

The Impact of Nursery Education on Academic Performance of Primary One Pupil. A Case Study of Bake Loko Chiefdom, Port Loko District North-West Region, Sierra Leone.

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Abstract

This research arose from the popular public concern about the performance of pupils in primary schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of nursery education on academic performance of primary pupils. The objectives of the study were to examine the effectiveness of nursery curriculum being implemented in the nursery schools, examine the relationship between nursery education and performance of children in primary one. And assess the significance of nursery education to a child's intellectual development and finally to come up with possible solutions to curb the problem. Consequently research questions were designed in order to guide the research work. The study adopted basically descriptive research design which also used qualitative and quantitative methods. Using probability proportion to size method, 160 including nursery graduates, play grounds pupils, teachers, headteachers and inspectors of schools. The target population was nursery graduates, play grounds pupils. Two research instruments were designed to collect primary and secondary data on objectives of the study. The study established among others that there was close relationship between nursery education and primary one performance in Bake Loko Chiefdom. There was significant difference in the academic performance of children who went through nursery education from those who didn't. Even though some nursery schools were not well equipped and therefore could not teach well their pupils, they as well lack established system. Research revealed that with well established system, nursery education can be of importance.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Overview This chapter covers the introductory aspects of the study. It presents the background to the study problem, statement of the research problem, study objectives and also the justification of the study. The scope of the study is also included.

The idea of the modern nursery schools is indeed a concept of twentieth century. The needs of many working class mothers for a safe place from which to leave their younger children during working hours brought about the existence of nursery school system. In part, nursery schools owe their beginning to social upheavals during which the plight of young children come to the attention of adults. Nursery Education in Sierra Leone Nursery education is the type of teaching and learning given to children who are not yet old enough to join primary school. Generally speaking, the purpose of nursery school is to supplement and extend early home experiences and environment to plan further for each child's development through living and learning with peers and to lay the foundation of the development of intellectual capacity. According to Lugumba in his book "A History of Education in East Africa 1900 - 1975" he stated the first nursery schools in Uganda appeared around Asian Commercial Settlements a few years after their arrival particularly in Kampala, Entebbe and Jinja. These nursery centers started as mere playground or gardens where Asians employed Ayahs (those who take care of children) to take children out for relaxation for fresh air. Later these Asians' community play groups were organized into formal institutions and spread to many parts of the country. Galiwango (1984), compliments the above by saying that there were over fifteen nursery schools around Port Loko City alone. It favourably compares with about four thousand nursery schools in the USA by that time.

It is known that Education is fundamental in human development and progress that is why the foundation should be well laid. Considering other factors (extraneous variables) affecting the performance of primary one pupil, the quality of nursery schools lays an important foundation in the later academic performance of an individual. Due to this understanding, most of schools today especially in urban areas all value nursery education as a prerequisite qualification for primary one enrolment. However there is no clear explanation on the role of this nursery education as foundation of an individual academic life is concerned.

Objectives:

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of nursery education on academic performance of primary pupils. Specific objectives

- i. To examine the effectiveness of nursery curriculum being implemented in the nursery schools.
- ii. To examine the relationship between nursery education and performance of children in primary one.
- iii. To assess the significance of nursery education to a child's intellectual development.
- iv. To suggest the way forward to improve the quality of nursery schools.

Research Questions

- i. How effective is the curriculum that is being implemented in nursery schools?
- ii. What is the significance of nursery education to a child’s intellectual development?
- iii. What can we do to improve the quality of nursery education?
- iv. Is there any relationship between nursery education and the academic performance of primary one pupil?

Methodology

This section shows the methods and procedures used in the conduct of the study. It essentially comprises the Research Design, Population, Simple and Sample Technique, research instruments, data collection and data analysis process.

Demographic data of respondent

This comprises the nursery graduate, playground graduate, nursery school pupils and teachers.

Table 1: Analysis of English Language in Schools.

score	Nursery Graduate		Playground Graduate	
	Nursery graduate	Percentage %	Playground graduate	Percentage %
80-100	20	67	00	0
60 – 79	08	27	09	30
40 – 59	00	0	09	30
20 – 39	02	07	07	23.3
0 – 19	00	0	04	13.3
Total	30	94	30	60

In table 1; Analysis for English Language, showed that out of 30 nursery graduates in 28 scored 50 marks and above giving a percentage 94% while 18 playground graduates scored 50 marks and above giving a total percentage of 60%.

In comparison playground graduates did much better than nursery graduates in the three schools. That is 98% against 83%.

Table 2: Analysis for Mathematics subjects in schools

score	Nursery Graduate		Playground Graduate	
	Nursery graduate	Percentage %	Playground graduate	Percentage %
80-100	10	63	20	67
60 – 79	02	07	05	17
40 – 59	04	14	04	14
20 – 39	05	17	00	00
0 – 19	00	0	01	3.3
Total	30	83	30	98

Table 2: Out of 30 nursery graduates, 25 scored 50 marks and above in mathematics test giving a percentage of 98%.

In comparison playground graduates did much better than nursery graduates in the three schools. That is 98% against 83%.

Table 3: Analysis for Science in schools.

score	Nursery Graduate		Playground Graduate	
	Nursery graduate	Percentage %	Playground graduate	Percentage %
80-100	10	33	06	20
60 – 79	09	30	07	23
40 – 59	05	17	11	37

20 – 39	06	20	03	10
0 – 19	00	0	03	10
Total	30	80	30	80

Results in this table shows that out of 30 nursery graduates, 24 scored 50 marks and above in science test giving an average of 80%, while 24 playground graduates scored 50 marks and above giving 80% too. In this regard, nursery graduates and playground graduates performed equally well.

Table 4: Analysis of Social Studies in Schools.

score	Nursery Graduate		Playground Graduate	
	Nursery graduate	Percentage %	Playground graduate	Percentage %
80-100	07	23	04	13
60 – 79	12	40	08	27
40 – 59	03	10	04	13
20 – 39	08	27	13	43
0 – 19	00	0	01	03
Total	30	73	30	53

The results in table 5 revealed that out of 30 nursery graduates, 22 scored 50 marks and above making a percentage of 73%. While 16 pupils out of 30 playground graduates scored 50 marks and above giving an average percentage of 53%. When these are compared, we see that nursery graduates did the tests better than playground graduates.

Table 5: Analysis for Religious Education in schools

score	Nursery Graduate		Playground Graduate	
	Nursery graduate	Percentage %	Playground graduate	Percentage %
80-100	11	37	09	30

60 – 79	10	33	06	20
40 – 59	08	27	12	40
20 – 39	01	03	03	10
0 – 19	00	0	00	0
Total	30	97	30	90

In table 5, out of 30 nursery graduates in schools who did the Religious Education test 29 scored 50 marks and above giving a percentage of 97%, while out of 30 playground graduates 27 scored 50 marks and above giving a percentage of 90%. Comparing the above performance, the percentage of nursery graduates who scored 50 marks and above is slightly higher than that of playground graduates that is 97% to 90% the difference is small that is 7% therefore very significant.

Table 6: Analysis for Reading in schools

score	Nursery Graduate		Playground Graduate	
	Nursery graduate	Percentage %	Playground graduate	Percentage %
80-100	11	37	03	10
60 – 79	11	37	07	23
40 – 59	08	27	12	40
20 – 39	00	0	04	13
0 – 19	00	0	04	13
Total	30	91	30	73

In table 4, when the results are compared, 30 nursery graduates out of 30, scored 50 marks and above giving a percentage of 91%, while 22 playground graduates out of 30 scored 50 marks and above giving 73%. Considering the above performance in table 4, nursery graduates performed much better than playground graduates that is, 91% against 73%. This may be related to the fact that the information, knowledge and skills that were imparted to them at the nursery level made a great positive impact in their academic foundations.

Table 7: Analysis for Handwriting in Schools.

score	Nursery Graduate		Playground Graduate	
	Nursery graduate	Percentage %	Playground graduate	Percentage %
80-100	16	53	08	27
60 – 79	10	33	13	43
40 – 59	04	13	05	16
20 – 39	00	0	04	13
0 – 19	00	0	00	0
Total	30	99	30	82

Results in the figure above shows that out of 30 nursery graduates, 30 scored 20 marks and above which is 90%, while 20 playground graduates scores 20 marks and above which is 82%. The outcome is therefore that the nursery graduates performed better than playground graduates. There is slightly a big difference i.e. 99% against 82%. Therefore it is significant.

Conclusion

Discipline was found to be very critical to the learning process of pupils in Schools, but discipline was conceived as punishment in all schools. Though all schools investigated had disciplinary measures in place, it was observed that such measures were not appropriate for positive discipline and self-discipline. Almost all the schools do not adopt the basic principles of discipline in pursuing their disciplinary agenda to promote a positive learning process. Corporal punishment and physical labour were the most common forms of disciplinary measures used in schools and there was firm belief that without these measures discipline would be highly unlikely in schools.

Recommendations

1. School authorities need to be trained on basic principles of discipline so that they in turn can adopt best practices in instilling discipline in pupils in schools.
2. All factors/ stakeholders in discipline should endeavour to play their roles to mould and shape the characters of the pupils and to focus their attention in school.
3. School to establish guidance and counselling units manned by trained and qualified school counsellors.
4. Give pupils responsibilities and guide them to cultivate respect for law and order.

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