



PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN AN ERA OF DIGITALIZATION IN SOUTH EAST – NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study centered on the personnel management of Pre-primary education in an era of digitalization in south east Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of the total number of 10,032 head teachers in both public and private pre-primary schools in five states of south east Nigeria. The sample of the study comprised of 480 head teachers drawn through multi-stage sampling techniques. The findings from the study shows among others that the entire south east states lack qualified pre-primary school teachers, pre-primary school head teachers. Have high teacher-pupil ratio, lack in-service training such as seminars and conference etc. some recommendations are government to adhere to policy recommended for implementation of pre-primary education like teacher-pupil ratio of 1:15, in-service training for head teachers and teachers, provision of ICT equipment for effective implementation and management of personnel in pre-primary schools.

Introduction

Pre-Primary Education is education given to the child in a school setting before entering the primary school. It includes the crèche, nursery and kindergarten. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009:8) defined pre-primary/early childhood education as “the care, protection, stimulation and learning promoted in children from 0 – 5years in a crèche, nursery or kindergarten” Pre-primary education is very important in the overall development of children. It helps the child to acquire worthwhile knowledge, values, habits and skills that will enable him grow up as a contributory member of the society. This is because early childhood experiences form the foundation for an individual’s lifelong learning capabilities and social behaviours. Pre-primary education can therefore be described as the bedrock upon which other tiers of education are built. Maduwesi (2005) stated that the nature of education a child receives during the first five years is very crucial to his overall development and later life chances. Therefore a high quality care and education at the early years help the child to develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.

It is in recognition of the importance of Pre-primary education that various conferences and events such as the Joeim Declaration World Summit (1990) and the Convention on the right of the child (CRC, 1989) declared that pre-primary education is a very initial factor for national development. In view of this, the FRN (2004) approved the establishment of pre-primary section in all existing primary schools. Government also promised to “provide qualified Pre-primary teachers in adequate number, contribute to the development of pre-primary curriculum, supervise and contribute to the quality of such institution” (FRN 2004:11). In view of this, management of personnel in pre-primary education has to be of uppermost priority in this era of digitalization. Personnel management in a school according to Ekemezie (2019) means all the activities designed towards the effective and efficient utilization of both staff and students/pupils towards the achievement of educational goals and objectives. In this era of digitalization, every effort should be made towards effective management of personnel for effective service delivery.



Digitalization: is the process of converting analog information into digital format. The personnel manager should be able to make effective use of computers and its like for effective management of personnel in pre-primary schools.

Statement of the problem

It is worrisome that despite the global emphasis on the importance of quality pre-primary education on the overall development of children and its contribution to national development, it appears that this level of education has not received the attention it deserves in terms of personnel management in south east especially in this digitalization era. This has resulted to several problems which have attracted criticisms from parents, eminent scholars and various stakeholders in education. Most schools have dilapidated classrooms with sinking roofs and broken walls. Poor learning environment and facilities could retard children's capabilities thereby inhibiting the full realization of the goals of pre-primary education. It is therefore necessary to investigate and ascertain the problems militating against effective personnel management of pre-primary education in south east Nigeria in this era of digitalization.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine problems encountered by head-teachers in the management of personnel in the administration of pre-primary schools in south east Nigeria and to determine whether school type and location are contributory factors. Specifically the study seek to;

1. Identify staff personnel problems facing the management of pre-primary schools in South East Nigeria.
2. identify the pupil-personnel problems facing the management of pre-primary schools in South East Nigeria.
3. ascertain strategies for improving the personnel management of pre-primary school in south east Nigeria.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the staff personnel problems facing the management of pre-primary schools in south east Nigeria.
- 2) What are the pupil's personnel problems encountered by pre-primary school heads in the management of schools in south east Nigeria.
- 3) What strategies could be adopted to enhance the management of pre-primary schools in south east Nigeria.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis guided the study;

- 1) There is no significant difference between the problems encountered in the management of pre-primary schools in each of the zones in south east Nigeria.
- 2) There is no significant difference between the problems encountered in the management of public and private pre-primary schools.
- 3) There is no significant difference in the problems encountered in urban and rural pre-primary schools.

Methodology

Design: The study adopted a survey design. The population of the study comprised of head teachers in five states that constitute south-east of Nigeria. They are: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo state. The researchers used three States as a basis for this work.

The distributions are as follows:

States	No of public Pre-primary School	No. of Private pre-primary schools	Total No, of	Source
Abia	855	552	1407	Abia State ministry of education 2015
Anambra	1036	1025	2061	
Enugu	1229	1908	3137	



Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study comprised of 480 head teachers. A multistage sampling technique was used to collect data for the study. First, a simple random sampling technique was used to draw three states out of five states in south east Nigeria. The states are Abia, Anambra and Enugu. Stratified sampling technique was used to group pre-primary schools in each state into public and private, urban and rural. Then a purposive random sampling technique was used to draw 40 head teacher from each public and private schools located in rural and urban areas in all the three selected states. These gave a total of 160 head teachers in each state and a total of 480 head teachers were used as sample.

Sample

S/No	State	School type	No. of Schools	No. of head teachers selected	Total
1	Abia	Public Private	855 552	Urban, 40, Rural 40 = 80 Urban, 40, Rural 40 = 80	160
2	Anambra	Public Private	1036 1025	Urban, 40, Rural 40 = 80 Urban, 40, Rural 40 = 80	160
3	Enugu	Public Private	1229 1908	Urban, 40, Rural 40 = 80 Urban, 40, Rural 40 = 80	160
				Grand Total	480

Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers in agreement with the research questions.

It was titled “Personnel Management of Pre-primary Education in an era of digitization in south east (PMPESE). It was a 30 - item questionnaire that was made up of 3 research questions and 3 hypotheses. The research questions were structured on a 4 – point rating scale of strongly agree - (SA) – 4points, agree (A) – 3 points, disagree (D) – 2points and strongly disagree (SD) – 1 point. The 3 hypotheses were tested on 0.05 level of significance. The instrument was validated by 2 experts from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka for face and content validity. Their inputs and comments were affected by the researchers and used as final instrument. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Statistics in another State and the Co-efficient of 0.82 gotten was considered high and attested to the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to the respondents through the effort of 3 research assistants. A total of 480 questionnaire was administered and collected.

Results:

Research Question One: What are the staff-personnel problems facing the management of Pre-Primary Schools in South East Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean response of head teachers on staff personnel problems facing the management of Pre-primary schools.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	High pupil-teacher ratio	2.92	0.77	Accepted
2	Head teacher not specializing in early childhood education	2.99	0.71	Accepted
3	Lack of qualified Pre-Primary school teachers.	3.19	0.75	Accepted
4	No opportunity for staff development	3.03	0.85	Accepted
5	Lack of experienced head teachers in ICT	3.00	0.86	Accepted
6	Use of retired weak teachers	2.26	0.83	Rejected
7	Non availability of teachers	2.16	0.82	Rejected
8.	Non-availability of support staff such as cleaners, etc.	3.09	0.74	Accepted
	Grand mean	2.76	0.63	Accepted

From the results on table 1 above, it was observed that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 with mean responses of 2.92, 2.99, 3.03, 3.00 and 3.09 respectively are above the cut-off score of 2.50, indicating that they are among the problems of staff personnel management in Pre-primary schools in south east Nigeria. Item 3 which is “lack of qualified Pre-primary school teachers” has the highest mean of 3.19, followed by non availability of



support staff (3.09), No opportunity for staff development (3.03), lack of experienced head teachers in ICT (3.00), head teachers not specializing in early childhood education (2.99), and high pupil-teacher ratio (2.92). Also a grand mean of 2.76, all indicated that staff personnel posed problems to effective management of pre-primary education in south east in this digital era. This result however indicated that items 6 and 7 with mean of 2.26, use of retired and weak teachers” and 2.16 “Non availability of teachers”. These two items are below the cut off level of 2.50 meaning rejected. This indicated that they are not among the problems of staff personnel management of Pre-primary education in south east Nigeria. It means that teachers are available but not qualified in pre-primary education, again they do not use retired and weak teachers.

Research Question Two: What are the pupils personnel problems facing the management of Pre-primary schools in south east Nigeria

Table 2: Mean responses of head teachers on pupils personnel facing the management of pre-primary schools in South East Nigeria.

S/N	Items	mean	SD	Remarks
9	Poor ventilation of classrooms	2.67	1.64	Accepted
10	Poor lighting of classrooms	2.60	0.96	Accepted
11	Non availability of good source of water.	3.13	0.77	Accepted
12	Lack of good toilet facilities.	3.02	0.71	Accepted
13	Lack of health facilities.	3.16	0.65	Accepted
14	Inadequate materials for rest.	3.19	0.79	Accepted
15	Lack of facilities for outdoor games.	3.05	0.71	Accepted
16	Lack of facilities for indoor ICT games.	3.45	0.77	Accepted
17	Lack of toiletries.	2.84	0.78	Accepted
18	Non availability of fans and air conditioners.	3.07	0.87	Accepted
19	Non provision of mid-day meal for children.	3.12	0.65	Accepted
20	Non availability of school bus for pupils	3.10	0.81	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.03		Accepted

Observation of the results on table 2 shows that the mean responses on all the items (9 – 20) are above the cut off level of 2.50 indicating that the respondents agreed that all items posed problems to pupil personnel management in south east zone. This means that poor ventilation and lightening of classrooms, non-availability of good sources of water supply, lack of toilet and health facilities, inadequate materials for rest, lack of ICT materials for out-door and indoor games, lack of toiletries, non-availability of school bus are problems facing the pupils-personnel management in pre-primary schools in South East Zone.

Research Question Three: What strategies can be adopted to enhance the management of pre-primary schools in south east Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean responses of head teachers on strategies to be adopted to enhance the management of pre-primary schools in south east Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
21	Employment of more qualified pre-primary school teachers	3.44	0.70	Accepted
22	Adherence of FGN to class enrolment teacher – pupils ratio of 1:15		0.57	Accepted
		3.50	0.55	Accepted
23	Organization of regular workshop and seminars for pre-primary school teachers in ICT usage.	3.51	0.59	Accepted
24	Provision of in-service training with pay for Pre-primary school teachers who wish to specialize on early childhood.		0.53	Accepted
		3.47	0.59	Accepted
25	Provision of adequate equipment to pre-primary schools to enhance management and learning.			
	Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities to pre-primary schools.	3.53	0.53	Accepted



26	Adequate supervision of classroom instruction on a regular basis.	3.43	0.59	Accepted
27	Improvisation of instructional materials by teachers & head teachers from locally available resources.	2.64	0.63	Accepted
28	Employment of only head teachers with qualification on early childhood education and ICT in pre-primary schools.	3.39	0.58	Accepted
29	Employment of only candidates who qualified in early childhood education and are computer compliance to teach in pre-primary schools.	3.38	0.52	Accepted
30		2.80	0.62	Accepted
	Grand mean	3.31	0.64	

From the result of table 3, it can be observed that the mean responses of all the items are above the cut off 2.50, this shows the respondents agreed that all the strategies could be adopted to enhance the management of pre-primary schools to enhance ICT usage in the management of personnel in Pre-primary education.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the problems encountered in the management of pre-primary schools in each of the states in south east Nigeria.

ANOVA (Analysis of variance, one way) used to test the hypothesis as presented in table 4 below:

Research Question	Location	Mean	SD	F. Value	P. Value	Remarks
One: Staff personnel problem	Abia	2.92	0.443	29.58	0.000	Sign
	Anambra	2.45	0.549			
	Enugu	2.90	0.749			
Grand mean		2.76	0.631			
Two: Pupils personnel problem	Abia	2.48	0.527	74.58	0.000	Sign
	Anambra	2.78	0.471			
	Enugu	3.04	0.521			
	Grand mean	3.10	0.582			

From the result in table 4 above, it was observed that all the P-values are less than 0.05 level of significance hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the problems encountered in the management of Pre-primary schools in each of the states.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference between the problems encountered in Public and Private Pre-Primary Schools. The above hypothesis was tested using T-test of independence and the result presented in table 5 below:

Table 5: Result of T-test analysis of hypothesis 2

Research Questions	Location	Mean	SD	F. Value	P. Value	Remarks
One: Staff personnel management	Private	2.82	0.62	2.11	0.035	Sign
	Public	2.69	0.64			
Two: Pupils Personnel management	Private	2.95	0.58	5.86	0.00	Sign
	Public	3.25	0.54			

Results from analysis of hypothesis two as presented in table 5 above show that the null hypothesis was rejected because the P-value of 0.035 and 0.00 was less than 0.05 level of significance, which means that there is a significant different between the problems encountered in the management of Pre-primary schools in Private and Public schools in each states. It means that there is a sign different between staff personnel, pupils personnel problems encountered in the management of private and public pre-primary schools in south east.



The analysis equally revealed that staff personnel problems are less in private schools while public personnel problems are higher in public schools.

Hypothesis three: There is no significant difference between the problems encountered in urban and rural Pre-primary schools.

Table 6: T-test statistics of the differences between the problems encountered in urban and rural pre-primary schools

Research Questions	Location	Mean	SD	F. Value	P. Value	Remarks
One: Staff personnel management	Rural	2.81	0.67	2.11	0.140	Sign
	Urban	2.67	0.59			
Two: Pupils Personnel management	Rural	3.19	0.59	4.263	0.000	Sign
	Urban	2.96	0.55			

From the result in table 6 above, using the significance level of 0.05, it was observed that in hypothesis 3 the hypothesis was accepted especially in staff personnel problems encountered. This is because there is a significant different between the problems encountered in pre-primary schools located in urban and rural areas in relation to pupils personnel management. Observation showed that rural schools encounter more problems in all cases. The result also revealed that there is no significant different between the problems encountered in urban and rural Pre-primary schools in the management of staff personnel because of F-value is more than 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of Results

The findings of research question one showed that staff personnel problems facing the management of pre-primary schools in south east include lack of qualified teachers, high pupil-teacher ratio, non-available of opportunities for staff development, and non-available of support staff in some schools, it was observed that the crèche, the play group and the nursery were all combined in one class with one teacher who may not have the proper training and experience in handling pre-primary school children. This results to overcrowding which may lead to poor classroom management and contribute to poor teaching and learning. The findings contradict FGN (2004) policy that stimulates that the teacher-pupil ratio in pre-primary schools shall be 1:15. Omariwhirem (2005) in a study of the effect of class size on students performance, discovered that high student-teacher ratio limits student participation in class activities and invariably lower their academic performance. Ale and Adelula (2005) also found out that over crowding and lack of qualified teachers has negative effect on pupils' academic achievement. Maduewesi (2005) also noted that without professional knowledge, skills and workshops in early childhood education, teacher may not be able to initiate adequate interaction needed for quality play-based and child centered learning.

Therefore, this ugly situation demands urgent attention because for children to develop into creative and skillful adults that the nation desires, they should be engaged in quality learning that foster creativity, invention and exploration. Hence Pre-primary school children need to be guided by experts to exploit their natural potentials through a well planned instruction. The hypothesis also shows a significant different between staff personnel problems encountered in Public and Private Schools. The analysis revealed that staff-personnel problems are higher in private schools while pupils personnel are higher in public schools.

The findings in research questions two showed lack of essential facilities such as health facilities, toilets and toiletries, good source of water supply, child-size chairs and tables, mid-day meal, materials for rest such as mattresses or mats and material for indoor and out door game constitute problems to effective pupil personnel management. The findings from this study showed that pre-primary schools in south east do not comply with FGN (2004) stipulated for establishing pre-primary schools as cited by Anuna and Obi (2006) that Pre-primary school classrooms should be spacious with in-built toilets and wash hand basins of appropriate sizes and good source of water supply. The play ground must be grassed and installed with facilities for different play activities. Also the United Nations Convention on the rights of children places responsibility on states to ensure that children are exposed to clean and safe environment.

The findings in research question 3 on strategies to be adopted to enhance effective management of pre-primary schools shows that all the strategies should be adopted. This is in line with (FGN 2004) who stated that the above facilities and personnel should be provided for effective implementation of pre-primary



education. In hypothesis three the analysis showed that there is a significant difference between problems encountered in rural and urban Pre-primary schools in pupil personnel management. This means that schools located in rural areas encounter greater problem like poor learning environment while all schools encounter inadequate and unqualified teachers and head teachers.

Conclusion

School personnel management is an important aspect of management that comprises of pupils-personnel and staff personnel management. In this era of digitalization, effective personnel management becomes imperative in effective fulfillment of educational goals and objective of Pre-primary education in Nigeria. Head-teachers at this level need to possess relevant qualities and have relevant facilities in order to manage pre-primary education effectively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this work, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Government should employ more qualified Pre-primary school teachers and support staff to main pre-primary schools activities.
- 2) Government should provide adequate instructional materials and play equipment to promote participatory learning and improve quality instruction.
- 3) Government should organize workshops and seminars for Pre-primary school teachers on innovative pedagogies in ICT.
- 4) Adequate supervision of instruction by had teachers should be enforced.
- 5) Sponsorship to in-service training for teachers to study pre-primary education should be done by government.
- 6) Teachers should be encouraged to improvise instructional materials.
- 7) Government should provide adequate ICT gadgets for head teachers and teachers.
- 8) All stakeholders in education should join hands in the provision of facilities necessary for effective management of Pre-primary education our locality.

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