



Assessment of government's involvement in implementation of national policy on early childhood education in Nigeria

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Article History

Submitted: June 23, 2020

Accepted: December 12, 2020

Published: January 4, 2021

DOI:10.26555/jecce.v3i2.2066

Abstract

The study examined the areas of Government's involvement as stated in the national policy on early childhood education in South western Nigeria. It determined the implementation processes of the national policy on ECE on the areas of Government's involvement and also investigated the level of compliance in the implementation processes of the national policy on ECE and the stakeholders' assessment of Government's involvement in the implementation of the national policy on ECE. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Data was collected from 72 head teachers, 144 classroom teachers and 144 parents of early childhood education pupils as well as 30 State Ministry of Education officials. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study. Three instruments were used for this study. The results of the study showed that governments were involved in the regulation of the establishment and registration of pre-school facilities at 91.7% and 96.7%, development and implementing educational support services to orphans and vulnerable children at 51.4% and 90%. The study concluded that Government's involvement in the implementation of the national policy on early childhood education is only to a little extent. All the implementation processes of the national policy on education were not followed by the government.

Keywords: Government's involvement, Implementation, Early Childhood Education

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui keterlibatan pemerintah sesuai dengan kebijakan nasional tentang pendidikan anak usia dini di Nigeria Barat Daya. Hal yang diteliti terkait dengan proses implementasi kebijakan nasional tentang PAUD di bidang keterlibatan pemerintah dan juga menyelidiki tingkat kepatuhan dalam proses implementasi kebijakan nasional tentang PAUD dan penilaian pemangku kepentingan tentang keterlibatan pemerintah dalam implementasi kebijakan nasional tentang PAUD. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian survei deskriptif. Data diperoleh dari 72 kepala sekolah, 144 guru kelas dan 144 orang tua murid PAUD serta 30 pejabat Kementerian Pendidikan Negara. Prosedur pengambilan sampel menggunakan teknis multistage. Tiga instrumen digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemerintah terlibat dalam pengaturan pendirian dan pendaftaran fasilitas prasekolah sebesar 91,7% dan 96,7%, pengembangan dan pelaksanaan layanan dukungan pendidikan untuk anak yatim dan anak rentan sebesar 51,4% dan 90%. Dengan demikian disimpulkan bahwa keterlibatan pemerintah dalam implementasi kebijakan nasional tentang PAUD adalah kecil. Semua proses implementasi kebijakan nasional di bidang pendidikan tidak diikuti oleh pemerintah.

Kata Kunci : Keterlibatan Pemerintah, Implementasi, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is seen as the type of education that is directed towards the whole development of the child without any form of bias (Osho, Aliyu, Okolie & Onifade, 2014). According to the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, early childhood education includes the *crèche*, nursery and kindergarten classes (Akinbote, 2006). This programme came into being so that children between the ages of zero and five years can have access to it, as stated in Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). Early childhood education is regarded as the foundation for the development of a child, it is evident that the experiences which the child comes across during the early stage have an influence which maybe either a negative influence or a positive one on the later life of the child.

According to FRN (2013), the objectives of early childhood education include; effecting smooth transmission from home to school; preparing the child for the primary level of education; providing adequate care and supervision for children; inculcating social norms and values; inculcating the spirit of creativity and enquiry; developing a sense of cooperation and team spirit; teaching good habits and teaching the rudiments of numbers, letters, colors, forms and shapes through play.

For Early Childhood Education (ECE) to be effective, it is good to note that it is not just the role of the teachers and the parents alone, the government has to play the role of giving support to the centres via care, love, creating a holistic environment, effective policies and many more (Wolf, Aber & Behrman, 2017). The roles of the teachers, parents and the community in early childhood education can only come to play when the government has a partnership with these stakeholders and provides a work plan that assists in the implementation of early childhood education.

According to the FRN (2013), the roles and Government's involvement in early childhood education include; setting and monitoring the minimum standard for early childhood care development and education; developing and disseminating curriculum materials, encouraging both community and private individuals in establishment of ECCDE centres; making provision for teacher education; ensuring that the curriculum of teacher education is oriented towards play-way method; ensuring that the caregivers infant ratio is adhered to; developing suitable ECCDE curriculum; supervising; providing learning and instructional materials; ensuring that the mother tongue is the language of instruction and producing textbooks and other instructional materials in Nigerian language.

One of the roles of the government stated in the national policy on early childhood education which is missing in most early childhood education centres is ensuring that play-way method is adopted for the teaching-learning process. Play is a dynamic ever-changing process that is multisensory, interactive, creative and imaginative (Armstrong 2011). There has always been a relationship between play and education for young children as play has a very large influence on children's learning and development. The role of play in children's development cannot be over emphasised. Basically, play enhances the all-round development of children. It promotes their physical development, mental development, social development as well as their psychological development.

One of the objectives of this study is to examine the areas of government's involvement in implementation of the national policy on early childhood education in Southwestern Nigeria. Since there is a body of the law stipulating the responsibility of the government in early childhood education, this becomes important as it examines the involvement of government in providing quality and comprehensive early childhood education for all pre-schoolers. This study clarifies and elucidates on the areas of Government's involvement in early childhood Education in Southwestern Nigeria.

Effective implementation of the national policy on childhood education will give equal benefit to all children in the country. The observation in Nigeria is that some regions tend to benefit well from government educational policies while some regions do not (Nakpodia, 2011). The implementation of childhood education should be uniform across states in the federation. It has been noted that uniform programmes related to early childhood education facilitates Human Development (HD) and can bring about development in education, health, social capital and equality that will help develop children that participate in the program even up to the future (Shekarau, 2014).

The focus of the government is well sharpened towards making realistic plans to developing early childhood education. The national policy on early childhood education makes it explicit for the needs to develop integrities of the disciplines and grow the skills of the learners. Therefore, the national policy on early childhood education allows for all stakeholders in the field of early childhood education to be well aware of their roles and obligations in making realistic efforts for the realisations of the dictates of the policy. In the absence of the National Policy on Education, there would be very insignificant revolution and very mute growth in nation's early childhood educational sector. A statement in the National Policy on Early Childhood Education (2013) indicates that the government sets the standards to be followed whenever an early childhood education center is to be established and run in the

country which means that there are some rules to be followed or some levels to attain in order to establish and run early childhood education centers in the country.

Without the National Policy on Education, the educational sector as well as the Early Childhood Education (ECE) would have been in total mess. The roles of government in Integrated Early Child Care Development (IECD) cannot be overemphasised. All activities carried out by the government affect Integrated Early Child Care Development (IECD) in one way or the other. For examples, when new policies are made in the field of education, learners are largely affected. The National Minimum Standard for the establishment of Early Child Care Education Centres is to bring about effectiveness in the rapid practice in the dictates of the Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE). The set standards, principles and guidelines of the Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) are well encouraged to be practiced by educational stakeholders. In the same vein, there are provisions for teachers as well as caregivers in the need to play their best in carrying out their duties in their field of work. The need for children to be taught in their mother tongue is a necessity in Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE). Also, important and significant materials are to be developed for learning by the school, teachers as well as the community (in some cases) (NPE, 2013).

Previous researchers who have explored the subject matter (Ajayi 2008; Osho, Aliyu, Okolie & Onifade, 2014) focused on how well the government has achieved the stated goals in the National Policy on Education as well as the level of sustainability that has been achieved. This present study bridges the gap in the literature by providing empirical answers and clarification to the areas of Government's involvement as stipulated in the national policy on early childhood education, implementation processes, level of compliance and stakeholders' assessment of Government's involvement in the implementation of the national policy on early childhood education in Southwestern Nigeria.

Though, the national policy on early childhood education has been observed to be useful, stakeholders in Early Childhood Education (ECE) have noted that the implementation of the policy has not been well done. Some of the measures put in place by the government in times of number of pupils in the classroom, teaching strategies, curriculum content and many more have not been well maximised.

Nigeria has many educational policy documents relating to early childhood education which include the national policy on early childhood education. However, the level of

government's compliance in the implementation processes of the national policy on early childhood education appears illusive and indefinable.

The broad objective of the study is to assess the Government's involvement in the implementation of national policy on early childhood education in Southwestern Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to a) examine the areas of Government's involvement as stated in the national policy on early childhood education in Southwestern Nigeria; b) determine the implementation process(es) of the national policy on early childhood education on the areas of Government's involvement in Southwestern Nigeria; c) investigate the level of compliance in the implementation process(es) of the national policy on early childhood education on the areas of government's involvement in Southwestern Nigeria; and d) examine the stakeholders' assessment of Government's involvement in the implementation of the national policy on early childhood education in Southwestern Nigeria.

METHOD

The research design that was adopted for the study is descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised head teachers, classroom teachers and parents of early childhood education centers as well as State Ministry of Education officials in Southwestern Nigerian. According to the Nation Bureau of Statistics (2016), there are 8323 schools that consist nursery and the primary level in Southwestern Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised 390 respondents consisting 72 head teachers, 144 classroom teachers and 144 parents of early childhood education pupils as well as 30 State Ministry of Education officials. Multistage sampling procedure which involves the use of various sampling methods was adopted to select the sample for the study. Simple random sampling technique which is used to select a sample due to a criteria was used in selecting three states out of the six states in the Southwestern Nigeria and two senatorial districts from each of the selected states. In each selected senatorial district, four Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected and from each LGA, three primary schools were selected using simple random sampling technique. From each school selected, one head teacher and two classroom teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique based on their qualifications as experts in early childhood education while two parents were selected using accidental sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 10 State Ministry of Education officials from each state selected based on their qualifications as Zonal Inspectors of Education (ZIE) and Local Inspectors of Education (LIE).

Three Instruments were used for this study namely; Interview Schedule on the Areas of Government's Involvement in Implementation of National Policy on Early Childhood Education (ISAGIINPECE), Checklist on Government's Involvement in Implementation of National Policy on Early Childhood Education (CGIINPECE) and Interview Schedule on Stakeholders Assessment of the Effectiveness of Government's Involvement in the Implementation of the National Policy on Early Childhood Education (ISSAEGIINPECE). ISAGIINPECE and CGIINPECE were used to collect data that measured research objectives such as areas of Government's involvement, implementation process as well as the level of compliance in the implementation process of the national policy on early childhood education in Southwestern Nigeria while ISSAEGIINPECE was used to elicit information from the head teachers, classroom teachers, parents and Ministry of Education officials on the stakeholders' assessment of Government's involvement in the implementation of the national policy on early childhood education.

The ISAGIINPECE and CGIINPECE consist of three sections: Section A addresses the socio-demographic information of the respondents; Section B contains items that measure areas of government's involvement and implementation processes while Section C contains items that measure the level of compliance. ISSAEGIINPECE consists of three section; Section A addresses the socio-economic status of the respondents while section B contains items that measure the stakeholders' assessment of Government's involvement in the implementation if the national policy on early childhood education.

The research instruments for this study were designed by the researchers. The instruments were given to the experts in early childhood education to establish the content validity while experts in test development were consulted for construct validity. The observations and suggestions were used for the final preparation of the instruments. The instruments were administered to 40 stakeholders comprising 10 head teachers, 10 ministry officials, 10 classroom teachers and 10 parents. Their responses to the items on these instruments were used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Concerning the reliability of the instrument, two approaches were adopted. The Internal Consistency Approach based on Cronbach's alpha and split half reliability estimates were obtained from the SPSS 21 software. Reliability coefficient for each section was determined. For instance, items on Areas of Government Involvement yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.89; Level of Compliance in the implementation processes 0.74 and Implementation processes with 0.66. Also, items on Stakeholders' Assessment of the Effectiveness of Government's Involvement in

Implementation of National Policy on Early Childhood Education (ISSAEGIINPECE) yielded a reliability of 0.92.

The investigators and six other trained research assistants who were bachelor’s degree holders and master’s degree holders with good communication skills and prior experiences of data collection procedures were involved in the data collection exercise for the study. An online training was conducted for the research assistants for two weeks. During the course of training, they were informed about the importance of the exercise, sample of the study, how to approach the respondents and how to administer the instruments. Emphases were made on how the interviews would be conducted. The researchers and the research assistants administered the instruments in line with the procedure for data collection for the study as directed by the authorities of the schools and ministries. Descriptive analysis was employed to analyse the data collected for this study. Frequency and percentage were used to answer the stated research questions via SPSS.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data shows that there are some areas of government’s involvement as stated in the national policy on early childhood education, those are regulation of the establishment and registration of pre-school facilities, ensuring compliance with and innovation to minimum standard prescription, educational support for orphans and vulnerable children at, approval of relevant supplementary reading materials and teachers’ instructional materials, certification of work done and training received and ensuring full participation of government, communities and teacher associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities. Table 1 shows the frequency and the percentage of each involvement.

Table 1: Areas of Government’s Involvement as Stated in the National Policy on Early Childhood Education in South- western Nigeria

S/N	Areas of Government Involvement	Head Teachers		Ministry Official	
		Involved	Not Involved	Involved	Not Involved
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
1	Regulation of the establishment and registration of pre-school facilities.	66 (91.7)	6 (8.3)	29 (96.7)	1 (3.3)
2	Ensuring compliance of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act for the establishment of ECEC centres in public primary and junior secondary schools.	34 (47.2)	38 (52.8)	29 (96.7)	1(3.3)
3	Ensure compliance with and innovations to minimum standard prescriptions, especially as they relate to ECEC curriculum development	38 (52.8)	34 (47.2)	27 (90.0)	3 (10.0)

programmes and activities;					
4	Developing and implementing ECEC capacity-building programmes for parents, caregivers and teachers	10 (13.9)	62 (86.1%)	27 (90.0)	3 (10.0)
5	Developing and implementing educational support services to Orphans and Vulnerable Children	37 (51.4)	35 (48.6)	27 (90.0)	3 (10.0)
6	Provision and distribution of policy guidelines for the establishment and management of pre-primary institutions	33 (45.8)	39 (54.2)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
7	Production and development of appropriate national curriculum and textbook in Nigerian languages	30 (41.7)	42 (58.3)	18 (60.0)	12 (40.0)
8	Approval of relevant supplementary reading materials and teachers/instructions' manual	64 (88.9)	8 (11.1)	26 (86.7)	4 (13.3)
9	Provision and approval of appropriate certification of work done and training received	60 (83.3)	12 (16.7)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
10	Ensuring full participation of government, communities and teacher associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities	41 (65.9)	31 (43.1)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
11	Ensuring compliance with the stipulated medium of instruction at various ECEC across the state.	12 (16.7)	60 (83.3)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
12	Development of orthography of many more Nigerian languages	35 (48.6)	37 (51.4)	16 (53.3)	14 (46.7)
13	Ensuring strict compliance with play as the main method of teaching.	7 (9.7)	65 (90.3)	23 (76.7)	7 (23.3)
14	Development of mechanisms for public-private partnerships	7 (9.7)	65 (90.3)	22 (73.3)	8 (26.7)

I=Involved; NI=Not Involved

The results showed that the implementation processes of the national policy on early childhood education on the areas of government's involvement are directly involved in the establishment of early childhood education centers, encouraging both communities and private individuals in the establishment of early childhood education centers, encouraging appropriate government funded that the minimum standards for establishment of early childhood education centers is adhered to and ensuring ongoing and regular monitoring. The frequency and percentage can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Implementation Process of National Policy on Early Childhood Education on the Areas of Government's Involvement in South-western Nigeria

S/N	Early Child Care Education Implementation Process	Head Teachers		Ministry Official	
		A f (%)	NA f (%)	A f (%)	NA f (%)
1	Directly involved in the establishment of Early Child Care Centres across the State.	66 (91.7)	6 (8.3)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
2	Making it compulsory for various government funded schools to established Early Child Care	37 (51.4)	35 (48.6)	12 (40.0)	18 (60.0)

Centres in their premises					
3	Encouraging community and private individuals to establish and manage Early Child Care Education Centres.	36 (50.0)	36 (50.0)	18 (60.0)	12 (40.0)
4	Encouraging the appropriate government funded higher institutions to make provision for the training of specialist in Early Childhood education	61 (84.7)	11 (15.3)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
5	Setting and monitoring that minimum standard for early childhood centres in the country is adhered to.	62 (86.1)	10 (13.9)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
6	Provision of technical assistance to service providers through work plans, programmes and guidelines that help to translate policy positions into actions.	6 (8.3)	66 (91.7)	18 (60.0)	12 (40.0)
7	Provision of training manuals for Early Child Care service providers.	40 (55.6)	32 (44.4)	22 (73.3)	8 (26.7)
8	Ensuring ongoing and regular monitoring of the service providers.	60 (83.3)	12 (16.7)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
9	Actively participating in the National or State Early Child Care Education coordinating committee	5 (6.9)	67 (93.1)	16 (53.3)	14 (46.7)
10	Ensuring policy sensitization and advocacy for ECCE involvement	10 (13.9)	62 (86.1)	22 (73.3)	8 (26.7)
11	Making special provisions for ECCE activities and programmes in their line budgets.	43 (59.7)	29 (40.3)	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
12	Facilitating ECCE -related research	13 (18.1)	59 (81.9)	16 (53.3)	14 (46.7)

A= Applicable; NA= Not Applicable

The results showed that there was low level compliance in the setting and monitoring of minimum standard for ECCDE centres, there was medium level compliance in ensuring that the curriculum of teacher education is oriented towards play-way methods, there was high level compliance in supervision and control of quality of ECCDE centres and there was no compliance in producing text textbooks, supplementary reading and other instructional materials in Nigerian Languages. The frequency and percentage can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Level of Compliance in the Implementation Process of National Policy on Early Childhood Education

S/N	Compliance in	Head Teachers				Ministry Official			
		NCA f(%)	LL f(%)	ML f(%)	HL f(%)	NCA f(%)	LL f(%)	ML f(%)	HL f(%)
1.	setting and monitoring minimum standard for ECCDE centres	2(2.8)	42(58.3)	28(38.9)	-	2(6.7)	1(3.3)	10(33.3)	17(56.7)
2.	developing and disseminating curriculum materials such as:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	the Integrated Early Child Care Development (IECD) Policy	8(11.1)	64(88.9)	-	-	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	26(86.7)

ii	National Standard for the establishment of Early Child Care Education Centres	15(20.8)	57(79.2)	-	-	-	1(3.3)	27(90.0)	2(6.7)
iii	IECD Implementation Guidelines and other materials that will enhance the implementation of ECCDE	43(59.7)	29(40.3)	-	-	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	23(76.7)	5(16.7)
3.	encouraging both community and private efforts in the establishment of ECCDE centres based on set standards	29(40.3)	41(56.9)	2(2.8)	-	11(36.7)	17(56.7)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)
4.	making provision in teachers education programmes for specialisation in early child care and education, and for retraining of teachers	8(11.1)	51(70.8)	13(18.1)	-	1(3.3)	8(26.7)	16(53.3)	5(16.7)
5.	ensuring that the curriculum of teacher education is oriented towards play-way methods	10(13.9)	9(12.5)	53(73.6)	-	12(40.0)	6(20.0)	1(3.3)	11(36.7)
6.	ensuring that ECCDE Centres adopt the following caregiver infant ratios:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	Crèche shall be 1:10	66(91.7)	3(4.2)	3(4.2)	-	17(56.7)	13(43.)	-	-
ii	Nursery 1:25	65(90.3)	3(4.2)	3(4.2)	1(1.4)	16(53.3)	12(40.0)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)
7	developing suitable ECCDE curriculum for nationwide implementation	2(2.8)	4(5.6)	62(86.1)	4(5.6)	-	2(6.7)	16(53.3)	12(40.0)
8	supervising and controlling quality of ECCDE centres	5(6.9)	4(5.6)	7(9.7)	56(77.8)	-	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	27(90.0)
9	making provision for the production and effective utilization of learning and instructional materials in adequate numbers	68(94.4)	3(4.2)	-	1(1.4)	1(3.3)	23(76.7)	5(16.7)	1(3.3)
10	ensuring that the medium of instruction is principally the mother-tongue or the language of the	68(94.4)	4(5.6)	-	-	15(50.0)	6(20.0)	9(30.0)	-

	immediate community										
11	developing the orthography of more Nigerian languages	35(48.6)	35(48.6)	2(2.8)	-	2(6.7)	2(6.7)	15(50.0)	11(36.7)		
12	producing text textbooks, supplementary reading and other instructional materials in Nigerian Languages	40(55.6)	27(37.5)	2(2.8)	2(2.8)	21(70.0)	7(23.3)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)		

NCA=No Compliance; LL=Low Level; ML=Medium Level; HL=High Level

The results showed that stakeholders assessed Government’s involvement in regulation of the establishment and registration of pre-school facilities as not effective. Ensuring compliance of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act for the establishment of ECE centres in public primary schools was assessed very effective, ensuring full participation of government, communities and teacher associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities as not effective and development of mechanisms for public-private partnerships as not effective. The frequency and percentage can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Stakeholders’ Assessment of Government’s Involvement in the Implementation of the National Policy on Early Childhood Education in South-western Nigeria

Assessment of Government Involvement	Head Teachers			Ministry Officials			C/Teachers			Parents		
	NE f(%)	FE f(%)	VE f(%)	NE f(%)	FE f(%)	VE f(%)	NE f(%)	FE f(%)	VE f(%)	NE f(%)	FE f(%)	VE f(%)
Regulation of the establishment and registration of pre-school facilities.	5 (6.9)	61 (84.7)	6 (8.3)	-	7 (23.3)	23 (76.7)	93 (64.6)	36 (25.0)	14 (10.4)	101 (70.1)	36 (25.0)	7 (4.9)
Ensuring compliance of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act for the establishment of ECEC centres in public primary and junior secondary schools.	40 (55.6)	31 (43.1)	1 (1.4)	3 (10.0)	1 (3.3)	26 (86.7)	88 (61.1)	35 (24.3)	21 (14.6)	101 (70.1)	34 (23.6)	9 (6.3)
Ensure compliance with and innovations to minimum standard prescriptions, especially as they relate to ECEC curriculum development programmes and activities	12 (16.7)	59 (81.9)	1 (1.4)	3 (10.0)	6 (20.0)	21 (70.0)	103 (71.5)	20 (13.9)	21 (14.6)	107 (74.3)	25 (17.4)	12 (8.3)
Developing and implementing ECEC capacity-building programmes for	64 (88.9)	8 (11.1)	-	2 (6.7)	7 (23.3)	21 (70.0)	129 (89.6)	15 (10.4)	-	129 (89.6)	10 (6.0)	5 (3.5)

parents, caregivers and teachers													
Developing and implementing educational support services to Orphans and Vulnerable Children	35 (48.6)	37 (51.4)	-	2 (6.7)	13 (43.3)	15 (50.0)	129 (89.6)	4 (2.8)	11 (7.6)	109 (75.7)	20 (13.9)	15 (10.4)	
Provision and distribution of policy guidelines for the establishment and management of pre-primary institutions	39 (54.2)	29 (40.3)	4 (5.6)	2 (6.7)	7 (23.3)	21 (70.0)	89 (61.8)	28 (19.4)	27 (18.8)	86 (59.7)	27 (18.8)	31 (21.5)	
Production and development of appropriate national curriculum and textbook in Nigerian languages	43 (59.7)	25 (34.7)	4 (5.6)	11 (36.7)	9 (30.0)	10 (33.3)	10 (70.1)	9 (6.3)	34 (23.6)	81 (56.3)	25 (17.4)	38 (26.4)	
Approval of relevant supplementary reading materials and teachers/instructions 'manual	8 (11.1)	59 (81.9)	5 (6.9)	1 (3.3)	6 (20.0)	23 (76.7)	42 (29.2)	61 (42.4)	41 (28.5)	49 (34.0)	61 (42.4)	34 (23.6)	
Provision and approval of appropriate certification of work done and training received	14 (19.4)	52 (72.2)	6 (8.3)	1 (3.3)	6 (20.0)	23 (76.7)	94 (65.3)	49 (34.0)	1 (0.7)	92 (63.9)	48 (33.3)	4 (2.8)	
Ensuring full participation of government, communities and teacher associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities	33 (45.8)	36 (50.0)	3 (4.2)	1 (3.3)	11 (36.7)	18 (60.0)	129 (89.6)	13 (9.0)	2 (1.4)	133 (92.4)	11 (7.6)	-	
Ensuring compliance with the stipulated medium of instruction at various ECEC across the state.	62 (86.1)	10 (13.9)	-	3 (10.0)	11 (36.7)	16 (53.3)	139 (96.5)	2 (1.4)	3 (2.1)	142 (98.6)	2 (1.4)	-	
Development of orthography of many more Nigerian languages	45 (62.5)	25 (34.7)	2 (2.8)	13 (43.3)	12 (40.0)	5 (16.7)	142 (98.6)	-	2 (1.4)	142 (98.6)	2 (1.4)	-	
Ensuring strict compliance with play as the main method of teaching.	61 (84.7)	10 (13.9)	1 (1.4)	6 (20.0)	11 (36.7)	13 (43.3)	138 (95.8)	3 (2.1)	3 (2.1)	140 (97.2)	4 (2.8)	-	
Development of mechanisms for public-private partnerships	63 (87.5)	8 (11.1)	1 (1.4)	8 (26.7)	6 (20.0)	16 (53.3)	95 (66.0)	42 (29.2)	7 (4.9)	121 (84.0)	22 (15.3)	1 (0.7)	

NE=Not Effective; FE=Fairly Effective; VE=Very Effective

Play plays a vital role in children’s learning as it enables children to process their understanding as well as acquiring more knowledge. The investigation in the areas of Government’s involvement as stated in the national policy on early childhood education revealed that governments are shown at Table 1. However, it was revealed that governments were not involved in ensuring strict compliance with play as the main method of teaching. This corroborated with the findings of Iloh (2013) which states that application of play-way method of teaching in ECE centres was considered only to a little extent with cluster mean and SD of 1.70 and .90. This implies that teachers adopted manipulative and very strict methods of teaching in early childhood education centres in preference to play-way method. Children love better opportunities to explore, discover, develop and create his/her own skills and potentials to the fullest. The domineering method of teaching renders learner passive in class. This is also of the view of Adeyemi (2016) that the play method of teaching that is advocated in the national policy on early childhood education is not efficiently used in most of the early childhood care centres, as most of the teachers are not trained on the use of it. Also, Nakpodia (2003) lamented that the basic challenge facing the implementation of the play-way method is that very few of early childhood education teachers are received for training in early childhood education.

Also, the involvement of communities and private sectors in early childhood education helps to improve this level of education financially. With the help of the private sector, there is the provision of up to date technologies in schools. The findings of the study revealed that encouragement of communities and private individuals in the establishment of early childhood education centres is one of the implementation processes of the national policy on early childhood education on the areas of Government’s involvement. This agrees with the observation of Falana (2014) that, the government proposed encouraging private efforts in the establishment of early childhood education centres which is being implemented. The findings show that there is a significant relationship between community-private involvement and early childhood education development.

The investigation in the level of compliance in ensuring that the medium of instruction is principally the mother-tongue, shows that there was no compliance. This agrees with the findings of Ajayi (2008) and UNESCO (2002) that, the major problems relates to teaching in the mother-tongue including lack of quality textbooks on Nigerian orthography, lack of quality personnel, unavailability of necessary materials to facilitate children language development. This means that teachers ignores the recommended language of instruction and prefer English Language to the mother tongue or language of immediate the environment. Also, the result

shows that there is no compliance in the adoption of the stipulated care giver infant ratios at the *creche* level and nursery level. This corresponds with the findings of Njoku (2001) which states that the number teachers/caregivers are not enough in schools, teachers/caregivers are forced to handle high number of pupils/infants in the centres which has grossly affected academic performances. The governments are expected to act fast to increase the number of teachers/caregivers to match the number of pupils/infants.

The mother-tongue is the language that is firstly acquired by the child. It is also regarded as the language that is been used by most people in a place (Nyakwara, 2014). The findings of the study show that the stakeholders' assessment of Government's involvement in ensuring that there is compliance with the stipulated medium of instruction at various early childhood education centres across the state states that it is not effective. This is also of the view of Iloh (2013) that, the recommended language of instruction in early childhood education centres revealed little extent with cluster mean and SD of 1.0 and 80 in terms of teaching and learning songs in mother tongue or language of immediate environment in the classroom. This applies an absence of the recommended language of instruction. Ajayi (2007) also notes that the problems that most of the issues and problems that surround making use of the mother-tongue as the language of instruction are related to the lack of textbooks that are written in Nigerian language, lack of enough textbooks that children can easily relate with and lack of necessary materials that can easily help children to learn Nigerian languages.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the national policy on early childhood education has not been fully implemented. Only some aspects of the policy have been implemented which includes involving in the establishment of ECCE centres, encouraging community and private individuals in the establishment of ECCE centres, encouraging appropriate government funded higher institution in the training of specialists in early childhood education, setting and monitoring that the minimum standards for establishment of early childhood education centres is adhered to, provision of training manuals for service providers, ensuring ongoing and regular monitoring.

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