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INFLUENCE OF RESOURCE AVAILABILITY ON TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The success or failure of any nation's educational system depends on the quality and quantity of resources made available to it. Resources are used directly and indirectly for supporting, facilitating, influencing or encouraging knowledge transmission or acquisition, competence and skills. Presently, there has been serious agitation from stakeholders in Nigerian educational sector on the need to look into the factors that could influence performance of early childhood school teachers in Kwara State. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of resource availability on teachers' job performance in early childhood schools. It was discovered that television sets, DVD and cartoon CD, beds/ baby cots, electricity supply and fans were unavailable while resources such as play toys, nursery books, classrooms, chairs, tables, chalkboard, crayons, wash bowl and wall chart were available in all the sampled schools. The study also revealed that resource availability had a positive significant relationship with teachers' job performance in early childhood schools. It was recommended among others: that government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) should donate generously to make resources available for early childhood classes; and resource supply should be periodically evaluated by the Ministry of Education and State Universal Basic Education Board.

Keywords: Resources availability, Early childhood schools, Teachers' Job Performance, Education, Nigeria



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INTRODUCTION

Training children is accepted worldwide as the major foundation of education. The World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in 1990 undertook a joint commitment and urgent universal appeal to give education to every child (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006). The Convention on the Rights of the Child and World In-school Supervision on Education For All (EFA) identified access to and improvement of the quality of education for all children as the most urgent priority (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2003). Early childhood is a very unique period in man's life. Education is an essential requirement for human growth and development. Norman (2001) described education as an activity through which attitudes, skills, capabilities, knowledge and understanding are acquired and retained. Thus, Norman noted that education should be a process that should help to develop the whole human being. It should enable individuals to function in any environment. Reeves (2006) stated that the future of any nation depends on the quality of its educational system and the greatest investment of any nation is the commitment to the education of its citizens.

Resources are paramount in developing quality education. The success or failure of any nation's educational system depends on the quality and quantity of resources made available to it (Ayoku, 2006). Educational resources are both human and non-human resources meant for achieving educational goals. Emetarom (2004) defined educational resources as the physical and spatial teaching and learning enablers which increase the production of results.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Resource Dependence Theory (RDT). The RDT is based on the notion that the environment is the source of scarce resources and the organization is dependent on these finite resources for survival. Fathi (2012) utilized environmental literature to develop the resource dependence theory. It has been noted that the organization must develop ways to exploit the resources, which are also being sought by other organizations in order to ensure their own survival. According to Fathi, three factors influence the level of dependence that organizations have on particular resources. First, there is the overall importance of the resources to the organization. The scarcity of resources is also a factor. The more scarce a resource, the more dependent the organization becomes. Finally, there is competition among organizations for control of the available resources. Fathi emphasized that all these factors collectively act to influence the level of dependence that an organization has on a particular resource. Since organizations depend on the environment for resources, there is need to enact strategies that would allow them to acquire and utilize these resources.

This theory is germane to this study because within the resource dependent school, the environment is seen as the source of available resources critical for survival. It is the lack of control over these critical resources rather than a lack of information that gives rise to environmental uncertainty. Any environment that contains high levels of resources is perceived as less hostile to organizational stability, whereas those with low level of resources acted to increase the intensity of organizational competition. Therefore, this study is aimed at determining the influence of resource availability on teachers' job performance in early childhood education programs.



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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To guide this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What are the available resources in early childhood schools in Kwara State of Nigeria?
2. What is the level of teachers' job performance in early childhood schools in Kwara State, Nigeria?
3. Is there any significant relationship between resource availability and teachers' job performance in the state's early childhood schools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early childhood education is the foundation of the entire education system; it is the basis upon which subsequent learning is built. Austin (1996) elucidated that education during early childhood will enable children to function more effectively when entering elementary grade. Schweinhart (2002) stated that the central goal of this level of education is to contribute to the learning and development of children. Epstein, Schweinhart and McAdoo (1996) emphasized that early childhood school teachers nurture, teach, and care for children who have not yet entered primary school. They provide early childhood care and education through a variety of curricular activities which could foster motor, social, emotional and language development.

Resources are used directly and indirectly for supporting, facilitating, influencing or encouraging transmission or acquisition of knowledge, competence and skills (Betts, Rueben, & Danenberg, 2000). These include the teachers, school buildings, classrooms, furniture, libraries, laboratories, recreational equipment and other instructional aids. Halleck (1990) emphasized that the availability, relevance and adequacy of educational resources contribute to academic achievement and that unattractive school buildings, crowded classrooms, non-availability of playgrounds and surroundings that have no aesthetics can contribute to poor academic performance. Betts (1996) asserted that when the right quantity and quality of human resources are brought together, it can manipulate other resources towards realizing institutional goals and objectives. Consequently, every educational institution should strive to attract and retain the best of human resources.

Availability of teaching and learning resources can enhance school effectiveness as these are basic things that can bring good academic performance in students (Betts, 1996). Hanushek (1996) stated that educational materials are print and non-print items designed to impact information to students in the educational process. These include items such as kits, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, pictures, slides, video, video discs, workbooks, and electronic media including but not limited to music, movies, radio and CD-ROMS. Young (2002) noted that instructional materials play a very important role in the teaching-learning situation and they enhance the memory level of the learners. He emphasizes that education has spread wide and the entire oral teaching cannot be the key to successful pedagogy; therefore, the teacher has to use instructional materials to make the teaching and learning process interesting.

Oyedemi (1998) noted that school buildings and educational goals should be viewed as being closely interrelated and interdependent. School buildings are not only erected to protect learners from the sun, the rain, heat and cold but to provide a learning environment which has a great impact on comfort, safety and student performance. Oyedemi also highlighted the following physical resources as being valuable in the institution:



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- i- Lecture room
- ii- Laboratories
- iii- Basic early childhood development qualification and Home Economics buildings
- iv- Audio-visual building
- v- Auditorium / Lecture theatre

Adeogun (2003) identified six types of resources managed in educational institution to include the following: -

1. **Financial Resources:** - These resources are designed to systematize resources allocation and utilization as well as to overcome perceived deficiencies in the existing system of financial management. This helps in reducing the cost of existing programs and activities. It also calls for prioritization of activities to allow for prudent expenditure.
2. **Physical Resources:** - These resources include buildings, classrooms, laboratories, hostels, libraries and administrative staff offices and other plant like machine, vehicles, computer sets, and so forth.
3. **Material Resources:** - These refers to usable and consumable facilities like time, programs, policy issues, curriculum, textbooks, maps, timetable, diaries, registers, lesson notes, chalks, chalkboards, biros, pencils, electricity and stationery.
4. **Symbolic resources:** - These refers to resources that go into the education process to fashion out trained or educated people which include not only human and material resources but policies, ideas and information packages consisting of universal principles, theories and skills that are the same everywhere.
5. **Educational Resources Centres:** - These include audiovisual aid centers, language centers, media resource centers, science and mathematics resource centers, which are vital to the teaching – learning process.
6. **Human resources:** - It involves different categories of personnel needed for the different educational activities. They vary in number with different qualifications and fields of specialization.

Instructional material is another type of educational resource. Instructional material is the School Resources Input (SRI) that is used within the classroom to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

The first instructional material is the textbook. Hanushek (1996) viewed the textbook as a tool for learning. Mohammed and Fayyaz (2011) also viewed the textbook as the nucleus of all the learning activities related to a particular curriculum. They noted that the teacher is not a sufficient source of knowledge due to the large class size and time. Besides, students have to improve the knowledge received from teachers by reading textbooks.

The second instructional material is the chalkboard/blackboard. Betts (1996) viewed chalkboard/blackboard as the teaching aids that the teachers frequently use particularly during lessons and discussions. They are of different kinds: chalkboard, blackboard, marker board, felt board and magnetic board.

The third instructional material is the study kit. Mathematics kit is a study kit for the Mathematics subject. Betts (1996) described the study kit as a box containing a variety of visual aids, artistically assembled and displayed pertaining to a single topic. It includes all type of visual aids useful for mathematics. Science kit is another study kit which is meant for science subjects. This kit contains necessary aids useful for teaching science subjects. These aids may consist of an apparatus, maps, charts, models, and so forth.



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The fourth instructional material is the teaching guide. This is a booklet provided for teachers to provide guidance on matters related to teaching, from lesson planning to the teaching- learning process (Betts, 1996). Teaching guides help teachers to adopt a suitable teaching methodology and a suitable instructional material for a topic.

Audiovisual aids are the fifth instructional material. These visual aids are the teaching aids used in the teaching-learning process. Betts, Rueben, and Danenberg, (2000) noted that these aids play a very important role in the teaching and learning process and they make teaching and learning activities not only realistic but also very pleasant. The audiovisual aids are used in the classrooms of the advanced countries and many developing countries.

The teacher is an important element of human resources. Whenever the word “education” is mentioned, the concept of teaching and learning is usually implied. The teacher teaches while the learners learn. It is what the teachers teach that the learners learn (Udofot, 2005). Therefore, effective teaching and learning cannot be accomplished without the aid of competent teachers. Udofot (2005) concluded that the success of an educational enterprise particularly in terms of good quality education depends to a large extent on the regular provision of teachers in adequate quantity and quality. The National Policy on Education (2004) stressed the importance of teachers in the educational institution when it stated that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers.

Little (1993) stated that the teacher in any society is the pivot on which the total educational system rest. This implies that the success or failure of any educational system depends largely upon the quality of its teachers. Teachers are expected to possess high sense of responsibility, initiative, intelligence, knowledge, skills, loyalty, humility, integrity, self-control and sincerity (Abdulkareem, 1989). Teachers analyze the curriculum and syllabus related to their discipline. They identify the program of education; design instructional materials develop and use them to fulfill the objective of educational interaction. Abdulkareem (2003) observed that teachers are required in quantity and quality; materials for teachers and pupils should also be adequate and must be available for use to ensure school success.

Ukeje (1991) noted that the quality of education provided in any society and the nature of the change effected by that education both depend on the quality of teachers and their teaching effectiveness. Since the re-emergence of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, infrastructural facilities, teaching and learning materials as well as qualified teachers have been grossly inadequate in schools. This arose as a result of increase in both the number of schools and student enrolment. Durosaro (2008) pointed out that there seems to be lack of accurate information on the number of both early childhood care centers and pre-primary schools in existence. This is because most of these centers and schools are unregistered.

Past researchers had carried out different research works on early childhood education. For instance, Howard (2011) examined the parents’ perceptions of how early development education programs in disadvantaged communities impact parents’ lives in Michigan, while Ohlson (2011) studied the impact of exposure and explicit instruction on reading comprehension and information recall among children aged 3-5 years in Florida.



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These researchers examined the effects of variables on children's academic performance. Their focus was totally different from the present study in terms of purpose, problem, scope, population, sample and sampling techniques.

Presently, there has been serious agitation from stakeholders in the educational sector on the need to look into the factors that could influence job performance of early childhood education teachers in Kwara State. Therefore, carrying out a descriptive study on the relationship between resource availability and teachers' job performance in early childhood education schools is of paramount importance. The researcher chooses early childhood schools with the aim of filling the gaps observed in previous studies.

METHODOLOGY

The target population of this study consists of all the Head teachers, Assistant Head Teachers, Teachers and Caregivers of public early childhood schools in Kwara State. The multi stage sampling method was adopted. It is referred to as multi stage sampling method because the researcher used more than one sampling technique in selecting participants for this study.

Stratified sampling technique was used to stratify into the three existing Senatorial Districts. Daramola (1992) explained that stratification is a process in education research whereby variables are classified into groups according to desired characteristics of the variable. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select three local government areas from each three Senatorial Districts. They are Baruteen, Edu, Patigi, Offa, Ifelodun, Irepodun, Ilorin West, Ilorin South and Asa. Simple random sampling technique was used later to select 20 public early childhood schools from each sampled local government area. Purposive sampling technique was also used to select all the school heads, one assistant school head, one teacher and one caregiver from each sampled school. A total of 180 school heads, 180 assistant school heads, 180 teachers and 180 caregivers. In total, 720 respondents representing early childhood schools were involved in the study.

Two questionnaires were used in this study. The researchers, from the extensive review of related literature constructed these questionnaires. The first instrument was "Resource Availability Questionnaire (RAQ)". It consists of 21 items. This questionnaire was used to collect information on resource availability in the sampled schools. The Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (JOPQ) was also used to gather information on teachers' job performance. It consists of 27 items. The two questionnaires consist of items which respondents filled to show the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the listed statements on resource availability, adequacy and teachers' job performance. The items on the questionnaires were rated using a Likert type rating scale.

Content and construct validity of the two questionnaires were established by the four experts in Educational Management and two from Measurement and Evaluation both within and outside the University of Ilorin.

Test re-test method was used to ascertain the questionnaire validity. The questionnaire forms were administered in four early childhood schools which were not part of the actual study. The two test scores were compared using Pearson product-moment correlation statistics. The result obtained were .85 for RAQ and .77 for JOPQ at the .05 level of significance. These results indicated that the instruments were reliable.



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Two research questions were raised in the course of this study. Research question 1 was answered using frequency counts and percentage. Research question 2 that has corresponding hypothesis was tested using inferential statistics at the level of significance 0.05. In order to test this hypothesis, responses of the teachers and caregivers to statements that addressed resource availability were collated separately on statistical coding sheets. Responses of head teachers and assistant head teachers to items that addressed teachers' job performance were also collated on other statistical coding sheets. The set of data generated from the teachers and caregivers were regarded as the independent variable while that generated from the head teachers and assistant head teachers were regarded as the dependent variable. The set of data were subjected to Pearson product moment correlation statistic.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the available resources in early childhood schools in Kwara State, Nigeria?*

Table 1 below details the availability of resources in early childhood schools based on the questionnaire responses.

Table 1
Resource Availability in Early Childhood Schools

S/N	Resources	Available (%)	Not Available (%)
1	Play Toys e.g balls; dolls; Lego	360 (100)	
2	Nursery Books e.g Nursery rhymes	360 (100)	
3	Television Sets	1(1)	359 (99.7)
4	DVD and Cartoon CD	1(1)	359 (99.7)
5	Classrooms	360 (100)	
6	Toilets	258 (71.7)	102 (28.3)
7	Play grounds e.g Swings; Slides	253 (70.3)	107 (29.7)
8	Clinic facilities e.g First aid box; Nearby hospital	343 (95.3)	17 (4.7)
9	Chairs	360 (100)	
10	Tables	360 (100)	
11	Chalk boards and Chalk	360 (100)	
12	Crayons	360 (100)	
13	Beds/ Baby cots	103 (28.6)	257 (71.4)
14	Mattresses	340 (94.4)	20 (5.6)
15	Mats	254 (70.6)	106 (29.4)
16	Drinkable water	205 (56.9)	155 (43.1)
17	Electricity supply	107 (29.7)	253 (70.3)
18	Fans	102 (28.3)	258 (71.7)
19	Wash hand Bowls	360 (100)	
20	Painting materials	255 (70.8)	105 (29.2)
21	Wall charts	360 (100)	

Source: Survey conducted for this study



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The first research question sought the availability of resources in early childhood schools. In answering this research question, the options of Available and Adequate, Available but Less Adequate and Available but Not Adequate were compressed to determine resource availability while the Not Available option was used for not available. Table one shows that out of all resources investigated, television sets, DVDs and cartoon CDs, beds/ baby cots, electricity supply and fans have 359 (99.7%), 359 (99.7%), 257 (71.4%), 253 (70.3%), and 258 (71.7%) availability respectively implying that these resources are not available in most of the sampled early childhood schools. Resources such as play toys, nursery books, classrooms, chairs, tables, chalkboard, crayons, wash bowls and wall charts were found in all the sampled schools. The finding supports the Adesina (1981) study that observed that the quality of education that the children receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack of physical plant resources and overall facilities in which learning takes place in school and also in line with the study of Adaralegbe (1975) revealing that the effects of provision of adequate resources to the teaching-learning process are paramount and crucial in achieving the educational objectives.

Research Question 2: *What is the level of teachers' job performance of early childhood education schools teachers in Kwara State?*

Table 2 gives the responses to the question on level of job performance of early childhood schools teachers in Kwara State.

Table 2
Level of Job Performance of Early Childhood Schools Teachers in Kwara State

S/N	Item	Mean
1	Record Keeping	3.1
2	Daily Routine	2.9
3	Method of Teaching	2.8
	Average Mean	2.9

Key: 0.1 to 1 (Very Low), 1.1 to 2 (Low), 2.1 to 3 (High) & 3.1 to 4 (Very High)

From Table 2 it can be deduced that the level of teachers' job performance is high since the average mean is 2.9. The table also revealed that the level of teachers' job performance on record keeping is very high with 3.1 mean while the level of teachers' job performance on Daily routine and Method of teaching is high with 2.9 and 2.8 means respectively. This is evidence that record keeping is what teachers are mostly known for. However, teachers' job performance can be adjudged to be averagely high with the mean score of 2.9. The findings of this study align with that of Amin, Shah, Ayaz and Atta (2013) who examined teachers' job performance at secondary level in Khyber Pakhyunkhwa, Pakistan. The result of their study revealed that teachers' job performance were at above average level.



Research question 3: Is there any significant relationship between resource availability and teachers' job performance in the state's early childhood schools?

Table 3
Resource Availability and Teachers' Job Performance in Kwara State Early Childhood Schools

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	r-value	p-value	Decision
Resource Availability	360	48.69	13.68				
				358	0.872	0.000	Relationship supported
Teacher Job Performance	360	69.21	20.09				

$p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 3, the p -value (0.000) is less than the significant level (0 .05) for 360 degrees of freedom. This implies that there is significant relationship between resource availability and teachers' job performance in early childhood education. Furthermore, the r - value of .872 suggested a positive relationship between resource availability and teachers job performance. That is, a unit increase in the resources available to the school will bring about .87 (87%) increase in teachers' job performance. According to Cohen (1988), correlation coefficient between $\pm.10$ to $\pm.29$ is regarded as small, $\pm.30$ to $\pm.49$ is moderate and $\pm.50$ to ± 1.0 can be referred to as large. The correlation coefficient in this study is .87 which is regarded as very high. Therefore, if the government wants to enhance teacher job performance, increasing resources availability is one of the measures to achieve that.

This finding agrees with the finding of Afolabi (2004) on the influence of resource utilization on organizational effectiveness in government owned tertiary institutions. The study showed that resource utilization was significantly related to teachers; research and community service effectiveness respectively. The finding was in line with Ayoku (2006) who carried out a study on the influence of physical resource availability and utilization on secondary schools effectiveness in the state. The finding of the study showed that there was significant relationship among availability and utilization of physical resources and school effectiveness.

This finding also supported the study of Olutola (1989) who investigated educational facilities and students' performance in West African School Certificate Examination using Kwara State as a case study. He found that schools adequately provided with the educational facilities performed higher in the West African School Certificate Examination subjects and in their rate of utilization of instructional facilities.



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It also corroborated Adeogun (1998) who posited that the success and the failure of any educational system depends on the quality and quantity of resources made available to it and Akinnubi (2010) who submitted that schools with adequate facilities perform better than those without facilities.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have given empirical evidence to substantiate the ongoing debate among researchers and stakeholders in the educational sector on the need to look into factors influencing the performance of early childhood education teachers. However, what has been presented in this work is a means to an end and not the end in itself on the issue that has not been critically examined in gaining insight into the theoretical understanding of resource availability and job performance of early childhood teachers.

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that: television Sets, DVDs and Cartoon CDs, beds/ baby cots, electricity supply and fans were not available in Kwara State early childhood schools while resources such as play toys, nursery books, classrooms, chairs, tables, chalkboard, crayons, wash bowls and wall charts were available in all the sampled schools; and resource availability had a positive significant relationship with teachers' job performance in the sampled early childhood schools ($r = 0.872, p < 0.05$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings we make the following recommendations:

1. Government at all levels; donor agencies and other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) should come together and donate generously to make resource available and adequate for pupil at early childhood classes in order to actualize the idea of education for all in Kwara State.
2. Resource supply should be periodically evaluated by the Ministry of Education and State Universal Basic Education Board to ensure that the needed resources are sufficient.
3. Television sets, DVDs and Cartoon CDs should be made available with school electrification or alternative power supply to utilize these resources.

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