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MODE OF ENTRY AS CORRELATES OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

Despite the importance of early childhood and primary education, there is a gap between the quality and the number of teachers and the practice of early childhood education. One research question and three hypotheses were generated and tested in this study, the research question were answered using frequency count, percentage and mean independent samples t-test and PPMC were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study employed the Correlational Survey Research Design. The study sample size was 248 and Multi-Stage Sampling Technique was adopted to select respondents. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire titled 'Mode of Entry of Pre-Service Teachers Performance Questionnaire (MEAPTPQ) and Pre-service Teachers Academic Performance results (PTAPR).The reliability of MEAPTPQ is 0.77. The findings revealed that there was significant positive relationship between mode of entry and academic performance of pre-service teachers ($r = 0.257$; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected, another findings revealed that there was positive relationship between the academic performance of early childhood and primary education pre-service teachers and their attitudes to the subject in the universities ($r = .301$; $df = 246$; $.P< 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected. Based on the Findings of the Study, it was concluded that there was positive relationship between the Academic Performance of Early Childhood and Primary Education Pre-Service Teachers' in the University. The following Recommendations were made: Universities Admission board should ensure the enrolment of more male pre service teachers for the course, more so Universities and Faculty of Education should give more orientation to Pre- Service Teachers' towards the course.

Keywords: Mode of Entry, Pre-Service, Early Childhood, Academic Performance, Early Childhood and Primary Education Studies

Introduction

In times of scarce public resources, the care and education of young children will continue to fall to the bottom of the priority list until there is a public understanding of the economics of rising to the next generation. High-quality Early Childhood and Primary Education are too vital to be brushed aside as social service expenditure or too expensive to consider in tight budgetary times. Modern societies show serious concern for the education of their young ones because children's experiences in this period have a substantial impact on their development both positively and negatively. The period that has the most influence on shaping the human mind, character, and body in Early Childhood and this period is crucial in setting up the foundations of good mental health.

According to Baka (2016), early childhood education is the education given to children before primary school level of education that is aimed at meeting the need for physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional, and social development of children before primary education. It is the education provided in an educational institution to children prior to their entering primary school which includes the crèche, nursery, and kindergarten (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The period of Early Childhood Education is considered most vulnerable and crucial stage of a person's life. This is supported by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (2019) defined Early Childhood Education as educational programmes and strategies geared toward children from birth to eight years old and focus on guiding children to learn through play. It is considered as the time of remarkable growth with brain development at its peak.

The goal of early childhood and primary education is to address children's needs in terms of their physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional, and social development prior to their enrollment in primary school. The goal of early childhood and primary education is

to address children's needs in terms of their physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional, and social development prior to their enrollment in primary school. (Baka (2016). It comprises of all the essential support a young child needs to thrive in life as well as in the society. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, 2011) defined Pre-primary education as comprising of programmes that offer structured and purposeful learning activities in a school or a centre to children aged between three (3) to six (6). Most brain development happens before a child reaches primary school age where the brain cells preliterate, synapses crackle, and the pattern of a lifetime is established (Baka, 2016). At this stage, children develop their abilities to think, speak, learn, and reason and lay the foundation for values and social behavior as adults (Baka, 2016). The type of teaching, training, and stimulation a child receives at this stage determine the great extent that a child can attain later in life as an individual and in the society.

The teacher is the pillar of educational development, the country's level of development among other things is hinged on the quality of education given to its citizenry by the teacher. Teachers constitute the most essential body of personnel within the educational system. They transmit accumulated knowledge of the present to generation upon generation and thus interpret this information with reference to the past with the view to modify the future (Egwu, 2015). This responsibility is the professional role/duty of the teacher in the formal school setting. Their importance is numerous because the bulk of the work of implementing any curriculum lies in them.

This is why it is paramount to ensure and assess the quality of teachers that are produced either through the National Certificate in Education (NCE) or universities who understand basic learning objectives and developmental milestones for young children. The Nigerian Government realizing the need to prepare early childhood educators to be advocates who understand the value of pre-school education stated in section (8), sub-section (70) of the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) that the NCE shall be the

minimum qualification for teachers, by implication, NCE shall be the minimum qualification for teachers in pre-primary schools.

Three groups of students are admitted to Nigeria's university undergraduate programs at the tertiary level of the country's educational system: those admitted through the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), Direct Entry Admission, which can be in form of Interim Joint Matriculation Examination Board (IJMB) or graduates of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), and Pre-Degree Programmes run by different Universities (Jamb Brochure, 2016). All the three groups have varying academic experiences, hence, the basis for differences in their Modes of entry into the University. Pre-service teachers studying Early Childhood and Primary Education in the Nigerian Universities are admitted into 100 levels and 200 levels through UTME, NCE or IJMB.

Pre-service Teachers admitted through Direct Entry who have studied Early Childhood and Primary Education and other related courses are expected to have undergone elementary knowledge of Early Childhood Education. This will give them the experience of what the course is all about and also inculcate in them positive attitudes toward the teaching profession as against pre-service teachers admitted through UTME. Most times, pre-service teachers who have not undergone Early Childhood or Primary Education at the NCE level or studied non-related courses at the IJMB level are admitted via Direct Entry to study early childhood and primary education, thus, resulting into a lack of uniformity in the Academic experiences of the pre-service teachers and poor attitude towards the course (Emaikwu 2012), which is in accordance with the National Universities Commission's (NUC, 2006) assertion that a large number of colleges of education operate outside the guidelines set forth by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), resulting in a range of experiences for those who have National Certificates in Education.

In the field of Early Childhood Education, there is a different belief about the academic performance of students undergoing early childhood and primary education based on their mode of entry. It is believed that all those admitted to the University, regardless of the mode of entry, will be able to cope with the academic rigor (Emiakwu, 2012).

Emiakwu (2012) carried out research on assessment of the impact of students' mode of admission into the university and their academic achievement in Nigeria. Their findings indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean academic achievement of students who were admitted into the university through unified tertiary matriculation examination, remedial programme, and direct entry admissions. Also, Evroro (2009) examined the relationship between the mode of entry and degree performance of students in Delta State University, Abraka. The result revealed that there is no relationship between mode of entry into the university and students' academic performance.

The goal of this study is to assess the scores of undergraduates admitted through the Pre-Degree (PD) programme, those admitted through the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), those admitted through the direct entry such as Interim Joint Matriculation Board (IJMB) and those admitted with the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) in order to find out if their performances have any relationship with their mode of entry into the university.

This research work would explored the mode of admission of undergraduates in Early Childhood Education and their academic performance in two Nigerian universities using the overall cumulative grade point average scores of the students from year one till date.

Statement of the problem

In recent times, attention has been given to the importance of Early Childhood Education. Early childhood and primary education promotes self-confidence and self-

control among children at early years of life. The realization of the objectives of the programme depends on experience and skills of teachers in early childhood and primary education. This, therefore, means there is a correlation between early childhood and primary education, teaching qualification, and quality practice in teaching and learning. Despite the importance of early childhood and primary education, there is a gap between the quality and the number of teachers and the practice of Early Childhood Education. This seemingly wide gap due to the poor turn up of pre-school teachers has continued to evoke fear and inhibitions on the minds of parents and educationists over the consequences of lack of high-quality teachers on the child.

Researchers have worked on attitudes of Early Childhood Education pre-service teachers and mode of entry, mode of admission of education undergraduates and their academic performance the relationship between the mode of entry and degree performance of students, attitude of students towards teaching profession, pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the profession of Early Childhood Education in terms of sex and gender role. While many of these studies have been directed towards mode of entry and attitude separately, it all creates the gap this study seeks to fill. This study is set out to critically check the mode of entry as correlates to pre-service teachers' performance in two universities in Kwara State.

Research Question

The following research question was raised in this study:

1. What is the mode of entry of pre-service teachers in Early Childhood and Primary Education studies in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the Mode of Entry and academic

performance of Pre-service teachers'

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through UTME.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through direct entry.

Ho4: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female student entering the University through N.C.E.

Methodology

The researcher employed the use of correlation research design for the study, The Correlational survey research design enables the researcher to obtain necessary information on variables from representative sample of population (e.g. pre service student in 300L, 400L) in order to describe the situation as they exist. The population of the study comprises the pre-service teachers who are in 300l and 400l in the department of Early Childhood and Primary Education for 2018/2019 academic session in the Universities selected for the study. The universities where Early Childhood and Primary Education are offered as course of in Kwara State were selected for the study hence; Kwara State University, Malete and University of Ilorin were selected. There are 125 Pre-service teachers' in Kwara State University (100l to 400l) and 644 Pre-Service Teachers are there in the University of Ilorin (100L to 400L), which makes the total population 769, purposive sampling technique was used to select 248 pre-service teachers who are currently in 300l and 400l for the study, two research instruments used for the study are "Mode of Entry of Pre-Service Teachers Questionnaire"(MEPTQ) and "Pre Service Teachers Academic Performance Result" (PTAPR).

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Pre-service teachers' based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	104	41.9
Female	144	58.1
Total	248	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on gender 104 of the respondents representing 41.9% were male while 144 of the respondents were female representing 58.1%. From the analysis above, it is apparent that female respondents were found to be more in number than male children.

Research Question One: What is the mode of entry of pre-service teachers' in Early Childhood and Primary education studies in Kwara state?

Table 2: Table showing the Mode of Entry of Pre-service Teachers' in Early Childhood and Primary education studies in Kwara State.

Entry Mode	Frequency	Percentage
UTME	152	61.3
NCE	59	23.8
IJMB/JUPEG	37	14.9
Total	248	100.0

Table 2 shows the mode of entry of pre-service teachers' in Early Childhood and Primary Education Studies in Kwara States. A total number of 152 of the students were admitted through UTME; 59 students were admitted through NCE while 37 students were admitted through IJMB/JUPEG. Apparently, students admitted through UTME were more than those admitted through NCE and IJMB/JUPEG.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between the mode of entry and academic performance of pre-service teachers.

Table 3: Table showing the relationship between the mode of entry and academic performance of pre-service teachers.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	df	Sig.	Remark
Mode of entry	248	1.54	0.50	.257	494	.000	Significant
Academic performance	248	3.30	0.69				

Table 3 shows the relationship between the mode of entry and academic performance of pre-service teachers. There was significant positive relationship between mode of entry and academic performance of pre-service teachers ($r = 0.257$; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through UTME.

Table 4: Table showing the difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through UTME

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	65	3.26	0.70	-.458	150	.648	Not Significant
Female	87	3.31	0.69				

Table 4 shows the difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through UTME. There was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through UTME (t = 0.458; df = 150; .P> 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender had no significant influence academic performance of Student entering the university through UTME.

Research Hypothesis three: There is no significance difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through IJMB/JUPEG

Table 5: Table showing the difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through IJMB/JUPEG.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	16	3.36	0.87	0.568	35	.573	Not Significant
Female	21	3.25	0.77				

Table 5 shows the difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through IJMB/JUPEG. There was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through IJMB/JUPEG (t = 0.568; df = 35; .P> 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender had no significant influence academic performance of Student entering the university through IJMB/JUPEG.

Research Hypothesis four: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through NCE

Table 6: Table showing the difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through NCE

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	26	3.30	0.65	-0.11	57	.910	Not Significant
Female	33	3.31	0.63				

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Table 6 shows the difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through NCE. There was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female student entering the university through NCE (t = -0.11; df = 57; .P> 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender had no significant influence on academic performance of students entering the university through NCE.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this Study revealed that there is no significant relationship between the mode of entry and academic performance of pre-service teachers; therefore the hypothesis is rejected. This finding is supported by a similar study carried out by Okipuke (2010), who established the fact that the pre-degree Student performed significantly better than their counterparts who were admitted through UTME/PUTME in all courses combined together.

Another findings of the study revealed that there is no significant differences between the Academic performance of Male and Female Student entering the Universities through UTME, the Hypothesis is therefore rejected, this finding is not in line with the study carried out by Emiakwu (2012), who affirms that there was statistical significant differences in the mean Achievement of Male and Female Students and that the Academic Achievement of Male Students was higher than their Female counterparts

based on the three modes of admission.

Furthermore There was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through IJMB/JUPEG, the hypothesis is therefore not rejected .This view is in line with the findings of Okpilike (2011) on mode of admission of Education Undergraduates and their academic performance in a Nigerian University. With the use of descriptive survey, the study revealed that Education Undergraduates who gained admission through Pre-Degree programme performed significantly better than their counterparts who were admitted through the UTME/PUTME in all courses combined together.

Also, the findings of this study revealed that, there was no significant difference between the academic performance of Male and Female student entering the university through N.C.E, the hypothesis is therefore not rejected, which implies that gender had no significant influence on academic performance of student entering the through N.C.E, this is supported by A study carried out by Ojo (2005) who reported that Direct Entry Student were superior to the Remedial and Matriculation Examination (JAMB) students in Academic Achievements of degree completion rate irrespective of the gender.

What is the mode of entry of pre-service teachers in Early Childhood and Primary education studies in Kwara state? Table 2 shows the mode of entry of pre-service teachers's in Early Childhood and Primary education studies in Kwara states. 152 of the students were admitted through UTME; 59 students were admitted through NCE while 37 students were admitted through IJMB/JUPEG. Apparently, students admitted through UTME were more than those admitted through NCE and IJMB/JUPEG. This is according Ezema (2006) compared the degree results of direct entry students, unified tertiary matriculation students and remedial students and reported that for the five academic sessions studied there was no significant difference between the cumulative grade point average of the three groups prior to their degree examinations.

Summary of the Findings

1. Students admitted through UTME were more than those admitted through NCE and IJMB/JUPEG.
2. There was significant positive relationship between mode of entry and academic performance of pre-service teachers.
3. There was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through UTME.
4. There was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female Student entering the university through IJMB/JUPEG.
5. There was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female student entering the university through NCE.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female pre-service teachers' entering the university through UTME, Direct Entry and Remedial.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made

1. Universities admission board should ensure the enrollment of more male pre-service teachers' into/for the course.
2. Student who went through IJMB course should also be admitted for the course, this will buttress the number than that goes into N.C.E, this will help to improve the university intake into Early Childhood and Primary education programme.
3. There is need to encourage candidate to study Early Childhood and Primary Education in oder to erase the negative effect of pre-service teachers' to this course by giving out scholarship,

4. The government should encourage or enlist the interest of pre-service teachers' since it is found out that there is positive relationship which should encourage the learners since it will encourage their performance in the programme.

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