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IMPACT OF NURSERY EDUCATION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ENUGU EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE

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Abstract: *This study examined the impact of Nursery Education on the academic performance of Primary School Pupils in Enugu East Local Government Area. The research was guided by two research questions. The research employed Descriptive Survey research. The population of the study consists of 995 teachers in 65 primary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area. A sample size of 285 teachers (with 10 randomly drawn from each of the 28 primary schools) was selected for the study. A structured questionnaire titled “NEAPPS” was used as an instrument for data collection. Mean statistic and standard deviation was adopted as the method of data analysis. The findings showed that Nursery school education have good effect on the academic performance of pupils in primary school. Students with nursery education perform better in primary schools, Students with nursery education tend to face challenges with confidence unlike those without nursery education, Students with nursery education have better skill in reading and writing, Students with nursery education seem to be flexible in his thinking, realistic and capable of sustained efforts. The study recommends that every child should first attend a Nursery school before going to the primary school. It was then recommended that adequate mass enlightenment of parents on the need for Nursery education should be done.*

Keywords: *Origin of Nursery Education in Nigeria, Type of Nursery school, Nursery VS Primary Education in Nigeria and Academic Performance*

Introduction

Education which is given in group setting to the age of round about three up to five years old children is called nursery school education. Nursery school education is designed to investigate and assist the mental, physical, emotional, linguistic, and also social upbringing. Different psychologists, educationists and policy makers have given different names to this type of education namely nursery school education, kindergarten education and pre-primary education etc (Singh 2017). Pre-school education is also referred as any systematic program in which young children

participate before they do enter primary schools that is designed to promote children’s social emotional, academic, linguistic, and literacy skills, and health and above (Justice and Vukelich 2018).

The first five years of life are highly significant. What children learn and feel during this time, particularly about themselves, will be foundational to the rest of their life. At this stage a child develops good relationship with the people around him (Hightower 1999 in Aderibigbe 2015). The findings of psychologists and researchers on child development have laid great stress in recent years on the deep impressions made upon children by their

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early experiences and lasting effect of such impressions. This had led us to recognize that education starts very in life and the need to provide early education (Eweniyi 2012)

One of the problems facing the Nigerian school system is the early drop-out rate of pupils. Again, it was discovered that pupils failed in primary classes because they were unable to face or respond to the demands of formal school processes. This problem is not peculiar to Nigerian Primary Schools alone; some developing countries also experience this same problem. Pozner in Orebanjo (2014) found that 35% of first grade children in Argentina dropped-out of school. Yarrow et al cited in Awoniyi (2009) were able to explain that family factor accounted for this problem while Enge et al cited in Onibokun (2016) discussed personal factors. It is the intention of this study to focus on school related factors because it is assumed that there is an appreciable difference in processes of training in the nursery classes and in primary school.

Nursery education is the educational group experiences planned for children who have not yet entered primary schools. It is the 1st stage in education given to children between the ages of 2 to 5 years depending on schools requirements. The basis of many learning exercises at this stage are sand, water painting, play, storytelling, nursery rhymes and development of early literacy and numerical skills (survey on WAEC and result errors 2009). In the olden days, children's educations were solely left for parents to determine and cater for. But in recent times, both parents and government have their parts to play in the educational life of a child. The parents start the education of a child from home, immediately the child is born. They tend to equip the child with necessary norms and values of life, language, good habit, etc.

In Nigeria, it is government's responsibility to promote the training of qualified nursery school teachers in adequate number. Government ensures the development of suitable curriculum. They supervise and control the quality of such institutions that have nursery in them. It is the duty of government to establish nursery sections in existing public schools. They encourage both communities and private efforts towards this. They also

make provisions in teacher education programme for specialization in early childhood education. They also provide monitoring team for the supervision of schools, encouraging them to use mother tongue. They also provide enough books for schools. The purpose of nursery education is to effect a smooth transition from the home to the school, prepare the child for the primary level of education, provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work. It is also meant to inculcate social norms, spirit of enquiry and creativity through exploration of nature, environment, art, music, playing with toys in a child. It also helps to develop a sense of co-operation and team-spirit, learn good habits especially good health habits and teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, form etc through play (National policy on education, 4th edition, pg eleven, section two (Curriculum Conference committee in 1998).

Primary education is the first stage of compulsory education, it is preceded by nursery education and it is followed by secondary education. In most countries, it is compulsory for children to receive primary education, though in many jurisdictions it is permissible for parents to provide it. The transition to secondary school or high school is somewhat arbitrary, but it generally occurs at about eleven or twelve years of age. Some educational systems have separate middle schools with the transition to the final stage of education taking place at around age of fourteen.

Bibi and Ali (2012) stated that at this stage of development, children learn and absorb information very rapidly, and do take keen interest in every type of new discovery. It is a well known fact that the most important years of learning are started at birth. At this stage, the brain of a child develops such imprints which will last for the rest of his life. The environment also has a great influence on the rapid development on the ideas grasping power and emotional skills of the young children. The extensive studies which have been carried out on the high quality nursery schools education have long term fruitful effects on a child and especially for those who are weak in studies. Eweniyi (2012) stated that Nigerian Government recognizes the formal nursery experience as a result of the findings by the



Educationists and he included it in the National Policy on Education. Nowadays, there are proliferations of nursery school institutions both in the urban and rural areas. The Government has a deliberate attempt to raise the quality of education at all levels in order to make the products of our educational system more useful to the society. Therefore nursery school education will provide that vital physical, psychomotor, affective, cognitive, social potentials which are fundamental to human life that will play very essential roles in the academic performance of children in the primary, educational level and even more in the later life of the individual child (Osakwe 2009).

Origin of Nursery Education

Nursery education has a rich and exciting history. Brain and Anderson (2000) observed that the story of its development is the chronicle of people and movements who took bold steps towards improving children's lives. Critical events have had a hand in shaping the history of early nursery education. Example, a national crisis such as World War I brought together a community to provide for its children. Davis (2002) stated that the nursery school today is different from what it was when the movement began more than 50 years ago. It is different because of the changes in the world, because the place of education then and now is different, and because we know more than we did about human growth and development now than before.

The first Nursery school was established by McMillan sisters in London in 1908. According to Douglas (1999) their interest then was in improving the health and general welfare of young children living in slum areas of the city. The social, emotional, and intellectual development of children later began to concern people in England and in many other countries. Cooper and Zubek (1998) stated that in the United States, interest in the development and welfare of young children led to the establishment of nursery schools soon after the First World War. Most of the schools established in the first years were laboratory schools in colleges and universities for the purpose of learning more about the growth and development of children.

According to Gray and Klan (1998) cited by Aderibigbe (2015) amongst the individuals who contributed to our understanding of needs of young children was Maria Montessori of Italy, who developed a program of activities for young children that contrasted with the passivity of earlier education programs; John Dewey, who stressed the importance of activities, and of first hand experiences in learning and; Sigmund Freud, who stressed the significance of the first years of life, and the relation of emotions and behaviors.

Oniboku (1997 in Eke 2015) observed that the History of Nursery education in Nigeria today is largely a postcolonial development. The semblance of it during the colonial era was the Kindergarten and infant classes, which consisted of groups of children considered not yet ready for primary education. Grouping for instruction then, was not age-based. Some children age six or even more, could be found in some of the infant classes. With the phasing out of infant classes, some parents began to feel the need for Nursery schools. In the 1960's the number of Nursery schools increased as a result of influx of various European and American Citizens working in different parts of the country. The influx foreigners were the fact that Nigerian professionals were increasing in number, and were fast emulating the European Official in sending their children to Nursery schools. The demand for such schools fell much below the supply hence the fees charged by these schools became high such that very few well-to-do parents could afford to send their children to them.

UNESCO, (2007) states: "as the twig is bent, so grows the tree" could apply to all children and their early childhood learning and experiences. When people accepted the importance of childhood, they began to take responsibility for a quality life for them. Society began to provide for the health and physical welfare of children and came to understand the necessity to care for their minds. On the basis of the above, the following constitute the Core philosophy of Nursery education worldwide.

- It is a place for 2½ -5 years old.
- Designed for educational experiences
- It includes Nursery schools, Day Care Centers, Laboratory schools



- It focuses on social and emotional wellbeing.
- The curriculum encourages self expression through language, creativity, intellectual skills, and physical activities.
- The basic underlying belief is the importance of inter-personal connections children make with themselves, each other, and adults.
- They have some general characteristics.
9.00am: children arrive at school, 9.30am: free play periods, 9.45am: singing times and Rymes, 10.00am: toileting and snacks time, 10.30: free play, 11.30: clean up, 11.45: story time, 12.00noon: children depart home. (UNESCO in Education for all Global Monitoring Report 2007)

Nursery education is the foundation of learning because children who have a weak learning foundation can hardly perform as exceptionally intelligent students in their entire academic life circle. It is at this early stage of learning that children are developed for higher academic exercises. The foundation of education of the child is the preschools education which forms an integral part of his or her early education which may be formal or informal, usually given in an educational institution to children aged 1 to 5+ prior to their entering the primary school. This educational level of the child provides for the physical, motor, health, nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and social development of the pre-school child. If child education can provide these vital necessities which are fundamental in human life, it is not therefore unlikely to have an important and strong relationship with the pupils' performance at the primary school level and perhaps at the secondary and tertiary levels Nakpodia (2011).

Learning apart from a very rigorous exercise is procedural. If a child gets a particular step wrong or did not even get it at all, it becomes a very big problem to such a child. This makes nursery education very essential for the overall development of the education sub-sector. Nakpodia arguing further on the importance of early education maintained that the Universal Basic Education Act of 2000 cites Early Childhood Education (ECE), which has to do with pre-primary education

given to children between ages one to five, as an integral part of basic education. It represents the first important step in achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA).

Nursery VS Primary Education in Nigeria

International agencies recognize the role of nursery education as a foundation for the educational system and the young. The World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in 1990 undertook a joint commitment to make an urgent universal appeal to give every child a better future. Also, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasized urgent priority to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for all children. Adenipekun (2004) documented eight reasons given at these for a in support of the provision of affordable, quality programmes of early childcare that are community based, and which are linked with health care and nutrition as part of an integrated approach to meeting the needs of the young child. These reasons include:

1. From conception of six years of age, children, according to research findings, undergo rapid mental, social and physical development to the extent that by the age of six, their brains would have developed to almost the size of an adult.
2. The convention on the rights of the child stipulates that children have a right to live and develop to their full capacity.
3. Moral and social values postulate that through children, societies pass on values and culture from generation to generation.
4. Supporting the development of the child physically and mentally leads to increased enrolment, improves performance and the society generally.
5. Provision of early childcare facilities and offer equal opportunities to children from both the privileged and disadvantaged homes.
6. A programme in early childhood development should be used as an entry point for other developmental activities which will benefit the entire community.



7. ECC (Early Child Care) projects should be linked with other developmental activities for women, nutrition, health, water and sanitation.
8. There is a growing demand for better ways of caring for children through an ECC project given the advancement in science and technology which now ensures the survival of many more children, thereby increasing population growth. It is very important to add here that the National Policy on Education (2004) also recognizes the centrality of nursery education.

The policy in Section 2, page 11 refers to “pre-primary education” in this document as the education given in an educational institution to children aged 3 to 5 plus prior to their entering the primary school. The Policy identifies the responsibilities of government at this level as the promotion and training of qualified pre-primary school teachers in adequate number, contribute to the development of suitable curriculum and supervise and control the quality of such institutions. What this simply means is that the Nigerian government has equally provided a policy document guiding nursery education in Nigeria with a view to ensuring smooth transition to primary school. Jummai (2012) observes that primary school education is the foundation for formal learning in Nigeria.

To achieve functional primary education in Nigeria, the Federal Government in the National Policy on Education (2004) cited in Jummai (2012), sets the aims of primary education as follow:

- i. To inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively;
- ii. Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- iii. Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribute to the life of the society;
- iv. Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- v. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
- vi. Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him function

effectively in the society within the limit of his capacity; and

- vii. Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and craft of the locality.

Also in an effort to promoting primary education in Nigeria, The federal ministry of education has established a National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) with its headquarters in Kaduna. The state ministries of education have their own units of this board. Local government authorities also have their constituent bodies charged with the coordination of primary education matters along states and nationally formulated policies. The general objective of the establishment of Primary Education Commission is to ensure effective operation of primary education in the country with the ultimate aim of providing quality education to the pupils.

Quality Nursery Education

Quality Nursery education can be viewed from different perspectives. For this paper, quality Nursery education shall be viewed in the spheres of Environment, curriculum content, the children teachers, and evaluation (UNESCO 2007).

Environment Perspective

The environment is the stage on which children play out the themes of childhood, their interests, triumphs, problems and concerns (Acar et al 2005). An environment for children therefore includes all of the conditions that affect their surroundings and the people in it. (Polycarp 2003) on the other hand defines Nursery environment as “The sum total of the physical and human qualities that combine to create a space which children and adult work and play together. He identified the physical environment to include,(Buildings/room arrangement), [activity/recreational/play areas] [material/equipment](Amount of space/windows/doors) (Safety/ lighting/ health supplies) (Toiletries,/eating facilities) (Tables,/Chairs/Lockers/Flooring) (Display areas, and resting space). (Sydney 2010) stated that “each environment is unique”, and that there is no such thing as a model or Ideal setting for children”. But that



every nursery environment must be seen to encompass the followings:-

- Should be conducive for learning
- Should encourage optimal growth of children
- It should be child centered
- It should be favorable

A nursery school environment that is conducive for learning should not be seen to be at the middle of a motor park, a rail station, a market or an industrial area with both noise and waste pollution. Such environment are not conducive for learning, the noise pollution from these places not only distracts the children's attention from the class-activities, but prevent them from hearing the teachers and fellow children. Judging from the above one can correctly state that many Nigerian nursery schools, have failed to meet the environmental quality criteria, circumstances are bound in Nigeria where Nursery schools are located next to rail station's markets and cement factories. It is evident that many of our nursery schools have failed to meet the environmental quality expected in the location of many of our nursery schools.

Curriculum Perspective

Curriculum is considered to be one's individual course of study (Stanza 2001). In secondary schools, Social studies, Geography, Math's, English and Arts are part of curriculum. In a Nursery school setting, curriculum is literally everything that happens in the course of a school day, such as Arts activities, language, games, gymnastics, climbing, songs and rhymes, digging in the sand, rest and feeding times. Moshe (2001) observed that the curriculum of the Nursery school is the planned and the unplanned daily activities of the children at school. He observed that young children are like sponges, they absorb everything going on about them. Since they are young, and unfolding, the whole world is new and fresh; therefore they do not discriminate between what is prepared and structured for them to learn and whatever else happen to them at school. It is all learning.

Moshe (2011) further observed that "the teachers apply what they know about children in drawing up the

Nursery curriculum. Hence Nursery school curriculum is the sum of a teachers' knowledge about children's needs, materials, equipment, societal and government policy requirement, and what happens when children meet. Curriculum of the Nursery school is the translation of theories of education into practice.

Myers and Kings (2012) observed that most third world Nursery schools have a very school preparatory focus, emphasizing the three Rs rather than play or social skills. Bereiter (2018) and Englishman (1999) cited by Okwoche (2017) observed that Nursery education in Nigeria is one which is structured academically oriented, and inclined to formality.

Olayide (2013) in confirming the views above observed that Nursery school curriculum in many parts of Nigeria have planned/structured curriculum, planned time tables for teaching and learning situation. She further stated that some Nursery schools went the extra-mile of providing instructional materials such as pictures, posters, projectors, television, tape recorder, print materials such as text books, drawing books and the likes in line with the formal stage of a child's cognitive development. From the forgoing, it can rightly be concluded that quality issues in Nursery education as far as curriculum is concerned, Nigerian Nursery schools have failed to provide the right type of curriculum for our children.

The Children Perspective

UNESCO (2007), observed that the selection of children to any ideal Nursery school is dependent upon many factors, amongst some of these are type or Nursery school, location of Nursery school, and the purpose and need it serves the community.

Type of Nursery school

There is what is called the Head-Start Nursery schools, or compensatory education. This type of Nursery school education started in America in 1965, and was aimed at using political and social decision to use pre-school enrichment as an antidote to poverty. These types of schools were deliberately opened for children of the poor in slum areas who may have brilliant children, but



may not have money to send them to good fee paying Nursery schools.

The Laboratory Nursery Schools:

These schools are closely related to the child's study and guidance of children. They are usually established by either universities or higher colleges, or university related research training institutions, to permit the longitudinal study of child development and the training of childhood personnel. Going by the above condition one would simply see that none of the above criteria, constituted grounds for the selection of pupils into Nigerian Nursery schools. Even the so called university demonstration Nursery schools that are bound in most Nigeria Universities only serve the purpose of a training ground from which university lectures give the best of training to their children, from where they proceed to a University Demonstration secondary school and from there into the university.

Age and Number of Children per Class

The internationally accepted Number of children in a Nursery class is twenty children and below (UNESCO 2007). Large groups create strains and reduce the contribution that the school can make to the individual. If the class is mostly of 2-3 years old, the class is expected to have 15 or less children. (UNESCO 2007). If the Nursery school is for the handicapped, between 10-15 is the recommended Number. (UNESCO 2007). The Nursery school serves the needs of two to five years old, by age six they have moved to primary one. Most children are ready for group experiences when they are around the age of three years. Unless on a special need, children of age 2 and 3 should be grouped independently for they are in deistic stage of child development. Four years and five may be grouped together, Stanly (2003) observed that mixing the age group of 2 -3 may distort growth, as much as failing to mix them when the time is ripe could equally distort growth. Going by the Nigeria standards one cannot beat his chest that this is in practice?

Onibokun (1999) observed that the history of Nursery education in Nigeria today is largely a post colonial development. Then, grouping for instruction in schools

was not age-based, and that some children age six or more could be found in some Nursery classes. This case is still very much with us till date. Parents who go to villages to bring their wards with the aim of giving them better city education, enlist at age 6-7years in Nursery one. This is because back in the villages, these children may have attained primary two, but cannot speak a word of English, in their quest to re-dress this step they return the children and wards to Nursery one, creating a wide age disparity.

Staff of Nursery Schools

The number and types of staff members in a school will depend on the size of the school. Whatever the size and type of school, it requires some of these vital staff members to function efficiently. Amongst these are the head teacher, assistant head teacher, teachers, and aids. Other professionals such as social workers, a nurse, a doctor, a psychologist a psychiatrist, all of whom act as consultants who visit the school from time to time (UNESCO 2007). In an ideal Nursery school, there will be more than one adult with each group of children, especially if the children are very young, or of special needs. The two year old needs attention and individual care from teachers help in dressing, in using toilets, and even some times eating. When children with physical, emotional handicapped are enrolled, the school needs additional staff. A blind or partially sighted child, a deaf, a spastic, or a mentally retarded requires more help from a teacher than does a child without a handicap.

Concept of Academic Performance

Academic performance continues to be a major concern amongst academicians, researchers and policy makers. Strictly speaking, the persistent poor performance especially in quantitative courses is alarming. In this regard, the marketability of graduates in put on the line, as such, something needs to be done to correct this phenomenon. Most studies have tended to focus on investigating academic performance in general (Barnard, 2004; Roberts, 2007; Shafiq, Farooq, Chaudhry, and Berhanu, 2011). Others that have examined performance in individual courses concentrate on performance in mathematics (Maliki,



Ngban & Ibu, 2009), thus paying less attention to other quantitative courses at university level such as statistics, quantitative techniques, accounting and financial management. Nevertheless, extant literature highlights a number of factors that affect students' characteristics and their environment, teacher characteristics and background, teaching style and materials. In addition, academic performance is widely measured in terms of grades and test scores (Kingdon, 2006; Rockoff, 2003). Considering all the possible variables that explain academic performance in general, this study focuses on learning environment and attitude towards quantitative courses at university level. In the next section, we present a brief discussion of previous studies.

Statement of the Problem

Nursery education as an important component of the educational system plays a significant role in the determination of a child's academic performance in primary school. Nursery education is expected to equip a child with the necessary norms and values of life, but it is faced with these challenges. Nursery education should have the capacity of placing a child on a good academic plane before his/her primary level. It is indeed the pivot around which every academic activity revolves.

On the other hand, the quality of students graduating from different levels of education in Nigeria has been decried as being abysmally low over the years. As a panacea, government has increased spending in education over the years; trained more teachers; opened more schools, etc., all in a bid to arrest the ugly situation. Other stakeholders, like parents have devised a means of starting the educational training of their wards earlier in life either by using personal tutors at home or sending them to nursery school very early in life. This practice is stemmed on the belief that the earlier a child is exposed to academics, the better the chances of intellectual growth and development. How far this is true is still an issue of controversy among researchers and educationists. Also, the answer to this unanswered question would best be provided by the professionals who are in the field of teaching (teachers). It is for this reason that the study is designed to ascertain teachers'

perception of the role of nursery education on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Enugu East local government area of Enugu state.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of nursery education in academic achievement of pupils in primary schools?
2. Does Nursery school education educate pupils well enough to perform better in primary school?

Methodology

This section presents and discussed the design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrument of data collection, validation of instrument, reliability of instrument and method of data collection.

Research Design

The research design adopted for the study was survey design. In this design, questionnaire is used to elicit information from different individuals on a particular issue relating to the population (Iketaku 2010). The research design aimed at determining the impact of Nursery education in the academic performance of Primary school pupils in Enugu East Local Government Area. This survey design was adopted because the data collected from a few members of the population is used to generalize and make reference to the population.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in nine (65) public primary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area. Enugu East Local Government is made of communities including; Iji, Amorji, Ibeagwa, Emene, Ugwogo, Abakpa, Trans Ekulu, all in Nike Clan. The occupation of the people in this area of study is mainly agriculture, trading and civil servants. The headquarters of this local government area is at Nkwo Nike and has an area of 383 square kilometer.

Population of the Study

The study covers the entire primary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area. From the data obtained sixty-five (65) primary schools in the area of study. The population of the study was 995 teachers in 65 primary



schools in Enugu Educational Zone of Enugu State. Source: Enugu State Universal Basic Education Board, 2015.

Sample and Sampling Technique(s)

The sample was drawn from the 65 secondary schools. The sample size was 285 respondents which were determined using the Taro Yameni formula for sample size determination. With this, the researcher used a simple random sampling technique for the selection of the sample by selecting at least 10 teachers at random without bias from each of the 28 primary schools.

Instrument for Data Collection

Structured Questionnaires were used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was titled “NEAPPS” Questionnaire (Nursery Education Academic Performance Primary School). The instrument was divided into two major Parts, Part I and Part II. Part 1 of the questionnaire was used to collect personal data involving the gender, status and qualifications of respondents. Part II deals with the main questionnaire items, with four point scale responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). A sample of the questionnaire administered is as shown in appendix 2.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by my supervisor and two other experts, one expert in Measurement and Evaluation and one another in the Department of Educational Foundations all in Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University Uli, Anambra State. The

experts critically examined the items and made corrections where necessary. The instrument was finally rewritten by the researcher by integrating the suggestions and corrections pointed out by the experts.

Reliability of Instrument

For the reliability of this study, the researcher employed a Test-Retest method. A pilot study was conducted in one primary school in Enugu-North Local Government Area which was not part of the sample used in the study. The researcher after sharing out the questionnaires to the respondents to elicit their response at two different occasions collected it from the respondents. The data obtained was used to compute the reliability coefficient using the Pearson Product moment coefficient based on the four degree of responds, which gave a result of 0.93.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher collected the data through face to face contact. He visited the selected schools and was assisted by the teachers in distributing and collection of the questionnaires. All copies delivered were collected and used for data analysis.

Methods of Data Analysis

Mean analysis method was used to analyze the question items in the questionnaire. The purpose of using mean score point value to determine the yardstick for evaluating the responses to the question items posed to the respondent. The decision rule was that any mean up to 2.50 and above was accepted as “Agreed”, while a mean score below 2.50 was rejected as “Disagreed”.

Results

Research Question One

What is the role of nursery education in academic achievement of pupils in primary schools?

Table 1: Mean and Std. dev response on the Role of Nursery Education in Academic Achievement of Pupils in Primary Schools

S/n	Items	$\sum Fx$	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	To help the students obtain required knowledge for the primary school	787	2.76	0.73	Agree
2	To prepare them for the challenges in the primary school	790	2.77	0.622	Agree



3	To provide them with relevant skill in writing and speaking	835	2.93	0.65	Agree
4	Effecting a smooth transition from the home to the school	828	2.91	0.655	Agree
5	To foster the physical development of children	824	2.89	0.72	Agree
6	To foster the emotional development of children	802	2.81	0.747	Agree
7	To foster the social development of children	820	2.88	0.667	Agree
8	To foster the intellectual development of children	808	2.84	0.673	Agree

The table 1 above examined the role of nursery education in academic achievement of pupils in primary schools, from the analysis made all items ranging from

1 to 8 obtained mean scores greater than that of 2.50, thus denoting the respondents' decision as agree to the question items.

Research Question Two

Does Nursery school education educate pupils well enough to perform better in primary school?

Table 2: Mean and Std. Dev Nursery School Education Educate Pupils well enough to Perform better in Primary School

S/n	Items	$\sum Fx$	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
9	Pupils with nursery education perform better in primary schools	809	2.84	0.82	Agree
10	Pupils with nursery education tend to face challenges with confidence unlike those without nursery education.	854	3.00	0.73	Agree
11	Pupils with nursery education have better skill in reading	802	2.81	0.67	Agree
12	Pupils with nursery education seem to be flexible in his thinking, realistic and capable of sustained efforts	628	2.20	0.66	Disagree
13	Pupils with nursery education have better skill in writing	846	2.98	0.56	Agree
14	Pupils with nursery education have foundation knowledge on most topics in primary education	827	2.84	0.67	Agree

Table 2 presents the data, mean analysis and standard deviation on the research question; does Nursery school education educate pupils well enough to perform better in primary school? The response from gave the mean scores of item 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14 as 2.84, 3.00, 2.81, 2.98 and 2.84 respectively. The item 12 obtained a low mean score of 2.20 lower than the criterion mean of 2.50.

Summary of the Findings

From the analysis made based on the four research questions and two hypothesis, the researcher made the following conclusion

1. The roles of nursery education in academic achievement of pupils in primary schools are to help the students obtain required knowledge for



the primary school, prepare them for the challenges in the primary school, provide them with relevant skill in writing and speaking. It equally helps in effecting a smooth transition from the home to the school so as to foster the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children.

2. Students with nursery education perform better in primary schools, tend to face challenges with confidence unlike those without nursery education, have better skill in reading, have better skill in writing, and have foundation knowledge on most topics in primary education.

Discussion of Findings

Research question one sort to determine the role of nursery education on the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Enugu East, the response from the respondents identified and indicated that the roles of nursery education in academic achievement of pupils in primary schools are to help the students obtain required knowledge for the primary school, prepare them for the challenges in the primary school, provide them with relevant skill in writing and speaking. It equally helps in effecting a smooth transition from the home to the school so as to foster the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children.

The second research question identified if the nursery education educate pupils enough to perform better in primary school. Response obtained from the analysis revealed that students with nursery education perform better in primary schools, tend to face challenges with confidence unlike those without nursery education, have better skill in reading, have better skill in writing, and have foundation knowledge on most topics in primary education.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, the researcher can deduced that Nursery school education have very high effect on the academic performance of pupils and therefore, every child should first attend a Nursery school before going to the primary school, then based on the data collected from the respondents, which revealed that those that

attended Nursery school before primary school perform better academically, than those that did not, among the sampled schools.

Recommendations

The researcher therefore recommends that:

1. There should be enough mass enlightenment of parents on the need for Nursery education.
2. Government control of the establishment of Nursery schools and guideline for their operations should be put in place.
3. Legislation concerning the control of school fees chargeable especially in public schools, and in Nursery schools should be introduced.
4. There should be public enlightenment on the curricula of Nursery and Primary schools.

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