

INDIGENOUS FINANCING OPTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Eze, Thecla Amogechukwu & Agada, Fidelia Chinyelugo

Department of Educational Management

Enugu State University of Science and Technology, (ESUT) Enugu

Abstract

This study examined indigenous financing options for early childhood education in Enugu State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Data were collected using an eight item researchers' structured questionnaire titled; "Indigenous Financing Options for Early Childhood Education Questionnaire" (IFOECEQ). Reliability coefficient of 0.76 of the instrument obtained using (Cronbach Alpha). Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The instrument was administered to 369 head teachers and teachers, 258 copies of the questionnaire were returned. Analysis was done using mean, standard deviation and z-test. With grand means of 2.79 and 2.83 for head teachers and teachers respectively, this indicates that head teachers and teachers agreed on the indigenous options for financing early childhood education. It is recommended that a legal framework should be adopted so as to back up the utilization of these means.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Education, Indigenous, and Financing Options

Introduction

Education is a means of inculcating societal values to individuals. It leads to the development of an individual and invariably the society. The education of individuals starts at the very early age. This is referred to as early childhood education. The Federal Government of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2013) stipulates that it is the education and care of children between the ages 0-6 years. Early childhood education is however segmented into ages 0-4years and 5-6 years. Ages 0-4years covers day care and crèches and it is handled fully

by the private sector while ages 5-6 years are within the formal education sector.

The adoption of early childhood education by government as part of the formal education sector is relatively new. This decision may have been informed by various international declarations and researches stating the crucial cognitive development at this critical stage of life. Mustard (2010), opined that the basic architectures and functions of the brain are established at this period. Nakpodia and Achugbue (2012) posited that the child begins to initiate, imitate and develop certain important habits that will be used throughout later schooling. Consequently, benefits that accrue from early childhood education have to be tapped. It has been established that children that went through early childhood education perform better in primary schools. Osakwe (2009) found that pupils exposed to pre-primary education significantly differed positively in cognitive, motor and social skills from those without pre-primary education. In the same vein, Oniwon (2015) also found that there is a marked difference between the two sets of pupils. Pupils who attended nursery school performed better in numeric skills, sentence construction, verbal expression, creativity and writing skills than those who did not.

This being the case, education at this point in the development of children should not be treated with levity. Unfortunately, early childhood education is beset with many challenges, among which include low quality and quantity of teaching staff.(Nwangwu(2012); Nakpodia and Achugbue (2012), Kayode (2014) and Eze (2016)). Also lacking are classroom, toilet facilities and pipe borne water. Enugu State (2014) and Kayode (2014).

Government seems to be grappling with all these challenges, coupled with the economic recession in that put more strain on the government finances. Economic recession involves slowdown of the economy which affects the amount of public funds that will be available to schools. School expenditures are constantly on the increase and rapidly too such that at periods of economic recession, this rise is more than the output of the economy.

Financing basic education in Nigeria is complex because all the three tiers of government provide funds for basic education. However, in reality the state makes the spending decisions and determines how funds are allocated to various local governments. These spending

decisions according to Afolayan (2014) fall short of public expectations because the percentage revenue allocated to education has been grossly inadequate. Financing support that used to come from international donors has been dwindling gradually. Due to this poor funding of education especially at the primary school level and decline in international donor contributions, indigenous options are being advocated to better the financing of early childhood education. Some of these indigenous options include: allocating a percentage of constituency project money to a particular project in early childhood education; organizing fund raising in the community; sale of craft made by pupils and the contribution of development levy by parents of the pupils.

Additional income is needed to enable the head teachers accomplish the lofty goals and objectives of early childhood education. Donohoe (2016), opined that if gotten right, school fund raising events can be among the highest earners in terms of additional income.

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood education is crucial in the formation and development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour. In order to achieve this development a number of facilities are required by the school heads to facilitate it. But, there has been dearth in the provision of school facilities as a result of poor funding of education. This study therefore ascertained indigenous ways of financing early childhood education in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined indigenous financing options for early childhood education in Enugu State, Nigeria. It determined:

1. Head teachers' and teachers' perception on indigenous options for financing early childhood education.
2. Perception of head-teachers' and teachers' in urban and rural areas on indigenous options of financing early childhood education in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Questions:

1. Are the following indigenous financing options for early childhood education in Enugu State, Nigeria?
2. Do head teachers and teachers have different perception on these financing options?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean response of head teachers and teachers on the indigenous financing options for early childhood education.

Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Enugu State primary schools where early childhood education classes take place. The population of the study consisted of head-teachers and teachers in schools in four local government education areas. The population for the study consisted of 109 head-teachers and 260 teachers in four local government areas, making it a total of 369 respondents. All the 369 respondents were used as the sample for the study as this was manageable.

Data were collected using an eight- item questionnaire titled: "Indigenous Financing Options for Early Childhood Education Questionnaire" (IFOECEQ). Two experts in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu validated the instrument. Corrections given were reflected in the final draft of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha, and a value of 0.76 was obtained. The instrument was of a Likert- type 4-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA)- 4 points, Agree(A)- 3 points, Disagree(D)- 2 points, to Strongly Disagree (SD)- 1 point. The instrument was administered with the help of 2 trained research assistants.

Out of the 369 copies of the questionnaire distributed 258 copies were retrieved and found usable, giving a 69.9% return rate. Mean with standard deviation were used to collate the scores that answered the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. For decision making, a benchmark of 2.50 was used, any item with a score of 2.50 and above

was regarded as agreed while those scores less than 2.50 were disagreed. If calculated z-test score was greater than or equal to z-critical, the null hypothesis is rejected but if less the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Results

Table 1: Indigenous financing options for early childhood Education in Enugu State.

S/N	Items	Headteachers	Teachers
1	Allocating a percentage of constituency project money to take up a particular project in early childhood education.	76	158
2	Organizing fund raising in the community.	82	169
4	Sale of Crafts made by the pupils	81	165
5	Sales from farm produce	80	164
6	Compulsory levy of a specified amount by all adults in the community.	72	154
7	Asking teachers to donate a specified supportive sum.	13	19
8	Contribution of development levy by parents of the pupils	81	168

Results from table 1 shows that majority of the head teachers and teachers agreed that the listed items are indigenous options for financing early childhood education except for item 7 which they both rated low.

Table 2: Mean Rating of the Respondents on Indigenous financing options

S/N	Items	Head Teachers			Teachers		
		\bar{x}_1	SD ₁	Dec	\bar{x}_2	SD ₂	Dec
1	Allocating a percentage of constituency project money to take up a particular project in early childhood education.	2.99	1.32	A	3.77	0.52	SA
2	Organizing fund raising in the community.	3.12	0.86	SA	2.90	0.96	A
3	Soliciting for funds from philanthropists.	3.01	0.54	SA	2.13	0.76	SA
4	Sale of Crafts made by the pupils	3.23	0.68	SA	2.76	0.96	A
5	Sales from farm produce	2.57	1.00	A	2.83	1.12	A
6	Compulsory levy of a specified amount by all adults in the community	2.58	0.98	A	2.39	0.99	D
7	Asking teachers to donate a specified supportive sum	1.87	0.75	SD	1.67	0.76	SD
8	Contribution of development levy by parents of the pupils	3.23	0.86	SA	2.90	0.96	A
	Grand Mean	2.79	0.88	A	2.83	0.87	A

Summary of results on table 1 revealed that items 1 to 8, including the grand mean have means ranging from 1.87 to 3.23 for head teachers, which means that all the head teachers agree to a high extent that all the items except item 7 are indigenous financing options for early childhood education in Enugu State. The mean responses of the teachers range from 1.67 to 3.77; with the grand mean of 2.83 shows

that the teachers agreed that all items except item 7 are alternative indigenous options for financing early childhood education in Enugu State.

Hypothesis: There is no significance difference between the mean rating of head teachers and teachers on the indigenous financing options for early childhood education in Enugu State.

Table 2: Mean responses of head teacher and teachers on indigenous financing options for early childhood education.

	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	Standard error	z-cal	z-crit	Dec.
Head Teachers	86	2.83	0.87	256	0.118	0.339	1.96	not rejected
Teachers	172	2.70	2.70	0.88				

Table 2 shows a calculated z-value of 0.339 which is less than the table value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance. The hypothesis is therefore not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The results revealed that both head teachers and teachers agreed to a large extent that all the items except item 7 are all indigenous options for financing early childhood education. This might not be a surprising response because there seems to be gross neglect in the financing of education generally and early childhood education in particular. When finances are not available educational programmes suffer implementation. The early childhood level needs to be financed properly since this is the first contact children have with schooling and an experience will make an indelible mark in their memory. Finance is the life wire of any organization and if not enough as seems to be the case, execution of the educational goals will become a bit difficult. Plagued by this lack of sufficient funds, head teachers and teachers may be forced to think of other ways to get better financing for early childhood education in order to improve the management of education at that level.

Conclusion

From the results of the study it is concluded that these are indigenous options for financing early childhood education as perceived by teachers and head teachers in Enugu State, Nigeria. These if adopted and properly utilized may improve the funding of early childhood education in the state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended :

1. A legal framework to empower and back head teachers on adoption of these indigenous options for financing early childhood education should be enacted.
2. Government should ensure that a certain percentage of constituency project money is allocated to early childhood education.
3. In furtherance of No. 2 above, government should supervise the utilization of the funds allocated.
4. Head teachers through good school-community relationship should influence philanthropists to help in financing early childhood education.

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