



Adequate Funding: Panacea for Development of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper examined the benefits of adequately funding Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. The paper employed the use of secondary data. The secondary data were collected from online publications and print materials. The paper established that sufficient funds for management of early child care development and education, effective implementation of policies, employment of adequate teachers, provision of infrastructural facilities, provision of adequate instructional resources and effective training for teachers in Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme and adequate production of national curriculum for Early Child Care Education (ECCE) are panacea for Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. . Based on this, the paper recommended that the government should provide adequate funds for the administration and management of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria; private institutions and international organizations should provide financial aids to support the development of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria; ;managers of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria should seek host community participation in the funding of the programme in their communities.

Keywords: Funds, Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme



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INTRODUCTION

To say that adequate funding plays a key role in the effectiveness or success of educational programmes, will be putting it mildly. This is because, often, the effective implementation of policies will require adequate funding. The budgetary allocation for the administration and management of early child education in Nigeria is inadequate (Ogunode, Ibidiran and Ibidiran 2021). Thus, poor funding of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Nigeria is responsible for the poor development of the programme according to (Obidike, 2012).

In Nigeria, inadequate funding have been a major problem facing the management of education especially the early child education programme. The early child education programme derives its budget from the ministry of education both at the federal, state and local government authority (Ogunode& Christopher, 2021).

The major issue in Early Child Care Education (ECCE) development is shortage of funds. One of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational systems is that of dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demands and hence rising cost of management of Early Child Care Education (ECCE). This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. The programme cannot perform optimally without funding. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively accept and implement the 15%-20% funding formula for education as recommended by the UNESCO impacts negatively on the performance and sustainability of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria.

The objectives of early child care education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria may not be realized in the face of inadequate funding. Adequate funding is very important in the management of educational programme especially the early child education programme. The development of the early child education programme depends on the amount of funds allocated for the administration and management of the programme. Funding is made accessible for the arrangement of satisfactory assets. These assets incorporate; materials for teaching, offices and stimulating, preparing and pre-preparing of staff (educators and guardians), improvement and sharpening of projects through workshops, immunization, encouragement, supervision and examination, report composing, productions, school suppers and instructional booklets (Taofik, 2020). As properly seen by Ijaiya (2011), early childhood training quality endures poor funding in Nigeria, this prompted deficient assets, which brought about diminished and insufficient management. Funding is critical for the development of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria (Taofik, 2020). It is important to enumerate the import of adequately funding the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the benefits of adequately funding Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Nigeria.



Theory Framework

This paper is hinged on system theory. The system theory holds that an organization is a social system made up of integrated parts. The theory was propounded by a biophysicist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1920. The system was seen as a series of interrelated and interdependent parts in such a way that the interaction of any part of the system affects the whole system. That is, one part of the system must interact and depend on the other parts around it to function effectively. The system theory is relevant to education system because education system (school) is a system and the concept of interaction and interdependence of parts with the education system like all other social systems has identical properties with the other system.

The implication of this theory to this paper is that, education can be liken to be a system made up of different parts and components with the same objectives and goals and working inter-dependently and interrelated with one and another. Every part and component matters and plays crucial roles in the attainment of the system goals. Here, Nigerian educational system is made up of Early Child Care Education (ECCE), primary school education, junior secondary schools education, senior secondary school education and tertiary education. All these unit or form of education matters and is needed to function well to realize the objectives of education in Nigeria.

Conceptual Terms

Concept of Early Child Care Education (ECCE)

Early childhood care education (preschool training) in keeping with FRN (2013) is the care, safety, gaining knowledge of and stimulations promoted in children from age 0 – four years in a crèche or nursery. While kindergarten education is the one-year education given to pupils of age five (5) prior to the duration of getting into primary schools. Maduewesi (1999) observed that ECCE is the education that is offered to children who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school. He further maintained that it is a semi-formal education arrangement, usually outside the home, where young children from about the age of 3 years are exposed to play-like activities in a group setting. These group settings enhance their mental, social, and physical learning suited to their developmental stages until the mandatory age of government-approved formal schooling. Nakpodia (2003) observed that ECCE is the education that provides for the physical, motor, health, nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, and social development of the pre-school child.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2012) specifies that early childhood education ought to be included in mainstream schooling. Children aged three-five years start formal training from preschool training as presented in day-care centers and nursery schools and consequently, encouraged that the preschool segment has to be incorporated in all the primary schools in Nigeria.

It is developed by the informal traditional education given to pupils from 0-3 years which prepare them for school. But the federal government of Nigeria is not directly involved in the founding of day-care centres and nursery schools, it is only an overseer for the:



- Provision and distribution of policy guidelines for the establishment and management of pre-primary institutions;
- Production and development of appropriate national curriculum and textbook in Nigerian languages;
- Approval of relevant supplementary reading materials and teachers/instructions' manual; and
- Provision and approval of appropriate certification of work done and training received.

Ajayi (2017) listed the six reasons for early childhood education in Nigeria to include;

- i. 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;
 - ii. The convention on the rights of the child stipulates that children have a right to live and develop to their full capacity;
 - iii. Moral and social values postulate that through children, societies pass on values and culture from generation to generation;
- iv. Supporting the development of the child physically and mentally leads to increased enrolment, improves performance and society generally;
- v. Provision of early childcare facilities and offering equal opportunities to children from both the privileged and disadvantaged homes;
 - vi. A programme in early childhood development should be used as an entry point for other developmental activities which will benefit the entire community. ECC (Early Child Care) projects should be linked with other developmental activities for women, nutrition, health, water and sanitation.

Methods

This paper is a review paper that critically examined the benefits of adequately funding Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Nigeria. Content analysis and elimination methods were employed to select the literatures used to support the study. The secondary data were collected from print materials and online publications. The total literature collected was 127 and was reduced to 47 by elimination method and content analysis. The accepted valid literatures were used in the study.

Benefits of adequately funding Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Nigeria

There are many benefits of adequately funding Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Nigeria. Some of the benefits includes; sufficient funds for management of early child care development and education, effective implementation of policies, employment of adequate teachers, provision

of infrastructure facilities, provision of adequate instructional resources and effective training for teachers in Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme and adequate production of national curriculum for Early Child Care Education (ECCE).

Sufficient funds for management of Early Child Care Education (ECCE)

Adequate funding of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria will lead to enough funds for both external and internal management of the programme.

Taofik (2020) noted that as it is applicable in the developed nations' budgets, ECCE needs a special intervention budgeted for and/or increase its percentage of the universal basic education (UBE) matching grants to at least 10% in Nigeria. This is important looking at the immediate and longterm benefits of Early Childhood Education to the pupils such as improving their well-being in addition to the cognitive abilities, social and motor skills of the pupils (Osakwe, 2016). Improving the quality of all resources - human and material- to provide a more conducive environment for the achievement of Early Childhood Education objectives should be the focus of increased funds. Osakwe, (2016) noted that state governments need to improve and provide adequate measure towards the counterpart funding system and make them accessible while the federal government, on the other hand need to substantially increase the percentage of educational budget. As it is pertinent in the developing countries' financial limits, ECCE needs a unique mediation planned for as well as increment in it's level of UBE coordinating award to in any event 10% in Nigeria. This is significantly looking at the advantages of Early Childhood Education to the children, for example, improving their prosperity notwithstanding the psychological capacities, social and engine abilities of the children. Improving the nature of everything being equal - human and material resources to give an increasingly helpful condition to the accomplishment of Early Childhood Education programmes ought to be the focal point of expanded reserves. State governments need to improve and give sufficient attention towards the partner financing framework and the national government should significantly expand and increasetheir spending plan (Ogunode, Olowonefa, & Suleiman 2023).

Effective implementation of policies

Adequate funding of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria will lead to full implementation of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) policies that have been described as poorly implemented by Ogunode, Jegede, and Ajape (2021) as a result of inadequate funding of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. To realize the objectives and goals of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) in Nigeria, many policies were designed and formulated. Some of the policies include; teacher-student ratio, facilities policies, qualification of teachers policies, curriculum policies and instructional resources policies. Adequate funding of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria will help the managers of the programme to implement the various policies. Educational policies implementation have failed due to the lack of resources needed. Nakpodia (2011) and Ogunode, Akinsua-Ajape and Jegede, (2021) submitted that only adequate funding of education in Nigeria can ensure full implementation of the various policies designed to improve education in Nigeria.

Employment of adequate teachers

Adequate funding of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria will also guarantee the employment of qualified teachers in the programme. Teachers are very important resources in the realization of educational goals. No meaningful development can be attained in the educational institutions without teachers. Presently, report by independent Newspapers (2019) submitted that there was a deficit of 135,319 teachers at the Early Childhood Care Development Education level, 139,772 deficit in primary schools, and 2,446 shortage in Junior Secondary School across the nation. This shortage of teachers in the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria directly or indirectly will affects the implementation of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme. With adequate funding of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme, funds will be available to recruit professional teachers and deploy them across all facilities of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in the country. Onyeachu (2008) and Salami (2016) concluded that proper funding of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria will aid its development and employment of adequate teachers.

Provision of infrastructural facilities

Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities through adequate funding of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria will also ensure the success of the programme. Infrastructural facilities provides conducive environment for the implementation of teaching and learning. Anyakogu (2002) ascertained that a relationship did exist between the availability of school facilities and implementation of school curriculum. As he puts it, without the availability of functional infrastructures in the schools, the skill-based curriculum will not be effectively implemented in Nigeria schools and the children would lack skill acquisition and economic empowerment. This is because, the children will lack the ability to carry out some meaningful activities due to lack of basic skills that promote effective work performance. Amadi, (2013) observed that in many places, the public early child center facilities in use are uncompleted buildings, makes shifts and car garages that are poorly ventilated most of which have only mats as furniture. This situation can never guarantee effective teaching and learning of these tenderlings whose lives are further jeopardized. Inadequate infrastructural facility is one major problem preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Ogunode, and Christopher, (2021) and Osakwe (2012) opined that the problem of shortage of infrastructure facilities can only be solved in the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria through adequate funding from all stakeholders in the sector. Adequate funding of educational institutions in Nigeria will help to provide adequate and modern facilities to all institutions (Ogunode, Ukozor, & Ayoko, 2023)

Provision of adequate instructional resources

The provision of instructional resources in all the facilities of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria will be possible through adequate funding. Instructional resources are important resources in the implementation of early child education curriculum. Adenike and Peter (2016) submits that when resources are available for ECCE programme at pre-primary

school level, it helps the caregiver/teacher to nurture and support the development of young children and to successfully implement the curriculum while Chukwubikem (2013), acknowledge that the quantity and quality of resources available for any educational programme would determine schools systems capacity for the implementation of the type of educational programme. There have been report of shortage of instructional resources in majorities of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) across the country (Adenike, et al 2016; Awino, 2014). This problem of shortage can be solved via adequate funding of the programme to enable managers of the programme procure necessary resources needed for the implementation of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria.

Effective training for teachers in Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme.

Adequate funding of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria will guarantee effective training for teachers in the programme. Ogunode, Ibidiran and Ibidiran (2021) observed that curriculum implementers at the level of early child education needs constant training and retraining since they are handling children. The early child education curriculum is one of the complex and difficult curriculum to implement in the classroom or playroom. Care giver need to upgrade their knowledge and skills regularly to be able to implement the curriculum. Care giver should attend conferences, trainings and workshops to improve their capacity for instruction delivery. Research has it that supervisors that constantly go for training and retraining programme perform better than those who are not going for training and retraining programme. Poor capacity development of care giver in public early child education centers is another problem responsible for poor implementation of the early child education curriculum in many public early child centers across the country. This problem can be solved with adequate funding of the programme in Nigeria (Ogunode, Olaoye,; Yakubu, 2023; Ogunode, et al 2021; Osakwe, 2012).

Adequate production of national curriculum

The national curriculum produced for the implementation of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme were not adequate. Salami, (2016) observed that the inability of the Federal Government of Nigeria to produce the necessary documents for the successful implementation of the policies and curricula that promulgate them at all public centres in the country led to lack of availability and awareness of the policies and the curricula among the teachers who are supposed to implement them. For instance, none of the curriculum materials that should enhance its implementation like guide to scheme of work, text materials and appropriate instructional resources that would have upheld the curriculum was produced. The one that was produced – Nigerian National Manual for Toy making was never distributed to the schools as and when due. This problem can be solved by adequately funding of the Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. This will make enough fund available for the managers and administrators of the programme to produce adequate copies of the national curriculum of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme and distribute to all facilities of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme across the country. Adequate funding of education guarantees provision of educational resources to support the implementation programmes in the schools (Ogunode& Mohammed, 2024).



Conclusion and recommendations

This paper examined the benefits of adequately funding Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. The paper concluded that sufficient funds for the management of early child care development and education, effective implementation of policies, employment of adequate teachers, provision of infrastructural facilities, provision of adequate instructional resources, effective training for teachers in Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme and adequate production of national curriculum for Early Child Care Education (ECCE) will enhance the effective delivery of the programme to maximize all the benefits contained therein.

Based on this, the paper hereby recommended that the government should provide adequate funds for the administration and management of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. Private institutions and international organizations should provide financial aids to support the development of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria. Managers of Early Child Care Education (ECCE) programme in Nigeria should seek host community participation in the funding of the programme in the communities

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