

Assessment Of Pre-Primary School Children Developmental Level And Material Provision Towards The Attainment Of The Objectives Of Policy Documents In Early Childhood Education In North Central, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study, investigated pre-primary school children developmental level and material provision towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in north central, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The sample consisted of 81 pre-primary schools and 1354 pupils'. Multi-stage sampling was used to select the sample. Researcher-designed questionnaires were used to elicit information. Pre-primary school Children Characteristics Rating Scale (PCCR), and School Material Provision Checklist (SMPC), all the instruments and were subjected to face and content validation. The reliabilities of the instruments were established using PPMC; the result yielded 0.94, and 0.84 for PCCR, and SMPC respectively. Two research questions were generated and answered. Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested. Descriptive statistics of frequency, mean, and percentage were used to answer the research questions, and inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Co-variance were used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Children developmental level was low and enough materials were not available. There was significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level based on gender ($t = 3.964$; $df = 1350$; $p < 0.05$). It was recommended that schools that do not meet the necessary requirements should be encouraged to meet with the stipulated standard, otherwise, their approval should be revoked. Equire focus on all developmental domains should be prioritized.

Keywords: children characteristics, Developmental domains, Material provision, School type.

Introduction

Pre-primary schools are centre that offers traditional day care programs that emphasize learning and development while allowing parents to work or pursue other interests. Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) as defined in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's National Policy on Education document (FRN, 2013) is the care, protection, stimulation and education promoted in children from age 0 to 4 in an educational setting called crèche or nursery, while pre-primary education is the one year education given to children aged 5+ prior to their entering primary school. The National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007), in the National Minimum Standard for Early Childhood Care Centres (NMSECCC) further categorized pre-primary schools as: Day Care/crèche (for ages 0 to 2 years, Pre-nursery/Play group for children aged 3 to 4 and Nursery/Kindergarten for those aged 3 to 5 years. The document emphasised that all these classes may exist together or independently and may also be home based, centre based or mobile (NERDC, 2007).

The National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007), posited that Early Childhood Care (ECC) in Nigeria has metamorphosed from a single sectorial approach to a multi-sectorial pursuit, converging interventions in health, nutrition, care, stimulation, protection and participation of the child. Pre-primary education is, therefore, a starting point for a child's development and the key foundation of the Nigerian Educational System. Similarly, the National Policy on Education document (FRN, 2013) categorised early childhood care and development education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling as basic education, the basic education is further categorised as; one year of pre-primary education, six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. The implication of this is that government is only directly involved in the one year pre-primary education, while the early childhood care and development education (ECCDE) is organised in day care and crèche, solely in the hands of private sector and social development services, while only pre-primary education for children aged 5 is provided within the formal schooling.

The pre-primary school program basically helps to prepare young children for primary education and future education, (Odinko, 2002; Odinko & Iroegbu, 2005). The curriculum in a pre-school program focuses on language, social skills and child development (Luanne, 2019). In pre-primary school, teachers are expected to watch for signs of developmental progress or emotional problems. They often communicate with parents about what they observe. Pre-primary school programs may provide meals, physical activities

and rest periods for children, the teacher manages and coordinates all the daily activities that go into quality nursery program; while keeping the children safe and teaching the content of the curriculum (Luanne, 2019).

In addition, pre-primary school lesson plans and curriculum are incredibly important in establishing a safe and constructive routine for children to explore, discover, and learn at their pace, within this context. The importance of pre-primary education, the nature of activities, pre-schoolers' level of development and the qualities of teachers at pre-primary school level of education necessitate special qualification for teachers at this level of education. Pre-primary school teacher qualification is much different from those of teachers of older children. Teaching young children requires a deep understanding of the nuances of child psychology and early childhood development, and also requires extraordinary patience, consistency, mental and physical stamina to handle the stress that comes with teaching young children (Momentpath, 2019). However, pre-school teachers' qualification and training varies from one country to another.

The minimum standard for early childhood centre as recommended by NERDC (2007), includes that the pre-primary school centres should make use of child-sized chairs (one per child) or one round table big enough for 4 children, provide mats (locally or foreign made), beds, mattresses covered with macintosh and bed sheets, chalkboard/classroom (movable or fixed boards), gender-neutral information, education and communication (IEC) charts/posters/pictures. They further stipulated that children's works should be on the wall, cupboards, and shelves (enough to hold 25 children's items like water bottles, food, bags). Caregiver table and chair, display table or shelf and wall clock are also required.

However, some pre-primary schools make use of specific materials based on the approach in use, serving as additional materials (VLS, 2019). For example, Montessori approach recommends materials such as: (language materials) matching cards, sand tray, mystery bag(s), sound pouches for each letter, language objects, and metal insets, sandpaper; sensorial materials like: cylinder blocks, pink tower, brown stair, red rods, knobblers cylinders, sound cylinders, smelling bottles, touch boards, fabrics, baric tablets, thermic, and colour tablets (Theme, 2019). Others include mathematic materials; such as number rods (red/blue), sandpaper numbers, number cards, spindle boxes, numbers and counters, bead stair and table top number rods

First-school (2019) also suggested that the following are important pre-primary school materials every school should have; computer, mobile device and printer, computer paper (white and colour), construction paper, crayons, traditional or erasable colour pencils, white and colour chalk, craft knife (for adults), pencils with eraser and pencil sharpener, washable felt-tip colour markers, dry-erase colour markers (great for penmanship practice on covered tracers (standard block with sheet protectors), scissors: (extras: shaper scissors), cover up: old t-shirt, and file box and files to organize activities and materials. With all these attribute and characteristics of a good and quality pre-primary school, there are still schools operating as pre-primary school; but with little or no attributes as it is required of a productive pre-primary school.

The Federal government of Nigeria listed the following materials as the national minimum standard required for pre-primary school centres in Nigeria to operate; health materials; weighing scales, growth charts, height metres, roller metre/infant metre, shakir arm strip/tape measure, road to health cards, measuring cups/jugs/bottles, measuring spoon (tea spoons), salt and sugar (for regular use and ORS), clean water, spare clothes, charts/posters/pictures, towels and soap, nutrition approved feeding arrangements (nutritionally adequate and hygienic), exclusive breast feeding for 0-6 month old children, food (NERDC, 2007). The established qualities of pre-primary school centres helping in building and achieving all round development in children, but children do not have the same access to quality pre-primary school centres as a result of their parents economic status, location and government regulations. Pre-primary school requires the cooperation government to achieve its purpose.

Government involvement is important variable in pre-primary setting. Government is the only body saddled with the responsibilities of licencing, supervision, monitoring (quality control), training of suitably qualified personnel (government own centres), provision of infrastructure, personnel, and gender-fair instructional materials for both government and community owned centre (NERDC, 2007). The Nigeria Government encourages both internal supervision for caregiver and head caregiver, PTA, community Committees, and external supervision for national desk officers (biannual), State desk officers/focal persons (quarterly), Local Government Area (LGA) focal officers (monthly) (NERDC, 2007).

Based on the above this study sought to explore, and gather data about the characteristics of pre-primary settings in North Central Nigeria with a view to generating information and the policy guidelines on the establishment of this level of education with respect to children characteristics. Equally, this study investigated the extent of pre-primary school pupils holistic development (Cognitive, Affective). Adequate and up to date policies are important in any civilized society and educational settings. Nigerians and Africans at large still struggle with implementing policies accurately; the problem which is affecting all facets of the African society, including Nigerian education sector. Pre-primary is not an exception as policies about preschools are still not implemented and enforced to satisfactory level, thus creating a vacuum and giving room for inappropriate practices especially in North Central Nigeria. Also, the establishment and monitoring of pre-primary schools over the years has been open to anyone. Until recently, no guideline or policy

statement were available on this important level of education, leaving room for individualized guide line in the establishment, running and operation of pre-primary school resulting in wide varieties of practice with no sense of uniformity. Recently, the Federal Government of Nigeria formally acknowledged the importance and operation of pre-primary schools in Nigeria, thus including this level in the national policy on education.

The National Policy on Education further affirmed the provision of national minimum standard for early childhood care centres. The policy documents clearly stipulate the general guideline for establishing, monitoring, supervising and running of pre-primary education in Nigerian, with specific requirements from the State governments. However, there are still noticeable and wide differences between the provisions of the policy documents in Nigeria and the practices in the pre-primary schools thereby creating need for conducting this study.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of pre-primary school children development (cognitive, and affective) in North Central, Nigeria?
2. What are the materials (instruction, health, nutrition, child protection and outdoor) provided in pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria

Research Hypotheses

Ho1 There is no significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on gender

Ho2 There is no significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on school type

Methodology

The study was carried out in pre-primary schools in Kwara, Kogi, and FCT of the six states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) that make up North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria, the research covered these states because of the current security challenges in the country, particularly in the geo-political zone, secondly, because of the availability of pre-primary classes in the public schools in the State, and thirdly, the selected two states and FCT shared borders with other geo-political zones in the country there making the sample more heterogeneous and findings more generalizable.

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study consists of all pre-primary school pupils and teachers (public and private) in North Central, Nigeria (Kwara, Niger, Kogi, Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau state, and the FCT). There are 18, 690 public and private primary schools in North Central States of Nigeria (4410 schools in Benue state, 1125 in FCT, 2528 in Kogi state, 2505 in Kwara state, 1310 in Nasarawa state, 3807 in Niger state and 3005 in Plateau state), covering both public and private (FGN, 2019). The sample of this study comprises 1354 pre-primary school pupils and 81 teachers as suggested by the Research Advisor (2021). Hence, the sample size was selected from the two states and the Federal Capital Territory out of the six states in North Central Nigeria; 40% (542), 35% (474), 25% (338) of the sample size (1354 pupils) were selected from Kwara, Kogi, and FCT respectively. The two states (Kwara and Kogi) in North Central Nigeria have three senatorial districts, each and one senatorial district in the Federal Capital Territory, the senatorial districts were used as natural strata. Three local government areas and three area councils were sampled from each stratum (Senatorial district)

This study made use of two research instruments; Pre-primary school Children Characteristics Rating Scale (PCCR), and School Material Provision Checklist (SMPC). The instruments were designed by the researchers; SMPC consist of two sections. Section A consists of items on demographic information such as: School Location, number of pre-primary school classes, and School type. Section B consisted of items on the materials provided in pre-primary school. This consists of 38 items. PCCR consists section A and B, A had items on demographic information such as: age group, family size, school location, school type, gender, and ethnic groups. Section B consisted of items on the development of pre-primary school children (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor). This consists of 18 items. The instruments were subjected to both face and content validity. The reliability of the instruments were determined through an inter - rater method of reliability and yielded 0.96, 0.84 respectively.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected for this study. Frequency count and percentages were used to describe the demographic data. Percentage and mean were used to answer the research questions. Hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of independent sample t-test was used to test hypotheses one and two, at 0.05 significant level.

Result

Table 1: Distribution of Participants (Pupils) based on Centre Location

Centre Location	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	358	26.4%
Rural	571	42.2%
Sub-Urban	425	31.4%
Total	1354	100%

Table 1 data shows the distribution of participants based on Centre Location. 358 of the children representing 26.5% were in Centres located in urban areas while 571 of the children representing 42.2% were in Centres located in rural areas and 425 of the children representing 31.3% were in semi-urban area centres. It is apparent that children in rural area centres were more in number.

Table 2: Distribution of Participants (Pupils) based on School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage
Public	570	42.1%
Private	784	57.9%
Total	1354	100 %

Table 2 data shows the distribution of participants based on School type. 570 of the respondents representing 42.0% were in public schools, while 784 of the participants representing 58.0% were children from private schools. This indicates that there were more children at this level in private schools than in the public preschool settings.

Table 3: Distribution of Participants (Pupils) based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	575	42.5%
Female	779	57.5%
Total	1354	100 %

Data in table 3 shows the distribution of participants based on gender. 575 of the participants representing 42.5% were male, while 779 of the participants representing 57.5% were females.

Research Question 1: What is pre-primary school children developmental level (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) in North Central, Nigeria?

Table 4: Pre-primary school children developmental level (cognitive) in North Central, Nigeria

S/N	Cognitive Development	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Mean
	the child can;					
1	Sort things by size	665(49.1)	568(41.9)	60(4.4)	61(4.6)	3.36
2	Sort things by shape	643(47.5)	312(23.0)	354(26.1)	45(3.4)	3.15
3	Sort things by colour	614(45.3)	338(25.0)	96(7.1)	306(22.6)	2.93
4	Compare things by height	559(41.3)	382(28.2)	368(27.2)	45(3.3)	3.07
5	Compare things by gender	630(46.5)	554(40.9)	128(9.5)	42(3.1)	3.31
6	Compare things by length	787(58.1)	398(29.4)	122(9.0)	47(3.5)	3.42
7	Understand the difference between real and make-believe activities	555(41.0)	663(49.0)	92(6.8)	44(3.2)	3.28
8	Understand that pictures and symbols stand for real things	624(46.1)	343(25.3)	347(25.6)	40(3.0)	3.15
9	Recognize shapes in the real world	687(50.7)	279(20.6)	126(9.3)	262(19.4)	3.03
10	Identify objects	725(53.5)	252(18.6)	334(24.7)	43(3.2)	3.23
11	Count items in a group	678(50.1)	531(39.2)	112(8.3)	33(2.4)	3.37
12	Identify letters in alphabet	963(71.1)	269(19.9)	81(6.0)	41(3.0)	3.59
13	Read letters of the alphabet	807(59.6)	421(31.1)	98(7.2)	28(2.1)	3.48
14	Trace letters of the alphabet	756(55.8)	273(20.2)	284(21.0)	41(3.0)	3.29
15	Write number 1 to 20	757(55.9)	241(17.8)	118(8.7)	238(17.6)	3.12
16	Write letters of the alphabet	745(55.0)	232(17.1)	309(22.8)	68(5.1)	3.22
17	Sing songs	784(57.9)	404(29.8)	102(7.5)	64(4.8)	3.41
18	Sing rhythms	919(67.9)	297(21.9)	100(7.4)	38(2.8)	3.55
19	Say names	797(58.9)	417(30.8)	92(6.8)	48(3.5)	3.45
	Weighted Mean				3.29	

Table 4 data shows the pre-primary school children developmental level (cognitive) in North Central, Nigeria. The research revealed the findings of pre-primary school children developmental level (cognitive) in North Central, Nigeria. The result shows that children can identify letters in alphabet (71.1%), Sing rhythms (67.9%), and read letters of the alphabet (59.6%), say names (58.9%), compare things by length (58.1%), write letters of the alphabet (55.0%), write number 1 to 20 (55.9%), identify objects (53.5%), count items in a group (50.1%), among others. The weighted mean is 3.29, which is a clear indicator that pre-primary school children cognitive development is average. The result indicates that pre-primary school children developmental level (cognitive) in North Central, Nigeria is on the average.

Table 5: Pre-primary school children developmental level (affective) in North Central, Nigeria

S/N	Affective Development	Most of the Time	Sometime	Seldom	Never	Mean
1	Express a wider range of emotion	537(39.7)	479(35.4)	264(19.5)	74(5.4)	3.09
2	Share, cooperate, be helpful, and take turns	553(40.8)	450(33.2)	108(8.1)	243(17.9)	2.97
3	Cooperate with others	612(45.2)	371(27.4)	308(22.7)	63(4.7)	3.13
4	Be helpful to others	638(47.1)	545(40.3)	84(6.2)	87(6.4)	3.28
5	Take turns	781(57.7)	380(28.1)	100(7.3)	93(6.9)	3.37
6	Laugh at funny things	700(51.7)	465(34.4)	152(11.2)	37(2.7)	3.35
7	Enjoy telling jokes	853(63.0)	274(20.2)	118(8.7)	109(8.1)	3.38
	Weighted Mean					3.22

Table 5 data shows the pre-primary school children developmental level (affective) in North Central, Nigeria. The research revealed the findings on pre-primary school children developmental level (affective) in North Central, Nigeria. The result shows that children enjoyed telling jokes (63.0%), took turns (57.7%), and laughed at funny things (51.7%). The weighted mean is 3.22, which is a clear indicator that pre-primary school children affective development is average. The result indicates that pre-primary school children developmental level (affective) in North Central, Nigeria is on the average.

Research Question 2: What are the materials provided in pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria?

Table 6: Frequency on materials (instruction, health, nutrition, child protection and outdoor) provided in pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria

S/N	Material Related to Instruction	Available	Not Available
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1	Curriculum (Government approved).	58(71.6)	23(28.4)
2	Caregivers Manual.	40(49.4)	41(50.6)
3	Teachers guides (one set).	16(19.8)	65(80.2)
4	Toy Making Manual.	21(25.9)	60(74.1)
5	Time table/ Schedule of activities (one per class).	51(63.0)	30(37.0)
6	Chalk and ,	42(51.9)	39(48.1)
7	Blackboard	49(60.5)	32(39.5)
8	Cardboard	39(48.1)	42(51.9)
9	Slates	32(39.5)	49(60.5)
10	Teachers note book (learning/activities plan).	45(55.6)	36(44.4)
11	Radio/ Audio devices (one per class).	32(39.5)	49(60.5)
12	Picture books	35(43.2)	46(56.8)
13	Beautifully decorated instructional displays	38(46.9)	43(53.1)
14	Charts and colourful posters (variety).	30(37.0)	51(63.0)
15	Flash cards (as many as possible).	43(53.1)	38(46.9)
16	Lego buildings blocks	25(30.9)	56(69.1)
17	Playdough.	34(42.0)	47(58.0)
18	Counters	36(44.4)	45(55.6)
19	Abacus	43(53.1)	38(46.9)
20	Crayons	41(50.6)	40(49.4)
21	Pencils	45(55.6)	36(44.4)
22	Paints	31(38.3)	50(61.7)
23	Brushes	32(39.5)	49(60.5)
24	Drawing book for children usage	49(60.5)	32(39.5)
25	Writing materials	49(60.5)	32(39.5)
26	Reading materials	32(39.5)	49(60.5)
27	Musical instruments such as flutes, drum, whistles and other local musical instruments (one set per class).	32(39.5)	49(60.1)
28	Gender-neutral charts	25(30.9)	56(69.1)
29	Posters	45(55.6)	36(44.4)
30	Pictures	24(29.6)	57(70.4)
31	Children's works on the wall	27(33.3)	54(66.7)
	Health Materials	Available	Not Available
32	Weighting scale	27(33.3)	54(66.7)
33	Growth charts	27(33.3)	54(66.7)
34	Height metres	23(28.4)	58(71.6)
35	Roller metre/infant metre	17(21.0)	64(79.0)
36	Shaker arm strip	15(18.5)	66(81.5)
37	Tape measure	25(30.9)	56(69.1)
38	Road to health cards	19(23.5)	62(76.5)
39	Measuring cups/jugs/bottles	24(29.6)	57(70.4)
40	Measuring spoon (tea spoons)	23(28.4)	58(71.6)
41	Salt and sugar (for regular use and ORS)	28(34.6)	53(65.4)
	Health Materials	Available	Not Available
42	Clean water	33(40.7)	48(59.3)
43	Spare clothes	27(33.3)	54(66.7)
44	Hand towels	32(39.5)	49(60.5)
45	Soap	28(34.6)	53(65.4)
	Nutrition Materials	Available	Not Available
46	Facilities for storing breast milk and complementary food for 0-2 year olds	30(37.0)	51(63.0)
47	Stove and cooking pots/bowls with covers.	17(21.0)	64(79.0)
48	Cooking pots	27(33.3)	54(66.7)
49	Bowls with covers	29(35.8)	52(64.2)
	Child Protection Materials	Available	Not Available
50	Blankets	45(56.0)	36(44.0)

		Available	Not Available	
51	Key/padlocks for gate	35(42.0)	46(8.0)	Table
52	Nets on windows and doors.	43(53.1)	38(46.9)	6 data
53	Mosquitoes net	28(35.0)	53(65.0)	shows
	Outdoor Materials			the
54	Swing	45(55.6)	36(44.4)	
55	Play field	36(44.4)	45(55.6)	
56	Balls	47(58.0)	34(42.0)	
57	Riding toys	35(43.2)	46(56.8)	
58	Playhouse	31(38.3)	50(61.7)	
59	Slide	25(30.9)	56(69.1)	
60	Sand area	34(42.0)	47(58.0)	

materials provided in pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria, Nigeria. The research revealed the findings on materials provided in pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria. The result shows that the following materials were not available in most pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria: Teachers guides, one set (19.8%), toy making Manual (25.9%), caregivers manual (49.4%), cardboard (48.1%), slates (39.5%), riding toys (43.2%), playhouse (38.3%), slide (30.9%), sand area (42.0%), lego buildings (30.9%), others are: blocks, playdough, counters, paints, brushes, reading materials, musical instruments such as flutes, drum, whistles and other local musical instruments (one set per class), gender-neutral charts, pictures, children's works on the wall, weighing scales, growth charts, height metres, roller metre/infant metre, shaker arm strip, tape measure, and road to health cards, measuring, cups/jugs/bottles, measuring spoon (tea spoons), salt and sugar (for regular use and ORS), clean water, Spareclothes, hand towels, Soap, facilities for storing breast milk and complementary food for 0-2 year olds, stove and cooking pots/bowls with covers, cooking pots, bowls with covers, mosquitoes net, play field, radio/ audio devices (one per class), picture books, beautifully decorated instructional displays, charts and colourful posters (variety). However, the following materials were available in most schools: Curriculum, government approved, (71.6), time table/ schedule of activities, one per class, (63.0), Blackboard, (60.5), drawing book for children usage, (60.5) writing materials , (60.5) nets on windows and doors, (53.1), balls, (58.0) chalk and, (51.9), teachers note book, learning/activities plan (55.6), Flash cards, as many as possible, (53.1), abacus (53.1), crayons, (50.6), pencils, (55.6). This implies that materials provided in pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria low.

HO1: There is no significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on gender

Table 7: Independent Sample t-test showing the significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std.D	t	Df	Sig	Remark
Male	575	133.8988	24.39857				
				3.964	1350	.022	Significant
Female	779	128.6033	24.17881				

Table 7 data shows the significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on gender. The finding revealed that there is significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central Nigeria based on gender ($t(1352) = 3.964$; $df = 1350$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is rejected. This means that pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central Nigeria based on gender is significantly difference. Male pupils ($X = 133.90$) developmental level is significantly higher than female pupils ($X = 128.60$).

Ho2 There is no significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on school type

Table 8: Independent Sample t-test showing the significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on gender

School Type	N	Mean	Std.D	T	Df	Sig	Remark
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Public	570	123.7810	24.92605				
				-7.389	1350	.009	Significant
Private	784	134.2744	23.22748				

Table 8 data shows the significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level towards the attainment of the objectives of policy documents in early childhood education in North Central, Nigeria based on school type. The finding revealed that there is significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central Nigeria based on school type ($t(1352) = -7.38; df = 1350; p < 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 4 is rejected. This means that pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central Nigeria based on school type is significantly difference. Public school ($X = 123.78$) developmental level is significantly lower than Private school ($X = 134.27$).

Discussion

pre-primary school children's cognitive developmental level in North Central Nigeria is on the average. Furthermore, this study also revealed that pre-primary school children affective developmental level in North Central, Nigeria is on the average. This finding support the position of Abdullah (2019) that pre-school children's socio-emotional developmental skill was on the average. More so, pre-primary school children psychomotor developmental level in North Central Nigeria is low. This is evidenced in the over concentration of pre-primary centres on cognitive and memorization instead of focusing on holistic development of children and implementing what the curriculum and minimum standard prescribe.

Also, it was observed that materials provided in pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria is low. The result shows that materials were not available in most pre-primary schools in North Central, Nigeria: Teachers guides (one set), Toy Making Manual, Caregivers Manual, Cardboard, Slates, Riding toys, Playhouse, Slide, Sand area, Lego buildings, blocks, Play dough, Counters, Paints, Brushes, Reading materials, Musical instruments such as flutes, drum, whistles and other local musical instruments (one set per class), Gender-neutral charts, Pictures, Children's works on the wall, Weighing scales, Growth charts, Height metres, Roller metre/infant metre, Shaker arm strip, Tape measure, and Road to health cards, Measuring, cups/jugs/bottles, Measuring spoon (tea spoons), Salt and sugar (for regular use and ORS), Clean water, Spare clothes, Hand towels, Soap, Facilities for storing breast milk and complementary food for 0-2 year olds, Stove and cooking pots/bowls with covers, Cooking pots, Bowls with covers, Mosquitoes net, Play field, Radio/ Audio devices (one per class), Picture books, Beautifully decorated instructional displays, Charts and colourful posters (variety) were not available in most of the pre-primary centre in different levels. This supports the position of Odinko (2008) that most pre-primary school environments were characterized by inadequate provision of materials, decay in school buildings/structures. there is a significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central, Nigeria based on gender. This means that pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central, Nigeria based on gender is a significantly different. Male pupils' developmental level is significantly higher than female pupils. Equally, there is significant difference in pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central, Nigeria based on school type. This means that pre-primary school children developmental level in North Central, Nigeria based on school type is significantly different. Public school children developmental level is significantly lower than Private school. This may be as a result of the supervision level, availabilities of varieties of activities and funding at private schools' disposal coupled with readiness to try new tasks among others. The finding of this study shows that the practice of pre-primary education in North Central Nigeria is grossly not in compliance with the minimum standard on the establishment of pre-primary centre and it requires a proactive measure.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is highly recommended that governments and school owners should implement developmentally appropriate school activities in pre-primary centres. It is highly recommended that governments and school owners should assess children growth and overall development using growth monitoring equipment and Child Assessment Instrument, as well as using development using developmental milestones, engaging in age appropriate activities that promote intellectual development, physical development, emotional development and social development.

Early childhood education should be encouraged by the government through their investment and sensitizing the public (students) on taking educational courses in universities, colleges of education and also making relevant regulations for use those people who disregard pre-primary education, and motivating teachers through in-service or pre-service training on pre-primary education and by providing conducive pre-primary educational facilities (classrooms, instructional materials, and equipment) needed for the success of this level of education.

It is recommended that government and school owners should provide health facilities such as school clinic or sick bay and other health provisions as stipulated in the minimum standard for the establishment of pre-primary schools. It is equally recommended that emphasis on cognitive development should be equal to other domain, in order to promote holistic develop of the child. It is recommended that government and school owners should provide materials which will aid effective teaching and learning in pre-primary schools in North Central states, Nigeria.

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