

# Teachers' Perception of the Impact of Educational Programmes on the Development of Children in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This survey assessed the impact of early childhood educational programmes on the psychological, physiological, emotional, social and spiritual development of children in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The researchers employed simple random sampling method in selecting a sample of 120 teachers from Nursery/Primary Schools in Uyo Local Government Area for the survey. The instrument used in data collection was a simple questionnaire developed by the researchers to elicit data on how the educational programmes provided in the study area impacts on the development of the children. Questionnaire items covered the impact of available educational programmes on children's cognitive, physical, emotional, social and, spiritual development. Obtained responses were analysed using descriptive quantitative statistics. The outcome of data analyses showed that the educational programmes provided in the study area had a significant impact on the social, emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual development of the children. The researchers therefore recommended, among other things, that improving upon the educational programmes of the children, at the early childhood level would be a promising intervention and could contribute to the optimum development of the child.

**Keywords:** Childhood education; Child development, Pre-primary education; Crèche, Child psychology

## 1. Introduction

The period from birth to the age of six—more often referred to in educational contexts as early-childhood—is the most rapid period of development in human life. In developmental psychology, it is generally accepted that the various domains of child development are interconnected and influence one another. This underscores the importance of total development in children and the imperative of early childhood education in catering to the developmental needs of the child.

Development includes the process by which an organism grows from a foetus in the womb to an adult, processes that include predictable changes in biological maturation, physical structure, behaviour and thinking. Some researchers think of development as a series of small, gradual, continuous steps that blend into each other, just as a babbling sound of "mma, mma" becomes a call for "mama". Others think of development as a series of distinct stages that are qualitatively different from each other, just as walking is significantly different from crawling. Some researchers focus primarily within the 'interactions' tradition that conceives development as located within the nested social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, development is constrained and elaborated by cultural contexts and by the architecture of the brain. These nested social contexts include the impact of close family on development and therefore underscores the vital role of parents in supporting children's learning.

A key influence in the recent decades is the work of Vygotsky (1978) which stresses the role of the social and cultural context in children's development. The developing child is at the centre of a series of relationship that may influence the child's development. These are (family, friends, early year's practitioners, peers and neighbours). Myers (1992) delineated factors that may influence the child within any or all of the relational factors. These included relational factors such as the types of interactions and communication that a child experience. Myers also describes available for example the space, amenities and materials. Other factors of the learning environment are routines and special events that shape children's lives. All these are influenced by policies and cultural characteristics (value systems, beliefs etc.) In so doing it covers the processes of children's cognitive, social, emotional, moral and brain development from birth to the end of adolescence. This incorporates a section for each domain (personal-social, Emotional development, communication, language and literacy, Problem solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical development and Creative development). Within each domain themes such as Family, Settings, and neighbourhood environment, international-comparisons, and brain development are included as relevant.

There is striking overlap between findings across 'domains' of child development, especially as they relate to the supportive processes take place across all the contexts development, e.g. contingent responding to children's actions are born without a sense of self, they establish this through interactions with others (adults, siblings and peers) and with their culture.

A unique Nigerian child's development does not differ from every other child's development in the world. The quality of both the Home Learning Environment (HLE) and the setting has measurable and independent effect on Nigerian children's development. The Nigerian child needs a lot of supportive processes for the optimum development. The value systems, beliefs, amenities, Physical environment, family, neighbourhood,

Friends, Peers, Learning environment are important to a Nigeria child's development which has direct influence on learning. A Nigerian child is born without a sense of self and they establish this through interactions with others (adults, sibling and Peers) and with their culture. A Nigeria child is unique; they thrive in warm positive relationships, with necessary and appropriate conditions put into place, a Nigeria child can adequately develop according to the 'domains' of child development. Children learn to understand themselves and their worlds through two kinds of thought; narrative and scientific enquiry. Supporting their development means supporting both kinds of thinking.

Some Nigerian children lack quality home learning environment because of social gap that is related to income and parental education. Some children experience some kind of home stimulation provided by their advantaged parents while those children who do not experience this kind of stimulation can be supported through early years learning and programmes. It is very pertinent to consider the Nigerian's child's processes of development (cognitive, Social, emotional, moral and brain development) and the best supportive contexts for children's early learning and development. Children must be provided with experiences and support which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others, respect for others, social skills, and a positive disposition to learn.

Educational Programmes are written programme by the institution or ministry of education which determine the learning process of formal education. Educational Programmes facilitates children's development. Educational programmes help children in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. Educational Programmes supports children's learning through offering opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely, encounter creatures, people, plants, and objects in their natural environments and in real life situations, undertake practical experiments' and work with range of materials. Educational programmes are designed to meet the unique needs of a child leading to its development.

The educational programme of a school comprises the instructional programmes of school, the curricula activities and the guidance and counselling programme. A good educational programme package for the Nigerian child is a prominent component of the Nigeria child is a prominent component of the national education system. It is foundation training and is considered indispensable to future or life-long education. It is given in Day Care centres and Nursery schools to children aged 3 to under 6years and are enriched by the informal, traditional upbringing given to children. Nigerian government recommends that the main method of teaching at this level is activity or play method and that the curriculum of teacher education should be oriented to achieve this.

Educational programmes creates an active learning environments for young children and consciously meets the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, moral developing needs of a child. Educational programmes for a child the comfort and confidence to grow and develop.

Educational programmes of schools should be that which inculcates moral and spiritual principle in interpersonal and human relations, promote the cognitive, physicals, emotional and psychological development of all children. Dissatisfaction with the educational programme in one school usually causes parents to look for better alternatives for their children which can promote their development. Early childhood education is to effect a smooth transition from the home to the school, provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work, inculcate social norms, develop a sense of co-operation, team-spirit, good habits, teach rudiments, forms, letters, etc. through play (Nigerian National Policy on Education, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2004). Therefore any educational programmes developed for the child nearly education must be that which can lead to the optimum development of the child.

### *1.1. Purpose of the Study*

This study sought to examine the impact of early childhood education programmes on the total development of the children in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study sought to examine:

1. the impact of educational programmes on the cognitive development of children in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
2. the impact of educational programmes on the physical development of children in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
3. the impact of educational programmes on the social development of children in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
4. the impact of educational programmes on the emotional development of children in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
5. the impact of educational programmes on the spiritual development of children in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

### *1.2. Research Hypotheses*

To guide the study, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance:

1. The impact of educational programmes on the cognitive development of children in Uyo Local

- Government of Akwa Ibom State is not significant.
2. The impact of educational programmes on the physical development of children in Uyo Local Government of Akwa Ibom State is not significant.
  3. The impact of educational programmes on the social development of children in Uyo Local Government of Akwa Ibom State is not significant.
  4. The impact of educational programmes on the emotional development of children in Uyo Local Government of Akwa Ibom State is not significant.
  5. The impact of educational programmes on the spiritual development of children in Uyo Local Government of Akwa Ibom State is not significant.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1. Design

The study utilised the survey research design. This was considered most appropriate because it allowed the researchers to make generalisations on the population based on the questionnaire data obtained from the representative sample. Furthermore, this design allowed the researchers to examine the variables of research interest as they exist in the population.

### 2.2. Population/Sample

The population of study comprised all Nursery/Primary school teachers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. At the time this survey was conducted, there were a total of 620 Nursery/Primary school teachers in all the public Nursery/Primary Schools in Uyo Local Government Area. From this, a sample of 120 teachers was drawn in a simple random procedure to participate in the survey.

### 2.3. Instrumentation

The survey was designed for quantitative responses from the population. Thus, the researchers developed a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had 35 items on a four-point response scale of “strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.” This closed-ended questionnaire design with ordered choices is suitable for attitude or opinion surveys (Price, 1992). To ensure content validity, the questionnaire items were examined by several experts in education. The test-retest reliability estimate of the instrument yielded a coefficient of 0.87 which was considered acceptable by the researchers for the current study.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

The obtained responses were coded for the purpose of analysis as follows: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1. Based on this coding, the completed copies of the questionnaire were scored and the scores collated and analysed using appropriate statistics.

## 3. Results

*Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the relationship between educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools and children’s cognitive development*

Variable	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
Cognitive development	15.58	12.5	0.80*	*strong to perfect relationship
Educational programme	29.13	25		

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 118; n=120; Critical r-value = 0.185

Table 1 presents the result of the descriptive analysis of the relationship between cognitive development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The two variables were observed to have strong to perfect relationship at 91%. The arithmetic mean for cognitive development (15.58) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regard educational programme (29.13) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 25. The result therefore means that there is remarkable relationship between cognitive development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary School.

*Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the relationship between educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools and children's physical development*

Variable	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
Physical development	15.42	12.5	0.75*	*strong to perfect relationship
Educational programme	29.13	25		

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 118; n=120; Critical r-value = 0.185

Table 2 presents the result of the descriptive analysis of the relationship between physical development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The two variables were observed to have moderately strong relationship at 72%. The arithmetic mean for physical development (15.42) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regard educational programme (29.13) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 25. The result therefore means that there is remarkable relationship between physical development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools.

*Table 3: Descriptive analysis of the relationship between educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools and children's social development*

Variable	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
Social development	14.81	12.5	0.70*	*strong to perfect relationship
Educational programme	29.13	25		

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 118; n=120; Critical r-value = 0.185

Table 3 presents the result of the descriptive analysis of the relationship the social development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The two variables were observed to have moderately strong relationship at 70%. The arithmetic mean for social development (14.81) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regard educational programme (29.13) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 25. The result therefore means that there is remarkable relationship between the social development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools.

*Table 4: Descriptive analysis of the relationship between educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools and children's emotional development*

Variable	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
Emotional development	15.60	12.5	0.63*	*strong to perfect relationship
Educational programme	29.13	25		

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 118; n=120; Critical r-value = 0.185

Table 4 presents the result of the descriptive analysis of the relationship between emotional development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The two variables were observed to have moderately strong relationship at 63%. The arithmetic mean for emotional development (15.60) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as educational programme (29.13) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 25. The result therefore means that there is remarkable relationship between emotional development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools.

*Table 5: Descriptive analysis of the relationship between educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools and children's spiritual development*

Variable	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
Spiritual development	16.90	12.5	0.95*	*strong to perfect relationship
Educational programme	29.13	25		

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 118; n=120; Critical r-value = 0.185

Table 5 presents the result of the descriptive analysis of the relationship between spiritual development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The two variables were observed to have strong to perfect relationship at 95%. The arithmetic mean for spiritual development (16.90) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regard educational programme (29.13) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 25. The result therefore means that there is remarkable relationship between spiritual development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The result of the data analysis in Table 1 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-value (0.80) was greater than the critical r-value (0.185) at 0.05 level with (118) degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant relationship between cognitive development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The significance of the result is in agreement with the findings of (Shonkoff, 2009; Cunha & Heckman, 2003). They stated that that learning is easier in early childhood than later in life, and cognitive stimulation early in life are critical for long-term skill development. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in Table 2 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-value (0.72) was greater than the critical r-value (0.185) at 0.05 level with (118) degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant relationship between physical development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The significance of the result is in agreement with the findings of (Stephen & Plowman, 2002) who stated that Children in the preschool years benefit from opportunities for physical and outdoor play which is highly important in their physical and movement development. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in Table 3 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-value (0.70) was greater than the critical r-value (0.185) at 0.05 level with (118) degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant relationship between social development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The significance of the result is in agreement with the findings of Chang (2003) who opined that that teacher's caring and support affect their pupils' self-perception and behaviours. The wellbeing of children depends on teachers precluding and intervening against undesirable behaviour and promoting a caring, healthy social atmosphere in their classrooms. Teachers are considered to foster pro-social classroom environments and optimize intellectual social development in children. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in Table 4 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-value (0.63) was greater than the critical r-value (0.185) at 0.05 level with (118) degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant relationship between emotional development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The significance of the result is in agreement with the findings Brody (2002) who stated that classroom processes contribute uniquely to children's adjustment through children's development of self-regulation. Just as parents who are warm and responsive are more likely to promote strong social and emotional skills in their children, so too are early childhood educators and teachers, which means that the classroom environment must enable teachers the time to focus on individual children. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in Table 5 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-value (0.95) was greater than the critical r-value (0.185) at 0.05 level with (118) degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant relationship between spiritual development of a child and educational programmes of Nursery/Primary Schools. The significance of the result is in agreement with the findings of Crampton (1998) who stated that the intentional nurturing of young children's spiritual development through early educational programs is argued to be of the highest and most significant importance with many claiming that if young children's spirituality is not intentionally nurtured it will fade and be lost. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that the educational programmes in Nursery/Primary schools in Uyo Local Government Area have significant impact on the cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development of children. Based on this, the researchers make the following recommendations:

1. Child development courses should be introduced into teacher's certification programmes in order to equip teachers with knowledge and understanding of child development and thus prepare teachers-in-training adequately for child education.
2. Early childhood education curriculum should be reviewed to match activities and teaching methods that

- significantly relate and could best lead to a child's optimum development.
3. Equal educational opportunity should be given to every child, with emphasis on the inclusion of crèche in the UBE programme.
  4. Nursery/Primary schools should have at least have a Counselling psychologist who will see to the need of the growing child and who will also encourage the teachers by mounting in-service programmes and workshop that will enlighten them more on children-teachers relationship and how to significantly manage the domains of the developing child.

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