

Teachers versus Principals Perceptions on Childhood Development: An Empirical Review of Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja.

Aprebo Fiepre Clever Yenogha (Ph.D)
Chief Lecturer, Federal College of Education (T) Omoku,
Rivers State

Achonwa, Uchendu Onu (Ph.D)
Federal College of Education (T) Omoku,
Rivers State
bobouchendu@gmail.com

Abstract

The study focused on teachers versus principal's perceptions on childhood development An Empirical Review of Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja. The study was guided by one research question and hypothesis. A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit response from respondents which was validated by the supervisor and the research question was answered using mean, standard deviation and z-test to test the hypothesis. The result of the study indicates that the following are the achievements of childhood development; reduction/elimination of poverty level, promotion to healthy living, social wellbeing, Consciousness of Gender equality and empowerment of all folk and child protection. The study recommended the following; early child Education should be made compulsory for every child in Nigeria and a legal framework to carter for the affairs of early child education defaulters like parents, guardians and other relatives. The study concluded by revealing the teachers versus principals' perceptions on childhood development: An Empirical Review of Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja holistically.

Introduction

Wikipedia (2018) defines childhood development as a biological, psychological and emotional change that occurs in humans between birth to adolescent and as the child progresses from dependency to independency in life. The period of childhood development is faced with factors that are very influential which occur due to parental relationship with the child, genetic and environmental which is very vital in human existence.

Kid-sense (2018) indicates that childhood development is the sequence of physical language, thought and emotional changes that occur in every child during the period the child progresses from dependency on parents or guardians to increasing independency. Day Care and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) are forms of non-parental child care and early Child education which takes place before the child begins the formal education. Though this early childhood education is not formal and can be organized by anybody like relatives, grandmothers, Aunties, families and group educators. Good enough, some schools have already introduced the system in their curriculum.

It is on this premise the study of 'teachers versus principals perceptions on childhood development: An Empirical Review of Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja.' is being carried out.

Definition of Terms

Childhood Development here means early child education.

Purpose of the study

The study is to examine the perceptions of teachers and principals on Childhood Development in some Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja;

- To identify the achievements of Childhood Development in some selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja.

Research Questions

- Are there difference in perceptions of teachers and principals in achievements in Childhood Development in our Public Schools?

Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference between perception of teachers and that of principals in the mean rating of the achievements of Childhood Development in Public Schools.

Review of Related Literatures

Childhood Development

Novella (2016) defines the principles of childhood development as a predictable and orderly process. That is we can predict how most children will develop and how they will develop at the same time rate with other children. Though there are individual difference in children's personalities, activity levels and timing of developmental milestones, such as age. It describes the direction of growth and development. This principle ensures that the child gains control of the head first, later the arms and legs. Infants development depends on the control of the head, face movement within the first two months after births, within the next five months they are able to lift arms within six to twelve months the child begins to gain full control of himself by crawling, standing or walking and coordination of arms supersedes control of legs. Development proceeds from the centre of the body outward; it is known as the principle of proximodistal development. It describes the direction of development; ensures the spinal cord development inside before the outer parts of the body. The Childs arms develop before the hands, hands before the fingers.

Development depends on maturation and learning; maturation refers to the sequential characteristics of biological growth and development. The biological changes happen in stages that gives the child new abilities. Changes in the brain and nervous system are responsible for maturation in the child. These changes ensure that the child brain and nervous system improves the Childs thinking (cognitive) and motor (physical). The maturity is expected to get to a certain point before it gets to acquiring new skill. For instance a child of four month cannot use language by speaking because the brain development is below such stage. Basically maturation pattern are innate, it is genetically programmed. The child's environment and learning that occurs as a result of the child's full potentials. Development proceeds from the simple (concrete) to the more complex; this stage ensures that the child's cognitive and languages are utilized to the fullest to solve the problems of learning and relationship between things and classifications. These cognitive stage helps the child learning abilities in identifying and describing of items like orange and apple being able to identify both and their differences. As the Childs develop in cognitive skills, the child can understand a higher and a complex relationship between objects, things like an apple and orange. Growth and development is a conditional process; as development gradually occurs in a child's life, he or she adds to the already acquired skills or knowledge which has become a basis for mastering the skills or admiring more. Most children follow this in a motor development there are predictable stages that must occur for the next stage to take place like lifting of arms, turning of heads, moving of arms and legs, crawling, climbing, walking and running. Growth and development proceed

from the general to the specific; the physical development (motor) the child will be able to grasp an object with the whole hand before using only the thumb and forefinger. The infant first motor movement are very generalized, undirected and reflexive, waving arms or kicking before being able to reach or creep towards an object. Growth refers from large muscle movement to more refined (smaller) muscles movement. There are individual rates of growth and development; the rate every child grows or develops differs from the other though is imperative to understand that development patterns in some takes simple stages which are present in every child but the speed of occurrence differs in every child's development stages. Understanding these facts clearly enables everybody to know that these characteristics and features of child development differs in every child hence the speed of development is not at the same rate in every child. Some walk at ten while others at eighteen months of age, Some children are active while others are passive it doesn't make the passive child less intelligent as an adult, it is not a reliable root to validity the child's growth in development, it differs from the individuals as such should be given due attention at every stage for example in some children their emotional, social intelligent develops faster than the intellectual while in some the intellectual develops faster. Having a full knowledge of these principles in child development and growth enables parents, guardians, teachers and those providing these childhood services to know ways that is appropriate to plan the child's activities, stimulating and enriching the child's experience while the growth process is ongoing, it also provides basis for support and encouragement deemed adequate.

Parenthood and Childhood

Betty et'al (2010) revealed the stages of parenting children and they are as follows;

Nurturing: Parents-child relationship has long be acknowledged to be one of the most powerful predictors of optimal child development. Some of the events are warm responsive which is associated with later child language development (Bee et'al 1982, Bradley & Caldwell 1977, Clarke-Stewart 1973); Cognitive development (Bakeman & Brown 1980, Bee et'al 1982, Escalona 1982, Lyons-Ruth, Connel & Zoll 1989); School success (Werner & Smith, 198) and behavioural adjustment (Escalano, 1987; Maccoby & Martin 1983, Petit & Bates 1989).

Nurturing attachment figure does not necessarily have to do with the child's mother to have beneficial effects; the critical variables appear to the sensitivity and continuity of a reliable adult providing responsive care (Kochanek, 1993). Conversely parents who are less involved and less affectionate with children are more likely to witness variety of academic and behavioural problem with the children as they grow up (Olweus, 1980). At the far end of the spectrum child abuse and neglect are strongly related to poor developmental outcomes in short and long term basis.

Supportive Relationship: One index of the quality of parent-child relationship during the years is the attachment or bond between the child and parents (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). A large body literature explores the relationship of mother child attachment to later development. Secure attachment in infancy is associated with cognitive and language development (Gersten, Coster, Schneider-Rosen, Carlson & Gchetti, 1986). The quality of later peer relationship (Jacobson & Willie, 1986). Persistent in problem solving and good behavioural adjustment (Arend, Gove and Sroufe, 1977). It is theorized that these developmental stages occur because a secure attachment provides the child with a base from which to explore the environment, this increase opportunity for learning and a sense of control or mastery (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). In addition the early model of a caring relationship motivates and help the child learn to understand others fast (Selman, 1980). Quality of interaction is critical hence it promotes trust and secure attachment, the importance of adult-child relationship does not end in early childhood but goes into adulthood.

Child Abuse or Neglect: Warm attention and affectionate parent child interaction with secured attachment is seen as one end of a continuum of nurturing then child abuse or neglect can be conceptualized as the opposite end (Azar, Barnes & Twenty-man, 1988). Child is the emotional, affectionate, social and physical harm done to the child like shelter, food, care and cleanliness. Hence a child is abused or neglected by adults like parents, teachers, guardians and relatives it negatively affects the children's growth and development. To crown it all if children abused are not counselled properly they will forever live with the memories and develop negative mindset towards the entire society.

Effects of children brain development: Constant interactions helps the child brain and physical development, for children born with neurons or brain cells will have rapid brain growth within the first two years at birth the brain is 25% and at age two is 80% which is the ultimate weight (Berger, 1991). The growth consist primarily of connection between brain cell and insulation (or "myelination") of those connections. Key principles of developmental experience organizing in response to the pattern, intensity and nature of sensory and perceptual experience (Perry, 1993).

Verbal and cognitive stimulation: The development of this skill is pertinent towards the enhancement of language and speaking abilities with specific features of the caregiver environment. Verbal interaction is very crucial in parenting hence children learn fast by example and imitation, the frequency of this verbal interaction develops the child's IQ and language. Verbal interaction is an old and traditional strategies used by parents and caregiver to ensure fast development of the child's speaking skills.

Quantity of language; Level of interactions between parents and children is unique hence it ensures language IQ development within the ages of 6-36 months and at this point parents and caregivers are expected to guide and monitor the child's development carefully.

Reading; Parents and caregivers are expected often in present of the children at a very early age, story books with pictures should be used in teaching. As a toddler this regular routine instils the reading culture into the child's mentality and becomes the child's way of life.

Structuring of success; Regular conservation enables the child communicate effectively, those who have looked closely at the kind of interaction that is associated with child development describes it as scale folding. Observing the children interest, passion, abilities as a rudiment of setting the child's path towards success in life by guiding and encouraging them towards harnessing their full potentials.

Physical environment; Parents and caregivers arrange the kind of environment that resonate to the aspiration of the children which serves as a trigger towards dream actualization of the children hence environment plays as prominent role towards child's development.

Behavioural regulation; At this point parents and caregivers are to guide the children based on the positive and expected norms, values, culture and moral accepted in the society. Discipline practice is expected to be part of what the parents will instil in the children from adequate and accurate positive dimension which enable the children to live a positive life in the society.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive survey design was used for the study, the instrument used is questionnaire. Data obtained was analyzed using the Mean, Standard deviation & rank order of mean to answer the research questions and z-test of significance to test the research hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

Are there difference in perceptions of teachers and principals in achievements in Childhood Development in our Public Schools?

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and rank order of the perceptions of teachers and principals on the Achievements of Childhood Development in Public Schools in FCT, Abuja.

	What are the Achievements of Childhood Development in public Schools in FCT Abuja?	Teachers (n=397)		Principals (n=33)		Mean Set	Rank Order	Decision
		Mean (\bar{x}_1)	SD	Mean (\bar{x}_2)	SD			
1	Reduction/ elimination of poverty level	3.39	0.73	2.82	0.85	3.10	1 st	Agreed
2	Promote healthy living	2.98	0.93	2.76	0.85	2.87	2 nd	Agreed
3	Social wellbeing	2.65	0.94	2.51	1.01	2.58	4 th	Agreed
4	Consciousness of Gender equality and empowerment of all folk	2.91	0.65	2.82	0.86	2.87	2 nd	Agreed
5	Child protection	2.51	0.92	2.76	0.75	2.64	3 rd	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	2.89	0.83	2.73	0.86			Agreed

The data in Table 1 shows that respondents agreed on the following items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 with mean scores of 3.10, 2.87, 2.87, 2.64, 2.58 and rank orders of 1st, 2nd, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th from criterion mean of 2.5. The aggregate mean for teachers is 2.89 and 2.73 for principals showed that the respondents agreed on the list of items on the table as the achievements of Childhood Development: An Empirical Review of Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja. Since the calculated mean is greater than the criterion mean the hypothesis is accepted. The influences identified included: reduction/elimination of poverty level, promotion to healthy living, social wellbeing, Consciousness of Gender equality and empowerment of all folk and child protection.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of the perception of teachers and principals on the achievements of Childhood Development: An Empirical Review of Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation and z-test scores on analysis of difference between the perceptions of teachers and principals on the achievements of Childhood Development: An Empirical Review of Selected Public Schools in FCT, Abuja

Staff	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal	Critical Value	Decision
Teachers	397	2.88	1.08	428	0.65	±1.96	Accept H ₀
Principals	33	2.77	0.94				

In table 3, the mean ratings of 2.88 and 2.77 are so closely related to show no significant difference between them. Furthermore at 0.05 levels of significance and at 428 degrees of freedom, the calculated z value of 0.65 was far less than the critical value of ±1.96. From the analysis above since the calculated z value was far less than the table value, thus researcher accept the null hypotheses and which indicates that no significant difference existed between the perceptions of teachers and principals on the achievements of Childhood Development in Public Schools in FCT, Abuja.

Recommendations

- Early child Education should be made compulsory for every child in Nigeria its benefits
- Build a legal framework to carter for the affairs of early child education defaulting adults like parents, guardians and relatives punished accordingly.

Conclusion

Early child development (ECD) services are encompassing and has being proved to be the best approach to health, education, social and child protection which are some of the most cost effective interventions for long term outcomes such as completed schooling, lifetime earnings and reduced crime. Some programmes are antenatal care, birth registration through nutrition and quality learning and it maximizes the child's potentials towards the realizations of sustainable developmental goals. Basically the capacity for a country to grow, innovate and strengthen its economy, depends largely on the level of education, skills, knowledge, health, creative and productive nature of the people.

Kid-sense (2018) went on to unveiled what childhood development covers and its scope is as follows;

- Cognition; the concept of learning and solving problems.
- Social interactions and emotional regulation; constant exchange of pleasantries and communication with others, learning steps of controlling ones emotions despite the prevailing circumstances
- Speech and language; understanding the use of language at every given time and having the required knowledge of reading, writing and eloquent speaking and communication skills.
- Visible skills; ensuring that the motor skills are put into practice.
- Sensory awareness; the formal registration of sensory information into use.

As a result of the above scope parents are advised to follow the measures to identify the challenges within the child's developmental stages and these measures are:

- Fine motor skills development charts.
- Gross motor skills development charts.
- Phonological (sounds) awareness development chart.

- Play and social skills development charts.
- Self-care and organization development charts
- Sensory processing development charts.
- Speech sounds (articulation) development charts.
- Stages of language development chart.
- Written communication development chart.

The study therefore concluded by revealing the achievements of Childhood Development in Public Schools in FCT, Abuja as reduction/elimination of poverty level, promotion to healthy living, social wellbeing, Consciousness of Gender equality and empowerment of all folk and child protection.

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