

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF NURSERY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS CURRICULUM IN ISI-UZO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE.

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Abstract: This study was designed to investigate the factors that affect the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum in Isi-uzo local government area of Enugu State. Two research questions guided the study and a descriptive survey research design was adopted. A sample size of 100 nursery school teachers drawn from the government schools found in the three clusters of the local government representing 57.5% of the total population of 174 government nursery school teachers were used for the study. A questionnaire titled Factors Militating against the Effective Implementation of Nursery School Mathematics Curriculum Questionnaire (FMAEINSMCQ), with 20 items drawn on 4 points scale was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by research experts. The data were analyzed using frequency distribution and mean rating. The findings revealed that poor funding and class size, affect the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum and recommended that more fund should be channeled to the educational system and school heads should develop a yard stick for admitting pupils so as to check over population in classrooms.

Keywords: Implementation, Nursery School and Mathematics Curriculum.

Introduction

Nursery school is a place that is equipped and staffed, where children below school age (3-5years) are cared for, play and begin their social training. It is an education establishment which gives a child his first experience in playing and working with a group away from home. This education according to (2013), has significant impact on the performance of children in basic education program. It helps in cognitive development of children at the early grade of primary education having a strong impact on the learning, attendance and participation of children once they enter primary school. In the view of Haque, (2013), children who miss out in this stage tend to lack school readiness, making it difficult for them to adapt to

school and have a tendency to dropout. Nursery school is organized and structured under laid down educational policies called Curriculum. Curriculum is the entire program provided by a classroom, school, district, state or country to a child. Efemu (2017), pictured it as a set of prescriptions which ensures a good inter play among the teachers, pupils' subject matter and its content, of the physical and psychological environment where the program is being executed. The nursery school mathematics curriculum engages children in school readiness and activities like reading, writing, counting, number recognition and problem solving in a fun filled but purposeful manners. Hence, mathematics skills taught during this period are designed to provide the

foundation children need to succeed in mathematics in elementary school and beyond, as the education focuses on the introduction of simple mathematical terminologies, making it easier for elementary teaching to focus on the application of these ideas. As such, anyone can be a mathematician if given a proper guidance and training in the formative period of one's life called the "Nursery" (Guwahafi, 2015). As a foundation on which subsequent levels of the educational system rest, nursery mathematics education occupies the first position in the Nigeria educational system. Hence the effective implementation of the nursery school mathematics curriculum, determines quality of the primary, secondary and tertiary level. Curriculum implementation is a crucial aspect of the curriculum process, because if the curriculum is not well implemented the purpose for which it was planned, will be defeated. In line with this, Eric and Joseph (2017) lamented that in Nigeria, poor curriculum implementation poses a major problem. These, therefore bring the differences that exist between the development of government policies (curriculum) and the implementation aspect of it. Though, there are numbers of issues militating against the implementation of the nursery school mathematics curriculum which has become a serious challenge to the entire system, let us consider funding and class size.

It is very difficult to implement a curriculum successfully if the educational system has limited funding capacities. In developing countries like Nigeria, the number of learners and teachers has kept rising and money allocated to education absorbed by salaries, leaving very little for teaching materials, books, in-service training, monitoring and other things needed for the smooth implementation of the curriculum. Okpala, Obiajulu and Okoli (2015)

observed that poor salaries, no housing, little or no incentives and delay in the payment of salaries and generally, poor condition of service also demoralizes the teachers who may resort to going into private or commercial enterprises to supplement the meagre salaries. However, Ojo (2023) applauded the 2.8% increase in the budgetary allocation for the education this year as against the previous 5.4%, yet this fund still remains grossly inadequate. This is because lots of financial resources are required to buy equipment, maintain and repair them when they are bad or obsolete.

Class size on the other hand, largely depends on the total number of pupils in the school in relation to the facilities available. Lee (2013) stated that when the number of pupils in a class is more than the facilities available in terms of space, human and material resources, and such class is said to be overcrowded. Population explosion taking toll in most Nigerian nursery schools poses a serious threat on the few available amenities. This tells much also on the teacher that has to face over 30 pupils in a stuffy classroom with limited lightening, and on pupils that have to struggle for seats, desks, spaces and the limited available conveniences, that is, where it is available at all, otherwise, bush methods are employed; leading to littering of the environment and poor channelling of waste resulting in environmental degradation. Another effect as noted by Amaechi (2013) is poor educational quality as the classroom condition will not create room for effective teaching and learning with teachers giving little or no exercises or assignments and if he does, may not mark and make corrections on all of them. This, according to Ejeh (2019) may just be mere attendance of pupils rather than learning, as it becomes hard to offer individual assistance to pupils especially in the nursery schools where individualized method of teaching works best.

More so, disruption of policies, diseases spread, psychological frustration, disciplinary problems, poor classroom control and poor teacher-learner's relationship are also part of the effect of overcrowded classroom.

Statement of the problem

The percentage of passes and failures in mathematics shows a decline in performance of pupil's achievement in mathematics. Impersonation and malpractices of all kinds in mathematics examination is a clear indication that what is being prescribed in the mathematics objectives by the curriculum planners are not being achieved. Sadly, the result of these Mathematics inadequacies do not end in today's society because it has serious negative implications in the advancement of the society that has its root in sound mathematics proficiency. Perhaps, the poor implementation of the mathematics curriculum at the lower level (nursery school) has given rise to poor quality education seen today. Therefore, for adequate and effective action to be taken, factors responsible for this have to be verified. The study therefore is bent on determining the factors militating against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum in Isi-uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State.

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Purpose of the study

1. Investigate the extent to which poor funding militates against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum in Isi-uzo LGA of Enugu State
2. Investigate the extent to which class size militates against the effective implementation of nursery school curriculum in Isi-uzo LGA of Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study.

1. To what extent has poor funding of nursery schools by government militate against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum?
2. To what extent does class size militate against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum?

Method

The Research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey. The area of the study is Isi-Uzo local government area of Enugu state. The area is made up of eighty (80) government nursery schools in the three (3) school clusters. Namely; Isi -uzo central, Amanyi and Eha-amufu. The Population of the study consists of 174 nursery school teachers in all the government nursery schools found in the three zones. The data were obtained at the Local Government Headquarters, Ikem in October, 2023. Due to the current security challenges in the area, the entire

population was not used; but a sample of 100 nursery school teachers drawn from the three clusters were used for the study, representing approximately 57.5% of the total population. Purposive and proportionate random sampling techniques were used to select sampled nursery schools (that is schools that are situated within communities that are not far from the local government urban and having at least two nursery teachers.) Stratification was done systematically among the three clusters, based on the location and number of schools with teachers found in each cluster. This consists of 52 teachers in Eha-amufu, 29 teachers in Isi-uzo central, and 19 teachers in Amanyi. A structured questionnaire that contains 20 items, of two (2) clusters on a four (4) point scale of Very High Extent (VHE) – (4); High Extent (HE) – (3); Low Extent (LE) – (2); Very Low Extent (VLE) – (1), guided the study. The data collected were analyzed using mean. From the four (4) point scale the bench mark for taking decision was 2.50. Hence, any mean that rated 2.50 and above was regarded as accepted, while mean rated below the mark was regarded as rejected.

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Results

The tables below show the presentation and analysis of data collected in respect to the two research questions.

Research Question One: To what extent has poor funding of nursery schools by government militate against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum in Isi-uzo LGA of Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean Score of the Extent to which Poor Funding Affects the Effective Implementation of Nursery School Mathematics Curriculum. N=100

S/N	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	TOTAL	MEAN	RMK
1.	Inadequate fund for procurement Of teaching aids affect my teaching							

Of mathematics to the pupils	50	41	5	4	100	3.37	Agreed
2. Poor funding affects the payment							
Of my salary as at when due	73	23	3	1	100	3.68	Agreed
3. Fund should be made available for							
My continuous training and							
Retraining	43	32	15	10	100	3.08	Agreed
4. Poor funding disrupts educational	33	41	16	10	100	2.97	Agreed
Policies.							
5. Industrial actions resulting from							
Delay or none payment of my salary							
Do not affect quality delivery	2	12	19	67	100	1.49	Disagreed
6 The re-introduction of running	53	20	20	7	100	3.19	Agreed
Cost to schools will help in smooth							
Running of the school activities							
7. None payment of my allowances	64	28	6	2	100	3.54	Agreed
Do affect my attitude to school							
Work.							
8. Fund is not needed for effective	76	19	6	8	100	1.52	Disagreed
Monitoring and supervision.							
9. Fund should be made available for	49	33	10	8	100	3.23	Agreed
The maintenance of my classroom							
Facilities like desks, windows, seats.							
10 Fund needed to embrace fully,	3	5	11	81	100	1.30	Disagreed
Innovations in my teaching of							
The subject, is readily available.							
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			

Grand Mean = 2.74 Agreed

Result from Table 1 revealed that the nursery school teachers responded positively in strong agreement with the statements from (1-4, 6, 7, 9), except from items (5, 8, 10) in which they showed a strong negative reaction in disagreement with the statements. The grand mean of 2.74, indicates that the extent to

which poor funding of the educational system affects the educational system, is very high.

Research Question Two: To what extent does class size impede the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum in Isi-Uzo L.G.A of Enugu State?

Table 2: Extent to which Class Size Impede the Effective Implementation of Nursery School Mathematics Curriculum. N =100

<i>S/N</i>	<i>ITEMS</i>	<i>VHE</i>	<i>HE</i>	<i>LE</i>	<i>VLE</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>MEAN</i>	<i>REM</i>
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1.	The number of pupils in my Class is more than I can handle.	23	33	25	19	100	2.60	Agreed
2	The number of pupils in my class Affects the teaching and learning Of mathematics.	30	35	30	5	100	2.90	Agreed
3	Large class reduces my work	8	10	20	62	100	1.64	Disagreed
4	Large class increases poor Handling of classroom facilities.	72	24	3	1	100	3.67	Agreed
5	I am inconsistent in the use of Adequate and proper assessment Tools due to the large number of Pupils in my class.	40	40	12	8	100	3.12	Agreed
6	I often have case of disease spread In my class resulting from over Crowding	28	34	22	16	100	2.74	Agreed
7	I find it difficult managing the Pupils during mathematics games And other outdoor activities due To their number.	31	20	18	31	100	2.51	Agreed
8	Normal class size improves Effective instructional delivery.	50	42	4	4	100	3.38	Agreed
9	I often spend most of my time Handling cases of indiscipline Among pupils in my class.	39	42	11	8	100	3.12	Agreed
10	There is no enough classroom Facilities needed for pupils well	73	24	1	2	100	3.68	Agreed
		(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			

Grand Mean = 3.15 Agreed

Data presented in table 2 showed that the nursery school teachers, responded in strong agreement with the statements (1, 2, 4-10), except for item 3 where participants showed strong negative reaction in disagreement with the statement. The grand mean of 3.15 is an indication that the extent to which class size

militates against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum is very high.

Summary of Finding

1. Poor funding of the educational sector, affect the effective implementation of nursery school Mathematics curriculum.

2 Large class size affect the effective implementation of nursery school Mathematics curriculum.

Discussion of Findings

The findings were discussed according to the research questions.

Table 1 revealed the extent to which poor funding of the educational system militates against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum. The responses of respondents to the item statement shows that dearth of fund in the educational sector has drastic negative effects in the effective implementation of the Nursery school Mathematics curriculum; especially as regards to payment of salaries, procurement and replacement of recent teaching aid and resources etc. The findings agree with the statement of Bello (2018) who envisaged that quality education which is vital or human resources development cannot be guaranteed so long as poor funding and mismanagement remains part of the educational system. The trend for teaching and non-teaching staff going on strike to press for payment of the right salary and provision of necessary facilities has down the development of the school system. Supporting this, Ayogu (2015) asserted that non-payment of teacher's salaries hampered the system and made it unworkable. Funding is central to an efficient and effective education. Inadequate funding according to Abagbodi (2018) has been the bane of our educational growth and development of schools resulting to production of poor quality school leavers and lack of dedicated teachers.

Table 2 revealed the extent to which class size militates against the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum. This indicated that the number of pupils affects effective delivery. Hence overcrowded classrooms increase teacher's work; mismanagement and poor handling of infrastructural facilities; disciplinary problems,

among others. This study supports Amaechi (2013) who affirmed that the crowdedness of class leads to poor educational quality as the classrooms condition will cease to create room for effective teaching and learning.

Summary

The findings on the extent to which poor funding affect the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum, showed that poor funding has serious negative effect on the effective implementation of the nursery school mathematics curriculum. The grand mean of 2.74 which is above the bench mark 2.5, was the basis for this decision. Also, findings on the extent to which class size affect the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum revealed that large class size with its numerous challenges affect the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum to a very high extent. The grand mean of 3.15 which is above the bench mark 2.5, was also the basis for the decision.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn;

The educational system is not properly funded and this has serious negative effect on the effective implementation of nursery school mathematics curriculum in Isi-uzo local government area of Enugu State. In the same vein, class size has serious effect in the effective implementation of nursery school in Isi-uzo local government area of Enugu State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffered.

1. The problem of poor funding can be solved if government at all level increase the percentage of fund allocated to education in the nation's annual

budget, disbursed completely, managed and accounted for by other education stakeholders.

2. Government should also stipulate in the National policy on educational (NPE) that financing of education in the country should be a joint responsibility of the federal, state and local government.

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3. Provision and procurement of mathematics teaching gadgets/facilities and new classrooms should be facilitated in the nursery schools by school boards, non-government organizations, communities, philanthropists as well as government at all level.

4. School heads and administrators should device appropriate yardstick in screening and admitting pupils so as to check over population in classrooms.

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