



Perception Of Teachers/Caregivers On Implications Of Local Games/Plays In Pre-Primary Schools In Sokoto, Kebbi And Zamfara States Of North Western Nigeria

¹Sunday J. Ushe PhD & ²Lukman Muhammad

^{1&2} Primary Education Department
Shehu Shagari College of Education Sokoto, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The paper finds out Perception of Teachers/Caregivers on implications of Local Games/Plays in Pre-Primary Schools in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States of North Western Nigeria. The research design used was survey (purposive) and a questionnaire was issued to Teachers/Caregivers to solicit their responses. The research covered Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States, focuses will be on both Urban and Rural settlements descriptive statistics tools (frequency and percentage) to analyze the data. From the outcome of the questionnaires issued to caregivers it finds out that Teacher/Caregivers agreed that children have freedom and opportunity to engage in play activities in pre-school and during sessions time is allocated to for children to engage in games/plays. Child Early Years matters and play is at the centre of his learning experiences. This study investigated the knowledge of the Teachers/Care-givers on the issue of play for play based activities that will help the child acquire skills and appropriate understanding of concept easily. Also for him to attend that, the study explored the child, his family and environment, items and materials available for him to engage in his activities.

Keywords:- teachers, caregivers, local games/plays & pre-primary schools

INTRODUCTION

The current National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria includes one (1) year compulsory Pre-Primary level of Education as a requirement for entry into Public Primary School (NPE 2013:4).

It's fundamental and important for Care-givers in Pre-Service and In-Service to have good knowledge and understanding of the importance of play in our natural settings and its relevance to child development milestone in preparing them for school readiness.

Play to the child though sometimes consciously and unconsciously carried out, provide opportunities for learning, this includes Numeracy, Language, Fine and Gross-motor development, life skills, cognitive and socio-emotional developments that are essential for child's growth and development.

As contained in the Guidelines for implementation of National Early Childhood Policy in Nigeria page 16, made emphasis on Psycho-Social Stimulation and Early Learning for the child through range of activities, actions and materials employed to engage, activate and enhance the child's interest, brain development, increase and encourage developmental abilities in exploration, inquiry, creativity, problem solving and social skills in his environment.

The Revised Nigerian Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Early Child Care and Education/Primary Education 2020, contains some courses on the issues of play and the child's learning courses such as:- ECE: 125 – Play and the child's learning; as part of professional practice for pre-service teachers and ECE : 215 – Early Childhood Curriculum and Methods; professional knowledge as well.

This research was sponsored by Tetfund / IBR – Batch 7: 2015 – 2021 Merged S/No, 15

The study therefore will develop content that will help Teaching and provision of learning experiences for ECCE, NCE teachers in training for pre-primary schools. Also, the study is in line with the policy of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for lecturers to carry out researches on content areas of the curriculum.

Play way method is one of the methods used in teaching children in the early years. Thus, these current studies on children and play will help to establish the place of play, domains and developmental milestones of child development.

Objective of the Study

1. To find out whether teachers/Caregivers believe in the power of traditional play activities
2. To find out whether parents allow their children to engage in play freely in the North West Zone in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. Do Teachers/Caregivers believe in the power of play and child learning?
2. Do parents allow their children to engage in play freely?

Brain Development and Play in Early Childhood

Early childhood learning is key to the future development of the child and community survival. This is important because the brain develops faster in the first five (5) years of life. The child brain is active twice as that of adult.

The connection the child brain makes is between 700-1000 connections per second. These connections form the foundation of future child growth and development.

Furthermore, as the brain is the centre of all body connections, Pre-Primary education should provide appropriate play environment and materials to stimulate the brain. (UNICEF and FGN, Preprimary Monitoring and Mentoring Manual, 20....)

New scientific studies show that children's environments and early experiences shape how their brain is structured. Play activities determine the success of the child's life in the future. (UNICEF Early Childhood Development, 2013).

Items/Materials and Child's Play

The environment of the child is key to his learning and survival. Item 4, 7, 15, and 16 as responded points to the importance of materials for the child's to carry out meaningful engaging activities. Play is what they engage in throughout the day using items, materials and environment around them for exploration.

The Board of Trustees of Indiana University and University of Illinois (Scale et-al 2014) stated in their report that, play as a physical and mental activity for the child is supported by the teacher, parents/community and the natural environment. Engaging items/materials for play therefore should be provided by the teacher, parents/community also the environment.

Therefore, the child interacts socially within his environment which helps him develop cultural awareness and acquisition of cultural values. Also, a lot of exploration takes place which sharpens his creativity and sensibilities for future endeavors in life. Remember, children have their interests and special aptitudes that through play and use of materials, they develop their potentials. The aptitude as observed should be matured to the fullest to make his future bright and meaningful by parents, community and teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the following methodology to carry out the research; Identification of Local Government Areas in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States were identified (Hausa, Fulani and Lelna people). Design of Research Instruments, administration of instrument, snapped pictures of children at play and data analysis report of result findings and suggestions were documented in the study report. 90 questionnaires were administered, 30 for each state. 78 questionnaires were retrieved which represents 86.6% which is an adequate percentage to obtain results.

Research Design

The study is a survey (purposive) therefore; questionnaires have to be developed for Care-Givers to solicit their responses. Focus group discussions will be conducted. Mobile and Still Picture's will be developed with the use of Digital Camera for quality picture production.

In carrying out the research, trips will be undertaken to remote settings (Villages) on motor-cycles and at times travelling to explore and search for locations where children could be found engaging in their play activities.

Trips will be taken in the morning and evening hours which are periods when children normally engage in their play activities. Also it is expected that specific plays/games are performed as seasonal activities.

Population

Hausa, Fulani and Lelna speaking people will be identified Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States focuses will be in Urban and Rural settlements target for the study. The target population will be children age 0 -5 at play and Care-givers in Pre-Primary Schools will be the respondents.

Data Analysis

At the end of data collection, all the completed questionnaires were thoroughly edited, organized, and processed by the researchers. All research questions required descriptive statistical tools (frequency and percentage) for analyzing the data.

The researchers used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to help in analyzing the data. The questionnaire items were turned into frequencies and analyzed using Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage).

RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1.01: Children play at school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	65	83.3	83.3
	No	13	16.7	16.7
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

On weather children play at school, the results on table 1.01 shows 65 respondents representing 83.3% agreed that children engage in play at school, while 13 respondents representing 16.7% did not agreed. From the results obtained from the table 83.3% is greater than 16.7%, this indicates that caregivers make provisions for children to play in pre-school.

Table 1.02 the teacher always assigns children the game to play

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	69	88.5	88.5
	No	9	11.5	11.5
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.02 on Caregivers assigning children games to engage in reveals that 69 respondents representing 88.5% indicated yes while 9 respondents representing 11.5% indicated no. The results points that a greater percentage of caregivers used teacher guided activity for children to engage in and also choose what game they want to engage them.

Table 1.03: The teacher provides play materials for children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	67	85.9	85.9
	No	11	14.1	14.1
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

On the provisions of play materials, the result from table 1.03 shows that, 67 respondents representing 85.9% provide play materials as against 11 respondents representing 14.1 %. This indicates that, majority of caregivers/teachers provide materials for children to engage in activity that aids learning.

Table 1.04: Children provides play materials in school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	60	76.9	76.9
	No	18	23.1	23.1
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.04 on children sourcing their play materials show that, 60 respondents representing 76.9% indicating that children came with play materials to schools as against 18 respondents representing 23.1 which is less than 76.9%. This shows that children have freedom and child centered and learning is taking place.

Table 1.05: Children engage in only foreign game/play

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	30	38.5	38.5
	No	48	61.5	61.5
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.05 on children engaging in foreign games/plays shows that 48 caregivers representing 61.5% indicating that children do not engage much in foreign games/plays while 30 respondents representing 38.5 indicated yes. This point out more of local games/plays is used than foreign plays/games.

Table 1.06: Children organize themselves and assign responsibilities during play

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	60	76.9	76.9
	No	18	23.1	23.1
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.06 on children assigning roles when they play the result shows that 60 respondents representing 76.9% agreed children are assigned responsibilities as against 18 respondents representing 23.1% indicated negatively. The result shows that children share responsibilities when they engage in plays/games. This indicates participatory learning happens in the pre-schools.

Table 1.07: Children explore the environment when playing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	63	80.8	80.8
	No	15	19.2	19.2
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.07 on children exploring the environment for items materials to play with, the tables reveals that 63 respondents representing 80.8% indicates that, children source materials from their environment, while 15 respondents representing 19.2% responded negatively. The table reveals that children are open to creativity, innovation and learn in line with their interest. Thus, the environment is embedded as a teacher in their learning experiences.

Table 1.08: In school, a special time is provided for children to play

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	68	87.2	87.2
	No	10	12.8	12.8
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.08 on special time provided for children to play, the result shows that 68 respondents representing 87.2% indicated time is allocated for children to play as against 10 respondents representing 12.8% indicate negatively. The table reveals that most teachers/caregivers allow and make provision for children play on the time table.

Table 1.09: Children should not play because they dirty their uniforms

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	25	32.1	32.1
	No	53	67.9	67.9
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.09 on children spoiling their cloths when engaged in play, 53 respondents representing 67.9% indicated dirtying their clothes is not a problem as against 25 respondents representing 32.1% felt children should not dirtying their clothes during play. The results reveals that, a child dirtying their

cloths during play is not a problem as far as they acquire experiences and learning during indoor and outdoor using variety of facilities e.g. sand, paint and water.

Table 1.10: Traditional games should be introduced in pre-primary school level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	64	82.1	82.1
	No	14	17.9	17.9
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

Source: Result of Analysis (2022)

Table 1.10 on whether traditional games be introduced in pre-primary schools, 64 respondents representing 82.1% agreed that traditional games should be introduced in pre-school as against 14 respondents representing 17.9% that responded negatively. The table reveals that traditional games should be introduced in pre-schools as it provides children with experiences on traditional values of their communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children engaging in play activities by Teachers/Caregivers

As qualified teachers/care-givers, the items responded to were to affirm issues on children and play not to opine that it should hold play to be so. From the responses on the tables, the results revealed information on how the Caregivers/Teachers and ideas that support the idea of play for the child positively or negatively. The items used were based on the Questions raised for the purpose of the study.

The issue of teachers and caregivers allowing children to play the responses as responded in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States were positive. The issue of learning through play, tables 1, 3, 8, 9, 10 revealed that, children have the opportunity to play in school, teachers provide play materials, and special time is allocated on the time table for children to engage in different play activities. Also on the issue of children not allowed to play with their school uniforms so as not to dirty them, wearing uniforms and engaging in play activities showed not a barrier for not playing as play provides opportunities for learning experiences and acquisition of skills most of the children playing were on bone ground. Equally, the teachers/caregivers have the belief that local games/plays should take place in the school for the children have experiences that will inculcate traditional values and life skills.

From the responses obtained, the guidelines for implementation of National Early Childhood Policy in Nigeria Page 16 made emphasis on Psycho-social stimulation for early learning through a range of plays and activities including use of engaging materials that helps the child to activate and enhance his interest, brain development abilities in exploration, creativity, problem solving and social skills from the family and environment.

Also, Scale et al. (2014), Nzeribe (2004), Santrock (2004), stated that, play is necessary and important in early learning. It is critical and allows them to explore and make sense of their environment. They also learn, planned and unplanned tasks.

Furthermore, the contributions of eminent philosophers and educators such as, John Amos Commenious, John J. Rousseau, and Maria Montessori amongst others developed Early Childhood Curriculum and stressed the need for play methods at the infant level of education supported with a variety of learning items and materials. Therefore, the inclusion of Pre-primary level of education in Public Schools and permission for the private establishment of pre-primary as regulated in Nigeria a welcome idea. The inclusion and use of Nigerian local plays and games in pre-schools needs to be exploited fully for National Development.

Findings

From the revealed outcomes of the respondents as analyzed showed the following findings from the study on children and play.

- i. Teachers/caregivers agreed that children have freedom and opportunity to engage in play activities in school.
- ii. Teachers/caregivers and children source for and bring items to school that are used for play activities.
- iii. During school sessions, time is allocated for children to engage in games/plays
- iv. More of local games/plays than foreign ones were employed for the child's engaging activities.

- v. Children explore the environment for play items and materials and used them creatively.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that Teachers/Care-givers in the selected North Western Zone of Nigeria (Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States) use play based child centred methods of introducing concepts at the early years of learning for children age 0 – 5 years of age.

This study also reveals that the teachers/care-givers and children source for item and materials that are used by the children in their play based learning activities.

Furthermore, the study as revealed from the responses of sampled Teachers/Care-givers and documented pictures, are stimulated and developed the domains of the children (Social, Emotional/Affective, Psychomotor, cognitive and Physical). Children have the freedom to choose their play materials and activities they engage in without parent's interference at home.

The opportunity given to the Nigerian child should be by Teachers and Parents. It is from such play at home and play based activities in school that the child will develop and grow his potentials fully for his future profession and endeavors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Teachers/Care-givers should allow children to provide variety of play materials/items from their immediate environment and give them opportunity to play and explore with the materials.
- ii. Teachers/Caregivers should make a habit of calling on individual children by name to participate in the activities for motivation. This will keeps the whole class awake and alert.
- iii. Teachers/Caregivers should explore and use more traditional games/plays to instill traditional values.

REFERENCES

- Agatha C. B. N (2004). *Philosophy of Childhood Education*, 1st Edition Pleasant Places Publishers, Yola, Nigeria.
- Bahago B. A. et al (2015). *An Introduction to Early Childhood Education: A Guide for Early Child Educators*, Tabase Prints Publishes Kaduna, Nigeria.
- Bello M.S (1992). *Historical foundation of western education* Debis-Co Press and publishing company Ltd, Kano, Nigeria.
- Early child care project in Nigeria (1996). *A training code for lead trainers*. NERDC printing press 3. Jibowu street, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria.
- John, w Sandroek (2007). *Child development*. McGraw hill. Published by Tata McGraw Hill company Ltd. New Delhi India *Journal of Early Childhood Association of Nigeria* Volume 3, September 2013
- Mena I. G. (2011). *Foundation of Early Childhood Education*, McGraw – Hill International, New York.
- National Commission for Colleges of Education Abuja, NCE, *ECCE Minimum Standards Curriculum*, 2020 Edition.
- National Policy on Education (2013). NERDC Press, Lagos Nigeria.
- Nigeria and the right of the Child (1999). The Federal Ministry Of Women Affairs and Social Development, Abuja printed by Jeromlaiho and associates Ltd, Ikeja.
- Nigeria Educational Research And Development Council, *National Minimum Standard for early child care centres in Nigeria*. UNICEF 2007, MERDC printing press No. 3 Jibowo Street Yaba, Lagos.