

Assessing Parents' Opinions and Expectations on Nursery

Education for Quality Assurance

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed parents' opinions and expectations on nursery education for quality assurance. Participants were 250 parents, randomly selected from 25 Government approved nursery schools in five local Government area of Osun State. The instrument for collecting data was a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Parents' opinion and expectations on nursery education". The questionnaire had three sections. Section I was bio data. Section II had 15 items on opinions while Section III had 15 items on expectations. Each of the items in section II and section III was rated on a four – point scale namely: strongly agree=4, agree=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1 with reliability coefficient estimated at 0.67 using spilt halt method to test for internal consistence. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics tested at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that parents' opinions on nursery education were favourable and expectation very high. The correction between parents' opinions and expectations was high and positive while socio-economics status of parent had no significant difference on their opinions and expectations. It was recommended that parent and government should monitor teaching activities in nursery schools for quality assurance.

Key words: parents, opinions, expectation, nursery education, quality assurance.

INTRODUCTION

Education is important for everyone in the world. It makes one able to understand what is happening around logically and clearly. Education provides the ladder for achieving success in life and enables one to utilize skills and caliber in constructive way. Therefore, it becomes imperative for an individual to get educated as early as possible. In today's day and age, huge emphasis is bid on quality education for betterment of people as a whole and for fulfillment of various position in the society that can benefit the society. Lee (2008) expressed that a person is not given an importance if he/she is not educated in today's world. Therefore, importance of education and need for quality education cannot be over emphasized.

According to Ijaya (2010) quality has to do with whether something is good or bad. Harper (1922) in Omoregie (2008) defines quality as degree of excellence, and of a high standard. It is the combination of all the attributes and peculiar feature that make one or an object fit for a purpose. Omoregie further cited Ramon (2005) that quality is fitness for a purpose.

Quality in Nursery school should embrace all its function and activities such as teaching, caring, staffing, pupils, building, toys, facilities, and child interact with others and child's development. Concern for Quality assurance in Nursery education is most desirable for the fact that nursery education serves as foundation for all other level of education. Ijaya(2010) opined that educational system worthiness lies in its capability to continuously serve its customers (student/pupil, parents, employers, the society) better and remain relevant. According to Ijaya, quantity is concerned with getting as many citizens as possible to school that is large number within the shortest time allowed while quality answers the question: What manner of education? That is how good or bad the products.

Everyone wants the best quality education for their children but, this study tried to find out parents' opinion and expectation on Nursery Education as foundation for quality education in relationship to parents social-economic status. Romon, Duhamel, Collinet and Weill (2004) define social-status as the occupation of the father in the case of a two –parent family or by that of the single-parent in the case of a single-parent family. The occupation of each parent may affect the level of income of that individual. Evans and fuller (1999) expressed that parents' perceptions of the purposes of nursery education revealed disparity between parents and professional opinions. Omesh (2007) expressed that background of the parents and their social standing has also got direct impact on the child's intellectual level.

Nursery Education is pre-school education and child care to children of 3 to 5 years of age by offering or stimulating learning environment. Nursery school is child's first step into the world of formal education; a step taken during their most receptive and formative years. Nursery school experience will provide the basis for starting school so it is essential that these are happy times for children allowing confidence, independence and learning skills to develop properly. The curriculum at nursery is broad and the range of subject offered is quite wide. It focuses on English language, Mathematics (Arithmetic's), Nigerian languages, rhymes, reading and writing, social studies, music and basic science nature (Abidogun, 2011). Diop (2005) expressed that nursery education plays a key role in increasing standard overall. Oladosu (2003) expressed that the quality of living in the future depends upon the quality of nature given to children in their formative age. Each parent is therefore concern with their children's education from early stage. Taylor and Francis (2012) expressed that it was demanded that individual education of all children in nursery schools be improved early. The important of nursery education cannot be over emphasized as it's the level or education that prepares children for the primary level of education. Hunt (1961) in Oladosu (2003) opined that cognition development of intelligence can be modified by an early experience. Woodford and Zoysa (1994) expressed that research evidence shows that children who have had a high quality nursery school experience do better when they reach school, they stay in education longer, more sociable and assertive and do better in later life, than those who had no nursery education. Marton, Ranson and Tall (2012) expressed that nursery school pupils parents value education which provides high professional standards of teaching in a carrying atmosphere that focuses, as far as possible, upon the particular learning needs of individual children. Therefore, this study assessed parents' socio-economic status and their expectation and opinion on nursery education for Quality Assurance

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the expectation and opinion of low income earners and high income earners on nursery education for quality assurance in education system.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the expectation and opinion of highly educated and low educated parents on nursery education.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design was a survey type. It was designed to describe parents' opinion and expectation on Nursery Education for quality assurance.

POPULATION

The population of this study consists of all parents whose children are in nursery schools in Osun State.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The participants were 250 parents selected from 25 Government approved Nursery/primary schools in five Local Government Areas of state based on multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage was random selection five out of 30 Local Government Areas in Osun state. At the second stage, five nursery schools were taken from each local government to a total of 25 nursery schools using simple random technique. At the third stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 respondents from each school.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument used for this study was a self-constructed questionnaire. It has three sections: the first part (section I) comprised the bio-data of the respondents as well as the number of questions that considered the income and level of education of the respondents. Section II consisted of statements which followed the likert principle and dealt with expectation of parents. While section III was designated to look into the opinion of parents on nursery education for quality assurance in education system.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The validity of the instrument was determined using face and content validity through the use of experts. The reliability of the instrument was done through split half method to test for internal consistence and reliability coefficient 0.67 was obtained.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analyzed using Pearson product Moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the expectation and opinion of low income earners and high income earners on Nursery education for quality assurance in education system.

TABLE 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of respondent's expectations and opinion by level of income.

| INCOME | VARIABLE | N | Mean | S.D | r-calculated | r-table | Result |
|--------|-------------|-----|-------|------|--------------|---------|-------------|
| High | Opinion | 122 | 49.05 | 3.83 | 0.260* | 0.164 | Significant |
| | Expectation | 122 | 42.30 | 5.80 | | | |
| Low | Opinion | 128 | 49.63 | 4.57 | 0.183* | 0.164 | Significant |
| | Expectation | 128 | 44.14 | 7.45 | | | |

P < 0.05

The r-calculated (0.260) is greater than the table value which is 0.164 at 0.05 significance level for the high income group while the r-value (0.183) is greater than the table value (0.164) at 0.05 level of significance for low income group. Therefore for both high and low income group the null hypothesis is rejected. That means there is significant relationship between the expectation and opinion of low income group and high income group about nursery education for assurance in education system.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between the expectation and opinion of highly educated and less educated parents about nursery education.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation of Respondents expectation and opinion by level of education.

| Level of education | Variable | N | Mean | S.D | r-calculated | r-table | Results |
|--------------------|-------------|-----|-------|------|--------------|---------|-------------|
| Highly Educated | Opinion | 186 | 49.00 | 5.29 | 0.303* | 0.164 | significant |
| | Expectation | 186 | 43.23 | 7.01 | | | |
| Less Educated | Opinion | 64 | 49.46 | 3.80 | 0.181* | 0.164 | significant |
| | Expectation | 64 | 43.24 | 6.67 | | | |

P < 0.05

The r-calculated (0.303) is greater than r-table (0.164) at 0.05 level of significance for highly educated group and r-calculated (0.181) is greater than r-table (0.164) at 0.05 level of significance for less educated. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. The table 2 shows that there is significant relationship between the expectation and opinion of highly educated and less educated parents on Nursery Education for quality assurance in education system.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between parent expectation and opinion on nursery education for quality assurance. Both high income earners low income earners, highly educated and low educated have similar opinion and expectation on nursery education for quality assurance. That means the reason why they are sending their children to nursery school is because of their expectation on nursery education for their children.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was concluded that parents' expectation and opinion on nursery education were similar. Socioeconomic status of parents equally affects their expectations and opinion in nursery education for quality assurance. All parents are expecting nursery education to be foundation for quality assurance in education of their children. It was therefore recommended that the nursery schools, proprietor/proprietress and teachers should make adequate provision to make nursery education to be a real foundation for quality assurance in education, so that they will not let the parents down on their expectation. Also, it was recommended that parent and government should monitor teaching activities in nursery schools for quality assurance.

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