

Adjustment Capabilities of Nursery and Home-Schooled Children in Primary School

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Abstract

This study assessed and compared the adjustment capabilities of Nursery and Home-Schooled Children in Primary School and its implication for counselling. The purpose of the study was to determine the adjustment capabilities of Nursery and Home-schooled children in primary schooling in Bayelsa State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Design for the study was a cross-sectional survey design. The sample for the study comprised of 200 participants consisting of 10 teachers, 100 pupils and 90 parents from ten schools. Instrument for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire titled: Adjustment Capabilities Index Questionnaire (ACIQ). Descriptive statistics was used to answer research questions while hypotheses were tested using t-test. The findings, amongst others, showed that there was difference between social adjustment capabilities of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school; significant difference exists on psychological adjustment, while there was no significant difference in academic achievement between nursery and home-schooled children in primary school. Based on the findings, it was recommended, amongst others, that parents, teachers and other educators should make proper arrangements and provisions for both the Nursery and Home-schooled children to be able to adjust positively in primary school.

Keywords: adjustment, capabilities, nursery, home-schooled, implications, counselling

Introduction

The choice of how one's child receives his/her education is a huge decision to make, which is often made depending on personal factors such as time, availability, socio-economic status as well as one's child's personality. This choice, to a large extent, contributes to the success in career, educational foundation, and how educated a child becomes. Early childhood programmes which provide childcare services help to facilitate the labour market careers of parents but have the greatest potential value as human capital investment in young children. Not all parents and caregivers can afford to send their children and wards to nursery school due to many factors ranging from financial difficulties to family norms and values, sit-at-home mums, cultural belief systems, religious systems to mention a few; hence some opt for nursery schooling while some go for homeschooling before primary school.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2019) defines home-schooling as the practice of educating children at home, not in school. This means that home-schooling is the teaching of one's

children at home. It can also be referred to as the education of a child at home either by a parent or tutor. Ray (2017) asserts that home-schooling has been in practice, where parents were the main educators of their children but later went from being the norms in the colonial period to being the norm in the United States by 1900.

Homeschooling is the system of educational learning where students are taught in a home environment rather than a public or private school. The parent or guardian of the child is the one responsible for the teaching of the student or for securing instructor. For the purpose of this study, homeschooling will be defined as the process of educating the children within the home and with the parents as the sole instructor (Davis, 2011).

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), there are now more than two million children being home-schooled in the United States, with a rapidly increasing percentage by 7% to 15% each year. The number of children being home-schooled in North America is growing at an increased rate (Chang, Gould & Meuse, 2011). In 2008, it was estimated that over 1.5million children were home-schooled in the United States. With its continued growth in popularity over the years, it was estimated that as of 2010, there were over 2 million children who were home-schooled (Chang et al., 2011), signifying that there is increase in number of homeschooled children.

Preschool which is also known as Nursery school is usually associated with early childhood education that includes educational programme that serves children in preschool years and is designed to improve later school performance. It was led by Johanna Friedrich Oberlin, a Lutheran pastor, who founded in 1767 the Infant School in Berlin, Paris and elsewhere. Merriam-Webster dictionary (2019) defines preschool as a school for children usually younger than those attending elementary school or kindergarten.

Encyclopedia defines preschool as an early childhood programme in which children combine learning with play in a programme run by professionally trained adults. The word "Nursery" lexically means any place in which something is bred, nourished or fostered. Nursery school therefore means a place set apart for educating young children between ages three and five years. Akinola (2004) defines nursery education as the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to entering into primary schooling. Many societies have practiced home-schooling for centuries. Nursery school in this study is defined as an educational programme in which children between the age of 3 and 5+ undergo a programme carried out by a professional known as the teacher and combining learning and play in carrying out the activities.

In North America, home-schooling was not widespread until the 1870s when compulsory schooling attendance laws and the development of professional educators came together to institutionalize education. Its practice was in a limited way in the 1870s but by 1960s, home-schooling practice claimed attention from a large number of parents and educators. With such growth in the home-schooling option over the years, it aroused the interest of

this researcher to ascertain the adjustment capabilities of learners who were home-schooled and those who passed through Nursery school when they meet in primary school. Schooling, either at home or in a formal educational institution as in nursery schools, has a direct effect on children's educational achievement, their acquisition of literary, numeracy and scientific knowledge; these basic skills provide a solid foundation for the child's education and extent of adjustment (NCES, 2008).

Whether a child receives nursery or homeschooling, they transit to primary school eventually. Levinson in Teibowei, Aroso and Balogun (2020) defines transition as the “in between” time that proceeds the old era that is approaching its end into the new era that is just beginning. Herr and Cramer in Teibowei et al. (2020) see transition as the period that links two eras, communities or cultures and provides some continuity between them. Unless there is adequate preparation made to aid the child, this process can be accompanied by anxiety and fear which could result in adjustment challenges. When any form of transition takes place, the person involved is required to adjust to the new situation which often times are challenging and imposes threat on their adjustment.

Cox (2006) conceived adjustment, as an individual's general adaptation to his or her environment and the demands of life. McLloyd in Teibowei et al. (2020) sees adjustment as the psychological processes through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life; it is the process by which a living organism maintains a balance between needs and the circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs; it is the process of finding and adopting modes of behaviour suitable to the environment or to change in the environment. It can also be defined as the state whereby an individual interacts harmoniously with his environment and is satisfied with the role he has been assigned to play. It can also be seen to be the process through which a person tries to strike a balance between his requirements (needs, desires and urges) and the reality of life; it is the ability of an individual to adapt to his environment even in the place of changes taking place (Wichers, 2001).

School adjustment plays a vital role in a child's life; and like a pillar, the entire life of the child is based on it. It is not limited only to a child's progress and achievement, but also their attitude towards school, anxieties, loneliness, social support and academic motivation. With the difference in environment and setting found in the home-school and nursery school, there will be transitional needs, especially for the homeschoolers, that could be confronting them in primary school. To help them adjust in their new environment, these needs are to be addressed since every year numerous homeschooled children are being transferred into primary school and this transfer can be both stressful and it induces anxiety (Surekha, 2008).

Mandy (2020) conducted a study on influence of attachment patterns on adjustment using a sample of 120 pupils in primary schools in Sabagreaia, Bayelsa State. Instrument for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire titled, Social Adjustment Scale; results showed positive relationship between attachment patterns and adjustment. Oniwon (2015)

studied an examination of the role of Nursery Education on Primary School Pupils in Nigeria. The result showed a marked difference between the two sets of pupils with those who attended Nursery School performing better.

An empirical analysis carried out by Widener Law Review (2010) called Evidence for Homeschooling: Constitutional Analysis in Light of social science Research, indicated that homeschooled children achievement levels of academic achievement is similar to or higher than their public school peers and it also cuts across racial and socio-economic areas. With instance from the standardized academic achievement test carried out on 1,952 home school children across USA, it was reported that the homeschooled students on average scored 80% in every test category which includes reading, listening, language, math, science, social studies, study skills etc. This was in spite of the national mean for these standardized tests by contrast being 50%. Also, a study in Washington State involving 873 homeschooled children in a Stanford Achievement test found their median test scores to be in the 65th to 66th per cent range. This in addition to several other studies conducted at state department of education found that home school students score highly on academic achievement tests (U.S Department of Education, 2008).

Osakwe (2009) studied the effect of early childhood education on experience on the academic performance of primary school children. The study revealed that there was difference between pupils who had pre-primary education and those without, in their academic performance. In addition, Ray (2017) collected academic data based on 25 years of home-school achievement. The Researcher utilized 15 independent testing services, to obtain information from 11,739 homeschooled children from all 50 states and they took three well known tests; California Achievement Test, Iowa Test of Basic skills and Stanford Achievement Test. The study showed significant advances in home-school academic achievement as well as revealing that issues such as student, gender, parent's education level, and family income had little bearing on the results of homeschooled children.

Devika (2013) did a study on the adjustment of secondary school students and found that males have better emotional adjustment than females. However, the study showed no significant difference between male and female in regards to family, social and educational adjustment. Yau, Sun, and Cheng (2012) carried out a study on adjusting to university and found out that female students perceive psychological adjustment to have more impact on academic adjustment than male students. It also found out that there is a positive impact of psychological adjustment on academic achievement of the students. Abdullah, Elias, Uli, and Mahyuddin (2010) did a study and found that there is a strong positive relationship between social adjustment and academic adjustment while Yellaiah's (2012) study on adjustment and academic achievement of high school students found no relationship between the two variables.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was to:

1. Find out difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.
2. Assess difference in psychological adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.
3. Determine difference in academic performance of the nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.

Research questions

The following questions were asked to guide the study with regards to the purpose stated above:

1. What is the difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school?
2. What difference exists in psychological adjustment between nursery and home-schooled children in primary school?
3. What difference exists in academic performance between Nursery and Home-schooled children?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in psychological adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in academic performance of nursery and Home-schooled children in primary school.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. Nworgu (2006) sees survey design as one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered being representative of the entire group. The Population for the study comprised of teachers and parents of the pupils in primary one within Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State. Sample consisted of 200 participants in all, including 10 teachers, 100 pupils and 90 parents of pupils from 10 schools. Simple Random Sampling technique of Balloting was used to select 10 primary schools and also select one teacher and 10 pupils from each school, the 90 parents (80 parents had a child each while 10 parents each had two children, totaling 90) of the pupils selected formed the sample totaling 200 participants.

The instrument used for the study was a researcher designed questionnaire titled: Adjustment Capabilities Index Questionnaire (ACIQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B. Section 'A' contained demographic data while the 'B' section contained 15 items which were arranged in accordance to the research questions and outlined in a response order of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The validation of the instrument was carried out by three experts of Measurement and Evaluation in Federal University Otuoke; corrections made were effected before it was administered to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test retest method. The instrument was administered twice to the same respondents (who were not part of the sample) within an interval of two weeks. The generated data was analysed with Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC); and a reliability coefficient obtained was 0.76 confirming the instrument’s reliability for use in the study.

In administering the instrument, the researcher visited the selected schools to administer the instrument to the teachers and parents. Parents were contacted to participate in the exercise through the assistance of the head/class teachers. The respondents were implored to give attention to the exercise; on the spot collection was done after the exercise. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses.

Presentation of results

Research Question 1: What is the difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school?

Ho1: There is no significant difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.

Table 1: Difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig.
Nursery-schooled	68	38.04	4.86			
Homeschooled	32	29.28	8.28	98	7.328	.000

Table 1 shows that there is significant difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school (t = 7.328, Df = 98, P = .000). The mean score of nursery-schooled was 38.04 which was higher than that of home-schooled with a mean score of 29.28; this means that nursery schooled have higher social adjustment capability than home-schooled children.

Research Question 2: What difference exists in psychological adjustment between nursery and home-schooled children in primary school?

Ho2: There is no significant difference in psychological adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.

Table 2: Difference in psychological adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig.
Nursery-schooled	68	36.19	6.29	98	5.566	.000
Homeschooled	32	33.09	7.88			

Table 2 shows that there is a significant difference in psychological adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school ($t = 5.566$, $Df = 98$, $P = .000$). The mean score of nursery-schooled was 36.19 which was higher than that of home-schooled with a mean score of 33.09; this means that nursery schooled have higher psychological adjustment capability than home-schooled children.

Research Question 3: What difference exists in academic performance between nursery and home-schooled children in primary school?

Ho3: There is no significant difference in academic performance of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school.

Table 3: Difference in academic performance of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig.
Nursery-schooled	68	34.23	7.23	98	1.598	.099
Homeschooled	32	33.34	6.63			

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in academic performance of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school ($t = 1.598$, $Df = 98$, $P = .099$). The mean score of nursery-schooled was 34.23 which was higher than that of home-schooled with a mean score of 33.34; this means that nursery schooled pupils do not perform better academically than home-schooled children.

Discussion of the findings

Finding from hypothesis 1 indicated that there is significant difference in social adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school. This finding is in line with Abdullah, Elias, Uli, and Mahyuddin (2010) who reported difference in adjustment patterns amongst primary school pupils. This should be expected because children are born and bred in different homes, have different types of relationship with parents, caregivers and others; hence as they transit from either nursery to primary school or home-school to primary, they definitely need some time to adjust to the new class and

pupils they come in contact with. Besides, the home-schooled are experiencing the art of formal schooling for the first time, hence they may not find socializing with others in that environment as easy as their peers who had gone through nursery school. The home-schooled child may not have enough room for socialization as the means of communication might be basically between the child and the parents and if the parent is not a social person, it inevitably affects the rate at which the child socializes.

Finding from hypothesis 2 indicated that there is significant difference in psychological adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school. The result agrees with Teibowei et al. (2020) and Yau et al. (2012) who carried out a study on relationship between psychological and academic performance and adjusting to University and found out that there is a positive impact of psychological adjustment on academic achievement of the students and that female students perceive psychological adjustment to have more impact on academic adjustment than male students. The finding from this study however, disagrees with Devika (2013) who conducted a study on the adjustment of secondary school students and found that there is no significant difference between male and female in regards to family, social and educational adjustment.

Result from hypothesis 3 shows that there is no significant difference in academic performance of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school. The finding is congruent with Yellaiah (2012) who found no relationship between adjustment and academic achievement. The finding however, is divergent with Oniwon (2015) who carried an examination of the role of nursery education on primary school pupils in Nigeria. The result showed a marked difference between the two sets of pupils with those who attended nursery school performing better. Also, the finding disagrees with Osakwe (2009) who studied the effect of early childhood education on experience on the academic performances of primary school children, and reported there was difference between pupils who had pre-primary education and those without, in their academic performance.

Implications for counselling

Children face a lot of challenges when trying to adjust to primary school as it is usually a transitional period. These include adjusting academically, socially and psychologically, and these problems have persisted due to the gaps caused by either the parents, teachers or the child himself. Counselling is a profession that assists individuals to understand themselves, accept themselves, adjust to environments they find themselves in order to live effectively in society; it can therefore fill the gap observed. Counsellors in Nigeria should advocate for professional counselling services to be made available in all primary schools so that counselling services could be provided to cater for the children with issues that require counselling.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there is significant difference in social and psychological adjustment of nursery and home-schooled children in primary school; while there is no significant difference in academic performance of nursery and

home-schooled children in primary school. Also based on the findings, it can be inferred that although there are differences that exist between the nursery schooled and home-schooled children in terms of social and psychological adjustment, it is important to note that majority of the adjustment processes depends to a great extent on the child's personality and ability to adjust to situations while academic performance to a great extent is determined by the intelligent quotient of the individual child.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. School authorities should collect and store adequate background information of all pupils admitted into school each session.
2. Schools should ensure to provide services, including guidance and counselling, that would encourage all-round development of pupils in their schools. This will assist in their smooth transition and socialization process.
3. Cordial teacher-pupil, teacher-parents, parents-school authority and parent-child relationships should be encouraged. Parents and teachers should see it as their task to encourage all-round preparation for home schooled child to adjust faster in primary school; it is the task of both the parents and teachers to encourage such child as well as the child himself as his academic performance does not have to do with him being home-schooled.

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