 was ranked 2nd with a mean scores of 3.54 and states "enhances pupils speaking skills." While item 3 was ranked 3rd with a mean score of 3.52 and states "teaches the rudiment of numbers and letters."

However, item 7 was ranked 18th with a mean score of 2.68 and states "provides good foundation for the next level." Item 14 was ranked 19th with a mean score of 2.63 and states "encourages pupils to part in sporting activities." While item 16 was ranked 20th with a mean score of 2.38 and states "prepares pupils for future career."

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the teacher's views on the influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local government on the basis of teaching experience.

Table 3
ANOVA on the Influence of Kindergarten Education on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils on the Basis of teaching experience

Teaching experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value	Decision
1-5years	86	44.72	4.50	0.001	0.991	H0:1
5-10years	74	44.68	4.98			Accepted
10years above	40	45.01	4.78			

Table 3 reveals that the p-value of 0.991 is greater than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils on the basis of teaching experience by teachers is therefore accepted. This means that no difference was found among the respondents. No matter the years of teaching, teachers will identify the children who go through kindergarten education through their academic performance in the primary level.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the teachers' views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government on the basis of class taught.

Table 4
ANOVA of Respondents on the Influence of Kindergarten Education on Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils on the Basis of Class Taught

Teaching experience	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value	Decision
Primary1	31	41.27	5.32	2.01	0.232	H02
Primary2	39	42.39	4.71			Accepted
Primary3	53	41.87	3.36			
Primary4	21	42.54	5.09			
Primary5	24	43.01	4.11			
Primary6	32	42.69	5.98			

Table 4 reveals that the p-value of 0.232 is greater than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis two which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the influence of kindergarten education on the academic performance of primary school pupils

on the basis of class taught is hereby not rejected. It indicated that no significant difference was found. The respondents believed that the pupils that go through kindergarten education will also perform better when they go through primary classes.

Summary of Findings

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of teaching experience and class taught. Table 2 showed the item by item analysis and ranking order of the teachers views on influence of education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Tables 3 and 4 showed the analysis of hypotheses generated and tested. The hypotheses were tested using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significant. The two hypotheses were not rejected. The following results were derived from the analysis of the hypotheses.

1. There is no significant difference in the teacher's views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government on the basis of teaching experience.
2. There is no significant difference in the teacher's views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government on the basis of class taught.

Discussion

Understanding the teacher's views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West is one of the objectives of this investigation. Such understanding is crucial in knowing the importance of kindergarten education to pupils before going to primary school. The present study was therefore conducted to throw more light on the teachers' views on influence of kindergarten education on primary education of primary school pupils.

These results from the analyzed data revealed that 86 respondents have taught for 1-5 years representing 43.0% of the total respondents, 74 respondents representing 37.0% has taught for 5- 10 years, while 40 respondents representing 20% have taught for 10 years and above.

According to the distribution of respondents on the basis of class taught, 31 respondents representing 15.5% are teachers of primary one pupils, 39 respondents representing 19.5% were primary two teachers, 53 respondents

representing 26.5% were primary three teachers. Also 21 respondents representing 10.5% were primary four teachers, 24 respondents representing 12.0% were primary five teachers while 32 respondents representing 16.0% were primary six teachers.

On mean and rank order on the teachers views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, item 1 ranked first with a mean score of 3.67 and states "enhances pupils reading skills". While item 12 was ranked second with a mean score of 3.54 and state "enhancing pupils speaking skills."

Also items 7 was ranked 18th with a mean score of 2.68 states "provides good foundation for the next level."

The first hypothesis dealt with the teacher's views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils based on teaching experience. This hypothesis was not rejected and goes to agree with the work Feeney (1987) suggested that early childhood education is an asset of immense value in the later academic performance. They further explained that transition from kindergarten class to primary school level has a great effect on the academic behaviour of pupils and it prepares them for the task ahead.

Hypothesis Two stated that there is no significant difference in the teachers' views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils based on class taught. The hypothesis was not rejected. The hypothesis agreed with the study of Bernard (2001) which stated that the early childhood education experiences positively affect later school involvement in education. Kindergarten education has a positive significant in the academic performance of students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings reported in the previous chapter and discussion, the following major conclusions were drawn:

The findings revealed that there is no significant difference in the teachers' views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on the class taught by teachers. This goes a long way to agree with the assertion that the transition from kindergarten classes to primary school level has a great effect on the academic performance of the pupils. It prepares them well for the task ahead. While in the kindergarten levels, children have already learnt how to communicate, play and interact with other children and so many teaching materials which they come in contact with at primary level. This in turn enables them to adjust properly into the primary school level. Participation in well implemented early childhood education programme can have significant long term effects on school progress

as measured by increased promotion, decrease need for special education and completion of high school.

There is no significant difference in the teachers' views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin west local government area of Kwara state based on the years of teaching experience of the teachers. This result aligns with the mean and rank order of the respondents (teachers) on the teachers views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils. They went for items 1, 12, 3 and 5 which state that kindergarten education enhances pupils reading skills, enhances pupils speaking skills, teaches the rudiments of numbers and letters and encourages pupils to ask questions respectively.

Finally from the above statements, it is concluded that an individual who fails to acquire early education may suffer emotionally, socially, intellectually and even physically if he/she is trusted into the primary school without a sustainable early childhood education experience that will give him/her solid foundation in primary school.

Recommendations

This study has carefully examined the teachers' views on influence of kindergarten education on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. It is therefore on the basis of the result of this study and all that have been discussed that the researchers at this junction wish to make the following recommendations:

Since kindergarten education enhances primary pupils reading and speaking skills, effective measures should be ensured in the training of early childhood teachers through adequate scholarships.

State government should assist in the production of textbooks in spoken language this will enhance pupils' spoken English, spelling and encourage pupils' ability in asking questions in class.

Facilities and teaching aids should be provided for children in the kindergarten schools for effective learning. Government should regulate salary for all teachers in early childhood education as well as school fees; this will determine quality development of kindergarten education in Nigeria.

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