

**PRE – PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PUPILS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE**

**BY**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary education in Ilorin west local Government Area of Kwara state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed: (i) relationship between pre- primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary school placement examination in English Language; (ii) relationship between pre- primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary school placement examination in Mathematics and (iii) relationship between pre- primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary school placement examination in Elementary science . The study was a descriptive research design of correlation type, Random sampling technique was used in selecting pupils with pre – primary education. Ten secondary schools where pupils under study were mainstreamed in Ilorin West Local Government were used for the study. Two hundred questionnaires and students’ academic performance proforma were used to access the performance of students under study in the placement Examination. Main and operational hypotheses were tested using Pearson product-moment correlation statistics respectively at 0.05 level of significance, all the calculated t- values are greater than the critical table values. The finding of the study showed that students with pre – primary education performed significantly well in primary placement examination. Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommended among others that government should compete favourably with private schools in the provision and funding of pre – primary schools and also to formulate a national policy to provide guidelines and blue print for the establishment, control and management of pre - primary schools.*

**Keywords: Pre – primary education, Pupils’ Academic performance and Primary school**

**Introduction**

The importance of formal and informal education as the most predictable and significant tool for sustenance human and material development is fully acknowledged in Nigeria ever since the pre-colonial era. Even the illiterates in Nigeria appreciate the importance of education, never mind that they do not have. Wasilat (2012) opined that education is the process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, competencies and aptitudes to fit properly into the society in which they belong and contribute their quota for its growth. Pre-school education is the first step in child’s educational journey. Early childhood experts have the opinion that attending high quality preschool program helps to promote children’s social and emotional development and prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. Studies have shown that children who attended quality early education programs are more likely to have better test scores and grades.

Thus, Bloom (1964) measuring the intelligence of the age of 17 has found that about 50% of the development takes place between birth and age of 4 and about 20% between the age of 8 and 17. He also noted that this development is subjected to environment to foster, nurture and promote the personality development of each child. The pre – primary school education is the foundation education, it forms the basis upon which subsequent learning is built. There has been a lot of conception, misconceptions and beliefs about the purpose of pre – school education should be some of these beliefs have been confirmed by research findings. The early childhood care education has been general phenomena in the Nigeria education system. It involves all round development of the child right from age of 0-5 which includes, the health, nutrition, shelter, care, cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral intent (Yahya, Adeoye and Saliu, 2020). It is erroneously believed that nursery education is for the children of the rich and well to do due to high school fees charged by the privates schools. Therefore, the study investigated the academic performance between the pupils with nursery education and

pupils without nursery education in primary school placement examination in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Pre-school attendance has been regarded as a means of facilitating or improving future academic performance. Okewole (2012), defined early childhood care education as the form of education that is given to a child right from birth till age eight. He stressed further that there seems to be misconceptions about pre-primary education and early childhood care education. These two concepts are not synonymous in scope; early childhood care education is broader than pre-primary education or nursery education. While, nursery education could be equated with pre-primary education. Early childhood care education transcends both concepts of pre-primary and nursery education. Pre-primary and nursery education are integral parts of early childhood care education. Justice and Vukelich, (2008) compared the purpose of child rearing in pre-school with academic performance. According to them pre-schools are aimed at providing a suitable environment according to interest and predisposition of the young child, enhancing present and future academic learning.

Singh (2007) in the study conducted discovered that pre-primary education is associated with higher reading and Mathematics skills at primary schools. A learner's possession of concepts and propositions about a field of knowledge enables him to fit new information into an appropriate place within the framework he has established. Universal Basic Education (UBE, 2013), asserted that development in early childhood care education is the gradual process of change in the child which is exhibited physically, internally, socially, emotionally, spiritually and morally. Development change may take place as a result of genetically controlled process of maturation or consequences of environmental factors and learning. In most cases, development involves an interaction between the two. Similarly, Adedeji, Adeoye and Saliu (2020), believed that the only way through which educational goals can be realistic is through effective and functional early childhood care education system. In a realistic term this type of education is made possible through effective, efficient teaching and learning, taking note of the philosophy of early childhood care education in addressing national development problems. For educational development to attain there is the need to give sincere priority to early childhood care education.

In the same vein, Oluwadare (2015) stressed that early child education programme is “one that meets the developmental and cultural needs of young children and their families in ways that enable them to thrive. Imhangbe and Aluende (2016) believed that, empowerment of Nigerian youths with requisite skills which will enable them drive the economy is imminent. Then, it can be held that the making good and effective policies that would truly reform the youth for improve learning and better performance outcomes lies in cause and effects approach and replace intervention of educational policies especially at the early childhood. The National policy on Education (NPE, 2013) is not therefore, completely silent on pre-primary education, its potent role is realized and the policy document conspicuously states what the purpose of pre-primary education should be. The policy statement on pre-primary education further indicates how the objectives are to be realized, as well as the interest of government to encourage private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education. By this statement, it means that the ownership and provision is thrown open to private individuals.

The researcher has viewed the lukewarm attitude of government to nursery education with grave and therefore believed that, the pre-primary education even though is essential for all classes of children irrespective of their socio economic background, is even more necessary to the children of the poor reared in disadvantaged circumstances. The pre-primary education ought to be regarded as “people's school to be made free” and not “special” school meant for the privileged people as it is in our community. This is in line with the priority which the commonwealth has accorded to current international efforts to eliminate poverty and to achieve Education For All in the year 2000 and came to the conclusion that the important learning takes place from the early stage (UNESCO, 2004). Academic performance serves as the only clear cut measure of student success and adequacy for a life career. Academic performance varies according to individual students' scores such as high, average or low academic performance. Students who place higher premium on education are activated to enhance the

development of their intellect and this foster academic performance. Students' academic performance serves as a bedrock for knowledge acquisition and the development of skills. Therefore, the study examined the academic performance between pupils with nursery education and pupils without nursery education in primary school placement examination in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between pre-primary education and pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Ilorin West Local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was to:

- i. determine the relationship between Nursery education and pupils' academic performance in English language in primary school in Ilorin West Local Government area of Kwara state, Nigeria.
- ii. investigate the relationship between Nursery education and pupils' academic performance in Mathematics in primary school in Ilorin West Local Government area of Kwara state, Nigeria..
- iii examine the relationship between Nursery education and pupils' academic performance in Elementary science in primary school in Ilorin West Local Government area of Kwara state, Nigeria..
- iv. investigate the relationship between Nursery education and pupils' academic performance in Social studies in primary school in Ilorin West Local Government area of Kwara state, Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

#### **Main Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara State.

#### **Operational Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school placement examination in English Language.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school placement examination in Mathematics.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school placement examination in Elementary science.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school placement examination in Social studies.

### **Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey, the design was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to make accurate judgment on the pre-primary education and pupils' academic performance in primary education in Ilorin west local government in Kwara state, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all public primary and private schools in Ilorin west local government in Kwara state, Nigeria. Random sampling technique was used to select 10 schools and 200 respondents. In each of the selected schools the population for the study was stratified into pupils with nursery and pupils without nursery. By simple random sampling, 20 pupils with pre-primary education were used in each school for the study. However, overall total of 200 pupils were chosen. The instrument for gathering data for this study was questionnaires and students results in placement examination between 2015 and 2019. The questionnaire designed was validated by experts. Reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha method of reliability at 0.05 level of significance and reliability coefficient of 0.67 and 0.75 were obtained for pupils with pre-basic school (PWPBS), and pupils academics performance (PAP) respectively. Pearson Product- Moment Correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Ho:** There is significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara State.

**Table 1: Relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary school**

Variable	N	— X	SD	Cal. r-value	Cri. t-value	Decision
<i>Pupils with Pre-primary Education</i>	200	62.24	10.01	5.24	1.960	<b>Ho Accepted</b>
<b>Pupils’ Academic performance</b>	200	57.88	10.52			

p-value<.05

Table 1 shows the calculated r-value is 5.24 while the critical table value is 1.96 which is greater than significant level at 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis (Ho) which states there is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school placement examination in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state was accepted. This means that there was a significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance. The pupils with pre-primary education performed better in primary school placement examination in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara States, Nigeria.

**Ho1:** There is significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in English language in primary school in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara State.

**Table 2: Relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in English language in primary school**

Variable	N	— X	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
<i>Pupils with Pre-primary Education</i>	200	67.24	9.43	6.68	1.960	<b>Ho1 Accepted</b>
<b>Pupils’ Academic performance in English language</b>	200	57.88	9.57			

p-value<0.05

Table 2 shows the calculated r-value is 6.68 while the critical table value is 1.96 which is greater than significant level at 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis (Ho1) which states there is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils academic performance in English language in primary school placement examination in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state was accepted. This means that there was a significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance in English language. The pupils with pre-primary education performed better in English language in primary school placement examination in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara States, Nigeria.

**Ho2:** There is significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Mathematics in primary school in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara State.

**Table 3: Relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Mathematics in primary school**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
<i>Pupils with Pre-primary Education</i>	200	64.76	10.21	5.13	1.960	<b>Ho2 Accepted</b>
<b>Pupils’ Academic performance in Mathematics</b>	200	56.58	10.52			

p-value<0.05

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value is 5.13 while the critical table value is 1.96 which is greater than significant level at 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis (Ho2) which states there is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils academic performance in Mathematics in primary school placement examination in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state was accepted. This means that there was a significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Mathematics. The pupils with pre-primary education performed better in Mathematics in primary school placement examination in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara States, Nigeria.

**Ho3:** There is significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Elementary Science in primary school in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara State.

**Table 4: Relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Elementary Science in primary school**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
<i>Pupils with Pre-primary Education</i>	200	68.5	10.6	4.21	1.960	<b>Ho3 Rejected</b>
<b>Pupils’ Academic performance in Elementary science</b>	200	57.5	11.59			

p-value<0.05

Table 4 shows the calculated r-value is 4.21 while the critical table value is 1.96 which is greater than significant level at 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis (Ho3) which states there is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils academic performance in Elementary Science in primary school placement examination in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state was accepted. This means that there was a significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Elementary Science. The pupils with pre-primary education performed better in Elementary Science in primary school placement examination in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara States, Nigeria.

**Ho4:** There is significant relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Social studies in primary school in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara State.

**Table 5: Relationship between pre – primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Social studies in primary school**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
<i>Pupils with Pre-primary Education</i>	200	65.65	10.3	3.33	1.960	<b>Ho4 Accepted</b>
<b>Pupils’ Academic performance in Social studies</b>	200	60.52	11.32			

p-value<0.05

Table 5 shows the calculated r-value is 3.33 while the critical table value is 1.96 which is greater than significant level at 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis (Ho4) which states there is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils academic performance in Social studies in primary school placement examination in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state was accepted. This means that there was a significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance in Social studies. The pupils with pre-primary education performed better in Elementary Science in primary school placement examination in Ilorin West Local government area, Kwara States, Nigeria.

**Discussion of Findings**

The result of the data collected for the study is presented, analyzed and discussed. The discussion of the result is however based on the research hypotheses earlier generated to guide the purpose of the study. There is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary school placement examination in Ilorin west local government, Kwara state, Nigeria. The finding showed that the calculated t-value of 5.24 is greater than the critical table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant, therefore the hypotheses is accepted. This means that that there is a significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary school placement examination. This is in line with the assertion of Justice and Vukelich (2008), that nursery education has a great impact in pupils’ performance in their subsequent level of education.

Subsequently, all other by operational hypotheses were also tested and showed that all calculated t-values are greater than the critical values. Hence, all the hypotheses were accepted, this means that there were significant relationships between pre- primary education and pupils academic performance in primary school placement examination in English language, Mathematics, Elementary science and social study respectively, in Ilorin west local government area, Kwara state. This is supported by the opinion of Adedeji, Adeoye and Saliu (2020) that the essence of nursery (pre-primary) education is to prepare the pupils for the future academic excellence.

**Conclusion**

The study examined whether there is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academic performance in primary schools in Ilorin west local government area of kwara state. It was a comparative descriptive survey with emphasis on the extent to which pre-primary education had influenced pupils’ academic performance in primary school education. The finding of the study has proved that there is significant relationship between pre-primary education and pupils’ academics performance in primary school education in Ilorin west local government area, Kwara state, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the fact that the result of this investigation has shown the importance of pre-primary education on pupils academics performance is positively significant, therefore, the study recommended among others that;

1. A national policy on pre-primary education should be formulated to provide guideline and blue print for the establishment, control and management of pre-primary school government owned primary schools.
2. The government should make adequate provision for the training of the willing specialized teacher of pre-primary schools in all teacher training colleges.
3. The government should compete favorably with private individual and organization in the provision and finding on pre-primary school, as a way of bringing a reduction in the school fees charge by the private schools and improve the quality of service.
4. Pre-school education should be encouraged by the government by providing pre-school educational facilities (classrooms, instructional materials, and equipments) needed for the success of the program.
5. There should be proper enlightenment campaign on the importance of pre-school education. Parents should be involved in their children's early education experience by providing the necessary materials.

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