

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOWER BASIC EDUCATION DELIVERY FOR
PROMOTING PUPILS ACADEMIC INTEREST AND PERFORMANCE IN
PANKSHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY, PLATEAU
STATE**

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Abstract

The study investigated community involvement in lower basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance in Pankshin local government education authority, Plateau State. Three research question and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling was adopted to select 200 respondents out of the total population of 600 teachers from Lower basic schools in Pankshin L.G.A. The instrument titled: community involvement in lower basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance (CILBEDPPAIP) questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents from the sampled schools. Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha and the reliability coefficients of 0.82, 0.80 and 0.81 was obtained with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 which was considered high for the study. Data were collected and analyzed using mean and standard deviation while Pearson Moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the communities are involved in lower basic education delivery at moderate rate and absence of community involvement in lower basic education would affects pupils' academic interest and performance poorly. Findings also revealed low positive involvement of community in lower basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance. There was significant relationship between community involvement in lower basic education delivery and pupil's academic interest and performance in Pankshin Local

Government Education Authority. There is no significant difference between community Involvement in Basic Education Delivery in Lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority and Academic Interest of Pupils in Lower Basic Schools in Pankshin. Based on the findings of the study , it was recommended that school heads should ensure good school community relationship as this could help mobilize community members to increase their involvement in school management. On the other hand, advocacy materials can be printed and placed at strategic corners in the school as well as awareness campaign on the importance of community involvement in education to enhance sustainable growth in education and economy.

Keywords: *community involvement, basic education, pupils, Academic interest, Academic Performance*

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right and a crucial element in the development of any society. The development of any nation overtime has been seen to hinge heavily on the educational foundation of its citizens. This implies that education is a means of effecting change on the society through individuals in the learning environment in order to build a well developed country. Basic Education according to international standard of classification of Education (ISCED) (2011) is the first nine years of formal schooling and is made up of two levels. Level I is primary education (usually six years) and level 2 refers to lower secondary (usually three years JSS 1-3) in the Nigerian context. It also covers non-formal and informal activities intended to meet basic learning needs of people of all ages (UNESCO, 2011). In Nigeria, Basic Education is seen as system of learning from basic one to basic six known as lower basic and from junior secondary one to junior secondary three which is known as upper basic. This basic education is designed to give children proper and foundation training for sound mind and appreciates the societal values. This supports the notion highlighted in the National Policy on the philosophy of education which includes but not limited to living in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, and promote African solidarity and world peace through understanding (FRN, 2013)

Globally, primary education otherwise known as lower basic education in Nigeria serves as the foundation upon which all other levels of education are built. In many developing countries, primary education is the most critical stage, as it equips children with essential basic

knowledge and skills that shape their future learning experiences and social development. Negligence of the communities' involvement has negative roles in the educational domain which could result to social menace such as hunger, banditry, militancy, kidnappings, stealing; Almajiris among others.

Community involvement is the active involvement of parents, families and local communities in the planning, designing, coordinating, executing, supervising, monitoring and evaluation of programmes or projects for better education delivery. Community involvement includes parents, local leaders, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders actively involving in various educational activities such as provision of infrastructure, decision-making processes, and school governance. The researchers defined community involvement as an active collaboration of various stakeholders which include parents, non-governmental organizations and community members in the educational process. This holistic approach is grounded in the understanding that education is not solely the responsibility of the government or schools but a collective societal effort. Poor community involvement of some communities in Plateau state has contributed to people abandoning their ancestral homes and farms due to series of attacks by herdsmen which has resulted to killings of women, children and constant conflicts within the schools and its environment among others. This could be attributed to being illiterate and timid, this is because school is seen as a place that modifies individual's behaviors from undesirable to desirable as well acquires necessary cultural values and knowledge for decision making. When children are trained in a hostile environment they will tend to behave in undesirable manners therefore community involvement should be given a priority to avoid poor involvement of the parents, philanthropists and guardians. This is in line with Lukeman (2024) who opined that poor community involvement in education contributes to social menace. Lack of community involvement in education delivery encourages local challenges, and promotes divisive practices that cannot accommodate the diverse needs of pupils (Lema and Mwila, 2022).

Community involvement is imperative for any policy designed to improve educational performance in a country. Parents and community participation is one of the five key elements common to school effectiveness models, the others being learning, teaching, responsiveness to children's needs and management. This is one of the reasons while impact of community involvement on pupils' academic interest and performance is profound and multifaceted as when communities are actively involved in education delivery, pupils are more likely to

develop a keen interest in their studies and achieve higher academic performance. This enhancement occurs through various channels, including improved school environments, better resource allocation, increased motivation and support for pupils (Anisiobi and Obidike, 2020). First, community involvement leads to the creation of a conducive learning environment. When parents and community members participate in school activities, it fosters a positive school culture and enhances the physical and emotional atmosphere of the school. For example, communities can help maintain school facilities, provide additional learning materials, and support extracurricular activities, all of which contribute to a more engaging and stimulating educational environment (Lema and Mwila, 2022)

In addition, effective community involvement ensures better resource allocation and management. Communities contribute resources that may not be readily available through government funding, such as volunteer labor, local materials for school construction, and financial donations. This supplementary support helps address gaps in the education system, providing schools with the necessary tools and infrastructure to enhance learning experiences (Anusiobi and Obidike, 2020). The presence of a supportive and engaged community boosts pupils' motivation and self-esteem. When pupils see that their education is valued by their families and community members, they are more likely to take their studies seriously and strive for academic excellence. Community involvement is a collaborative input, abilities and skills from the parents, relatives and other members of the community in the educational process. Plateau State, located in the central region of Nigeria, exemplifies these broader national dynamics, facing unique educational challenges and opportunities that warrant detailed investigation as to whether involving the community in basic education will improve pupils' academic interest.

Academic interest refers to the enthusiasm, motivation, and curiosity that pupil's exhibit towards their educational pursuits (Lee, Lee and Jeong, 2023). It is a critical component of the learning process, influencing how pupils engage with their studies, the effort they put into their academic work, and their overall attitude towards learning (Nwana and Okeke, 2024). Academic interest is not merely a transient feeling; it is a sustained inclination that drives pupils to explore subjects more deeply, seek out additional knowledge, and apply themselves diligently to their academic tasks (Harefa, 2023). Pupils' academic interest is the feelings, attraction and attentions a child has towards a particular subject or subjects of a learner that motivate them to pursuit academically. The researchers defined academic interest as a

psychological construct that plays a major role in various life activities including academic performance.

Academic performance refers to the measurable performance of a pupil in their educational pursuits, typically evaluated through various forms of assessments such as exams, standardized tests, projects, and assignments (Okeke and Uwakwe, 2024). It is an indicator of the extent to which a pupil has acquired the knowledge, skills, and competencies set out in the educational objectives. Academic performance is often quantified by grades or scores, which provide a tangible measure of a pupil's proficiency and understanding in specific subject areas (Emesi and Anyanwu, 2024). The researchers defined academic performance as the ability to meet academic expectations, which includes: obtaining good grades, participating in class, and demonstrating a solid understanding of the concepts being taught. Academic performance also has to do with how well or badly a child performs academically in school.

Ideally academic interest and performance cannot be achieved if there is no collaborative approach from the host community. This collaborative approach makes the school and classroom environment conducive for learning. Classroom environment provides pupils with effective instruction and promotes smooth teaching-learning process and affect academic performance positively. The power of the classroom environment is expressed in the formulation of interest as key factor in the enhancement of student engagement. According to Kpolovie, Joe and Okoto (2014), academic interest is the affective reaction triggered by specific or appealing stimuli in the environment. It can be enhanced through the manipulation or modification of certain aspects of the learning environment and contextual factors such as teaching strategies, task presentation and structuring of learning experiences. Academic performance represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments (Steinmay, 2014). Therefore community participation is necessary if universal basic education must be used for sustainable development in Nigeria especially in Pankshin local government education authority, Plateau State.

Observation has shown that many schools in Plateau State suffers from inadequate infrastructure, hindering effective teaching and learning. Teacher quality and stability are critical factors in pupil's performance, yet many basic schools in Plateau state face high turnover rates, disrupting the learning environment and negatively impacting pupils performance. This goes a long way in affecting the academic interest of the pupils in basic

education level. It is because of poor and fluctuating performances of the pupils in basic education that prompted public outcry which has emerged due to below-expectation in academic performance of pupils in Plateau State. Recent observations by Dawap (2024) revealed that many pupils struggle with reading fluently, writing accurately, and communicating effectively, exhibiting poor handwriting and performing poorly in terminal exams. Even Prof. Mathew Sule, the then Executive Chairman of the State Universal Basic Education Board, noted that upon visiting schools, he found many primary five pupils unable to read, write, or even spell their names (Dawap, 2024). His subsequent visits to both rural and urban schools confirmed that the entire education system was in dire need of urgent attention as the academic interest and performance of the pupils is on the decline (Vanguard, 2018). Poor level of community involvements in basic school in Plateau state may have caused set back on academic interest and performances as well as increase in social vices in the community. Based on the backdrop, this study seeks to explore these dynamics in detail, examining the specific ways in which community involvement impacts primary education in Plateau State and identifying best practices that can be replicated and scaled across similar contexts.

Statement of the Problem

Involvement of parents, school administrators, philanthropists and guardians promotes conducive environment and academic excellence among the school pupils. It is a source of joy which arouses pupils interest in academics seeing their parents and significant others being part of their school progress. But situation in Plateau State is worrisome due to poor community involvement in basic education delivery which may have contributed to the high number of school dropout especially in Pankshin local government Education Authority. Observation has shown that Pankshin local government struggles with several issues within its education sector, including insufficient funding, a lack of qualified personnel, and inadequate educational resources. Despite the recognition of the importance of community involvement, many schools continue to experience limited engagement from parents and local communities. Factors such as socio-economic challenges, lack of awareness, and inadequate communication between schools and communities may hinder effective collaboration as a result, schools often operate in isolation, without the vital input and backing of the communities they serve. This situation exacerbates educational disparities, leaving many children without the foundational skills and knowledge necessary for their future academic and socio-economic success. Ultimately, the

underperformance of pupils in Plateau State may undermines the broader goals of national development and the potential for the community to thrive. Hence the researcher seeks to examine community involvement in basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance in lower basic schools in Plateau state.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the community involvement in lower basic education delivery in promoting pupils academic interest and performance in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau state. Specifically, the study seeks to

1. determine the benefits of community involvement in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.
2. Examine how community involvement promotes academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.
3. Find out how community involvement promotes academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the benefits of community involvement in lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State?
2. How does community involvement promote academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau state?
3. How does community involvement promote the academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau state?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in mean rating of community involvement and academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community involvement and academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Methods

The study employed descriptive survey research design. Three research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The population of the study comprised of 600 teachers from lower Basic schools in Pankshin. 200 teachers were selected as the sample for the study using simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement. 10 teachers each were selected from 20 schools out of the 42 lower Basic schools in the area. A questionnaire structured by the researchers titled: Community Involvement in Lower Basic Education Delivery in Promoting Pupils Academic Interest and Performance (CILBEDPPAIP) was used for data collection. The items were structured along the modified four point scoring scale of Strongly Agree, SA =4 points, Agree, A=3 points, Disagree, D=2 points and Strongly Disagree, SD=1 point. Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by the three experts, two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one from the Department of Educational foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), all in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha formula was used to compute internal stability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82, 0.80 and 0.81 was obtained with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 which was considered high for the study. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while Pearson Moment coefficient was used to answer the hypotheses. The decision rule was set at 2.50 which is the midpoint for the scale. Therefore, items with mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted as indication of areas of community participation while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as indication of areas of low level of community participation

Results.

Research Question One: What are the benefits of community involvement in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.?

Table 1: Mean ratings on benefits of community involvement in lower Basic schools in Pankshin local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

S/N	Benefits of Community Involvement	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	It will improve relevance of school curriculum to societal needs.	3.20	0.61	Agreed
2	It increases government-community relation and partnership.	3.30	0.58	Agreed
3	Effective communicating with school authority	2.83	1.06	Agreed
4	Checking indiscipline in school through local vigilante	2.56	0.86	Agreed
5	Implementing policy decisions of PTA.	2.86	0.63	Agreed
6	It helps to reduce dropout rate.	3.42	0.86	Agreed
7	It improves attendance and promptness for pupils and teachers.	3.30	0.48	Agreed

Data in table 1 shows that items 1 -7 have mean scores of 3.20, 3.30, 2.83, 2.56, 2.86, 3.42 and 3.30 respectively which shows that the items are benefits of community involvement in lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Research Question Two: How does community involvement promote academic interest of pupils in lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State?

Table 2: Mean ratings on community involvement in promoting academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin. Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

S/N	community involvement promote pupils interest in the following ways;	X	SD	Decision
8	Classroom construction by the community.	3.25	1.16	Agreed
9	Provision of basic furniture such as lands, tables, chairs, food items among others.	3.40	0.68	Agreed
10	Donation of fund by the community	1.78	1.02	Disagreed
11	Construction of access roads to schools	1.90	1.13	Disagreed
12	Donation of ICT facilities in schools	1.60	1.24	Disagreed
13	Provision of enough social incentives such as school feeding programme in schools	3.40.	0.68	Agreed
14	Sponsoring children through scholarships	3.25	1.16	Agreed
15	Collaborate with the teachers to know pupils that have special talent	3.25	0.77	Agreed

Data in table 2 above shows that items 8, 9, 13, 14 and 15 are ways community promotes academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in the study area while items 10,11 and 12 does not promotes academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in the study area.

Research Question Three: How does community involvement promotes the academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State?

Table 3: Mean ratings on how community involvement promotes the academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

	Community involvement promote academic performance in the following ways;	X	SD	Decision
16	Prize and award giving to the best performing pupils through P.T.A help to improve academic performance of pupils.	3.10	0.52	Agreed
17	Recruitment of PTA teachers in important subjects in rural areas due to shortage of teachers	2.53	0.72	Agree
18	Community active participation and decision making relating to the curriculum of the school.	2.80	0.61	Agreed
19	Provision of transportation for children by the community	3.10	0.52	Agreed
20	Provision of adequate instructional aids by the community	2.53	0.72	Agreed
21	Management of the school in the area of organizing extra mural classes for the better academic performance	3.30	0.48	Agreed

Data in table 3 shows that items 17 to 21 have mean scores above 2.50 which indicates that the items were accepted by the respondents as ways community involvement promotes the academic performance of pupils in basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority in Plateau State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community involvement and Academic interest of pupils in basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority in Plateau State.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson difference between Community involvement and Academic Interest Scores of Pupils in Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority in Plateau State.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	Pvalue	Decision
Community involvement	118	.822	12.699				
Academic interest	82	0.37	13.114	0.700	27	0.000	
Total	200						

Table 4 above shows the difference index r value is 0.700 degree freedom of 27 and pvalue of 0.00, ($P < 0.05$). The result shows that the difference is significant because the pvalue lower than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community involvement and academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Table 5: Test of Pearson significance between community involvement in lower Basic schools and promoting academic performance in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Variable	N	R	P value	Decision
Community involvement	86			Not significant
		0.84	0.000	
Academic performance	114			Not significant
Total	200			

Table 5 above shows that the significance relationship of community involvement in Basic Education Delivery in promoting pupils academic performance in lower basic schools was 0.84 and had p-value ($p < 0.05$) which indicates that the p-value (0.05). There is a significant relationship between community involvements in lower basic school. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed the benefits of community involvement in lower basic schools such that it improves relevance of school curriculum to societal needs, Community involvement increases government-community relationship and partnership. It was also discovered that community involvement promotes good relationship and partnership, helps to reduce dropout rate and improve attendance rate of pupils among others. Therefore, the

findings of this study was in collaboration with Usman (2018) who opined that community involvement in school governance in such areas of provision of financial and material supports are key factors to determine school effectiveness in sub-Saharan Africa.

Finding of this study revealed that community provision of adequate financial aids for the renovation and construction of classroom blocks, provision of basic facilities such as lands, tables and chairs and school feeding programme among others are ways the community can promote the academic interest of pupils. The finding is in collaboration with the work of Edem and Phoebe (2008) who opined that community participation includes provision of basic needs to complement government efforts.

Findings revealed that prize and award giving to the best performing pupils through PTA teachers, recruitment of PTA teachers in important subjects due to shortage of teachers and active participation on some decision making relating to curriculum of the school among others are ways community involvement community can promote academic performance This finding supports the opinion of Abimbola, Onyewuchi and Adeniyi (2024) that community participation in basic education delivery involves being active in some decision making of the school relating to the school curriculum and societal needs to avoid clustering of “Almajiri” in Hausa language popularly known as street beggars. This finding is supported by Lema and Mwila (2022) who stated that community involvement in education improved resource condition in schools. Education for sustainable development can only be attained when curriculum is made relevant to community needs. In terms of increased accountability, involvement of parents and communities in school management have been shown to be a means of making school more accountable to the society which fund them.

Conclusion

Community involvement in lower basic education delivery in promoting pupils academic interest and performance is the active involvement of parents and communities in the day to day activities of the school for better education delivery. Community involvement in education is a sure way of attaining effective school functioning, economic competitiveness by helping schools produce market capable workforce, pupils’ well-being and sustainable development. Provision of basic infrastructures, recruitment of PTA teachers and involvement in the decision making in basic school among others are very essential.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it was recommended that;

1. School heads should ensure good school community relationship as this could help mobilize community members to increase their participation in school management.
2. Formation of school community councils could help bring the schools and communities together for better community involvement in educational management and school improvement.
3. Nigerian government should enforce laws, regulations and sanctions that will compel parents and communities to be actively involved in the management of education.

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INFLUENCE OF RECESS ON PUPIL'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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Abstract

This study determined the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. Two purpose and two research questions guided the study. The population for the study comprises 927 basic school teachers in 45 basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority, in Anambra State. The sample for this study comprised 125 primary school teachers drawn from the sampled 25 basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. This represents approximately 13.5 percent of the entire population. Using the simple random sampling technique of balloting with replacement, 5 teachers in public basic schools were selected from each of the sampled basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. The instrument for data collection was a 14 item self-structured questionnaire. The instrument was face and content validated by three experts, one in the Department of Educational Foundations and two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education all from the Faculty of Education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was established using the Cronbach alpha method and yielded coefficient values of 0.64 and 0.71 for sections A and B. Questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher with the help of two (2) research assistants. Data collected for this study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the respondents rated strongly agreed to the items raised on the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in Arithmetic in Awka South Local Government Education Authority; the study further reported that the respondents rated agreed to the items raised on the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in reading comprehension in

Awka South Local Government Education Authority. Conclusion was made and it was recommended that State Ministry of Education should ensure that adequate play facilities are provided, before granting approval to schools among others.

Keywords: Recess, basic schools, pupil's, academic, academic performance

Introduction

Most countries of the world have provided various educational programmes for their citizens. This is because education is recognized as the cornerstone for sustainable development. In a developing country such as Nigeria, education is perceived as the bedrock for national and personal development because the socio-economic development of any nation is wholly dependent on the level and quality of education given to its citizens at different levels including the basic education level. Basic education level also known as primary education as stated by Okolocha and Okeke (2018), is a type of education received before the secondary level of education and it has its own goals and objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education. It is important to emphasize that the extent to which these goals and objectives are achieved is dependent on the academic achievement of the pupils. In fact, pupils' academic achievement plays an important role in identifying graduates who will become great leaders and productive manpower for nations' economic and social development. Undoubtedly, the aim of enrolling a child in school is to achieve high in their academics especially at primary schools' level, which is the foundation for career building.

One of such policies is the 2013 edition of the National Policy on Education, which describes primary level of education as the education given to children aged 6-12 years. The objectives of basic education are to, inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively; lay a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking; promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity; instil social, moral norms and values in the child; develop in the child the ability to adapt to the changing environment; and provide opportunities for the child to develop life manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability (FRN, 2013). Nevertheless, despite the laid down objectives, and the unarguable fact that education is set up for the pupils to

learn for the sake of their future and the future of the nation, attention has to be drawn to pupil's all-round personal development especially their physical development which could be obtained through recess. Nevertheless, the quality of education rendered to pupils cannot be rated without the overall factors both internal and external that makes up the learning environment. One of such factors could be recess allowed for pupils in the learning environment.

Recess is an essential component of the total educational experience that provides pupils with discretionary time and opportunities to engage in physical activity, which helps to develop healthy bodies and enjoyment of movement (Okuneye and Dansu, 2018). According to the Council on Physical Education for Children, CPEC, cited in Okuneye and Dansu, (2018), recess allows elementary school children to practice life skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, respect for rules, taking turns, sharing, using language to communicate, and problem solving in real situations. According to Jarret (2016), the most obvious characteristics of recess is that it constitutes a break from the day's routine; and for people of all ages, and in all fields, recess is considered essential for satisfaction and alertness. Specifically, recall is improved when recess is introduced rather than teaching pupils for a long time without break. Jarrett (2016) found that this assertion is comparable with what is known about brain functioning; that attention requires periodic novelty, that the brain needs downtime to recycle chemicals crucial for long-term memory formation.

Recess has been perceived as the only common means that school pupils can use to explore their real environment and learn. Pupils may understand the world better when they are involved in doing something and by interacting with their peers. It is when they are involved in their learning that they take ownership of new information. According to Isenberg and Quisenberry (2017), when pupils are on the playground, they engage themselves through social interaction with their peers, they may be acquiring skills that are transferred to the classroom. Learning requires children to interact with their peers to gain facts and skills and making information one's own. Hurwitz (2016) asserts that the purpose of play is to motivate, stimulate, develop positive attitude, concentration, concepts, skills, language/communication skills and demonstrate awareness of recent learning and skills to consolidate learning.

More importantly, recess provides pupils with the opportunity for movement experiences that helps develop a healthy mind and body that is capable of learning. Inactivity is considered a major risk factor for heart disease and pattern of inactivity may begin at early ages (Okuneye and Dansu, 2018). Based on this, MacPherson (2020) was of the opinion that children must be given as much as possible time to play, especially during recess, as playing outside promotes running around, which helps sustain sound health.

Buttressing further, it has been asserted that it is natural that children should play, because play as well as learning is natural components of children's daily lives (Ikwel, Anyikwa and Enemuo, 2020). Play is truly a universal phenomenon, because it exists in different forms in every society. When you ask children of what they like to do best, the response would be that they like to play. Play is considered to be a practice initiated by pupils, while learning is seen as a result of a practice initiated by adults. In the context of primary school, play and learning are often separated in terms of time and space. Pupils are highly motivated to play, though adults may not understand why they play. Uduchukwu cited in Ikwel, *et al.* (2020) observed that play is both fun and developmentally valuable. Mbachi, Enemuo and Chibgo-Obasi (2020) asserted that play takes different forms for different children. Having choices is important since an action that appeals to one child may be of no interest to another, and the child's interest is likely to change throughout the play period. In the same vein, Egaga and Arikpo (2015) noted that a child who does not play is a sick child. A child who is prevented by his teacher or guardian from playing, which is a form of recess will be sick physically and mentally. Pupil all over the world have engage in recess at the heart of their learning and development, because it keeps them happy.

Play during recess allows pupils to relax and release the pressure from their normal environment. Through imaginative play, children act out roles and experiences that are important to them. They become motivated when taking on a role such as becoming an important member of the family, community or state. Pupils often use different objects to represent something else. Dancy (2016) observed that when children are using their imagination to play, their brains are working in a much healthier way than when they are being made to sit and complete pages from work books. When children organize their own games, they learn respect for rules, self-discipline,

control of aggression, practice leadership, resolve conflict, develop understanding, playing by rules and associate with children of different groups (Blatchford, Baines and Pellegrini, 2019).

Over the past years, schools have been reducing the amount of time pupils have for recess or physical activity during the school day. Research studies reveals that the basic rationale for decreasing recess time was to improve achievement and standardized test scores. By furthering academic accountability standards, the No Child is Left Behind Act was enacted in 2002 (No Child is Left Behind, NCLB, 2002). No Child is Left Behind Act initiated a trend of educational accountability that sparked the discussion of whether recess should remain a part of the elementary school day or not. In addition, statistical data reveals that 40% of public schools either reduced or cut out recess time, and most basic schools do not require a daily recess period.

In a similar note, some studies on recess reveals that, recess became a source of controversy in the late 1980s when people began to question its role in the school curriculum. In United States, about 40% of school districts have eliminated recess or are considering doing so, and a similar trend of eliminating recess was occurring in United Kingdom and Australia (Ikwel, Anyikwa and Enemuo, 2020). Schools have begun to limit or eliminate recess, which makes school pupils currently not to recess. According to Jarrett (2016), recess carried out during recess could vary from structured recess, free play recess, indoor recess, active recess, inclusive recess, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) recess, extended or flexible recess sport-based recess, quiet or restful recess, conflict resolution recess and nature-based recess. In the context of this study, recess will be delimited to free-play recess, structured recess, sport-based recess, quiet or restful recess, conflict resolution recess and nature-based recess.

Evidence has shown that this lack of free and undirected play during recess may be part of what contributes to the rise in childhood obesity, anxiety and depression among primary school pupils in public and private schools. On the other hand, studies report variation in levels of involvement in recess and types of activities engaged in during recess by pupils. While some pupils engage themselves in vigorous physical activities, some are into moderate ones and others participate in less physical activities. Recess time spent in physical activities has been found to be of greater benefits than the less active ones. Thus, it could be deduced that recess influences pupils' performance,

In spite of the importance of primary education, the education sector continues to face many challenges. According to ISSER cited in Pambudi (2022) the performance of many children is failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies. Pupils' academic performance is considered a vital indicator of good schooling, so the poor performance of pupils at basic education level has not only led to public outcry, but also educationists have been increasingly occupied in their attempt to identify factors that is responsible for poor academic performance of pupils and most especially among public primary school pupils in Nigeria.

The academic performance of pupils can cut across different subjects taught at the basic education. In the context of this study, the influence of recess practice on pupils' academic performance focuses on subjects like arithmetic, reading comprehension and grammar taught in basic schools. On the contrary, despite the importance of recess and its clear benefits in a pupils' development, recess seems to be losing its value in the society. The problem may be that some schools are built without playgrounds, while some may have no recess time, because they are only concerned with academic activities at the expense of recess and this breeds negative attitude towards recess. Even those schools that observe recess seem to have reduced the time for recess. This worrisome scenario prompted the researcher to conduct the present study which seeks to determine the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in Awka South local government education authority.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in Awka South Local Government Education Authority Education Authority. Specifically, this study examined;

1. the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in Arithmetic in Awka South Local Government Education Authority.
2. the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in reading comprehension in Awka South Local Government Education Authority Education Authority.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the influence of recess on pupils' academic performance in Arithmetic in Awka South Education Authority?
2. What is the influence of recess on pupils' academic performance in reading comprehension in Awka South Education Authority?

Methods

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The area of this study is Awka South Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). The population for the study comprises 927 basic school teachers in 45 basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority, in Anambra State. The sample for this study comprised 125 primary school teachers drawn from the sampled 25 basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. This represents approximately 13.5 percent of the entire population. Using the simple random sampling technique of balloting with replacement, 5 teachers in public basic schools were selected from each of the sampled basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority.

The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire from a pool of literature titled "Influence of Recess on Academic Performance of Pupils Questionnaires (IRAPPQ)", which comprises 14-items. The instrument is divided into two (2) Parts 1 and 2. Part 1 contains information on the demographic data of the respondents. Part 2 is sub-divided into sections A and B. Section A contains 7 item statements on the influence of recess on academic performance of pupils in Arithmetic, section B contains 7 item statements on the influence of recess on academic performance of pupils in reading comprehension. The items have fixed response options thus, Strongly Agree (SA)– 4 Points, Agree (A) – 3 Points, Disagree (D) – 2 Points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. The instrument for data collection was face and content validated by three experts, one in Educational Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations and two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education all in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, These experts were required to scrutinize the instrument in relation to its appropriateness to the response categories, content wording, clarity and suitability of the item statements and correctness of instructions. Data

collected for this study relating to research questions was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The decision was based on the cluster mean scores in relation to the real limits of numbers on a 4-point scale as follows:

Response option	Points	Real limits
Strongly Agree	4	3.50 – 4.00
Agree	3	2.50 – 3.49
Disagree	2	1.50 – 2.49
Strongly Disagree	1	1.00 – 1.49

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in Arithmetic in Awka South Local Government Education Authority?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in Arithmetic in Awka Local Government Education Authority.

s/n	Item statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Recess builds self-confidence in pupils to solve arithmetic problems	3.77	1.29	Strongly agree
2	Recess makes arithmetic lessons less redundant	3.11	1.34	Agree
3	The mathematical concepts should be explained using playground equipment	3.68	1.32	Strongly agree
4	Recess helps pupils develop interest in arithmetic calculations	3.59	1.21	Strongly agree
5	During recess, most pupils try out difficult arithmetic concepts with peers	3.16	1.37	Agree
6	Recess influences pupil’s psychomotor skill development	3.81	1.07	Strongly agree
7	During recess, pupils partake in extracurricular activities relating to understanding arithmetic concepts	3.87	1.20	Strongly agree
Cluster mean		3.57		Strongly agree

The analysis presented in table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation result of teacher on the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in Arithmetic in Awka south Local Government Education Authority. The respondents rated strongly agree to items 1,3,4,6,7, also they agreed with items 2 and 5. The cluster mean score of 3.57 implies that, the respondents were in strong agreement with the items raised on the influence of recess on pupil’s academic

performance in Arithmetic in Awka South local Government Education Authority. The standard deviation scores are high and indicates heterogeneity in the respondents rating.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in reading comprehension in Awka South Local Government Education Authority?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in reading comprehension in Awka South Local Government Education Authority.

s/n	Item statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
8	During recess, pupils practice reading with peers	3.57	1.23	Strongly agree
9	Recess creates avenue for pupils to discuss their reading challenges with their peers	3.09	.97	Agree
10	During recess, pupils develop their reading habits through reciting passages taught in class	3.29	.78	Agree
11	Recess and engaging with some play equipment enable pupils develop reading skill	3.08	.90	Agree
12	The recess process enables pupils improve their cognitive ability	3.07	1.03	Agree
13	During recess, learners read writ-ups on the playground	3.13	.96	Agree
14	Recess allows pupils discuss reading patterns with peers	3.08	.88	Agree
Cluster mean		3.19		Agree

The results presented in table 2 indicates the mean and standard deviation results of teachers on the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in reading comprehension in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. The respondents rated strongly agree to item 8, while they rated agreed on items 9-14. The cluster mean score of 3.19 implies that, the respondents were in agreement with the items raised on the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in reading comprehension in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. The standard deviation scores are moderate and indicates homogeneity in the respondents rating.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that the respondents were in strong agreement with the items raised on the influence of recess on pupil’s academic performance in Arithmetic in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. This result conforms with the result of Özkal (2020), who found that recess enables pupils to effectively participate in lessons cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally and that academic learning continued during recess. Cognitive development of an

individual corroborates with different learning, including arithmetic skill development. In addition, it is stated that recess has social effects such as forming friendships, learning about self, social skills and life. The participants stated that recess helps pupils to feel happy and relieve their tensions. Participants stated that recess can have positive effects on health since it provides pupils with the opportunity to move physically and it can decrease undesired behaviours. Participants also stated that pupils can also experience negative emotions such as feelings of exclusion and loneliness during recess.

The finding of this study reveals that the respondents were in strong agreement with the items raised on the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in reading comprehension in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. This finding is in agreement with Sanni, Offiong, Quadri and Rasaki (2020), who reported that while 3.4% of the schools allotted three periods a week for physical activities/ health education, 72.6% assigned two periods per week for this. All the schools surveyed observed break periods/ recess, as 36.8% private schools, compared with 82.5% public schools, had sports fields. Within the preceding year of the study, 80.1% of the schools staged drama as a form of periodic extracurricular activity. Inter-house sports were organized by 55.0% public and 17.9% private schools. Furthermore, the study of Ikwel, Anyikwa and Enemuo (2020) found that primary schools in Cross River State lack recess, play facilities were not available in primary schools, inadequate time for play during recess and poor recess supervision of play during recess were identified. This was observed despite the agreed influence of recess on academic performance of pupils in basic schools as reported in the present study, however, this could be based on difference in location.

Conclusion

The study concludes that, the respondents were in strong agreement with the influence of recess on pupil's academic performance in arithmetic and reading comprehension in basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority. Hence, teachers and school administrators should allow proper and adequate recess time to pupils in basic schools in Awka South Local Government Education Authority in Anambra state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Teachers should not deny children recess activities which enhances their learning outcome. Teacher should be mobilized for further training and retraining, better welfare package for teachers, workshops and seminars on the current approach to recess and academic performance
2. School administrators should inspect basic schools to ensure availability of recess facilities and its usage among pupils in the school.
3. The State Ministry of Education should ensure that adequate play facilities are provided, before granting approval to schools.

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GENDER AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AS CORRELATES OF READING AND WRITING IN PUPILS IN ORU EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, IMO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between teachers' gender, classroom behaviour management, pupils' reading and writing abilities in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted the correlation survey research design. The sample for the study involved 377 respondents comprising 47 teachers and 330 pupils in 20 primary schools in the area. The instruments for data collection were two: Classroom Management Practices Survey (CMPS) and Pupils' Reading and Writing Achievement Schedule (PRWAS). The CMPS and PRWAS were subjected to face validity by three validates. The reliability of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach Alpha. Coefficients for .73 and .82 for PRWAS. The method for data collection was the direct delivery approach. Linear Regression was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The correlation matrix that teachers' gender has moderate relationship with reading and writing among primary schools' pupils, and a moderate relationship between teachers' behaviour management and pupils' performance in reading and writing skills. The null hypothesis is rejected and implies that teachers' gender has a significant relationship with pupils' performance in reading and writing in primary schools. Similarly, behaviour management has a significant relationship with pupils; performance in reading and writing in primary schools. Based on these results, the researcher recommends targeted professional development for teachers in behaviour management, promotion of gender-sensitive teaching practices, and the implementation of data-driven educational strategies to improve pupils' performance. These measures aim to create a more supportive and equitable learning environment, thereby improving literacy skills among pupils.

Keywords: *Gender, Behaviour Management, Teachers, Pupil, Performance, Reading Skill, Writing Skill*

Introduction

Emphasis is usually laid on teaching reading and writing than on other skills by teachers, right from the primary education level. Reading is the extraction of meaning from graphic symbols. It is a complex activity that involves sight, intelligence, knowledge of the writer's language and knowledge of the word. For beginners, reading is the ability to recognize printed symbols, represent speech and to respond to the sounds and meanings of words. According to Roshi, Razali, Zamil, Noor and Baharuddim (2018), reading is seen as an attempt to comprehend the writer's message for personal growth and success in the relevant fields. Writing on the other hand, is the ability to document ideas or information on print. It is the process of using symbols, letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form (Harmer, 2020). Writing involves the ability to put down the graphic symbols that represent a language and is a way of recording information by means of visible symbols. Writing involves the creation of textual content by using symbols, characters, or systems to express ideas, thoughts, information for communication and preservation (Graham and Perin, 2017).

Writing skills are an appreciable skill, which is meant to be imbibed in pupils in the learning environment. Pupils are expected to gain appreciable skills in the arts of reading and writing in order to lay a solid foundation for future academic career and effective participation in the society. Unfortunately, it has been observed that most pupils lack the ability to read and write effectively (Onyeme, 2023). The inability to read and write consequently affects pupils' academic achievement in primary schools, hence the concerns of various stakeholders in primary education

on the need to improve reading and writing skill among pupils. Several factors have been attributed to the inability of pupils to read and write as expected. One of the factors identified is the inability of teachers to manage the behaviours of their pupils properly during reading activities (Olowo and Fashiku, 2019).

Behaviour management is an important component of classroom management that ensures that disruptive behaviours do not impact negatively on pupils in the teaching and learning process. Behaviour management in the classroom involves strategies and practices used by teachers to establish and maintain a positive and orderly learning environment (Marzano and Marzano, 2013). By maintaining a positive and orderly learning environment, pupils may be better disposed to learn reading and writing. Through effective behaviour management strategies, teachers can cultivate an environment conducive to literacy development, enabling pupils to engage actively in reading and writing tasks and have consistent opportunities to practice and improve their skills. Operationally, behaviour management is a process whereby teachers are able to coordinate pupils' behaviour towards learning. Moreover, effective behaviour management strategies increase pupils' engagement in literacy activities, leading to enhanced reading comprehension and writing proficiency (Jones, Bailey and Brush, 2021). Previous related studies seem to support the influence of behaviour management on learners' academic achievement. Agu (2021) in a related studies found that classroom discipline influenced students' achievement. Similarly, Farooq and Ahmed (2021) found that behaviour management is a predictor of students' achievement. In another study however, Abiodun and Olaniyi (2021) found that classroom discipline is not a predictor of achievement.

On gender as another variable in this study, Rafiq, Khan and Rizvi (2018) found that male teachers were more efficacious in controlling behavior problems and enhancement of student's

efficacy. Gender is a dynamic system of stratification that shapes social roles, interactions, and access to resources (Fausto-Sterling, 2020). It is assumed that men and women have different perceptions, ability, attitude and skills (Onyeme, 2023). These differences may influence teachers' behaviour management abilities in primary schools which may relate to reading and writing in pupils.

Despite the possible link between behaviour management, reading and writing among primary pupils, little has been done to explore this possible link in Oru East Local Government Area. Yet, it is observed that many primary pupils even at sixth grade in Oru East Local Education Authority, Imo State barely read or write well despite their exposure to various learning experiences (Nwosu, 2020). In order to improve reading and writing among primary pupils generally, and those in Oru East Local Education Authority, particularly, there is need to explore whether there is relationship between teachers' behaviour management and reading and writing. This study therefore is poised to establish the relationship between teachers' gender and behaviour management as correlates of pupil's performance in reading and writing skill in Oru East LGEA.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of teachers' behaviour management practices may significantly influence pupils' proficiency in reading and writing. However, despite the importance of behaviour management, its relationship to pupils' performance in reading and writing skills remains inadequately explored and understood. Although there is an established consensus on the pivotal role of classroom management in creating conducive learning environments, the specific behaviour management through which these practices directly influence literacy outcomes require deeper investigation. Furthermore, there is a dearth of standardized frameworks or guidelines that

explicitly link targeted classroom behaviour management strategies and enhancements in pupils' reading and writing proficiency. Addressing this issue requires a focused inquiry into the specific classroom behaviour management practices and their relationship with pupils' reading and writing proficiency. Teachers' gender has also been examined as a factor affecting the performance of pupils in reading and writing. The problem of the study therefore is whether behaviour management correlates with reading and writing of pupils.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' gender and classroom behaviour management as correlates of pupils performance in reading and writing skills among primary school pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to establish relationship between:

1. teachers' gender and performance in reading and writing skill among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State.
2. teachers' behaviour management practices and performance in reading and writing skills among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State.

Research Questions

This research question was posed for the study:

1. What is the relationship between teachers' gender and performance in reading and writing skill among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State?

2. What is the relationship between teachers' behaviour management practices and performance in reading and writing skills among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State?

Hypotheses

The formulated hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and performance in reading and writing skills among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' behaviour management practices and performance in reading and writing skills among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State.

Method

The study adopted a correlation design. The area of the study is Oru East Local Government Education Authority, Imo State, Nigeria. The population of the study was 6,681 comprising 826 teachers and 5,855 primary five pupils in 53 public-owned primary schools in Oru East Local Government Area. The sample of the study was 377 respondents comprising 47 teachers and 330 pupils in 20 primary schools in the area. The sample size was estimated using Taro Yamane formula for determining sample size and proportionately allocated to teachers and pupils based on their population sizes. The instruments for data collection were two: Classroom Management Practices Survey (CMPS) and Pupils' Reading and Writing Achievement Schedule (PRWAS). The CMPS and PRWAS were subjected to face validity by three validates (two from the Department

of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one from Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka). The reliability of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach Alpha. The coefficients was .73 for CMPS and .82 for PRWAS. The researcher visited the 20 primary schools involved in the study for instrument administration and subsequently data collection. The CMPS was administered on the 47 participating teachers by researcher and three research assistants who were briefed. Teachers also tested reading and writing of participating pupils using the selected texts. The PRWAS was used by teachers to collect data on pupils' achievement in reading and writing, the process lasted for one week. Linear Regression was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between teachers' gender and performance in reading and writing skill among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between teachers' behaviour management practices and performance in reading and writing skills among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State?

Table 1: Correlation matrix on the relationship between teachers’ gender, behaviour management and pupils’ performance in reading and writing among pupils
Correlations

		Reading and		
		Behaviour	Writing	Teacher
		Managemen	Achievemen	Gender
		t	t	
Behaviour Management	Pearson	1	.924**	.655*
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.040
	N	377	377	377
Reading and Writing Achievement	Pearson	.924**	1	.551
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.099
	N	377	377	377
Teacher Gender	Pearson	.655*	.551	1
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.099	
	N	377	377	377

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 shows a correlation coefficient of .066 and 0.55 for behaviour management and gender respectively which are positive and within the .30 to .69 correlation coefficient scale of Creswell (2009). This indicates that teachers’ gender has moderate relationship with reading and writing among primary schools’ pupils, and a moderate relationship between teachers’ behaviour management and pupils’ performance in reading and writing skills.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ gender and performance in reading and writing skills among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ behaviour management practices and performance in reading and writing skills among pupils in Oru East Local Government Area, Imo State.

For testing the corresponding hypothesis, the table shows p-values of .04 and .01 which are less than the alpha value of .05. The null hypothesis is rejected and implies that teachers' gender has a significant relationship with pupils' performance in reading and writing in primary schools. Similarly, behaviour management has a significant relationship with pupils; performance in reading and writing in primary schools.

Discussion

The study investigated the relationship between teachers' behaviour management, gender, pupils' reading and writing skill. The results, presented in Table 1, provided correlation coefficients and p-values that reveal significant insights into these relationships. The correlation coefficient ($r = .66$) indicates a strong positive relationship between teachers' behaviour management and pupils' reading and writing abilities. This suggests that effective behaviour management by teachers is strongly associated with better reading and writing performance among pupils. The finding agreed with Olowo and Fashiku (2019) who revealed the connection between effective behaviour management and students achievement in school. The statistical significance ($p = .04$) which is less than the alpha level of .05, indicates that this relationship is statistically significant. This means that the observed correlation is unlikely to be due to random chance, confirming that there is a meaningful association between behaviour management and academic outcomes in reading and writing.

The strong correlation between behaviour management and academic outcomes underscores the importance of teachers' behaviour management strategies in the classroom. Effective management likely creates a conducive learning environment, minimizes disruptions, and allows for more focused instruction and student engagement. Schools and educational

policymakers should emphasize training and professional development for teachers in effective behaviour management techniques. Such strategies can significantly enhance pupils' reading and writing abilities.

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.55$) for gender indicates a moderate positive relationship between gender and pupils' reading and writing abilities. This suggests that teacher gender has a significant impact on reading and writing performance, with one gender possibly performing better than the other. The p-value of .01, also less than the alpha level of .05, indicates that this relationship is statistically significant. This low p-value confirms that the observed correlation is not due to chance, reinforcing the importance of teacher gender as a factor in behaviour management. The finding is consistent with Onyeme (2019) who found teacher gender as a correlate of students' achievement in secondary schools. The consistency of findings suggest that the influence of teacher gender on academic achievement of learners cut across various levels of education.

The moderate correlation between gender and pupils' performance reveals that gender plays a notable role in influencing reading and writing skills. This may reflect differences in how boys and girls develop these skills, how they are motivated, or how they are taught and supported. Educational approaches should consider gender differences and incorporate gender-responsive teaching strategies. Tailored interventions and support mechanisms can help address gender disparities and promote equitable academic achievement in reading and writing.

The study demonstrates a moderate positive association between gender and these academic skills. The finding is inconsistent with Abiodun and Olaniyi (2021) who found that classroom discipline is not a predictor of achievement. The statistical significance of both relationships highlights their importance in the educational context. These findings suggest that

improving teachers' behaviour management strategies can have a substantial impact on enhancing pupils' reading and writing performance. Additionally, recognizing and addressing gender differences in educational practices can further support pupils in achieving better academic outcomes. The significance level, indicated as .000, is less than the conventional alpha level of .05. This very low p-value indicates that the results of the regression analysis are statistically significant. It means that the likelihood of the observed relationships occurring by chance is extremely low. Consequently, we can confidently state that the relationships between teachers' gender, classroom behaviour management, pupils' reading and writing achievement are real and not due to random variation.

Conclusion

The regression analysis reveals that teachers' gender and classroom behaviour management are significant predictors of pupils' reading and writing abilities, explaining 98.3% of the variance in these academic outcomes. The statistical significance of the model highlights the critical role these factors play in educational achievement. Therefore, enhancing classroom behaviour management and considering the impact of teachers' gender can lead to significant improvements in pupils' literacy skills. The strong explanatory power of the model suggests that effective classroom behaviour management plays a crucial role in enhancing pupils' reading and writing abilities. This underscores the importance of training teachers in effective behaviour management strategies to foster a conducive learning environment that supports academic success. From the findings, it may reflect differences in teaching styles, classroom interactions, and expectations based on gender, which in turn influence pupil performance. The results suggest that both

behavioural management and teachers' gender together provide a holistic understanding of factors affecting reading and writing skills.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. Since the study reveal that teachers' gender has moderate relationship with reading and writing among primary schools' pupils, schools should invest in comprehensive professional development programmes such as workshops and conferences that focus on effective classroom behaviour management strategies. These programs should provide teachers with practical tools and techniques to maintain a positive and productive classroom environment. There is also need for schools to establish peer mentoring and coaching systems where experienced teachers can support less experienced colleagues in implementing effective behaviour management practices.
2. A moderate relationship between teachers' behaviour management and pupils' performance in reading and writing skills was recorded and it recommended that there is the need for schools to conduct regular training sessions to raise awareness among teachers about the potential impact of gender on teaching and learning. These sessions should include strategies to ensure gender-neutral interactions and equitable opportunities for all students.
3. Teachers' gender and behaviour management has a significant relationship with pupils' performance in reading and writing in primary schools. In view of this, government should aim to recruit a diverse teaching workforce that represents various genders. A diverse teaching staff can bring different perspectives and teaching styles that cater to the needs of

a diverse student population. Moreso, schools should create an inclusive work environment where teachers of all genders feel valued and supported. This includes providing equal opportunities for professional growth and leadership roles.

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EFFECT OF NUTRITION EDUCATION ON MOTHER’S PRACTICES OF PRE-SCHOOLERS’ NUTRITIONAL NEEDS IN PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of nutrition education on mothers’ practice of pre-schoolers’ nutritional needs in Plateau State. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were formulated. The design of the study was quasi-experimental design. The population of this study comprised all the 429 women of child bearing age registered with the five primary health care centres in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. The sample of this study consisted of 103 women of child bearing age registered from two registered primary health care centres. This selection was made using the multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection is an achievement test and questionnaire titled “Test of Mothers’ Knowledge of Preschoolers’ Nutritional Needs” (TMKPNN) and “Questionnaire on Mothers’ Practices of Preschoolers’ Nutritional Needs” (QMPPNN). The instrument was validated by three experts and subjected to test of reliability using Kudar Richardson formula (KR-20) and Cronbach Alpha method settle the coefficient values. Mean and standard deviation scores was used to answer the research questions while ANCOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The finding revealed that the mean knowledge scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education is higher than mothers who were not exposed. It was also found that the mean Practice scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education is higher than mothers who were not exposed. It was recommended amongst others that nutrition education should be a core component of pre-natal and post-natal care services. By reaching mothers during critical periods of pregnancy and early child development, these programs can help foster healthier attitudes and knowledge.

Keywords: *Nutrition, Nutrition Education, Preschool, Nutritional Needs, Mothers' Knowledge, Mothers' practice*

Introduction

Preschool education, encompassing crèche, nursery, and pre-primary stages, is designed to prepare young children for primary school by providing a structured educational environment before formal schooling begins. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), the objectives of pre-primary education include ensuring a smooth transition from home to school, preparing children for primary education, providing care and supervision while parents are at work, and fostering good health habits. Central to achieving these goals is developmentally appropriate nutrition, which serves as a foundation for cognitive development, physical health, and emotional well-being. Proper nutrition equips preschoolers with the energy and nutrients needed to engage in educational activities, meet developmental milestones, and thrive in their early learning environments (FRN, 2014).

Building on the critical role of nutrition in achieving preschool education objectives, preschoolers have specific nutritional requirements essential for their growth, development, and overall health. Adequate nutrition during early childhood supports cognitive function, physical growth, immune system development, and the establishment of lifelong healthy eating habits (Denney et al., 2018). For instance, carbohydrates are a vital energy source for preschoolers, fueling their high activity levels and supporting their rapid growth (Katepa-Bwalya et al., 2021). As highlighted by Ogunmefun and Motunrayo (2021), a balanced diet providing sufficient energy is crucial for optimal growth and development, enabling preschoolers to actively participate in learning and play while meeting the energy demands of their dynamic developmental stage. By addressing these nutritional needs, preschool education programmes can effectively support the

holistic development of young children, ensuring they are well-prepared for the transition to primary school.

Nutrition education therefore involves imparting knowledge about healthy dietary practices and the importance of nutrition for growth and development (Banga et al., 2020). Nutrition education is any combination of educational strategies accompanied by environmental support, designed to facilitate voluntary adoption of food choices and other food and nutrition related behaviours conducive to health and well-being (Banga –Baren et al., 2020). In this study, nutrition education is defined as education provided for young women of child-bearing age and geared towards improving mothers' knowledge of the nutritional needs of pre-school children. According to Bashir and Umar (2012), nutrition education will give mothers better knowledge of nutritional needs of pre-school children. The authors further stressed that nutrition education plays a crucial role in empowering mothers to effectively meet the nutritional needs of preschool-aged children.

Nutrition education equips mothers with practical information on portion sizes, food groups, nutrient-rich choices, and meal planning strategies tailored to meet the specific nutritional needs of preschoolers Berisha et al.,(2017) opined that enhanced knowledge of nutrition education empowers mothers to make informed decisions about the types of foods to offer their children, ensuring a well-balanced diet that supports optimal growth, cognitive development, and overall health. This knowledge also enables mothers to prioritize nutrient-dense foods, address potential deficiencies, and create a nutritional environment that fosters the well-being of their preschoolers. In order words, exposing childbearing mothers to nutrition education significantly impacts their interest towards nutrition education.

Childbearing mothers who are not exposed to nutrition education may have limited knowledge about essential nutrients, proper feeding practices, and nutritional requirements for preschoolers. Olatona, Adenihun, Aderibigbe and Adeniyi (2017) suggested that mothers who lack nutrition education are more likely to rely on traditional beliefs or misinformation when making feeding decisions for their children, which can lead to inadequate dietary intake and nutrient deficiencies. Furthermore, Fadare et al. (2019) revealed that the absence of nutrition education can result in childbearing mothers adopting inappropriate feeding practices for preschoolers. This means that mothers without nutrition education may struggle to provide balanced meals, offer a variety of foods, or understand portion sizes appropriate for young children, leading to imbalanced diets and potential health consequences.

Knowledge and positive practice must translate into action for effective dietary practices. Nutrition education equips mothers with practical skills, such as meal planning and healthy cooking methods, which are essential for providing nutritious meals. Banga et al. (2020) revealed that mothers who participated in nutrition education programs were more likely to implement and sustain better feeding practices, leading to improved health outcomes for their children. Jardi, Casanova and Arija (2021) reported that nutrition education interventions led to substantial improvements in mothers' knowledge, practice and interest, which directly contributed to better health and developmental outcomes for their children. This insinuates that the sustained knowledge, practice and interest exhibited by mothers who have undergone nutrition education programmes highlight the transformative potential of education in driving behavioural change and promoting optimal nutrition for preschoolers. It is therefore against this background that this study

seeks to determine the effect of nutrition education on mothers' practice of preschoolers' nutritional needs in Plateau State.

Statement of the Problem

In an ideal situation, mothers in Plateau State, Nigeria, would possess comprehensive knowledge about the nutritional needs of their preschool-aged children. This knowledge would enable them to make informed decisions regarding the planning, preparation, and provision of balanced diets that meet all the essential nutritional requirements for optimal growth and development. These mothers would be aware of the importance of various food groups, understand appropriate portion sizes, and practice healthy cooking methods that preserve the nutritional value of food. Consequently, preschoolers would have a lower risk of malnutrition, experience better physical and cognitive development, and be less susceptible to diseases, thereby laying a strong foundation for their future health and educational success.

However, the present situation in Plateau State tells a different story. Many mothers lack adequate knowledge and education about the nutritional needs of their preschoolers. This lack of education often results in improper feeding practices, such as giving children sugary snacks and drinks instead of nutritious meals, or serving oversized portions that can lead to childhood obesity. Some mothers may also be unaware of the importance of certain nutrients, leading to deficiencies in their children's diets. It is worrisome that with the enormous local foods with high nutritional values in Plateau State of Nigeria, many mothers still prefer processed, packaged and canned foods (junk foods) for their children. They are also commonly observed clustering around public food vendors on their way to and from school.

This present situation therefore shows that if nutrition education is lacking, it has dire consequences on preschoolers' nutrition needs such as high rates of malnutrition, including stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies, malnourished children being more susceptible to infections and diseases, which can lead to higher morbidity and mortality rates. This significant backdrop therefore calls for the need to investigate the effect of nutrition education on mothers' practice of preschoolers' nutritional needs in Plateau State. Specifically, the study seeks to determine:

1. The effect of nutrition education knowledge of preschoolers' nutritional needs among mothers of preschoolers in Plateau State
2. The effect of nutrition education on attitude of preschoolers' nutritional needs among mothers of preschoolers in Plateau State.

Research Questions

1. What is the mean difference in mothers' knowledge scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State.
2. What is the mean difference in mothers' attitude scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant mean difference in mothers' knowledge scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State.

2. There is no significant mean difference in mothers' attitude scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State.

Methods

The design of the study was quasi-experimental design. Specifically, it used pre-test posttest non-equivalent, non-randomized control group design. The population of this study comprised all the 429 women of child bearing age registered with the five primary health care centres in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. The WCBA are those between the ages of 18 – 50 years old. The sample of this study consisted of 103 women of child bearing age registered with College of health primary health care centre and new layout primary health care centre. This selection was made using the multi-stage sampling technique. From the experimental group, the intact number of 75 women with child bearing age (within 18 – 50 years) registered with college of health primary health care centre were used while from the control group, the intact number of 28 women with child bearing age (within 18 – 50 years) registered with new layout primary health care centre were used in the study. The instruments used for data collection were achievement test and questionnaire.

The first instrument was an achievement test titled “Test of Mothers’ Knowledge of Preschoolers’ Nutritional Needs” (TMKPNN). It is a 20-item achievement test questions structured by the researcher in line with the purpose of the study. The researcher used the question during the pre-test and the same questions were reshuffled and used as post-test. The second instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Mothers’ Attitude of Preschoolers’ Nutritional Needs” (QMAPNN) with 14-item structured questionnaire

on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with values 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts. The Kuder Richardson formula (KR-20) was used to establish the reliability co-efficient and a value of 0.76 was obtained. More so, the QMAPNN was subjected to test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method, and co-efficient value of 0.72 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation scores were used to answer the research questions while ANCOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Table 1: Knowledge mean scores of mothers’ knowledge scores of preschoolers’ nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and when not exposed in Plateau State

Group	N	Pre-test \bar{X}	Post-test \bar{X}	Mean gain	Remark
Experimental group	75	35.45	68.12	32.67	Effective
Control group	28	21.51	50.89	29.38	
Difference				3.29	

Table 1 shows that the mean of mothers’ knowledge scores of preschoolers’ nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education had a pre-test of 35.45 and post-test of 68.12, while mothers not exposed to nutrition education had a pre-test score of 21.51 and post-test of 50.89. The analysis revealed that knowledge mean scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education has a mean gain of 32.67 higher than mothers who are not exposed with mean gain 29.38. This means that the mean knowledge scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education is higher than mothers who are not exposed.

Table 2: ANCOVA test on significant mean difference in mothers’ knowledge scores of preschoolers’ nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and when not exposed in Plateau State.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1445.007 ^a	2	722.504	100.473	.000
Intercept	4369.875	1	4369.875	607.685	.000
Knowledge	.397	1	.397	.055	.815
Treatment	1308.402	1	1308.402	181.949	.000
Error	826.968	101	7.191		
Total	164629.000	103			
Corrected Total	2271.975	102			

Table 2 reveals that no mean difference in mothers’ knowledge scores of preschoolers’ nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State;

$F(1,101) = 181.949, P= 0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant mean difference in mothers' knowledge scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and when not exposed in Plateau State.

Table 3: Attitude mean scores of mothers' knowledge scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs those exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State

Group	N	Pre-test \bar{X}	Post-test \bar{X}	Mean gain	Remark
Experimental group	75	23.67	71.56	47.89	Effective
Control group	28	21.11	66.93	45.82	
Difference				2.07	

Table 3 shows that the mean of mothers' attitude scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs those exposed to nutrition education had a pre-test of 23.67 and post-test of 71.56, while mothers not exposed to nutrition education had a pre-test score of 21.11 and post-test of 66.93. The analysis revealed that attitude mean scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education has a mean gain of 47.89 higher than mothers who are not exposed with mean gain 45.82. This means that the mean attitude scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education is higher than mothers who are not exposed.

Table 4: ANCOVA test on the significant mean difference in mothers' attitude scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1268.389 ^a	2	634.194	40.306	.000
Intercept	1528.879	1	1528.879	97.167	.000
Attitude	107.460	1	107.460	6.830	.011
Treatment	618.797	1	618.797	39.327	.000
Error	1038.481	101	15.735		
Total	45582.000	103			
Corrected Total	2306.870	102			

Table 4 reveals that no mean difference in mothers' attitude scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State; $F(1,101) = 39.327, P = 0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant mean difference in mothers' attitude scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding in research question one revealed that the mean knowledge scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education is higher than mothers who were not exposed. This finding agreed with that of Contento, Balch, Bronner, Lytle, Maloney, Olson and Swadener(2017)who conducted a study on the impact of nutrition education programs and found that mothers who received nutrition education demonstrated significantly higher knowledge scores compared to those who did not participate in such programs. The study emphasized that structured nutrition education can lead to improved dietary behaviors and greater knowledge retention among mothers. Agho, Dibley, Odiase and Ogbonmwan (2016) agreed also that mothers who had exposure to nutrition education, either through health services or community programs, had higher knowledge scores related to proper feeding practices compared to their counterparts with no such exposure. The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there was a significant mean difference in mothers' knowledge scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs those exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State. This finding supported that of Adeyemo and Ijarotimi (2021) and Ibeanu, Onyechi and Eme (2018) that mothers who participated in nutrition education programs demonstrated a significantly higher knowledge score compared to those who did not. On the other hand, the finding opposed that of Maziya-Dixon, Akinyele, Oguntona, Nokoe, Sanusi and Harris (2016) that

while nutrition education programs increased knowledge scores, the difference was not as significant due to competing factors such as low literacy levels, food insecurity, and traditional beliefs about child feeding. The difference between both findings could be as a result of varying opinions of geographical location.

The finding in research question two revealed that the mean attitude scores of mothers exposed to nutrition education is higher than mothers who are not exposed. This finding supported that of Kumar, Singh and Mehta (2020) that mothers who were exposed to nutrition education had significantly higher mean attitude scores than those who were not. This shift in attitude included a greater willingness to adopt healthier feeding practices, such as incorporating a balanced diet and reducing reliance on processed foods. Onuoha and Umeh (2018) agreed that mothers who participated in nutrition education programs developed a more favorable attitude toward infant and preschooler nutrition compared to those who were not exposed. This improvement in attitude was reflected in greater appreciation for food diversity, better meal planning, and a more proactive approach to feeding their children. The corresponding hypothesis revealed that there is a significant mean difference in mothers' attitude scores of preschoolers' nutritional needs when exposed to nutrition education and those not exposed in Plateau State. This finding agreed with that of Olumakaiye and Ajayi (2021) that found a significant difference in the attitudes of mothers who received nutrition education in southwestern Nigeria. Their research showed that mothers who participated in nutrition education sessions exhibited a more positive attitude towards healthy meal preparation and food selection for their preschool children.

Conclusion

The findings from this study clearly indicate that nutrition education plays a crucial role in enhancing both the knowledge and attitudes of mothers regarding the nutritional needs of their

children. Mothers who were exposed to nutrition education demonstrated significantly higher mean knowledge and attitude scores compared to those who were not exposed. This underscores the importance of targeted educational interventions in empowering mothers to make informed decisions about their children's nutrition, which is vital for promoting healthier growth and development, especially in early childhood.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Health institutions in Plateau State and non-governmental organizations should prioritize the expansion of nutrition education programs, especially in underserved and rural areas. These programs should be integrated into maternal and child healthcare services to ensure that all mothers have access to essential nutritional knowledge.
2. Plateau State government should establish community-based nutrition education initiatives that focus on participatory learning methods. These programs should incorporate local culture, food availability, and socioeconomic factors to ensure practical and sustainable improvements in mothers' attitudes and practices towards child nutrition.
3. Nutrition education should be a core component of pre-natal and post-natal care services. By reaching mothers during critical periods of pregnancy and early child development, these programs can help foster healthier attitudes and knowledge early.

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PARENTAL ATTACHMENT AS A CORRELATE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated parental attachment as a correlate of primary school pupils' academic and emotional adjustments in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 37,190 primary five pupils in the 21 LGEAs in Anambra State. The sample size comprises 400 primary five pupils using the multi-stage sampling technique. Data for this study was collected by means of structured questionnaire. The first instrument was adopted and it is titled The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979) and the second instrument titled Questionnaire on Primary School Pupils' Adjustment" (QPSPA) was developed by the researcher. The PBI has been shown to have satisfactory construct and convergent validity and to be independent of mood effects (Parker, 1983). QPSPA was validated through face and content validity. In the original study of Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979), the PBI possessed good internal consistency and re-test reliability. The three clusters of QPSPA was subjected to test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method, and reliability values of 0.77, 0.78 and 0.81 were obtained. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research questions while linear regression was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and primary school pupils' academic and emotional adjustment in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that primary schools in Anambra State should actively encourage and facilitate parental involvement in their children's education. This can include regular parent-teacher meetings, workshops on

effective parenting strategies, and providing resources for parents to support their children's learning at home.

Keywords: *Parenting, Parent Attachment, Academic Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment*

Introduction

The interplay between primary education and parenting is crucial for the holistic development of children. Parenting involves the practices, behaviors, and strategies parents use to nurture, educate, and support their children. Parenting is the process of raising and nurturing children from infancy through adulthood, with the goal of supporting their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development. It involves more than just providing basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing. It also includes guidance, discipline, love, and opportunities for growth. An effective parenting encompasses emotional support, discipline, involvement, and fostering a conducive learning environment. Effective parenting is crucial during the primary school years, a period characterized by significant developmental changes (Omoteso, Oyetoro and Banjoko, 2020). Parents play a significant role in shaping the development of their children, especially during their formative years in primary school. Parenting, particularly in the context of primary school pupils, encompasses the practices, behaviours, and strategies that parents employ to raise and support their children (Omoteso, Oyetoro and Banjoko, 2020). Securely attached parents provide a safe environment for their children to explore, support their emotional needs, and navigate challenging situations.

Attachment is basically seen as a form of long-term or short-term interpersonal relationship that exists between human beings. Attachment is a form of secure relationship that goes on between the children and their caregivers. According to Ohaka and Kemjika (2019), attachment is a bond formed between one person or animal and another, a bond that endures over time. The behavioural hallmark of attachment is the desire to gain and maintain proximity to the object of attachment, which can range from close physical contact to other situations. To the researcher, attachment refers to the emotional bond that forms between a child and their parents or primary caregiver. This bond plays a crucial role in the child's social, emotional and cognitive development. Attached children display visible signs of attachment, such as warm greetings, stretching out arms, and active contact when picked up. The primary objects of attachment are the objects that calm and protect the child from fear during strange events or unfamiliar situations. Attachment often forms naturally through closeness with each other, but it can develop naturally over time. Children who develop a strong need to remain near their parents are more likely to survive physically and psychologically (Rehman and Younus, 2016).

Parental attachment has to do with the secure relationship that exists between the children and their parents. The parent could be the mother, father or both parents. Parental attachment has to do with the philosophy that determines the bodily closeness as well the touches that spring up in course of raising the child (Nnamani, Idoko, Onuigbo and Eze, 2020). According to Ebimoboere and Udochi (2021) parental attachment is the aspect of the parent-child relationship that focuses

on the emotional bond and the sense of security it provides to the child. It involves consistent caregiving behaviors that meet the child's emotional and physical needs, fostering a secure attachment. This bond is foundational for the child's sense of security, shaping their ability to explore the world, form relationships, and develop emotionally and socially. Operationally, parental attachment refers to the emotional bond that forms between a parent and child, which significantly impacts the child's development across various domains. Parental attachment is a crucial aspect of a child's development. It involves sensitivity, responsiveness, consistency, emotional support, and positive interactions (Nnamani et al., 2020). Sensitivity and responsiveness help parents recognize and respond appropriately to their child's needs, fostering a secure attachment. consistency and reliability provide a predictable environment, fostering trust and confidence in caregivers. Emotional support, including physical closeness, comforting words, and empathy, helps children develop emotional regulation skills. Positive interactions, such as play, shared activities, and verbal communication, strengthen the attachment bond, promoting mutual enjoyment and reinforcing the emotional connection between parent and child (Ehibudu and Obikoya, 2017).

The types of parental attachment as reviewed by Ebimoboere and Udochi (2021) and Gates and Jersild (2020) are secure attachment, insecure-avoidant attachment, insecure resistant (ambivalent) attachment; and disorganized attachment. Secure Attachment is characterized by children feeling safe and confident in their caregiver's availability and responsiveness. These children explore their environment freely when the caregiver is present but seek comfort from the caregiver when distressed (Gates and Jersild, 2020). According to Bin-Bin (2017) insecure-avoidant attachment are set of children who tend to avoid or ignore their caregiver, showing little emotion when the caregiver departs or returns. This style often develops when caregivers are consistently unresponsive or dismissive. Bin-Bin further addressed that insecure-resistant (ambivalent) attachment children are often anxious and clingy, showing intense distress when separated from the caregiver and ambivalence when the caregiver returns. This can result from inconsistent caregiving. Disorganized attachment is a style that is marked by lack of clear attachment behaviour. Children may exhibit a mix of avoidant and resistant behaviors, often stemming from frightening or erratic caregiving (Ebimoboere and Udochi, 2021). It is important to note that when children have a strong bond with their parents, they are more likely to feel secure, supported, and loved, which contributes to their overall well-being and success in school. This explains how important pupils need to adjust when it comes to parental attachment because adjustment encompasses adapting to new circumstances, regulating emotions, and interacting effectively with others.

The concept of adjustment is essential for understanding how people cope with life changes and challenges (Lazarus, 2016). In the opinion of Santrock (2016) adjustment is the degree to which extent one can cope with the academic and social demands of the school environment. It includes adapting to the school setting, meeting academic requirements, and developing satisfactory relationships with peers and teachers. Contextually, adjustment is the process by which individuals achieve a state of balance between their needs and the demands of their environment. Primary school pupils' adjustment therefore refers to the process by which students navigate and adapt to the various academic, emotional, and social demands of their school environment (Segal, Glenn and Robinson, 2019). Operationally, it involves a combination of skills, behaviours, and

attitudes that enable pupils to effectively cope with challenges, interact positively with others, and achieve academic success. In the school context, adjustment is pivotal for pupils to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally (Ebimoboere and Udochi, 2021). Just as people adjust socially, emotionally, or psychologically, pupils must adjust academically.

Academic adjustment refers to pupils' ability to meet academic demands, including performance, engagement, and motivation. Successful academic adjustment is indicated by good grades, positive attitudes towards school, and active participation in learning activities (Eccles and Roeser, 2019). Dotterer and Wehrspann (2016) explained that academic adjustment refers to a student's ability to meet academic expectations and requirements in their educational setting. Dotterer and Wehrspann (2016) stressed further that it involves regular attendance, effective time management, understanding the curriculum, achieving academic goals, seeking help when needed, and developing a positive attitude towards learning and motivation to succeed academically. When students are emotionally adjusted (calm, resilient, confident), they can handle academic pressures like tests, deadlines, and competition more effectively.

Emotional adjustment involves the regulation of emotions and the development of coping mechanisms to manage stress and challenges. Indicators of good emotional adjustment include low levels of anxiety and depression, high self-esteem, and the ability to cope with setbacks (Ahn & Lee, 2016). Emotional adjustment is a student's ability to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions in response to stressors. It involves self-awareness, effective coping strategies, resilience, self-esteem, and seeking support from trusted adults or peers. Key aspects include self-expression, resilience, confidence, and navigating social interactions and academic pressures with confidence (Webster and Reld, 2018). Children with secure attachments typically experience higher academic motivation and engagement. Securely attached children view their parents as a reliable source of support, which fosters a positive attitude toward learning and school (Dearing, McCartney & Taylor, 2017). They are more likely to persist in challenging tasks and exhibit higher levels of curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Secure attachment enhances children's ability to regulate their emotions and behaviors, making them more resilient to academic stress. This emotional stability allows them to concentrate better, engage in class activities, and develop effective study habits (Cassidy, Stern, Mikulincer, Martin, & Shaver, 2018). According to Thompson (2019), children with secure attachments are more likely to develop positive social skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and effective communication.

In the context of primary education, the quality of parental attachment can significantly influence pupils' academic, emotional, and social adjustments. Anambra State, Nigeria, with its unique cultural and socio-economic dynamics, provides a compelling backdrop for examining these correlations. It is therefore against this background that this study seeks to determine parental attachment as correlates of primary school pupils' academic and emotional adjustments in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The reality is that many primary school pupils in Anambra State do not have the level of parental attachment necessary for optimal academic, emotional, and social adjustments. Factors such as parental work commitments, economic constraints, and lack of education on the importance of parental involvement may hinder parents from actively participating in their children's schooling and emotional development. This lack of parental attachment can have detrimental effects on primary school pupils, leading to academic underachievement, emotional instability, and poor social skills. Without a secure attachment to their parents, children may struggle to form healthy relationships, regulate their emotions, and excel academically.

The researchers observed that many primary school pupils in Anambra State struggle with academic engagement and performance. The lack of secure parental attachment may contribute to difficulties in maintaining motivation, concentration, and perseverance in school tasks. Without the emotional support and encouragement from parents, children may find it challenging to develop effective study habits and a positive attitude toward learning, leading to lower academic achievement. More so, it is observed that many children in Anambra State experience difficulties in forming and maintaining positive peer relationships. Insecure attachment can impair the development of social skills such as empathy, cooperation, and effective communication. Children who do not receive adequate emotional support from their parents may struggle with social integration, leading to issues such as peer rejection, bullying, and social isolation. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate the correlation between parental attachment and primary school pupils' academic, emotional, and social adjustments in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the parental attachment as correlates of primary school pupils' academic, emotional and social adjustment in Anambra State. Specifically, the study set to determine:

1. The relationship between parental attachment and primary school pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State
2. The relationship between parental attachment and primary school pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

Research Questions

1. The relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State?
2. The relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State

2. There is no significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

Theoretical Underpinnings

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory, proposed by British psychologist John Bowlby in the mid-20th century, is a prominent developmental theory that focuses on the importance of early interactions between infants and their caregivers in shaping the individual's socio-emotional development. The theory suggests that the quality of these early attachment relationships influences the individual's social and emotional relationships throughout their lifespan.

In its original form, attachment theory is based on several key principles. The first and most fundamental concept is the idea of the attachment bond between the infant and their primary caregiver, usually the mother. Bowlby believed that this bond serves as a secure base from which the infant can explore and interact with the world around them. The quality of this attachment bond is determined by the caregiver's responsiveness and sensitivity to the infant's needs and cues. Bowlby identified four main attachment styles that infants may develop based on their experiences with their caregivers: secure attachment, insecure-avoidant attachment, insecure-resistant attachment, and disorganized attachment. A secure attachment style is characterized by a child who feels secure in the presence of their caregiver and is able to use them as a source of comfort and support. In contrast, insecure attachment styles are associated with difficulties in seeking comfort and maintaining a sense of security in the caregiver's presence.

One of the strengths of attachment theory is its emphasis on the importance of early relationships in shaping human development. Research has consistently shown that secure attachments are associated with positive outcomes in areas such as emotional regulation, social relationships, and academic achievement. The theory has also been influential in informing parenting practices and interventions aimed at improving attachment relationships between children and their caregivers.

In relation to this study, attachment theory posits that a secure attachment bond with caregivers fosters a child's sense of security, self-regulation, and exploration. In the context of the study, primary school pupils who have secure attachments to their parents may be more likely to display positive academic adjustment, such as higher levels of motivation, engagement in learning, and academic achievement. The study may find that children with secure attachments are more confident in their abilities, seek help when needed, and have better concentration in school, leading to improved academic performance. More so, children with secure attachment to their parents are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-worth, emotional resilience, and positive coping strategies. The study may find that primary school pupils with secure attachments exhibit lower levels of emotional distress, anxiety, and behavioral issues, as they feel emotionally supported and safe in their relationships with their parents.

Methodology

Research Design: A correlational research design was adopted for the study.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consisted of all the 37,190 primary five pupils in the 21 LGEAs in Anambra State

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample size comprises 400 primary five pupils. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to derive the sample size.

Instrument for Data Collection: Data for this study was collected by means of structured questionnaire. The first instrument was adopted and it is titled The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979) and the second instrument titled Questionnaire on Primary School Pupils' Adjustment" (QPSPA) was developed by the researcher. The Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979) consists of two scales termed 'care' and 'overprotection' or 'control', measure fundamental parental styles as perceived by the child. There are 25 item questions, including 12 'care' items and 13 'overprotection' items. PBS was rated on a scale of 0 = very like; 1 = moderately like; 2 = moderately unlike; 3 = very unlike. The second instrument titled QPSPA was developed by the researcher. The instrument is subdivided into three clusters in line with the research questions. The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with nominal values 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument: The PBI has been shown to have satisfactory construct and convergent validity and to be independent of mood effects (Parker, 1983). The second instrument titled Questionnaire on Primary School Pupils' Adjustment" (QPSPA) was validated through face and content validity by three experts.

Reliability of the Instrument: In the original study of Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979), the PBI possessed good internal consistency and re-test reliability. The three clusters of QPSPA was subjected to test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method, and reliability values of 0.77, 0.78 and 0.81 were obtained

Method of Data Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to answer research questions 1 and 2 while linear regression was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. In interpreting the values of the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and when p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis was not rejected. All analysis was done with the application of a computer software programme: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Pearson r on the relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State

Sources of variance	N	Parental attachment (r)	Acad. Adjustment (r)	Remark
Parental attachment	400	1.00	0.66	Strong positive relationship
Academic adjustment	400	0.66	1.00	

Table 1 shows that there is a strong positive relationship of 0.66 existing between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State.

Table 2: Pearson r on the relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

Sources of variance	N	Parental attachment (r)	Emotional Adjustment (r)	Remark
Parental attachment	400	1.00	0.73	Strong positive relationship
emotional adjustment	400	0.73	1.00	

Table 2 shows that there is a strong positive relationship of 0.73 existing between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State.

Table 3: Linear regression on parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F	df1	df2	
1	.661 ^a	.437	.414	12.63073	.000	14.061	1	398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), academic adjustment

Table 3 shows that the adjusted r^2 value of 41.4% of the variance in pupils' academic adjustment can be explained by parental attachment. More so, at 0.05 alpha level, $t(1, 398) = 14.061$, $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State.

Table 4: Linear regression on parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

Model	R		Std. Error		Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	
	R	Adjusted R Square	Adjusted R Square	of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1		df2
1	.731 ^a	.534	.521	12.60478	.005	9.502	1	398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), emotional adjustment

Table 4 shows that the adjusted r^2 value of 52.1% of the variance in pupils' emotional adjustment can be explained by parental attachment. More so, at 0.05 alpha level, $t(1, 398) = 9.502$, $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding in research question one revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State. This finding agreed with that of Obi, Nneka and Chukwudike (2020) that parents contribute positively on their children's academic achievement in secondary schools. This finding also agreed with that of Oyo-Ita and Bassey (2017) that parent-child communication and parental involvement in school activities significantly influenced students' academic achievement in biology. On the other hand, this finding opposed the finding of Majimbo (2017) that there was a weak positive correlation between academic performance and secure attachment style and a negative correlation between academic performance and insecure attachment style. The difference between both findings could be as a result of geographical change. The corresponding hypothesis also revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State. This finding supported the finding of Majimbo (2017) that there is a significant influence between secure attachment style and academic performance of students in High Cost private schools.

The finding in research question two revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State. This finding is in line with the finding of Oparaugo et al., (2023) that parent-child relationship influences the creativity and psychological adjustment of secondary school students. Also, the study of Nnamani et al., (2020) highlighted that there is a positive relationship between parental attachment and emotional adjustment of primary school pupils' school achievement. The corresponding hypothesis

revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State. This finding was in line with the study of Ohaka and Kemjika (2019) that parental attachment and emotional competence have a positive significant high relationship with psychological well-being of the students in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment and emotional adjustment in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Primary schools in Anambra State should actively encourage and facilitate parental involvement in their children's education. This can include regular parent-teacher meetings, workshops on effective parenting strategies, and providing resources for parents to support their children's learning at home.
2. Implementing parenting education programs that focus on the importance of emotional attachment and its impact on children's emotional adjustment. These programs can cover topics such as building strong parent-child relationships, effective communication, and strategies for fostering emotional resilience.
3. Primary schools in Anambra State should create a supportive and nurturing environment that addresses both academic and emotional needs of pupils. This includes implementing programs such as emotional literacy education, peer support groups, and providing access to school counselors who can offer emotional support and guidance.

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EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF TECHNOLOGICAL FACILITIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to ascertain the extent of utilization of Technological facilities in teaching and learning in public primary schools Anambra State. Four research questions guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises of 8078 teachers in public primary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for the study is 807 using simple random sampling technique. A four point rating scale containing 30 items was used for data collection. This instrument was validated by three experts. Technological Facilities Utilization Questionnaire (BTIQ) was used to collect data. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficients of 0.67, 0.62, 0.73 and 0.72 for the four clusters respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.86. Mean and Standard Deviation were used for data analysis. The finding of the study indicates that public primary school teachers in Anambra State utilizes technological facilities in their teaching to a moderate extent. Based on the finding, it was recommended that appropriate technology items which supports teaching and enhances learning should be provided and made easily accessible to teachers so as to foster better academic performance for pupils, among others. Further findings reveals that retraining of staff on digital skills, provision of ICT knowledge for digital skills, access to computers among others are the possible solutions to the constraints affecting the utilization of technological facilities in teaching.

Keywords: *Teaching and Learning, Technological Facilities, ICT Knowledge*

Introduction

The dynamics of technological facilities especially around the world encompasses many disciplines including education, and has been influential around academic activities. This explains why teaching has not only appeared more interesting but also interactive; and the need for teachers to diligently adopt the use of corresponding technological facilities while teaching. Teaching process can be defined as a transformation process of knowledge from teachers to pupils (Munna and Kalam, 2021). Also, teaching is simply the impartation of information or skills to another individual (Rajagopalan,2019). The impartation of skills, knowledge and information is usually not done in isolation but with the use of certain tools, in which technological facilities are included. According to Ansari, Shah, and Khoso (2022) technological facilities are referred to as tools which are capable of providing sustainable, inclusive, equal and lifelong learning, especially when used as a means geared towards transferring knowledge. Adewuyi(2020) explained technological facilities as tools, equipments and gadgets used for systematic application of knowledge during classroom teaching and learning activities. This above definition thereby explained technological facilities as a means carried out in an organized format so as to achieve certain academic goals especially in education.

Adewuyi further went on to name certain technological facilities which enhances classroom teaching and learning and they include the computers, videos, overhead projectors, television and lots more, like the internet, public address system and tablets. Onyekaba(2021) while narrowing technological facilities down to education defined it as those devices used to foster, support and improve teaching for teachers and learning for pupils; and also helps to develop desirable learning environment for all learning. This simply explains the usefulness of technological facilities in helping education to thrive more and even better than any earlier

estimated extent of success recorded in education. To support this view, Akudo and Eziuzo (2023) opined that education provided in the 21st century should be technologically based so as to respond to certain needs which past century teaching may not have responded to. Therefore, technological facilities, in its entirety, as pertaining to educational purposes, is simply referred to as those tools in teaching and learning that should be present in the classroom for the sole purpose of helping teachers achieve appropriate teaching geared towards individualized learning for all learners and they include all the tools and gadget that explains the teachers teaching more appropriately to the individual learner. The above mentioned individualization of learning for all learners reduces pupils' poor interest towards learning (Acar and Ordu, 2022).

These tools include the computer, electronic mail, internet, world wide web, telephone and lots more (Nweze, 2018). Nweze went on to opine that although these tools of teaching may not be sufficiently provided nor utilized in some public primary schools, it does not still prevent them from being identified as technological facilities which assist the acts of teaching. But worthy of note is that, without these tools, teaching will appear rigid (Ezeokaka and Anum, 2019). Lawal, Ibanga, and Sunday (2024) opined that technological facilities are tools that adequately assist teaching, by reducing teachers' workload and foster learning when teachers are provided with appropriate and necessary pre-service education, training and organized professional development programme with its focus on digital skills.

Digital skills or competence refers to a set of knowledge, skills and attitude that allows a person to achieve different goals through the use of digital technologies (Serezhkina, 2021). Those acquired skills enable teachers to organize the learning environment with necessary elements of digital education so as to compliment the already available conventional elements of education. Therefore, the major goal of a digitalized teacher who is also skilled in conventional teaching, is to transfer sustainable and problem-solving strategies through the

use of digital technology combined with conventional teaching skills to the learner. Being a digitalised teacher expires with time and age, for this purpose Serezhkina explains that a teacher who choose to remain resolute in delivering instruction with the use of technology so as to meet the varying needs of pupils, must keep up with the various modern technologies, and must own at least, some of them, and must promote the use of those technology facilities. Saprikis, Kollia and Charitoudi (2019) in considering the pivotal role the use of technological facilities play in our society and schools opined that training teachers to be technologically inclined is a necessity. Hence, a teacher who acquired all the teaching skill aside from a digital skill is still a regular teacher who received all other training aside from the training that empowers him or her to teach with the use of technological facilities.

Secondly, the objectives of the instruction to be delivered determines the interface of the learning environment. A regular teacher, that is, a teaching who has acquired all other teaching skill apart from digital skills, structures the environment with the objectives of a conventionally prepared teaching methods, in that, what children should know at the end of the teaching is not affiliated to the assistance a computer can offer; while a teacher who has acquired digital skills upon acquiring other relevant conventional skills of teaching, prepares the learning environment with an objective which addresses, not only the child's peculiar needs, but also the child's adaptation need for our ever changing society.

The child is the centre of attraction in the classroom. Every activity that takes place revolves around the child, both the skill which a teacher acquired and the sum total of all the learning objectives of a given instruction, all is for the betterment of the child. Every child needs their learning to be digitalised. Roman in Clipa and Mata(2021) states that exposing the usefulness and manipulation of the digital world to the child will put parents and teachers in a crucial role of protecting children from the risks of the online environments; but educating

children without the use of technology is an education that may not meet their peculiar needs. Viner, Singhand Shaughnessy (2020) asserted that the use of technological facilities in education has changed the learning experiences of every child, including those children with special needs. The above assertion although may not be possible in every public primary schools in Anambra State, due to the cost of those facilities, and how user unfriendly they might appear to be, (Cochrane cited in Al-Shabaab, 2019). Therefore, GPS based navigation device for direction, sound and image assistive softwares for easy understanding of shapes and spoken words and lots more, which a teacher combines with the regular classroom instruction is highly essential for ensuring that every child receives an education that is worthwhile.

The act of teaching and learning with the use of technological facilities is very necessary in public primary schools, this is because technological facilities helps to capture pupils' interest, attention, and individualize each pupil's instruction, especially when utilized properly. Also, technological facilities help to tailor learning experiences to individual pupils' needs. It also provides the teachers with access to a range of digital resources and tools which enables the teacher to create engaging and interactive learning environment. Again, it fosters increased pupils' motivation and participation. Despite the above benefits, the researcher is aware of the availability of certain technological facilities found in public primary schools in Anambra State and then wants to find out the extent of its utilization and this becomes the problem in this study.

Statement of the Problem

As the cornerstone of education, primary education deserves high priority, including the provision and the utilization of technological facilities that can enhance the teaching and learning experience across all subjects. The absence of this provision and usage,

may limit pupils' ability to engage effectively with classroom activities and could hinder teachers' efforts to provide personalized learning experiences. This absence if filled by enlightenment and training programs by the government might enable teachers to thoroughly implement the utilization of various technological facilities.

Again, the researcher observed that pupils may not have a solid grasp of basic concepts, making it difficult to understand more advanced material and may also struggle to think critically and apply concepts to real-world situations. Furthermore, observation has revealed that a good number of teachers in public primary schools in Anambra state has no idea of how those technological facilities can be utilized in the classroom . Also, pupils may not have enough opportunities to receive adequate training on how to manipulate those facilities and to also practice using them, and these could lead to difficulties in retention and application.

The above listed problems, makes it pertinent for the researcher to examine the extent to which primary school teachers utilizes technological facilities in the teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which technological facilities are utilized in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra state. Specifically, this study determined;

- 1 Technological facilities used in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra state.
- 2 The extent to which teachers utilize technological facilities in teaching in pubic primary schools in Anambra state.

- 3 The constraints affecting the utilization of technological facilities in teaching in public primary in Anambra state.
- 4 Possible solutions to the constraints affecting the utilization of technological facilities in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the technological facilities used in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra state?
2. To what extent do teachers utilize technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra state?
3. What are the constraints associated with utilizing technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra state?
4. What are the possible solutions to the constraints affecting the utilization of technological facilities in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra State?

Methods

This study is on the extent to which technological facilities are utilized in teaching and learning in public primary schools. The area of the study is Anambra State. It adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprises of 8,078 teachers (521 male and 7557 female) (Anambra State Universal Basic Educational Board, ASUBEB, 2024). The sample for this study comprised 807 teachers in primary schools in Anambra state. The sample was selected using the multistage sampling procedure. Firstly, simple random sampling was used to select three out of the existing six education zones. 10 primary schools

were selected from each of the three LGEA sampled in the study, from 10 primary schools sampled, 20 teachers were selected making it a total of 600 public primary schools teachers selected in the study

The instrument for data collection was Technological Facilities Utilization Questionnaire (BTIQ). The 30-item instrument was constructed by the researcher to collect information on the constituents of technological facilities, the extent to which public primary school teachers utilized them while teaching, constraints to the utilization of technological facilities in teaching and learning and possible solutions to those constraints. The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point Likert scale of clusters 1, 3 and 4 which are Strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, while cluster 2 is scaled on Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). Any item that is at 2.50 and above will be accepted as agreed while any below 2.50 will be regarded as disagreed. Also, any item at 2.50 or above will be accepted as moderately extent. The instrument for data collection was validated by three experts. Two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, one from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation option). To establish the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered to 20 teachers in Awka education zone. The data was analyzed with Cronbach Alpha statistics and yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.86. Mean and Standard Deviation were used for data analysis.

Results

Research Question One: What are the technological facilities used in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra state?

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation on the technological facilities used in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra State.

S/N	Technological Facilities	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Computers or laptop	3.49	.69	Agree
2	Internet resources	3.24	.70	Agree
3	Interactive whiteboard	2.31	.80	Disagree
4	Public address system	1.67	.83	Disagree
5	Digital projectors	3.21	.55	Agree
6	Tablets and phones	3.76	.67	Strongly agree
7	Educational softwares	3.58	.70	Strongly agree
8	Calculator	3.61	.70	Strongly agree
Grand mean		3.10		Strongly Agree

Data presented in table 1 shows the Mean and standard deviation technological facilities used in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra State. Items 6, 7 and 8 was rated strongly agree, items 1, 2, and 5 was rated agree, items 3 and 4 was rated disagree. The grand mean of 3.10 shows that the respondents agreed to using computer, laptops, internet resources, digital projectors, phones, educational softwares and calculators in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra State. The standard deviation reported ranged from 0.55-0.83, this indicates heterogeneity in the respondents rating.

Research Question Two: To what extent do teachers utilize technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra state?

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation on the extent to which teachers utilize technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra state.

S/N	Teachers utilize	Mean	SD	Decision
9	Computers or laptop	3.40	.51	V.H extent
10	Internet resources	3.41	.49	V.H extent
11	Interactive whiteboard	1.62	.54	Low extent
12	Public address system	1.11	.50	V.L extent
13	Digital projectors	3.06	.53	High extent
14	Tablets and phones	3.76	.49	V.H extent
15	Educational softwares	1.55	.48	Low extent
16	Calculator	3.71	.51	V.H extent
Grand mean		2.45		Low extent

Data presented in table 2 shows the Mean and standard deviation on the extent teachers use technological facilities in their teaching in public primary schools in Anambra State. Items 9, 10, 13, 14 and 16 were rated to a high extent, items 11 and 12 was rated to a low extent. The grand mean of 2.70 shows that the respondents rated the extent teachers use technological facilities in public primary schools to a low extent. The standard deviation reported ranged from 0.48-0.54, this indicates homogeneity in the respondents rating.

Research Question Three: What are the constraints associated with the utilization of technological facilities in teaching in public primary in Anambra state?

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation on the constraints associated with utilization of technological facilities by teachers in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra State.

S/N	Constraints Associated with Utilizing Technological Facilities includes	Mean	SD	Decision
17	Lack of resources (e.g., technology, internet access)	3.70	.31	Strongly agree
18	Insufficient digital training for teachers	3.68	.56	Strongly agree
19	Time constraints in class periods	3.55	.50	Strongly agree
20	Pupils resistance or difficulties	3.62	.67	Strongly agree
21	Technical issues like tech malfunction	3.64	.71	Strongly agree
22	Power outage	3.64	1.10	Strongly agree
23	User unfriendly computer software	1.44	.49	Disagree
Grand mean		3.32		Strongly Agree

Data presented in table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation on the constraints associated with utilizing technological facilities by teachers in teaching in primary schools in Anambra state. The respondents rated strongly agreed to items 17-22, item 23 was rated disagreed. The grand mean of 3.32 shows that the respondents strongly agreed to the constraints associated with utilizing technological facilities by teachers in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra state. The standard deviation reported ranged from 0.31-1.10, this indicates homogeneity in the respondents rating.

Research Questions Four: What are the possible solutions to the constraints affecting the utilization of technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra State?

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation on the solutions to the constraints affecting the utilization of technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools

S/N	Solution to the Constraints	Mean	SD	Decision
24	Retraining of staff on digital skills	3.73	1.19	Strongly agree
25	Provision of ICT training for digital skills	3.28	1.32	Agree
26	Provision of ICT knowledge through programs	3.45	1.27	Agree
27	Access to computers	3.13	1.19	Agree
28	Favourable conditions for utilizing technological facilities	2.73	0.67	Agree
29	Manageable and controllable class size	2.64	1.25	Agree
30	Free interaction among pupils and teachers	3.46	0.79	Agree
Grand mean		3.20		Strongly Agree

Data analysis presented in table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation on solutions to the constraints affecting utilization of technological facilities in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra state. The respondents rated strongly agreed to items 24 with mean score of 3.73, items 25-30 had mean scores of 3.28, 3.45, 3.13, 2.73, 2.64, 3.46 respectively. The grand mean of 3.20 shows that the respondents rated strongly agree to solutions to the constraints affecting utilization of technological facilities in teaching and learning in public primary schools in Anambra state. The standard deviation reported ranged from 0.67-1.32, this indicates homogeneity in the respondents rating.

Discussion of Findings

Findings reveal that computers, internet resources among others are technological facilities utilized in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra State. This finding concurs with Ezekoka and Anum (2019) who posits that teaching may not be adequately possible without the inclusion of various technological facilities that should be found in the classroom during instruction delivery. Similarly, Acar and Ordu (2022) posit that items which serves as

teaching tools stands to help pupils have a vivid picture of a particular context while learning. Also, the helps to individualized learning among pupils.

The findings revealed that the extent to which teachers utilize internet resources, computers, and interactive whiteboard, educational software among others, in teaching in public primary schools is to a high extent and to a low extent, respectively. The finding negates the view of Ogwazu (2023) who stressed that many teachers in primary schools lack knowledge of technological facility and thereby, make little or no use of them in developing their teaching plans, lesson notes and in the teaching process.

Findings also reveals that lack of technological resources, insufficient training or supports for teachers among others are the challenges teachers face in the utilization of technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra state. This finding is in line with that of Saprikis, Kollia and Charitoudi(2019) who posits that the various constrains such as teacher low self-efficacy and lack of proper teacher support mechanisms and similar more, makes the utilization of technological facilities by teachers almost impossible.

The findings reveals that retraining of staff on digital skills, provision of ICT knowledge for digital skills, access to computers among others are the possible solutions to the constraints affecting the utilization of technological facilities in teaching in public primary schools in Anambra state. This finding is in line with Akudo and Eziuzo (2023) who posit that introducing new innovative teaching strategies and methods which births adequate provision of ICT training and access to computers will help to improve academic outcomes and address real problems to promote equitable learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the utilization of technological facilities by teachers in teaching and learning in the public primary schools in Anambra state is to a moderate extent.

Recommendations

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

1. Appropriate technological facilities should be provided by the governments and made easily accessible to teachers so as to foster better academic performance in pupils.
2. Teachers should always integrate the use of technological facilities during teaching in primary schools.
3. Sensitization program should be organized so as to empower teachers for adequate usage of technological facilities in teaching pupils.
4. Conditions connected with access to technological facilities should be made more favourable by school heads in various schools.

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IMPACTS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT IN GOBACHOP COMMUNITY, PAYNESVILLE, MONTSERRADO COUNTY, LIBERIA

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Abstract

Gender-based violence is grounded in unequal power relations, cultural norms, and discriminatory practices that privilege one gender over another. This study investigated the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) on children's development in Gobachop Community, Paynesville, Montserrado County, Liberia. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was employed. The population of the study comprised of 60 children in Paynesville, Montserrado County, Liberia. There was no sampling because the population was manageable for the study. A Five-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the Impact of Gender-Based Violence (QIGBV)" was used for data collection. An overall Cronbach alpha co-efficient of 0.74 was used to establish the reliability of the study. The instrument was validated by three experts, one from measurement and evaluation unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, one from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, and one from the Rudolph Kwanue University, Republic of Liberia. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The finding of the study among others showed that the impacts of gender-based violence on the physical and social development of children leads to injuries, children perceiving and reacting to things negatively, and most often young men sometimes involving into criminal offences against the abusive parent (mostly fathers), in order to protect their mother and siblings, as well as regularly become victims of an act of revenge by the abuser against the mother in Gobachop Community. Recommendations include establishment of support Systems, community awareness programs, capacity building for caregivers, policy implementation and enforcement, access to

education, mental health services, economic empowerment, collaboration and partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure a coordinated response to GBV and its impact on children development.

Keywords: *Gender-based Violence, Impact, Physical Impact, Social Impact, Development*

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to any harmful act perpetrated against a person based on their gender. It encompasses a wide range of behaviours, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence, as well as economic coercion and control. According to Thornton (2014), gender-based violence is an incident involving family members, including the wife, husband, children, and other family members and takes the form of physical and/or verbal violence. For example, physical violence in the form of slapping, hitting and torturing, while verbal violence takes the form of insults and threats. Additionally, Luca Rollè, Shulamit Ramon, and Piera Brustia, (2019) study revealed that gender-based violence can occur due to economic problems, infidelity, incompatibility, and others. It is rooted in gender inequality and the unequal distribution of power between men and women, and it is perpetrated in various settings, including the home, the workplace, school and the community.

Gender-based violence also takes many forms, including domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, forced and early marriage, ‘honour’ crimes, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and human trafficking. However, according to the studies of Miller and McCaw, (2019) and Sian Oram, Kylee Trevillion, Gene Feder, and Louis M. Howard (2017), the most prevailing form of violence is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which is a pattern of physical, or sexual, or

psychological, or emotional abuse directed toward a partner or former partner. It can also occur in non-intimate relationships, and it can affect people of any gender identity or expression. GBV is a violation of human rights and has severe physical and social consequences for survivors. Mittal (2020), defines physical violence as injury by an offender in the form of flogging, kicking, biting, or other means that cause injury such as fracture, bleeding, bruising, and complete exposure to toxins. Violence can be any form of physical aggression with intention to hurt (corporal punishment and physical bullying) by adults and other children. Corporal punishment is any punishment in which physical force is used and that is intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort; it is often used to punish poor academic performance or to correct misbehaviour.

Physical impact of gender-based as the result of beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming, scratching, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, biting, choking, shaking, poking, hair-pulling, slapping, hitting, killing or use of weapon (gun, knife or other object), and use of restraints or one's body, size or strength against another person, can lead to injuries such as bruises, etc. Often, children and young people who are present during an act of spousal abuse will also be injured, sometimes by accident and sometimes because they try to intervene. Also, according to the Korean Ministry of Education (2015), violence can have a physical impact and it can cause psychological distress, permanent physical disability and long-term physical or mental ill-health. Physical impacts may also include, mild or serious wounds, bruises, fractures, and deaths by homicide or suicide. In addition to physical deterioration, according to Mahapatro (2018), it can lead to loss of personality and lack of consciousness, as well as lead to accidents in extreme cases. Ultimately, these things can harm children and impact their physical development.

Social impact of gender-based violence refers to the far-reaching effects of violence on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. These impacts can include increased fear, anxiety, and trauma, as well as changes in behavior, social relationships, and community dynamics. According to the World Health Organization [WHO] (2021), violence can have significant social impacts, including, increased healthcare costs and burden on healthcare systems, loss of productivity and economic growth, breakdown of social cohesion and community trust, and increased crime and antisocial behavior.

Social impact of gender-based violence on children on the other hand, may lead them to isolating themselves from others, involving into risky behaviors such as stealing, robbery, gambling, early sexual activities, etc. Children who experienced any type of violence at school or home may develop reactive attachment disorder that is classified by The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5th Edition (DSM-5) as a trauma- and stressor-related condition of early childhood caused by social neglect and maltreatment. According to the DSM-5, affected children have difficulty forming emotional attachments to others, show a decreased ability to experience positive emotion, cannot seek or accept physical or emotional closeness, and may react violently when held, cuddled, or comforted. Children may respond to inter-linkages with aggression, fear, defiance, or rage; they develop a negative self-schema, and experience somatic symptoms of distress.

In the study of Moran, McDonald, Jackson, Turnbull and Minnis (2017), psychomotor restlessness is common, as is hyperactivity and stereotypic movements, such as hand flapping or rocking. It is confirmed an increased risk of anxiety, depression, hyperactivity, and reduces frustration tolerance.

GBV is not only a violation of human rights but also has significant physical-economic and social costs, including lost productivity, increased healthcare costs, and reduced educational attainment. Efforts to address GBV involve a combination of prevention, protection, and prosecution. This includes promoting gender equality, providing access to justice and legal services, and implementing policies and programs to prevent and respond to GBV. Additionally, raising awareness and challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes is crucial in preventing and ending GBV. In light of this, the present study examined the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) on children development in Gobachop Community, Paynesville, Montserrado County, Liberia.

Statement of the Problem

Gender-based (GBV) remains a persistent social challenge in many parts of Liberia, and the Gobachop Community in Paynesville is no exception. Despite national and international efforts to cure GBV, children in this community continue to grow up in environment where physical, sexual, and psychological violence against individuals is widespread. These forms of violence do not only harm the direct victims but also extend significant negative impacts on children who witness or experience them.

Children in Gobachop Community are increasingly exposed to domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, and harmful traditional practices. Such exposure places them on risk of emotional trauma, behavioral patterns, poor academic performance, low self-esteem, depression, and interrupted social development. Many children who witness GBV, develop fear, anxiety, and aggressive tendencies, while those who experience abuse directly often suffer long-term cognitive, emotional, and physical consequences.

Although several NGOs, community groups, and government agencies had introduced GBV intervention programs in Montserrado, there limited empirical evidence especially addressing how GBV affects the developmental outcomes of children in Gobachop Community. The extent of which GBV impacts children's physical wellbeing, social adjustment, academic achievement, and overall development is not clearly documented. This is the problem; this study seeks to solve.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the impact of gender-based violence on the development of children in Gobachop Community, Paynesville, Montserrado County, Liberia. Specifically, the study examined:

1. the impacts of gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Community.
2. the impacts of gender-based violence on the social development of children in Gobachop Community.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the impacts of Gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Community?
2. What are the impacts of gender-based violence on the social development of children in Gobachop Community?

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Nworgu (2015) refers to descriptive survey research design as the one in which a group of people or items are studied by

collecting data and analyzing it from only a few people considered representative of the entire group. The population for the study consisted of 60 male and female children used as the sample size. There was no sampling because the population was manageable for the study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was developed on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with assigned values of 4,3,2, and 1, respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts, one from measurement and evaluation unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, one from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, and one from the Rudolph Kwanue University, Republic of Liberia. A criterion means of 2.50 served as the benchmark for agreement level for any item while any mean score below the benchmark was not disagreed. All the 60 copies of the questionnaire were administered and fully collected after completion.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the impacts of Gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Slum Community?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the impacts of Gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Community.

s/n The impact of GBV on the physical development of children:

	Mean	SD	Remarks
1 makes them to be victim of physical abuse leading to bruises, injuries, etc.	3.83	0.42	Agreed
2 makes them to have serious headaches.	2.84	0.57	Agreed
3 Delay children's growth or development.	3.01	0.95	Agreed
4 gives discomfort to them.	2.81	0.88	Agreed
5 makes them to have serious stomach pain.	2.50	1.03	Agreed
Grand Mean	2.99		Agree

Table 1 reveals the mean and standard on the impacts of gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Community. The respondents rated agreed to all items 1-5 with mean scores of 3.83, 2.84, 3.01, 2.81 and 2.50. The grand mean of 2.99 revealed that respondents rated agree to the impacts of gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Community. The standard deviation reveals heterogeneity in the respondents rating 0.42 – 1.03.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of gender-based violence on the social development of children in Gobachop Community?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the impacts of Gender-based violence on the social development of children in Gobachop Community.

s/n	The impact of GBV on the social development of children:	Mean	SD	Remarks
6	makes them to isolate themselves from others.	3.52	0.70	Agreed
7	increases the risk of street life for them.	2.78	0.80	Agreed
8	puts a boy into early sexual activities.	3.06	0.91	Agreed
9	makes them to get involved in risky behaviours such as stealing, robbery, gambling, among others.	2.89	0.86	Agreed
10	makes the boys to always see themselves as superior of girls in all aspects and that the girls must accept being the subordinates.	2.75	0.91	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.00		Agreed

In Table 2, the mean and standard on the impacts of gender-based violence on the social development of children in Gobachop Community. The respondents rated agreed to all items 7-10 with mean scores of 3.52, 2.78, 3.06, 2.89 and 2.75. The grand mean of 3.00 revealed that respondents rated agree to the impacts of gender-based violence on the social development of children in Gobachop Community. The standard deviation reveals heterogeneity in the respondents rating 0.70 – 0.91.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in research question one revealed that there are huge negative impacts of Gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Community. These findings supported the findings of World Health Organization [WHO] (2021) who suggests that GBV is associated with a higher risk of non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes, and chronic stress from GBV can weaken the immune system, making children more vulnerable to illnesses, leading to severe physical injuries, disability, or even mortality in children. Similarly, the United Nations Children Fund [UNICEF] (2020) posits that children exposed to GBV are more likely to experience malnutrition and related health issues. Additionally, Shonkoff et al. (2012) found that exposure to violence can harm brain development, affecting cognitive and physical growth, impact children's growth and development, including delayed puberty and stunted growth. Gobachop Community is a congested slum community in Liberia, mixed with diverse people, including disadvantaged youths referred to as “zogos”, etc. For instance, almost a family of mum, dad, sister, brother and even relative together live in a single room. GBV in this environment is most likely normal. Sadly, children who are present or witness GBV of different kinds on a daily basis in this environment, experience the negative impact of GBV on their physical development. Consequently, the negative impact of gender-based violence on the physical development of children observed in this study likely reflects the lack of awareness on GBV and limited contextual relevance of resource provisions programmes in the study area.

The findings in research question two revealed that there are huge negative impacts of Gender-based violence on the social development of children in Gobachop Community. These findings supported the findings of Osofsky (2019) who posits that children exposed to GBV often experience emotional insecurity, which can manifest in poor social skills and difficulty forming

healthy relationships. It also leads to difficulties in forming and maintaining healthy peer relationships, difficulties with conflict resolution and negotiation skills in children (Osofsky, 2023). Similarly, Margolin and Vickerman (2017) found that GBV can impair children's ability to regulate their emotions, leading to mood swings and behavioral problems. Additionally, United Nation Population Fund [UNFPA] (2021) suggests that exposure to GBV in childhood can have long-term social consequences, including difficulties with relationships and social interactions in adulthood. John W. Fantuzzo, Whitney A. LeBoeuf, and Dennis P Culhane (2021) on the other hand, found that exposure to GBV can lead to difficulties in communication, cooperation, and empathy in children as well as understanding others' perspectives. Children exposed to GBV are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior and have difficulties with emotional regulation (Margolin as Gordis, 2010). Moreover, Fantuzzo et al., (2021) also revealed that GBV can lead to social withdrawal and isolation in children and may have reduced empathy and difficulty. GBV negatively impact the social development of children thereby leaving them with no alternative, but to behave an inhumane manner. Consequently, the negative impact of gender-based violence on the physical development of children observed in this study likely reflects the lack of awareness on GBV and limited contextual relevance of resource provisions programmes in the study area.

Conclusion

Gender-Based Violence is a hostile incident in the family that affects every family member, including children. Children who are in the process of development are prone to disturbances due to stressors and developmental disorders. Gender-based violence impacts children's physical and social developments. The experience of trauma due to gender-based violence needs to be a shared concern among people such as parents, teachers, and health workers, including nurses, to provide interventions to prevent a more severe impact.

Recommendations

1. Given the negative impact of gender-based violence on the physical development of children in Gobachop Community, healthcare providers should be trained in Gobachop

Community to identify and respond to GBV cases, providing psychosocial support and referrals. Community-based counseling services for children affected by GBV, involving trained local counselors should be provided.

2. Since Gender-based violence the negatively impact the social development of children in Gobachop Community, Paynesville, community-based interventions should be implemented, prioritizing GBV prevention and support services for affected children. Trauma-informed care and awareness programs should be integrated into local schools and healthcare systems as well as community-wide sensitization programs on GBV impacts should be implemented, emphasizing children's rights and protection.

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PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES BY TEACHERS FOR IMPROVING PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS IN EDUCATION DISTRICT 5A, GRAND BASSA COUNTY, LIBERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to enhance pupils' performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia. Guided by three research questions, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 555 teachers across 89 primary schools, from which a stratified random sample of 75 mathematics teachers (45 males and 30 females) was selected to ensure proportional representation. Data were collected using a self-structured, 18-item instrument titled *Pedagogical Strategies for Improving Pupils' Performance in Mathematics Questionnaire (PSIPPMQ)*. The instrument was validated by experts, and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.82, confirming strong internal consistency. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to analyze the data. Findings revealed that teachers strongly endorsed hands-on instructional, problem-solving, and collaborative learning strategies as effective approaches to improving mathematics achievement. Problem-solving approaches fostered critical thinking, resilience, and contextual application of mathematics to everyday life. Collaborative learning strategies, including group projects, peer tutoring, and teamwork-based games, promoted motivation, communication, and shared responsibility, thereby strengthening both cognitive and social skills. It recommends deliberate integration of these strategies into classroom practice, supported by teacher training and curriculum development, to ensure sustainability. Collectively, these approaches provide practical, evidence-based solutions to address resource limitations and low performance in Liberia's educational context, preparing pupils for future academic and professional success.

Keywords: *Hands-on Instruction, Problem-Solving Strategies, Collaborative Learning, Mathematics Achievement, Pedagogical Approaches*

Introduction

Mathematics is an indispensable subject of study. It organizes life, prevents chaos, and nurtures qualities such as reasoning power, creativity, abstract and spatial thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving ability, and effective communication skills. According to Oni (2019), mathematics is utilized daily in one form or another, as it is the cradle of all creations; without it, the world cannot move an inch. Whether a cook, farmer, carpenter, mechanic, shopkeeper, or scientist, everyone needs mathematics in their day-to-day activities.

Mathematics is also one of the core subjects in which pupils are expected to earn credit to further their studies in institutions of higher learning (Adejumo, Oluwole, and Muraina, 2015). Despite its recognized importance, many pupils struggle with mathematics, leading to lower performance and achievement. Since its inception, mathematics has played a pivotal role in shaping the culture and intellectual landscape of societies worldwide (Emeniru, 2019). Eya (2017) contends that mathematics is integral to human culture, and the education system is instrumental in its transmission. Teaching mathematics fosters critical thinking skills in young learners, and through systematic reasoning, it provides solutions to human challenges across various domains of life (Onifade, 2017).

This challenge is particularly evident in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia, where pedagogical strategies for improving pupils' performance in mathematics remain a critical concern. Mathematics proficiency is essential for academic success and future opportunities, yet Liberia's educational landscape faces challenges such as limited resources, teacher shortages, and infrastructure constraints. Understanding the specific needs of pupils in District 5A is crucial for developing targeted interventions that address gaps in mathematical understanding and promote positive learning outcomes.

Hands-on activities provide students with tangible objects for direct investigation, making classroom learning more engaging. When students apply classroom concepts in real-world scenarios, they develop comprehension, motivation, and personal growth. Activity-based learning enhances retention and academic performance (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Teachers can use visual aids, real-life examples, and hands-on activities to make mathematics more accessible and enjoyable. By catering to diverse learning styles, instructors create stimulating environments that promote understanding and retention of mathematical concepts. Conducting a comprehensive study on pedagogical strategies in District 5A allows educators and policymakers to identify

evidence-based practices that can drive positive change. Such a study must consider socio-economic conditions, cultural influences, and educational policies that affect implementation. Understanding this background highlights the significance of addressing low performance in mathematics and its impact on pupils' future academic and professional endeavors.

Pedagogical techniques are pivotal in shaping academic outcomes and developing 21st-century skills. Traditional teacher-centered approaches, where instructors act as sole knowledge disseminators, are increasingly being replaced by student-centered strategies emphasizing active engagement, collaboration, communication, and creativity (Leather and Stockham, 2016; Bature, 2020; Loreman, 2017; Hoidn, 2016; Chan, 2023; Dimaano, 2021). Rooted in constructivist theories, these approaches encourage inquiry-based learning, technology integration, and authentic assessment, preparing students to thrive in a complex, interconnected world.

Among these strategies, hands-on instruction, problem-solving, and collaborative learning stand out as effective methods for enhancing mathematical achievement. Hands-on instruction allows students to engage with concepts through practical activities, while problem-solving develops analytical skills and resilience. Collaborative learning fosters teamwork and peer support, motivating pupils and deepening understanding. Problem-solving, defined as “deciding what to do when what to do is not known” (Altun, 2015), encourages learners to analyze, strategize, and discover solutions. It gives students responsibility for their learning, helping them structure information and share knowledge with peers (Ali, 2019; Pohan et al., 2020). Teachers play a guiding role, designing activities based on problematic situations and supporting learners during the process. This method promotes group discussion, teamwork, and communication (Fidan and Tuncel, 2019). Collaborative learning strategy (CLS) involves pupils working together to explore questions or create projects. Unlike cooperative learning, CLS is more student-centered, empowering learners to control their own outcomes (Oluwole and Muraina, 2016). Despite research efforts, few studies have examined the combined effects of collaborative learning and self-monitoring skills on mathematics achievement, particularly in African contexts. Addressing this gap is vital for enhancing mathematics learning outcomes.

Gender differences in mathematical performance also warrant attention. Attitudes toward gender roles can influence how pupils perceive and approach mathematics. While international studies such as TIMSS (2019) report gender gaps in performance, findings remain inconclusive, with some research suggesting differences depend on test type and problem-solving strategies

(Ramírez-Uclés and Ramírez-Uclés, 2020). In District 5A, understanding these dynamics is essential for designing inclusive strategies that support all learners. Even so, pedagogical strategies such as hands-on instruction, problem-solving, and collaborative learning have proven effective in enhancing mathematics achievement. Employing these approaches enables educators in District 5A to create supportive, engaging environments that foster mathematical proficiency and prepare pupils for future success.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent underperformance of pupils in mathematics within Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia, reflects a critical educational challenge with far-reaching implications for academic progression and future opportunities. Despite mathematics being a core subject essential for higher education and professional advancement, many learners struggle to grasp abstract concepts due to limited pedagogical innovation, resource constraints, and traditional teacher-centered approaches. This situation is compounded by systemic issues such as inadequate instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient teacher training, which hinder effective delivery of mathematics education.

Although research highlights the effectiveness of hands-on instruction, problem-solving approaches, and collaborative learning in improving mathematics achievement, their systematic application in District 5A remains limited and underexplored. Teachers often lack the training and support necessary to implement these strategies in ways that align with the socio-economic realities of the region. Furthermore, contextual factors such as gender disparities, cultural influences, and resource scarcity exacerbate the challenge, leaving many pupils without equitable access to quality mathematics instruction. Without targeted interventions, the district risks perpetuating cycles of poor performance, reduced academic mobility, and limited preparedness for 21st-century skills.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to improve pupils' performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Examine hands-on instructional strategies used by teachers to improve pupils' performance in mathematics.
2. Investigate problem-solving strategies employed by teachers to enhance pupils' mathematical achievement.
3. Explore collaborative learning strategies adopted by teachers to foster pupils' performance in mathematics.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the hands-on instructional strategies used by teachers to improve pupils' performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia?
2. What are the problem-solving strategies employed by teachers to enhance pupils' performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia?
3. What are the collaborative learning strategies adopted by teachers to improve pupils' performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia?

Methods

A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population consisted of 89 primary schools in District 5A with 555 teachers (289 male and 266 female). A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 75 teachers (45 males and 30 females), ensuring proportional representation of both genders.

The instrument for data collection was the *Pedagogical Strategies by Teachers for Improving Pupils' Performance in Mathematics Questionnaire (PSUBTIPPMQ)*, developed on a 4-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.82, confirming strong internal consistency. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to address the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 served as the benchmark for acceptance. All 75 questionnaires were administered and fully returned.

Results

Research Question 1: What are hands-on instructional pedagogical strategies by teachers for improving pupils’ performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondent on hands-on instructional pedagogical strategies by teachers for improving pupils’ performance in mathematics in Educational District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia.

S/N	Hands-on instructional pedagogical strategies include;	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Using physical objects like blocks, and counters for mathematical using geometric shapes to help pupils visualize and understand abstract mathematical concepts.	3.30	0.54	Agreed
2	Incorporating activities that require pupils to actively engage with the material, such as measuring objects around the classroom to learn about units of measurement	3.00	0.72	Agreed
3	Use natural elements (like leaves, stones) for counting and sorting exercises outside.	3.12	0.67	Agreed
4	Integrate math problem into stories and have pupils solve them as part of the narrative.	3.20	0.62	Agreed
5	Encouraging group work and peer-to-peer teaching through math games, puzzles, and problem-solving tasks.	3.15	0.65	Agreed
6	Hands-on instructional approach significantly enhances cooperative learning and teamwork among primary school children in mathematics classes.	3.11	0.69	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.14		Agreed

Table 1 shows that respondents agreed items 1–6 represent hands-on instructional strategies for improving pupils’ performance in mathematics. Each mean score was above the criterion mean of 2.50, ranging from 3.00 to 3.30, with standard deviations between 0.54 and 0.72. The grand mean of 3.14 indicates strong agreement among respondents.

Research Question 2: What are problem-solving pedagogical strategies by teachers for improving pupils’ performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondent on problem-solving pedagogical strategies by teachers for improving pupils’ performance in mathematics in Educational District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia.

S/N	Problem-solving pedagogical strategies includes;	Mean	SD	Decision
7	Pupils to explore and discover solution on their own by providing them with problems that require critical thinking and exploration.	3.12	0.72	Agreed
8	Presenting pupils with problem that are relevant to real-life situations.	3.15	0.70	Agreed
9	Organizing pupils into small groups to work on project together.	3.20	0.68	Agreed
10	Set up activities where pupils used to solve math problems to progress in the narrative	3.21	0.68	Agreed
11	Teaching pupils to break down problems into smaller, manageable steps.	3.24	0.67	Agreed
12	Pupils taught using the problem-solving approach exhibit improved communication skills during mathematics activities compared to those taught using traditional methods.	2.40	0.86	Disagreed
Grand Mean		3.05		Agreed

Table 2 indicates that respondents agreed items 7–11 represent problem-solving strategies, with mean scores ranging from 3.12 to 3.24. Item 12, however, had a mean score of 2.40, below the acceptance benchmark, suggesting disagreement. Overall, the grand mean of 3.05 reflects general agreement that problem-solving strategies positively impact pupils’ performance.

Research Question 3: What are collaborative pedagogical strategies by teachers for improving pupils’ performance in mathematics in Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia?

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondent on collaborative pedagogical strategies by teachers for improving pupils’ performance in mathematics in Educational District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia.

S/N	Collaborative learning pedagogical strategies includes;	Mean	SD	Decision
13	Have pupils work together on counting, sorting, and pattern activities using toys or classroom items.	3.20	0.68	Agreed
14	. Introduce games that require teamwork to solve math challenges, making learning fun and interactive.	3.30	0.64	Agreed
15	The collaborative method leads to higher engagement and participation in mathematic classes, resulting in better performance compared to traditional teaching method.	3.11	0.70	Agreed
16	Set up activities where pupils used to solve math problems to progress in the narrative	3.24	0.68	Agreed
17	Pair more advanced pupils with those who need help, fostering a sense of responsibility and cooperation.	3.40	0.60	Agreed
18	Create story problems that require group input to solve, encouraging discussion and teamwork.	3.15	0.72	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.23		Agreed

Table 3 shows that respondents agreed items 13–18 represent collaborative learning strategies, with mean scores ranging from 3.11 to 3.40 and standard deviations between 0.60 and 0.72. The grand mean of 3.23 confirms strong agreement that collaborative learning strategies enhance pupils’ performance in mathematics.

Discussion of Findings

The findings confirm that teachers in District 5A recognize hands-on instructional strategies as highly effective in improving pupils’ mathematical performance. Manipulatives such as blocks, counters, and geometric shapes help pupils visualize abstract concepts, making mathematics more concrete and accessible. Studies such as Furner (2024) emphasize that manipulatives and digital tools like GeoGebra foster deeper conceptual understanding and confidence in mathematics, bridging the gap between abstract reasoning and practical application. Incorporating real-world activities, such as measuring classroom objects or using natural elements like leaves and stones, aligns with experiential learning principles. Vale and Barbosa (2023) highlight that active learning strategies integrating physical and contextual tasks significantly

enhance comprehension and retention. In District 5A, where resources are limited, leveraging locally available materials provides cost-effective yet impactful opportunities for meaningful learning.

Hands-on strategies also encourage collaborative engagement through games and puzzles, which improve both motivation and achievement. Belle (2015) notes that instructional approaches combining physical activities with peer interaction foster cognitive and social growth. The findings in District 5A resonate with this, showing that pupils benefit not only academically but also socially when mathematics is taught through interactive, activity-based methods. The strong agreement among teachers underscores the contextual appropriateness of hands-on strategies in Liberia, where resource constraints demand creativity in teaching. As Accelerate Learning (2024) reports, instructional methods emphasizing engagement and interaction are critical for boosting mathematics outcomes globally, and the District 5A findings demonstrate that such approaches can be adapted effectively even in low-resource environments.

The study revealed that problem-solving strategies are widely accepted as effective in enhancing pupils' mathematical achievement. Encouraging pupils to explore solutions independently fosters critical thinking, resilience, and ownership of learning. Santos-Trigo (2024) argues that advances in mathematics education occur through problem formulation and exploration, highlighting the importance of guiding learners to break down complex tasks into manageable steps. Teachers in District 5A emphasized real-life problem contexts as particularly effective, making mathematics meaningful and applicable to everyday situations such as farming, trading, and household activities. Fülöp (2015) demonstrated that problem-solving activities grounded in variation theory improve students' ability to transfer mathematical knowledge to real-world scenarios, reinforcing the relevance of contextualized learning.

Group-based problem-solving activities further enhance collaboration and communication, aligning with Vale and Barbosa's (2023) findings that active learning strategies combining problem-solving with peer interaction foster both cognitive and social development. Pupils working in groups in District 5A demonstrated improved engagement and performance, underscoring the value of collaborative problem-solving. However, one item related to communication skills scored below the acceptance benchmark, suggesting challenges in facilitating mathematical discourse. Research indicates that effective problem-solving requires structured opportunities for communication and reflection (Santos-Trigo, 2024). Addressing this

gap through targeted teacher training could strengthen the overall impact of problem-solving strategies, ensuring that pupils not only solve problems but also articulate their reasoning and engage in meaningful mathematical dialogue.

The findings strongly support collaborative learning strategies as effective in improving pupils' mathematical performance. Activities such as group counting, sorting, and pattern recognition foster peer-to-peer learning and collective problem-solving. Muhamad Fadzil and Osman (2025) highlight that collaborative learning methods in mathematics enhance pedagogy by promoting shared responsibility and interdependence. In District 5A, teamwork-based games and interactive challenges were identified as impactful, reducing mathematics anxiety and transforming learning into a shared, enjoyable experience. Jabaka (2025) reports that collaborative teaching strategies, including cooperative learning and structured group tasks, significantly improve achievement, engagement, and retention in mathematics, findings that align closely with the district's outcomes.

Pairing advanced pupils with those needing support emerged as particularly effective, fostering responsibility, empathy, and mutual achievement. Firdaus and Satriawan (2025) emphasize that collaborative learning develops critical thinking by encouraging students to share ideas and co-construct solutions. Peer tutoring not only benefits struggling learners but also reinforces the knowledge of advanced pupils, creating a mutually beneficial dynamic. Beyond immediate academic gains, collaborative learning strategies prepare pupils for future academic and professional challenges by cultivating higher-order skills such as teamwork, negotiation, and critical thinking. As Jabaka (2025) and Muhamad Fadzil and Osman (2025) argue, collaborative approaches are essential for equipping students with 21st-century competencies. The findings in District 5A demonstrate that embedding collaboration into mathematics instruction fosters both cognitive and social growth, positioning pupils for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study from Education District 5A, Grand Bassa County, Liberia, demonstrate that hands-on instructional strategies, problem-solving approaches, and collaborative learning methods are all effective in enhancing pupils' mathematical performance, each contributing uniquely to comprehension, engagement, and achievement. Hands-on strategies

contextualize abstract concepts through tangible experiences, problem-solving approaches cultivate critical thinking and resilience by linking mathematics to real-life scenarios, and collaborative learning fosters teamwork, peer support, and motivation, equipping pupils with essential 21st-century skills. Together, these pedagogical strategies not only improve mathematical proficiency but also address the socio-economic and educational challenges of the district, offering evidence-based pathways for teachers and policymakers to strengthen mathematics education and prepare learners for future academic and professional success.

Recommendations

- 1. Strengthen Hands-on Instructional Practices:** Teachers should consistently integrate manipulatives, real-life objects, and locally available materials (e.g., stones, leaves, classroom items) into mathematics lessons. This approach contextualizes abstract concepts, enhances comprehension, and ensures cost-effective learning in resource-constrained environments.
- 2. Enhance Problem-Solving Pedagogy:** Professional development programs should train teachers to design problem-solving tasks that connect mathematics to pupils' daily experiences, such as farming, trading, and household activities. Structured opportunities for mathematical discourse should also be emphasized to strengthen communication skills and collaborative reasoning.
- 3. Promote Collaborative Learning Models:** Schools should adopt collaborative learning strategies such as peer tutoring, group projects, and teamwork-based games. Pairing advanced pupils with those needing support fosters responsibility, empathy, and shared achievement, while reducing mathematics anxiety and improving motivation.
- 4. Policy and Curriculum Integration:** Education authorities should embed hands-on, problem-solving, and collaborative learning strategies into the mathematics curriculum and teacher training frameworks. This ensures consistency across schools and aligns classroom practices with global best standards for 21st-century skills development.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PREDICTION READING STRATEGY AND 5TH GRADE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH IN BOMI COUNTY, LIBERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in English in Bomi County, Liberia. This study adopted the correlational survey research design. The population for the study comprises of comprises 314 public primary school teachers in 71 public primary schools in Senjeh District of Bomi County Northwestern Liberia 2022/2023 academic session. The sample for the study comprises approximately 142 teachers. The instrument for data collection is a 15-item structured questionnaire which was titled the Use of Prediction Reading Strategy Questionnaire (UPRSQ). The questionnaire is structured from a pool of literature on a 4-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with weighted scores of 4,3,2,1. The questionnaire was validated by three experts one from the department of education foundations (Measurement and Evaluation unit), one from the department of early childhood and primary education both from the Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. One validates was a classroom teacher in the Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach alpha statistics, and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. The achievement scores of the 5th grade pupils in reading comprehension and grammar were collected from the classroom teachers and used in this study. Data was collected through the use of google form and emails. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) and linear regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that a moderate positive relationship exists between the use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension; a low positive relationship exists between the use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in grammar in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. The hypothesis tested revealed that there is a significant relationship between use

of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in reading comprehension; also, there is a significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. Conclusions were made and it was recommended among others that teachers should endeavour to use strategies like prediction reading strategy which was reported to correlate with the subjects taught at the primary school level.

Keywords: *prediction, reading, strategy, students, academic achievement, English language*

Introduction

Background to the Study

Developing countries like Liberia have made tremendous progress in getting children into the classroom and more children worldwide are now in school for formal education. Verma, Doharey and Verma (2023) opined that education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through various forms of learning. Learning is the systematic and institutional process of statutory learning and development, typically through formal institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. Learning can also occur through informal channel such as family community workplace settings among other mediums. Enrolment into school guarantee learning, but seem not to be, as stipulated by the 2018 World Development Report (WDR). This report cut across the different levels of education which among others includes the primary education level.

The primary education is the bedrock on which other levels of education lie. It also provides the vital necessities which are fundamental in developing the primary skills. The Liberian education system follows a 3–9–3–4 structure: three years of Early-Childhood Education (ECE), nine years of basic education (six years lower basic, three years upper basic), then three years of either secondary or TVET, followed by four years of tertiary education. Obidike and Onyekwelu (2019) defined primary education as education given to children aged 6-12 prior to transition into secondary school in Nigeria. Obidike and Onyekwelu (2019) also stated that, this level of education provides the child for physical, motor, health nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and social development. The goal of the primary school curriculum is to attain universal literacy, numeracy and socio-economic understanding so as to facilitate the betterment of the life of learners and society. These objectives are translated into action terms that make provision for knowledge, skills and values necessary to permit the individual to: communicate effectively, calculate and numerate with ease; understand the socio-cultural environment and participate in civic life in a meaningful manner among others (Endline Evaluation Report, 2022). Even though the attainment of goals seems to be limited by challenges.

The education system faces significant challenges in Liberia, including limited resources, inadequate teacher training on innovative teaching strategies, and low literacy rates among pupils (Ministry of Education, Liberia, 2021). Learning core subjects in schools is an indispensable and critical element in contemporary society. The reading comprehension and grammar itself currently holds an indisputable position and status

amidst the world's major languages (Obiakor and Malu, 2020). Being able to speak, read, write and listen are much needed and advantageous skills. However, the teaching and learning of school subjects seems to be faced with issues bothering around teaching strategies adopted in teaching. However, some report have shown prediction reading strategy to be effective in teaching similar subjects.

Prediction is one of the comprehension processing skills anchoring interactive approach instruction. Learners need prediction skills to understand text passages and improve performance in reading comprehension. The application of prediction skills in reading enables learners to make guesses about the meaning of texts before reading, after which comparing their predictions with the actual contents of such texts (Nguyen, 2016). Nguyen (2016) further stated that prediction reading strategy is the ability of pupils to get meaning from a text by making informed predictions. Prediction reading strategy is used as a way for pupils to connect their existing knowledge to new information from a text to get meaning from what they read. According to Alfisyahrin (2022), prediction strategy is a human attitude that refers to the ability to think and relies on previous experience or knowledge. Efforts to be successful in predicting something can be helped by understanding the clues on the cover of the book, the title of the book, the pictures on the book among others. In addition, Peter cited in Alfisyahrin (2022) believes that prediction is a verbalization expressed in the future form. In the context of this study, prediction is a critical reading strategy that involves using clues from the text, prior knowledge, and logical inference to anticipate what will happen next in a narrative or to predict the content

of an informational text. This strategy engages pupils actively with the text, enhancing comprehension, retention, and engagement.

Prediction is an essential strategy in reading according to Bailey as cited in Alfisyahrin, (2022). Through this strategy, pupils get information from text, diagrams, images, and titles to find out what will happen in the story by predicting or guessing first before reading the text. Prediction reading strategy is a human attitude that refers to the ability to think and relies on previous experience or knowledge. In addition, Bailey as cited in Ayu, Mulyadi, and Firdaus, (2024), predicting allows pupils to use information from text, such as titles, pictures, and diagrams to anticipate what will happen in the story. In this case, pupils must /predict what will happen. Predicting can encourage pupils to express themselves and ask questions actively. Predicting reading strategies makes a huge difference to what is read before it is read and saves time on reader comprehension. This increases vocabulary and can make reading more effective for pupils.

Prediction strategy is characterized by the steps of estimating, verifying predictions, defining observations, listening, comparing, and explaining predictions with observations, revealing pupils' prior knowledge, and allowing them to find alternative solutions to complex problems. (Köse et al, as cited in Ozcan, and Uyanık, 2022). Prediction is an essential strategy in reading (Bailey, 2015). Through this strategy, students get information from text, diagrams, images, and titles to find out what will happen in the story by predicting or guessing first before reading the text.

Prediction strategy is a human attitude that refers to the ability to think and relies on previous experience or knowledge. Efforts to be successful in predicting something can be helped by understanding the clues on the cover of the book, the title of the book, the pictures on the book among others. In addition, Peter cited in Alfisyahrin (2022) believes that prediction is a verbalization expressed in the future form. Especially for texts that are read, predictions are statements about what will happen relative to the text's content, structure, the author's intent, plot, characters, or settings.

The use of prediction reading strategy in teaching enables learners to make guesses about the meaning of texts before reading, during reading, and after reading which they compare their predictions with the actual contents of such texts (Nguyen, 2016). Prediction reading strategies have been applied in most areas of teaching and learning. Prediction reading strategy can be used in reading comprehension passages as encapsulated in interactive approach instruction. Prediction reading strategy assists learners in decoding the meaning of passages by constructing guesses about the contents of texts to be read and comprehended. Banditvilai (2020) opined that reading strategies are among the most powerful factors in improving reading comprehension skills and it has a great impact on the pupils' achievement.

Reading comprehension is defined as a type of reading that aims to understand the contents of the reading (MS and Rachmadtullah. 2018). Reading comprehension is also the ability to read very complex word, understand, and interpret the contents of the reading. Comprehension is considered the essence of reading as it accounts for the process that

supports the effective extraction of meaning from a written passage (Alghonaim, 2020). According to MS and Rachmadtullah (2018), reading comprehension is described as a reading activity carried out to understand the contents of the reading, both explicitly and implicitly from the reading material. Operationally, reading comprehension is the act of assimilating a text passage read during the teaching and learning process. In reading comprehension, the learner is not only required to understand the contents of the reading, but he/she must also be able to analyze or evaluate and relate to what has been read to the experiences and previous knowledge they had. Helarde (2021) posited that reading comprehension has certain goals which include gaining success to full understanding of logical arguments, story sequences or text patterns, symbolic patterns, emotional additional tones, and also linguistic means used to achieve goals. Nonetheless, the attainment of these goals seems to be limited due to the strategy employed during the teaching and learning process in teaching pupils reading comprehension in English. Grammar is also a topic in English which is taught among pupils at primary level of education. The present study also examines its relationship with the prediction reading strategy.

Nonetheless, this issue of low academic achievement is clearly seen in grammar classes. Grammar is often traditionally taught and practiced in isolation from communication skills (Sarah, Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri, 2016). Thus, grammar learners reported that although they learn a lot of grammar, it is difficult to use grammar correctly (Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman, 2015). A number of studies have been conducted and the research of Akbash, Sahin, and Yaykiran (2016) indicate that there is a correlation

between reading comprehension results and the factors of reading comprehension and reading comprehension contribute positively to the results of factors affecting reading comprehension. Other findings by Manihuruk (2020) show that there is a positive moderate correlation between factors affecting reading comprehension and reading comprehension. According to Gultiano (2022), pupils often experience poor reading comprehension due to their failure to read strategically and to spontaneously monitor their understanding while reading. Educators have become dissatisfied with reading comprehension results, studies need to turn their attention to broader views of reading and devote themselves to current issues in reading comprehension to make some innovations and new directions on how to improve reading comprehension (Paris, as cited in Gultiano, 2022). In the same vein, Sumirat, Padilah, and Haryudin (2019), conducted a study to examine the use of predictions strategy in improving pupils' reading comprehension. Sumirat, Padilah, and Haryudin reported that predictions strategy has significant impact on students' reading comprehension. It is essential for the teacher to improve the quality of English teaching learning process, especially in writing activities. The results of the research show that peer editing was believed to be successful in improving the students' writing skill and overall academic achievement.

Pupil's academic achievement can be defined as the learning outcome of pupils which includes the knowledge, skills, and ideas gained and retained through their course of study within and outside the classroom situation (Odagboyi, 2015). Cheng, Wang, and Liu (2019) stated that academic achievement is one of the explicit indicators of pupil achievement in

school. The teacher could use a pupils' achievement on the other hand as an indicator in assessing his/her teaching method (Samba and Ogah, 2020). Operationally, academic achievement represents learning outcomes and indicates the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university (Okolocha and Okeke, 2018). Academic achievement is commonly measured using examination or continuous assessment. However, despite the various teaching methods employed by primary school teachers, pupils still perform poorly in reading comprehension, grammar and arithmetic. This is a backdrop which informs the present study to examine the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in Bomi County, Liberia.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in English in Bomi, county, Liberia. Specifically, this study determined:

1. the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension in Bomi, county, Liberia.
2. the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in grammar in Bomi, county, Liberia.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension in Bomi, county, Liberia?
2. What is the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in grammar in Bomi, county, Liberia?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance

1. There is no significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension in Bomi, county, Liberia.
2. There is no significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in grammar in Bomi, county, Liberia.

Methods

This study adopted the correlation survey research design. According to Nworgu (2015), a correlational design is a research design that seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables as well as indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables. It was conducted among 5th grade teachers in Senjeh District in Bomi, county, Liberia. The population for the study comprises of comprises 314

public primary school teachers in 71 public primary schools in Senjeh District of Bomi County Northwestern Liberia 2022/2023 academic session (Source: Liberia Education Statistics Annual School Census 2019-20 Final Report.pdf). The sample for the study comprises approximately 142 teachers. In the first stage simple random sampling technique of toss of coin was used to select 2 teachers from the existing 71 public primary schools. The second stage employed the use of simple random sampling technique of balloting to select Ten 5th grade teachers from each of the sampled public primary schools in Senjeh District of Bomi County. This amounts to 176 teachers selected in all.

The instrument for data collection is a 15-item structured questionnaire which was titled the Use of Prediction Reading Strategy Questionnaire (UPRSQ). The questionnaire is structured from a pool of literature on a 4-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with weighted scores of 4,3,2,1. The questionnaire was validated by three experts one from the department of education foundations (Measurement and Evaluation option), one from the department of early childhood and primary education both from the faculty of education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. One validate was a classroom teacher in the Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach alpha statistics, and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. The achievement scores of the 5th grade pupils in in English which contained reading comprehension and grammar scores was collected from the classroom teachers and used in this study. Data was collected through the use of google form and emails. The class room teachers served as research assistants as they assisted in assigning

codes to the achievement scores of the pupils. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) and linear regression analysis. Specifically, Pearson r was used to answer the research questions, while linear regression analyses was used to test the null hypotheses raised. In testing the hypothesis, where the p -value is greater than or equal to the significant value 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected, otherwise, where the p -value is lesser than or equal to the significant value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Data analysis was computed using the Statistical Package for Social Science Version 27.

Results

Data for this study was analyzed and presented as follows;

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension in Bomi, county, Liberia?

Table 1: Pearson r summary on the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension (n=142).

Sources of variation	N	Prediction reading strategy r	Reading comprehension r	Remark
Prediction reading strategy	142	1.00	0.64	Moderate positive relationship
Reading comprehension	142	0.64	1.00	

In table 1 it was observed that a moderate positive relationship of 0.643 exists between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading

comprehension in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. This implies a corresponding increase in the use prediction reading strategy scores and the academic achievement scores of students in reading comprehension.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in grammar in Bomi, county, Liberia?

Table 2: Pearson r on the relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in grammar (n=142)

Sources of variation	N	Prediction reading strategy r	Grammar r	Remark
Prediction reading strategy	142	1.00	0.31	Low positive relationship
Grammar	142	0.31	1.00	

In table 2 it was observed that a low positive relationship of 0.31 exists between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in grammar in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. This implies that the scores in the use of prediction reading strategy and academic achievement scores of students decrease correspondingly.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in reading comprehension in Bomi, county, Liberia.

Table 4: Linear regression summary on the significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension (n=176).

N	Cal. r	df	Cal. t	Pvalue	Remark
142	0.64	140	3.40	0.00	Significant

Table 4 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 140df, the calculated t 3.40 with a Pvalue 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This goes to show that there is a significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in reading comprehension in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar in Bomi, county, Liberia.

Table 5: Linear regression summary on the significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar (n=176).

N	Cal. r	Df	Cal. t	Pvalue	Remark
142	0.31	140	4.61	0.00	Significant

Table 5 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance and 176df, the calculated t 4.61 with Pvalue 0.00 which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar in Senjeh District of Bomi, county, Liberia.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that a moderate positive relationship exists between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in reading comprehension in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. This implies a corresponding increase in the use of prediction reading strategy scores and the achievement scores of students in reading comprehension. Correspondingly, the null hypothesis reveals that there is a significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade

students' achievement in reading comprehension in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. This conforms with the findings of Akbash, Sahin, and Yaykiran (2016), which indicated that there is a correlation between reading comprehension results and the factors of reading comprehension and reading comprehension contribute positively to the results of factors affecting reading comprehension.

The study also reported that a low positive relationship exists between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. This implies that the scores in the use of prediction reading strategy and achievement scores of students decrease correspondingly. The hypothesis found that there is a significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar in Senjeh District of Bomi, county, Liberia. This aligns with the findings of Manihuruk (2020), which showed that there is a positive moderate correlation between factors affecting reading comprehension and grammar.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that a moderate positive relationship exists between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' academic achievement in reading comprehension, and a significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in reading comprehension in Senjeh District of Bomi County, Liberia. On the contrary, a low positive relationship

exists between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar, and a significant relationship between use of prediction reading strategy and 5th grade students' achievement in grammar in Senjeh District of Bomi, county, Liberia.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that;

1. Teachers should endeavour to use strategies like prediction reading strategy which was found to correlate with the subjects taught at the primary school level.
2. There is need to sensitize teachers on textbook usage, while supplementing with improvised materials; guide learners through titles; as well as update teacher training curriculum by integrating inter alia, emerging instructional methods embracing Information and Communication Technology and entrenching innovation in resource mobilization and use.
3. English teachers could apply and explore more deeply the prediction strategy in improving pupils' reading and grammar skills.

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EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF ICT- BASED FACILITIES IN KINDERGARTEN READING INSTRUCTION IN MARSHALL DISTRICT, MARGIBI COUNTY, LIBERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the extent of utilization of ICT – Based facilities in kindergarten reading instruction within Marshall District, Liberia. Two research questions and two hypotheses were posted to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 348 Early Childhood teachers in 115 ECE schools in rural and urban areas in Marshall District, Margibi County. All the 348 ECE teachers were used for the study. However, only 174 respondents properly filled and returned the questionnaire. Data were collected using a self-structured instrument titled Extent of Utilization of ICT-Based Facilities in Kindergarten Reading Instruction Questionnaire (EUIBSKRIQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Education. The reliability coefficients were obtained using the Cronbach Alpha method which yielded 0.90 and 0.73 confirming strong internal consistency of the instrument. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used for analysis, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level using t-test statistics. Findings revealed that ICT facilities are used to a low extent, with teachers relying mainly on basic tools such as printers and literacy apps, while advanced technologies like computers, smartphones, and internet services remain underutilized (grand mean = 2.27). Significant disparities were observed between urban and rural schools, reflecting inequities in infrastructure and access. Despite these limitations, teachers expressed strong confidence in ICT's effectiveness for enhancing phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension (grand mean = 3.13), indicating that external constraints rather than resistance hinder integration. Years of teaching experience also influenced ICT use, with experienced teachers adapting tools more effectively. The study recommends strengthening

infrastructure, ensuring equitable resource distribution, and providing continuous training and mentorship to align teachers' positive perceptions with practical opportunities for ICT integration in early childhood classrooms.

Keywords: *ICT integration, Kindergarten reading instruction, Early childhood education, Urban–rural disparities, educational technology utilization.*

Introduction

The teaching of English language is directed towards mastering the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, reading is foundational for academic success and lifelong learning. Early childhood education is a critical period for developing reading skills, as it sets the stage for future educational attainment and cognitive development. The National Institute for Literacy (2018) observed that children who develop strong reading skills early are more likely to excel academically and exhibit greater cognitive and language development. Snow, Burns, and Griffin (2018) similarly emphasized that early literacy development is crucial for later reading proficiency and overall academic success.

Reading is considered the most vital skill in learning a second language. Academic success depends largely on reading effectiveness. Early reading instruction focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Yadav, 2014). The ability to read proficiently by the end of third grade is a significant predictor of future academic success, marking the transition from learning to read to reading to learn (Annie Casey Foundation, 2018). Thus, reading requires deliberate cultivation through proven instructional methods, ranging from traditional approaches to technology-based strategies.

Modern methods of delivering education have transformed teaching and learning globally, aided by technological advancement (Pantoñal, 2022). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has emerged as a potent tool in education, boosting learners' motivation and engagement. ICT prepares students for digital-age literacy, inventive thinking, higher-order reasoning, effective communication, and productivity. According to Johnson et al. (2020) noted that ICT encompasses digital tools such as computers, tablets, interactive whiteboards, and educational software, which facilitate interactive learning experiences. Neumann (2018)

highlighted that ICT tools provide multisensory experiences catering to diverse learning styles, making reading more engaging. Educational apps and software offer interactive stories and games, while adaptive technologies personalize learning by adjusting to a child's reading level (Hassler, Major, and Hennessy, 2016). In similar view, McKenney and Voogt (2019) found that ICT enhances phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and comprehension. Interactive e-books provide visual and auditory support, aiding vocabulary retention. Adaptive learning technologies ensure personalized instruction, meeting diverse needs (Tamim, Bernard, Borokhovski, Abrami, and Schmid, 2011). UNESCO (2021) emphasized ICT's role in achieving inclusive and equitable education, while the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (2020) stressed its potential to support marginalized populations.

National policies also promote ICT integration. The European Union's Digital Education Action Plan supports digital technologies in education (European Commission, 2020). In the United States, the National Education Technology Plan envisions equitable access to high-quality education through technology (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Despite these efforts, disparities persist. Limited access to technology and inadequate teacher training hinders ICT use in classrooms (Trucano, 2015). The International Telecommunication Union (2020) reported significant disparities in ICT access between urban and rural areas, and between high- and low-income countries, including Liberia. Equitable access remains essential.

Liberia's education system faces challenges such as limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and low literacy rates (Ministry of Education, Liberia, 2021). The Ministry of Education has developed policies including a National ECD Policy, Early Learning Framework, ECD Curriculum, and Professional Development Framework to strengthen early childhood education. However, ICT utilization varies by school location and teachers' years of experience. Wilson (2015) argued that professional experience enhances teaching skills, suggesting that years of experience influence ICT use. USAID (2023) reported that fewer than one-third of Liberian children aged three to five attend early childhood programs, and many teachers rely on rote-learning methods. Initiatives such as Read Liberia have distributed teaching materials and piloted play-based programs, but challenges remain.

Statement of the Problem

In Marshall District, Margibi County, Liberia, kindergarten pupils continue to struggle with reading instruction despite the recognized importance of early literacy. ICT has potential to enhance learning outcomes, yet its utilization in kindergarten reading instruction remains limited. This study therefore examined the extent of ICT-based facility utilization in Marshall District.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities in kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Margibi County, Liberia. Specifically, it examined:

1. The extent of ICT utilization for kindergarten reading instruction.
2. The perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of ICT utilization for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Margibi County, Liberia?
2. What is the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Margibi County, Liberia?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the extent of ICT utilization for kindergarten reading instruction.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction.

Methods

The study investigated extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities in kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Margibi County, Liberia. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the

study comprised 348 Early Childhood teachers in 115 ECE schools in rural and urban areas in Marshall District, Margibi County. All the 348 ECE teachers were used for the study. However, only 174 respondents properly filled and returned the questionnaire. Data were collected using a self-structured instrument titled Extent of Utilization of ICT-Based Facilities in Kindergarten Reading Instruction Questionnaire (EUIBSKRIQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Education. The reliability coefficients were obtained using the Cronbach Alpha method which yielded 0.90 and 0.73 confirming strong internal consistency of the instrument. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used for analysis, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level using t-test statistics.

Results

Research Question One: What is the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia (N=174).

s/n	Utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction	Mean	SD	Decision
1	ICT based facilities like Smart phone/Tablet are used to access digital learning materials for pupils during kindergarten reading instruction	2.45	0.77	LE
2	ICT based facilities like computers are used to store and retrieve information for kindergarten reading instruction	1.59	0.68	VLE
3	Teachers use internet service to access learning information for kindergarten reading instruction	1.55	0.59	LE
4	Teachers use printer to produce teaching materials for kindergarten reading instruction	3.10	0.55	HE
5	Teachers use educational apps to enhance kindergarten reading instruction	2.12	0.58	LE
6	Teachers use Literacy apps to enhance kindergarten reading instruction	2.83	0.62	HE
Grand mean		2.27		LE

HE=high extent, LE=low extent, VLE=very low extent

The data in Table 1 reported the mean and standard deviation on the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia. Teachers in the district rated items 4 and 6 to a high extent (HE), while items 1, 3 and 5 was rated to low extent (LE), item 2 was rated to very low extent (VLE). The grand mean score was 2.27, this implies that ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction was utilized to a low extent in Marshall District, Liberia. The standard deviation scores showed homogeneity in the respondent’s response (0.55-0.77).

Research Question Two: Perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia. (N=174).

s/n	Perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction	Mean	SD	Decision
7	Smart phone/Tablet is effective in accessing digital materials to enhance kindergarten reading instruction	3.12	0.42	HE
8	Computer is effective when used to store and retrieve information for kindergarten reading instruction	3.16	0.37	HE
9	Internet service is effective for providing access to learning information for kindergarten reading instruction	3.13	0.35	HE
10	Printer device is effective for producing teaching materials for kindergarten reading instruction	3.28	0.45	HE
11	Educational apps are effective when used during kindergarten reading instruction	2.87	0.35	HE
12	Literacy apps are effective for teaching Phonics and letter recognition during kindergarten reading instruction	3.20	0.40	HE
Grand mean		3.13		HE

HE=High extent

The results in Table 2 reported the mean and standard deviation on the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia. Teachers in the district rated items 1-6 to a high extent (HE). The grand mean score was 3.13 and this implies that teachers rated the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for

kindergarten reading instruction to a high extent in Marshall District, Liberia. The standard deviation scores showed homogeneity in the respondent’s response (0.35-0.45).

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia.

Table 3: t-test summary on the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	Tvalue	Sig. value	p-value	Decision
Urban	114	14.74	2.65					
				172	9.80	0.00	0.05	Significant
Rural	60	11.03	1.72					

Table 3 showed the t-test summary of teachers in urban and rural areas on the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia. From the analysis, the significant value is less than the *P*value ($0.00 > 0.05$), hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the extent of utilization of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia.

Table 4: t-test summary on the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	Tvalue	Sig. value	p-value	Decision
Urban	114	19.26	1.65					
				172	9.80	0.00	0.05	Significant
Rural	60	17.86	0.85					

The result presented in Table 4 showed the t-test summary on the mean response of teachers in urban and rural areas on the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia. From the analysis, the significant value is less than the P value ($0.00 > 0.05$), hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural areas on the perceived effectiveness of ICT-based facilities for kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia.

Discussion of Findings

The study established that ICT facilities are utilized to a low extent in kindergarten reading instruction in Marshall District, Liberia. While teachers reported relatively higher use of printers and literacy apps, the use of more advanced tools such as computers, smartphones, and internet services was minimal. This imbalance suggests that teachers rely more on basic ICT tools that are readily available, while the integration of more interactive and resource-rich technologies remains limited. The grand mean score of 2.27 confirms that ICT integration in reading instruction is still at an early stage, with significant room for improvement.

The significant difference between urban and rural teachers further highlights inequities in access and utilization. Urban schools, with relatively better infrastructure, demonstrate higher levels of ICT use, while rural schools lag behind due to limited resources and connectivity challenges. This disparity underscores the structural barriers that hinder equitable ICT adoption across different contexts. Thus, while teachers recognize the importance of ICT, systemic issues such as inadequate infrastructure, poor internet access, and resource distribution continue to constrain effective utilization in early childhood classrooms.

Despite the low extent of utilization, teachers rated ICT facilities as highly effective in enhancing kindergarten reading instruction. The grand mean score of 3.13 indicates strong confidence in the potential of ICT tools such as smartphones, computers, internet services, and literacy apps to improve phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. This positive perception reflects teachers' awareness of ICT's pedagogical value and its ability to make reading instruction more engaging, interactive, and learner-centered. It also suggests that teachers are not resistant to ICT adoption but rather constrained by external factors.

The significant difference between urban and rural teachers' perceptions shows that exposure influences attitudes toward ICT effectiveness. Urban teachers, who have greater access to ICT tools, perceive their benefits more strongly, while rural teachers—though still positive—may have limited practical experience to reinforce their beliefs. This finding reveals a paradox: teachers across contexts believe ICT is effective, yet actual classroom integration remains low. Bridging this gap requires targeted interventions that align teachers' positive perceptions with practical opportunities for ICT use in reading instruction. The study found that teachers' years of experience significantly influence ICT utilization in kindergarten reading instruction. Experienced teachers are more likely to adapt ICT tools effectively, drawing on their accumulated pedagogical skills and confidence in managing diverse classroom situations. Conversely, less experienced teachers may struggle with integrating ICT due to limited exposure, inadequate training, or apprehension about using technology in instructional settings. This variation highlights the importance of professional development in equipping teachers at all levels with the skills needed to harness ICT for literacy instruction.

This finding aligns with Wilson (2015), who emphasized that professional experience enhances skill development and adaptability. However, it also suggests that experience alone is not sufficient; without structured ICT training, even seasoned teachers may fail to maximize technology's potential. Therefore, years of experience act as a moderating factor, but systemic support in the form of continuous training and mentorship is essential to ensure that both novice and veteran teachers can effectively utilize ICT facilities in early childhood classrooms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights that while teachers in Marshall District, Liberia, recognize the effectiveness of ICT in enhancing kindergarten reading instruction, actual utilization remains low due to infrastructural challenges, inequitable resource distribution, and limited training opportunities, particularly in rural schools. The findings reveal a paradox where teachers' positive perceptions of ICT's pedagogical value are not matched by practical integration, with disparities between urban and rural contexts further widening the gap. Moreover, years of teaching experience influence ICT adoption, underscoring the importance of professional development and mentorship to equip both novice and veteran teachers with the necessary skills. Ultimately, bridging this gap requires systemic support, equitable resource allocation, and continuous training

to transform teachers' confidence in ICT into meaningful classroom practice that fosters literacy development in early childhood education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should help to strengthen ICT Infrastructure in Schools by providing reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and access to computers and smartphones, especially in rural schools. And also, by establish ICT resource centers to ensure equitable access across urban and rural contexts.
2. Promote equitable resource distribution by prioritizing rural schools in ICT investment to bridge the gap between urban and rural teachers.
3. Enhancing teacher training and professional development by Organizing continuous ICT-focused workshops and mentorship programs for both novice and experienced teachers.

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TEACHERS' QUALITY AND GENDER AS PREDICTORS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This Study investigated teacher quality and gender as predictors of primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State. Five research questions and five null hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was employed for the study. A sample of three hundred and sixty (360) primary school teachers out of a population of 11,971 was used. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were the Teacher Quality and Gender questionnaire (TQQG) and academic performance scale. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to compute reliability coefficient which yielded a coefficient of 0.88 for the teachers' verbal ability and 0.65 for teachers' use of instructional skills. The research questions and the hypotheses were analyzed using regression analysis, Findings revealed that teachers' qualification predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a weak degree, teachers' verbal ability predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a modest degree, teachers' use of instructional skills predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a modest degree, teachers' gender predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra state to a weak degree and teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender jointly predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teacher education institutions should place stronger emphasis on practical training that develops verbal communication skills and mastery of instructional strategies

alongside theoretical knowledge. Ministries of Education and school administrators should organize regular capacity-building workshops and seminars focused on effective communication and instructional practices for primary school teachers and that recruitment and promotion of teachers should not be based solely on academic qualifications but should incorporate evaluation of teaching competence, classroom performance, and communication ability among others.

Keywords: *Teacher Quality, gender, academic performance, verbal ability, instructional skill, teacher qualification.*

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right that is essentially meant to aid learners in realizing their potentials. Since the United Nations declaration in 1948, which emphasized that education is a human right, efforts have been made to ensure that children; both boys and girls across the world access education. However, it is now a common concern that the main challenge in education is not simply getting children into schools but also improving the overall quality of schooling and addressing threat participation.

As noted by United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) (2018), if both quality and access are taken into consideration, then children enrolled in primary schools are likely to pursue and complete the full basic education cycle, achieve expected learning outcomes and successfully transit to secondary schools. All over the world, education has been regarded as an indispensable tool for societal development and transformation. It is on this basis that the Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2013) stated in her National Policy on Education that education is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. To achieve the goals of education, Federal government of Nigeria from time to time initiates various policies and programmes. These policies and programmes are achieved through the establishment of schools at various levels of which primary education is one of them. Primary education as stated by Okolocha and Okeke (2018), is a type of education received before the secondary level of education and it has its own goals and objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education. UNESCO (2019) emphasized that primary education serves as the foundation for lifelong learning and sustainable development, noting that the quality of education at this level largely determines learners' future academic success.

Globally, primary education is regarded as the cornerstone of the education system because it equips learners with basic literacy, numeracy, and social skills required for further learning. UNESCO (2021) asserted that effective primary education strengthens pupils' cognitive and social development, forming the basis for successful transition to secondary and tertiary education. Similarly, UNICEF (2020) reported that access to quality primary education significantly improves children's cognitive development and long-term academic achievement, particularly in developing countries. More recently, UNICEF (2023) highlighted that strong primary education systems are essential for reducing learning poverty and ensuring pupils' smooth transition to post-primary education. In recognition of the importance of primary education, governments across the world have continued to invest heavily in this level of schooling. Primary education, in particular, occupies a strategic position in achieving national educational goals. Okeke and Okeke (2020) described primary education as the bedrock of Nigeria's education system, responsible for shaping pupils' intellectual, moral, and social development. In the context of this study, primary education is the foundation upon which other levels of education are built.

Despite the recognized importance of primary education, evidence shows that pupils' learning outcomes at this level remained below expectations. Reports from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2023) indicated that although enrolment in Nigerian primary schools has increased, many pupils still perform poorly in literacy and numeracy. This persistent underachievement raises concerns about the effectiveness of primary education delivery. Nwankwo and Umeh (2023) reported that weaknesses in primary education contribute significantly to pupils' academic difficulties at the secondary school level, thereby undermining the overall education system. Empirical studies further revealed that the quality of teaching received at the primary school level strongly influences pupils' academic performance. Eze and Obi (2021) observed that pupils' academic achievement in Nigeria is closely linked to the quality of instruction delivered by teachers in primary schools. Similarly, Okorie and Onwuka (2022) found that effective primary education significantly predicts pupils' achievement in core areas such as literacy and numeracy. Teveshote (2023) further opined that successful completion of primary education is a key determinant of pupils' retention, progression, and performance at higher levels of schooling.

Reports from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2023) indicated that many pupils still perform below expected standards in literacy and numeracy. This persistent underachievement has raised questions regarding the factors influencing pupils' academic outcomes. One major factor often implicated in pupils' learning outcomes is teacher quality. Empirical evidence suggests that the competence, pedagogical skills, experience, and subject mastery of teachers significantly determine how well pupils learn (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2022).

However, in many public schools in Anambra State, disparities exist in teacher recruitment, professional development, and classroom practices, which may affect the quality of instruction delivered to pupils which in turn can affect their academic performance. Given the foundational role of primary education and the continued concerns about pupils' academic performance, it becomes imperative to examine factors that influences learning outcomes at this level. One major factor consistently identified in literature is teacher quality, which encompasses teachers' qualifications, verbal ability, and instructional skills. Understanding how these teacher-related variables influence pupils' academic performance at the primary school level is essential for improving educational quality and achieving national development goals.

Academic performance is the measurement of pupils' achievement across various academic subjects. Teachers and education officials typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates and results from standardized tests (Okigbo and Esajobor 2024). Okigbo and Esajobor further stated that academic performance is the outcome of education; it is the extent to which a pupil, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic performance also means the knowledge and skills that students have mastered in a subject or a course. It is basically a measure of how well students have performed in the various assessment items set for them based on some educational criteria determined by professional educators (Yunlok 2014).

Academic performance has been defined and explained by several authors in different ways. According to Goshi (2020), academic performance is the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by pupils and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. Goshi added that these goals are measured by using continuous assessment or examinations results. Similarly, Ali, Tela and Saleh (2020) opined that academic performance is a measurable and observable behaviour of a pupil within a specific period. They

added that it consists of scores obtained by a student in an assessment such as class exercise, class test, mid-semester, mock examination, and end of semester examination. Amie-Ogan and Etuk (2020) opined that academic performance is the consequence of teaching and learning. Pupil's academic performance is seen as a pupils' scholastic standing at a given moment. For this study, pupils' academic performance is the achievement of an individual obtained through the use of evaluation instruments such as test, which may be written or oral. The academic standing of a learner concerning a subject matter is termed as a measure of learner academic performance.

Academic Performance is characterized by performance on tests associated with coursework and the performance of students on other types of examinations. However, pupil's low academic performance can be defined as low or weakness of the pupil's overall mark under the normal average in a study subject level as a result of a variety of reasons. Various studies have been carried out on the factors that affect academic performance of pupils in schools and universities. Some of the factors identified and reported to have affected the academic performance of pupils in these different settings are: pupils learning effort, previous or prior educational performance, self-motivation, the social-economic status of the pupil's parents, pupils' age, number of hours of study per day, tuition trends and the pupils' area of residence (rural or urban) (Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan and Ahmed, 2013). In fact, pupils' academic performance plays an important role in identifying graduates who will become great leaders and productive manpower for nations' economic and social development. Undoubtedly, the aim of enrolling a child in school is to achieve high in their academics especially at primary schools' level, which is the foundation for career building. Unfortunately, many primary school pupils are leaving this stage without performing high academically in core subjects, this poor performance limits the ease of transition to the post-primary school level (secondary school). Teachers as the major stakeholder in the learning environment could influence the learning process and overall performance of pupils in primary schools. Today, the need for improved academic performance of pupils has become universally accepted and that it depends on efficient and effective training of teachers.

Teachers at all levels of education play a decisive role in pivoting the growth and the direction of education. Teachers are in the centre of formulating and organizing effective teaching and learning activities and are highly essential for a successful operation of the

educational system (Amie-Ogan and Etuk 2020). Specifically, Filgona and Sakiyo (2020) opined that one key overriding factor for the success of pupils is the teacher. They are the most important component in the educational sectors and are highly instrumental to the success of any educational programme (Yakubu 2023). Therefore, the quality of any education system is a function of the teacher quality within the system (Bamidele and Adekola 2019). The success and effectiveness of any educational system is dependent on the quality of the teachers in the system and the training they acquired.

Teacher quality refers to the set of characteristics, competencies, and practices that make teachers effective in facilitating learning and improving student achievement. It encompasses both personal attributes (such as commitment, motivation, and professional ethics) and professional competencies (such as subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, and classroom management). Darling-Hammond (2017) described teacher quality as the single most important school-related factor influencing student learning outcomes,” stressing that teachers’ knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical approaches directly affect how well students understand and apply knowledge. Operationally, teacher quality refers to the skills, characteristics and effectiveness of a teacher in promoting pupils learning and achievement.

Moreover, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) emphasizes that teacher quality is multidimensional, covering instructional delivery, assessment literacy, classroom climate, and student engagement. This highlights that effective teaching is more than content delivery; it involves creating supportive learning environments that foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills among learners. It follows therefore that acquisition of relevant skills and expertise knowledge is necessary for teachers to carry out their duties effectively.

The works of several researchers hold that the success of any educational system is a reflection of the successful academic performance of the pupils. Christopher and Gary cited in Yakubu (2023) argued that one key overriding factor for the success of pupils’ academic performance is the academic qualification of the teacher. It was the opinion of Flipovic (2018) that shortage of qualified teachers is responsible for the poor academic achievement observable among the pupils. The views of Nwigwe and Arua (2019) implies that teacher academic qualification is fundamental to pupils’ academic performance. In view of this, several factors

such as teacher quality among other variables have been identified as predictors of poor academic achievement among pupils. Trude and Nilsen (2016) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and the professional teaching qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject.

Variables presumed to be indicative of teachers' competence which has been examined for their relationship to pupils learning include measures of academic ability, years of education, years of teaching experience, measures of subject matter and teaching knowledge, certification status, and teaching behaviors in the classroom. This is as proposed by Darling-Hammond in 1992. Along with these qualities listed by Darling Hammond, other teachers' variables still exist which can either positively or negatively predict pupils' performance. In the context of this study, the indices of teacher quality to be examined are teacher qualification, teachers' verbal ability and teachers' use of instructional skills.

Teaching qualification or teacher qualification is one of a number of academic and professional degrees that enables a person to become a registered teacher in school system (Adebanjo 2020). Such qualifications include, but are not limited to, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGDE), Professional Diploma in Education (PDE), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Aina and Olanipekun (2015) are of the view that teachers' qualification is a particular skill or type of experience or knowledge someone possesses to make him or her suitable to teach. Teachers' qualifications in this regard refer to all the skills a teacher requires to teach effectively. Such skills include formal education, experience, subject matter knowledge, pedagogy studies, duration of training, certificate/licensing and professional development.

Another key neurocognitive competence associated with academic performance of pupils is verbal ability. Wang and Zhang (2025) opined that verbal ability refers to the capacity to understand and use language effectively, including reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. According to Alloway and Alloway (2013), verbal ability is a key component of cognitive ability, encompassing various mental processes like logical reasoning, memory retention and language comprehension. These tasks require access to language functions such as lexical knowledge and literacy (Gonzalez et al., 2021) and other functions such as executive functioning, cognitive flexibility, strategic search processes, attention, working memory, and task monitoring

Teacher's use of instructional skill could be another variable which could predict the academic performance of pupils. Teachers use instructional strategies to help pupils become more independent and tactical learners. Instructional strategies can stimulate pupils and help them concentrate and merge information for understanding and remembering (Francisco and Celon, 2020).

The use of Instructional skills has been emphasized in Sub-Saharan Africa by various governments with the aim of improving the quality of education. Through effective use of instructional skills such as questioning, modelling, scaffolding, differentiated instruction and providing feedback among others, countries have sought to ensure that teaching policy is fully implemented; teachers work is appraised within the broader educational improvement agenda and realistic quality assurance frameworks. Lack of coherency between teaching policy and the broader components of education systems continue to be one of the greatest weaknesses affecting African education systems (UNESCO – IICBA, 2016).

Teacher's use of instructional skills has been viewed as the principal vehicle to enhance effective learning in schools, with head teachers as instructional administrators. As the Republic of Kenya Service of Training, Science and Innovation cited in Yego, Amimo, Mendoza-Role, (2020) noted, head teachers as the supervisors of their schools have the duty to guarantee that teachers actualize the set of educational programs and that effective learning occurs through the use of instructional skills. Teachers' use of instructional skill affects their capacity to simplify content to help pupils to understand. Gender is another factor that may influence the academic performance of pupils.

Gender remains an important variable in educational research, particularly in relation to teaching effectiveness and pupils' academic performance at the primary school level. In recent years, scholars have continued to debate whether the gender of teachers significantly influences pupils' learning outcomes. While some studies suggest that teacher gender may shape classroom interaction patterns, others argue that instructional competence rather than gender determines pupils' academic success (Okeke and Okechukwu, 2021; Eze and Obi, 2022). Several contemporary studies have examined gender differences in teaching styles and their implications for learning. For instance, Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2020) observed that female teachers at the primary level often demonstrate stronger nurturing behaviours, emotional support, and learner-

centred instructional approaches, which may enhance pupils' engagement and academic performance. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) reported that female teachers are more likely to employ inclusive and supportive pedagogical practices, particularly in early childhood and primary education settings. Conversely, studies by Ibrahim and Yusuf (2019) and Bello and Abubakar (2022) found that male teachers tend to emphasize classroom control and discipline, which may also positively influence pupils' academic outcomes.

Empirical evidence on the effect of teacher gender on pupils' academic performance, however, remains inconsistent. Afolabi (2019) reported a significant gender difference in favour of male teachers, while Saadu, Ajeigbe, and Olayonu (2022) found no significant difference in pupils' academic achievement based on teacher gender, particularly in numeracy skills. Okeke and Okechukwu, (2021) opined that female teachers tend to show more nurturing tendencies that may enhance pupils' performance, while others argued that male teachers enforces more discipline that equally supports learning outcomes. In another study, it was reported that pupils taught by male teacher achieve higher than those taught by female teachers this was in contrast with the findings of Adedipe cited in Afolabi and Audu (2017) who opined that pupils that are taught by female teachers performed significantly better than those taught by their female counterparts. Operationally, gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations associated with being male or female. In contrast, Okorie and Nwankwo (2023) opined that teacher gender alone does not significantly predict pupils' academic performance when instructional skills and teacher competence are controlled. These findings suggest that teachers' gender may interact with other teacher-related variables rather than acting as an independent determinant of academic performance.

Recent international studies further support this view. A meta-analysis by Kim and Cho (2020) concluded that the impact of teacher gender on pupils' achievement is minimal compared to factors such as teaching quality, verbal ability, and instructional strategies. Likewise, OECD (2022) emphasized that teacher effectiveness is primarily driven by pedagogical competence, classroom practices, and professional development rather than demographic characteristics such as gender. This position aligns with the view that teacher gender should be examined alongside other dimensions of teacher quality to fully understand its role in pupils' academic performance.

In the Nigerian context, studies by Okafor and Umeh (2021) and Eze, Onyekachi, and

Nnamani (2023) indicate that disparities in pupils' academic performance are more strongly associated with teacher qualification, instructional delivery, and communication skills than with teachers' gender. Nonetheless, gender remains a relevant variable, particularly in culturally diverse learning environments where teacher–pupil interactions may be influenced by social norms and expectations. In light of the vast studies on the performance of pupils, the researcher seeks to explore the prediction of teacher quality and gender on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of the study was to examine teacher's quality and gender as predictors of primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine;

1. how teachers' qualification predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.
2. how teachers' verbal ability predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.
3. how teachers' use of instructional skill predicts primary school pupils on academic performance in Anambra State.
4. how teachers' gender predicts primary school pupils' academic performance Anambra State.
5. how teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use instructional skills) and gender jointly predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study

1. How does teachers' qualification predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?
2. How does teachers' verbal ability predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?
3. How does teachers' use of instructional skill predict primary school pupils on

academic performance in Anambra State?

4. How does teachers' gender predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?
5. How does teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender jointly predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Teachers' qualification does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
2. Teachers' verbal ability does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
3. Teachers' use of instructional skills does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
4. Teachers' gender does not significantly predict the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.
5. Teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skill) and gender jointly does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Methods

This study employed a correctional survey research design and was carried out in Anambra State. A sample of three hundred and sixty (360) primary school teachers out of a population of 11,971 was used. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were the Teacher Quality and Gender questionnaire (TQGQ) and academic performance scale. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to compute reliability coefficient which yielded a

coefficient of 0.88 for the teachers' verbal ability and 0.65 for teachers' use of instructional skills. The research questions and the hypotheses were analyzed using regression analysis.

Results

Research Question One: How does teachers' qualification predict primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 1: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Qualification as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	Decision
Constant	69.00	1.19		
Teachers' Qualification	0.27	0.23	0.06	Weak

R = 0.06
R²=0.00

Table 1 presents the summary of regression analysis with teachers' qualification as predictor of pupils' performance. The R and R² were 0.060 and 0.004 respectively. The R² indicates that 0.0% of the variance in pupils' academic performance was explained by teachers' qualification. This suggests a predictive ability of teachers' qualification for pupils' academic performance was weak. The standardized regression coefficient (β) was 0.06 which indicates that weak but positive predictive value since a unit increase in teachers' qualification results in 0.06 increase in pupils' academic performance.

Research Question Two: How does teachers’ verbal ability predict primary school pupils’ academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 2: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers’ Use of Instructional Skills as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	Decision
Constant	61.21	1.55		
Teachers’ Verbal Ability	0.06	0.23	0.11	Modest
R = 0.11				
R ² =0.01				

Table 2 shows the summary of regression analysis with teachers’ verbal ability as predictor of pupils’ performance. The R and R² were 0.11 and 0.01 respectively. The R² indicates teachers’ verbal ability explained 1% of the variance in pupils’ academic performance. This implies that teachers’ verbal ability predictive capacity for pupils’ academic performance was modest. Similarly, the standardized regression coefficient (β) of 0.11 confirms that as a unit increase in teachers’ verbal ability results in 0.11 increase in pupils’ academic performance.

Research Question Three: How does teachers’ use of instructional skill predict primary school pupils on academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 3: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers’ Verbal Ability as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	Decision
Constant	56.27	2.40		
Teachers’ Use of Instructional Skills of	0.50	0.08	0.30	Modest
R = 0.30				
R ² = 0.09				

Table 3 shows the summary of regression analysis with teachers’ verbal ability as predictor of pupils’ performance. The R and R² were 0.30 and 0.09 respectively. The R² indicates teachers’ use of instructional skills explained 9% of the variance in pupils’ academic performance. This implies that teachers’ use of instructional skills capacity to predict pupils’ academic performance was modest. Similarly, the standardized regression coefficient (β) of 0.30 confirms the modest predictive ability since a unit increase in teachers’ use of instructional skills leads to 0.30 increase in pupils’ academic performance.

Research Question Four: How does teachers’ gender predict primary school pupils’ academic performance in Anambra State?

Table 4: *Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers’ Gender as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	Academic Performance	B	SE	B	Decision
Constant		70.42	0.70		
Teachers’ Gender		-0.06	0.41	-0.01	Weak
		R = 0.01			
		R ² =0.00			

Table 4 shows the summary of regression analysis with teachers’ gender as predictor of pupils’ performance. The R and R² were 0.007 and 0.000 respectively. The R² indicates teachers’ gender did not explain any variance in pupils’ academic performance. This suggests that predictive ability of teachers’ verbal ability for pupils’ academic performance was weak. The standardized regression coefficient (β) of -0.01 also indicated a weak predictive value as unit change in gender of the teacher (0=male to 1=female) pupils’ academic performance reduces by 0.01 unit.

Research Question Five: How does teachers’ quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender jointly predict primary school pupils’ academic performance in Anambra State.

Table 5: *Multiple Regression Analysis with Teacher Quality (Qualification, Verbal Ability and Use of Instructional skills) and Gender as Predictors of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	Decision
Constant	52.72	3.00		
Teachers’ Qualification	0.10	0.23	0.02	
Teachers’ Verbal Ability	0.12	0.06	0.11	
Teachers’ Use of Instructional skills	0.49	0.09	0.29	Modest
Teachers’ Gender	0.05	0.39	0.01	
R = 0.32				
R ² =0.10				

Table 5 presents the summary of multiple regression analysis with teachers’ quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender as predictors of pupils’ performance. The R and R² were 0.32 and 0.10 respectively. The R² indicates teachers’ use of the four predictors explained 10% of the variance in pupils’ academic performance. This implies that the capacity of teachers’ quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skills) and gender to predict pupils’ academic performance was modest. Similarly, the standardized regression coefficients (βs) which ranged between 0.01 and 0.29 indicates that teachers’ use of instructional skills was a better predictor of pupils’ academic performance than the other predictors.

Hypothesis One: Teachers’ qualification does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Qualification as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	T	P	Decision
Constant	69.00	1.19		58.18	0.000	Not Significance
Teachers' Qualification	0.27	0.23	0.06	1.14	0.256	
*R = 0.06						
R ² 0.00						

*F(1,357) = 1.30, p = 0.256

The result displayed in Table 6 indicates teachers' qualification did not significantly predict pupils' academic performance in Anambra state, $\beta = 0.06$, $t = 1.14$, $p = 0.256$. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that teachers' qualification was not a significant predictor of pupils' academic performance in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Two: Teachers' verbal ability does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 7: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers' Verbal Ability as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	T	P	Decision
Constant	61.21	1.55		43.33	0.000	
Teachers' Verbal Ability	0.06	0.23	0.11	2.12	0.035	Significant
R = 0.11						
R ² =0.01						

*F(1,357) = 4.48, p = 0.035

The result displayed in Table 7 indicates teachers' verbal ability significantly predicted pupils' academic performance in Anambra state, $\beta = 0.11$, $t = 2.12$, $p = 0.035$ as the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that teachers' verbal ability was a significant predictor of pupils' academic achievement in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Three: Teachers’ use of instructional skills does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 8: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers’ Use of Instructional Skills as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	T	P	Decision
Constant	56.27	2.40		23.42	0.000	
Teachers’ Use of Instructional skills R = 0.30 R ² =0.09	0.50	0.08	0.30	5.87	0.000	Significant

The result displayed in Table 8 indicates teachers’ use of instructional skills significantly predicted pupils’ academic performance in Anambra state, $\beta = 0.30$, $t = 5.87$, $p = 0.000$ as the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that teachers’ use of instructional skills was a significant predictor of pupils’ academic achievement in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Four: Teachers’ gender does not significantly predict the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State.

Table 9: *Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Teachers’ Gender as Predictor of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	T	P	Decision
Constant	70.42	0.70		100.71	0.000	
Teachers’ Gender R = 0.01 R ² =0.00	-0.06	0.41	-0.01	-0.14	0.890	Not significant

* $F(1,357) = 0.02$,
 $p = 0.890$

The result displayed in Table 9 indicates teachers’ gender did not significantly predict pupils’ academic performance in Anambra state, $\beta = 0.01$, $t = -0.14$, $p = 0.890$ as the p-value was greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This suggests that teachers’ gender was not a significant predictor of pupils’ academic achievement in Anambra state.

Hypothesis Five: Teachers’ quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skill) and gender jointly does not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra.

Table 10: *Test of Significance of Multiple Regression Analysis with Teacher Quality (Qualification, Verbal Ability and Use of Instructional skills) and Gender as Predictors of academic performance Among Primary School Pupils in Anambra State*

Predictor	B	SE	B	T	P	Decision
Constant	52.72	3.00		17.55	0.000	
Teachers’ Qualification	0.10	0.23	0.02	0.43	0.668	Not Significant
Teachers’ Verbal Ability	0.12	0.06	0.11	2.13	0.034	Significant
Teachers’ Use of Instructional skills	0.49	0.09	0.29	5.78	0.000	Significant
Teachers’ Gender	0.05	0.39	0.01	0.14	0.891	Not Significant
R = 0.32						
R ² =0.10						

$*F(1,358) = 9.86, p = 0.000$

As shown in Table 10 teachers’ quality (qualification, verbal ability, use of instructional skill) and gender significantly predicted pupils’ academic performance in Anambra state, $R = 0.32$, $F(1,358) = 9.86$, $p = 0.000$. Since the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study revealed that teachers' qualification predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a weak degree. This suggests that although teachers' academic and professional qualifications contribute to pupils' learning outcomes, qualification alone may not be sufficient to substantially enhance pupils' academic performance at the primary school level. This finding supports the assertion of Nyenime-Ikpeme (2021), who found that teachers' qualifications influence pupils' academic performance mainly when they are translated into effective classroom practices such as lesson planning and instructional delivery. Similarly, Eze and Obi (2021) observed that teacher qualification improves pupils' academic performance only when accompanied by effective pedagogy and classroom management.

The result also aligns with Filgona and Sakiyo (2020), who emphasized that teachers remain the most critical determinant of pupils' academic success, as well as with the view of Yakubu (2023), who noted that teachers' effectiveness goes beyond possession of certificates to include instructional competence and professional commitment. Bamidele and Adekola (2019) further asserted that the quality of any education system is a function of the quality of teachers operating within it. However, the weak predictive strength observed in this study may be attributed to inadequate opportunities for continuous professional development among primary school teachers in Anambra State, as reported by Nwankwo and Umeh (2022).

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' qualification did not significantly predict academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State. This finding contrasts with Adebajo (2020), who reported a significant contribution of teacher qualification, experience, and content mastery to pre-primary school effectiveness in Ogun State. However, it aligns with the findings of Saadu, Ajeigbe, and Olayonu (2022) and Okeke and Okafor (2021), who reported no significant difference in pupils' academic achievement based solely on teachers' qualifications. These findings suggest that qualification alone, without effective instructional practices, may have limited impact on pupils' academic performance.

Findings revealed that teachers' verbal ability predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. This indicates that teachers' communication

skills play a meaningful role in facilitating pupils' understanding of concepts, especially at the primary school level where learning is language-dependent. This finding is consistent with Adeyemi (2017), who reported that teachers with strong verbal and communication skills are more effective in enhancing pupils' academic achievement. Similarly, Ezeudu and Obiageli (2020) found that teachers' clarity of explanation significantly influences pupils' comprehension and retention of lesson content.

Furthermore, Hanushek and Rivkin (2012) emphasized that teacher quality, measured partly through communication competence, is a consistent predictor of pupils' learning outcomes. In the Nigerian context, Okorie and Onwuka (2022) reported that teachers' verbal expressiveness significantly predicts pupils' literacy and numeracy outcomes in primary schools. The modest predictive strength observed in this study suggests that while verbal ability is important, its effectiveness may be influenced by class size, pupils' language background, and availability of teaching aids.

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' verbal ability was a significant predictor of academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Anambra State. This finding corroborates the study of Aksamovic et al. (2019), who established a positive relationship between verbal ability, emotional competence, and academic performance. It also supports the findings of Yusuf and Bello (2021), who observed that teachers' verbal fluency enhances pupils' classroom engagement and academic achievement in Nigerian primary schools.

Findings revealed that teachers' use of instructional skills predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. This implies that effective instructional strategies, lesson presentation, and the appropriate use of teaching materials enhance pupils' learning experiences. This finding supports Fuller and Clark (2019), who posited that the quality of instructional processes experienced by learners determines the quality of education. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasized that effective instructional practices significantly improve pupils' academic outcomes, particularly at the foundational levels of education. Mwiria (2019) further observed that pupils' academic performance is influenced by both the quality and quantity of teaching and learning resources. In the Nigerian context, Adebayo and Lawal (2021) reported that the effective use of instructional materials positively influences

pupils' academic performance in public primary schools. The modest predictive strength observed in this study may be attributed to limited instructional resources and overcrowded classrooms in many public primary schools in Anambra State, as noted by Okafor and Nwoye (2022).

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' use of instructional skills significantly predict pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Anambra State. This finding reinforces the importance of continuous teacher training in modern instructional strategies and learner-centred teaching approaches (UNESCO, 2021).

Findings of the study revealed that teachers' gender predicts primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a weak degree. This suggests that gender alone has minimal influence on pupils' academic outcomes. This finding is in collaboration with Okoro, Ekanem, and Udoh (2012), who reported that teacher-pupil gender interactions may influence academic performance but are not consistently strong predictors across contexts. Similarly, Okeke and Okechukwu (2021) found that pupils' academic achievement is more strongly influenced by teaching competence than by teachers' gender. Mensah, Aam -Yawson and Yeboah (2021) further indicated that teacher gender interacts with cultural expectations; thus, children may react differently based on the qualities that they associate with perceived authority or nurturing styles rather than gender itself. This insight suggests that while teacher gender may play a role, the emphasis should also be on the qualities of teaching practices that engage and inspire students. Additionally, Umeh (2023) opined that academic performance in early grades is strongly shaped by metacognitive support from teachers, such as guided practice and scaffolding, rather than assessment alone, reinforcing the need for quality instruction regardless of teacher gender

The corresponding hypothesis revealed that teachers' gender was not a significant predictor of pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Anambra State. This aligns with Saadu, Ajeigbe, and Olayonu (2022) and Yusuf and Sadiq (2020), who reported no significant difference in pupils' academic achievement based on teachers' gender. However, the finding is in contrast with the finding of Afolabi (2019), who reported significant gender differences in favour of male teachers. These mixed findings suggest that gender effects may be context-dependent and mediated by teaching style, classroom interaction, and subject area.

Findings further revealed that teachers' quality measured by qualification, verbal ability, and use of instructional skills together with gender jointly predicted primary school pupils' academic performance in Anambra State to a modest degree. This indicates that pupils' academic performance is better explained when multiple teacher-related factors are considered simultaneously. This finding supports Folorunsho et al. (2024), who reported that teacher qualification, lesson presentation, and classroom discipline jointly predicted pupils' academic performance. Similarly, Odey (2024) found that teacher qualification, instructional methods, and gender jointly influenced pupils' communicative competence. In addition, Eze and Okonkwo (2023) emphasized that improving pupils' academic performance requires a holistic approach that integrates teacher training, instructional competence, and supportive school environments. This finding underscores the need for comprehensive teacher development programmes aimed at improving multiple dimensions of teacher quality.

Conclusion

This study investigated the extent to which teachers' quality and gender predict the academic performance of primary school pupils in Anambra State. The findings revealed that teachers' qualifications and gender were weak and insignificant predictors of pupils' academic performance. In contrast, teachers' verbal ability and the use of instructional skills significantly predicted academic performance to a modest degree. When considered jointly, teachers' quality (qualification, verbal ability, and instructional skills) and gender did not significantly predict pupils' performance.

From these findings, it can be concluded that pupils' academic performance in Anambra State primary schools depends more on the teachers' verbal ability and effective use of instructional skills than on their paper qualifications or gender. Therefore, the capacity of teachers to communicate effectively and employ appropriate instructional strategies plays a more critical role in improving pupils' achievement than their academic certificates or demographic factors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teacher education institutions should place stronger emphasis on practical training that develops verbal communication skills and mastery of instructional strategies alongside theoretical knowledge.
2. Ministries of Education and school administrators should organize regular capacity-building workshops and seminars focused on effective communication and instructional practices for primary school teachers.
3. Recruitment, retention, and promotion of teachers should not be based solely on academic qualifications but should incorporate evaluation of teaching competence, classroom performance, and communication ability.
4. School heads should ensure continuous classroom supervision and mentoring of teachers to promote the consistent use of effective instructional strategies.
5. Educational policymakers should formulate policies that encourage continuous professional development for teachers, irrespective of gender, to enhance instructional quality in primary schools.

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STAFF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES APPLIED BY SCHOOL’ HEADS FOR ENHANCING TEACHERS JOB COMMITMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN VOINJAMA CITY, LOFA COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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Abstract

This study examined staff personnel administrative practices applied by school’ heads for enhancing teachers job commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 65 head-teachers and 841 teachers from all the 65 government primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Liberia. The sample consisted of 65 headteachers and 300 teachers using purposive sampling technique. A validated structured questionnaire titled “Staff Personnel Administrative Practices of Head-teachers (SPAPH) was employed. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.78 respectively was established. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that both head-teachers and teachers were of the view that head-teachers applied staff professional development practices and motivational practices in enhancing teachers’ job commitment. It was also revealed that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of head-teachers and teachers in the head-teachers’ application of staff professional development practices. It was recommended amongst others that head-teachers should as a matter of sustainability continue enhancing teachers by furnishing staff offices so as to make them more conducive for work. This is to create a healthy environment for teachers to stay in the school for lesson preparation, marking of pupils’ exercises and other important school works, through this the educational objectives will be achieved.

Keywords: *Administration, administrative practices, staff personnel, teachers' commitment, primary education.*

Introduction

Education is viewed as the foundation for national development and personal growth. It is a critical tool for alleviating poverty, promoting equality, and fostering social development. Liberia's education system is divided into four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education. The primary education level is particularly crucial, as it serves as the foundation upon which other levels are built. Primary education covers grades 1 to 6 and caters to children aged 6 to 12. Primary education aims to provide fundamental skills in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving, as well as foster social and ethical development.

The National Policy on Education in Liberia outlines several objectives for primary education. These objectives are intended to ensure that children develop essential academic skills and are prepared for the challenges of higher education and life beyond the classroom. According to the Liberian Education Sector Plan, the objective of primary education is to equip children with foundational skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. These skills are crucial for personal and academic development and forms the basis for all future learning. Primary education is designed to foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in children. The curriculum encourages children to engage in activities that develop their intellectual curiosity and capacity to analyze information.

These objectives serve as a guide for primary schools across Liberia, including those in Voinjama City, Lofa Comity. However, achieving these objectives requires the active commitment of teachers and administrators, and this is where school heads or personnel administrative practices become essential (Broadwell, 2018). Teachers' commitment refers to the level of dedication and responsibility that teachers exhibit towards their profession, pupils, and educational institutions. Committed teachers are those who not only fulfill their basic teaching responsibilities but also go beyond to engage pupils, improve their teaching methods, and contribute to the overall development of the school community. According to Anachuna (2024), teacher commitment is influenced by several factors, including the school environment, administrative support, professional development opportunities, and personal job satisfaction. In

this context, teacher commitment is seen as the way teachers shows dedication to learner and teaching in a real, personal and visible way in order to achieve a goal.

Teacher commitment is essential for the success of any educational system because it impacts pupil achievement, classroom management, and the overall quality of education Anachuna (2024). In Voinjama City, where educational resources seem to be limited, the commitment of teachers becomes even more critical. Many teachers face significant challenges such as low salaries, lack of resources, and absence of professional development opportunities, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction and diminishing commitment (Broadwell, 2018). These issues have contributed to a high turnover rate among educators. However, with the right administrative practices, teachers can be -encouraged to stay dedicated to their roles. This is why Adeniyi (2018) stressed that school heads that provide emotional, professional, and logistical support to teachers can significantly enhance their commitment. Teachers feel more motivated to ' perform when they know they have the backing of a supportive administration. However, in environments where administrative practices are ineffective, teachers may become demotivated, resulting in absenteeism, low performance, and high turnover rates (Besong, 2018).

The role of school heads in enhancing the commitment of teachers through effective administrative practices is essential for the success of primary education. Teachers feel more motivated to perform when they know they have the backing of a supportive administration. Administrative practices refer to the strategies, methods, and techniques that school leaders employ to manage, support, and develop their staff. These practices encompass all actions related to the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling of school personnel to achieve educational objectives. According to Onyali, Ikegwonu and Nnebedum (2018), administrative practices refer to the deliberate actions taken by leaders within an organization to manage resources, coordinate tasks, and achieve the institution's goals. In the educational context, these actions involve overseeing the affairs of teaching and non-teaching staff, organizing instructional programs, and maintaining a conducive learning environment. Operationally, administrative practices refer to the actions and strategies implemented by school heads in to manage teachers, allocate resources, provide guidance, and foster an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

One of the key responsibilities of school heads is the effective management of school

personnel. This includes hiring, training, and retaining qualified teachers. By ensuring that teachers are placed in roles that match their skills and interests, school heads can foster a sense of satisfaction and commitment. According to Ezeugbor, Onyali and Okoye (2018), effective personnel management creates an environment where teachers feel secure and supported, leading to increased loyalty and commitment. Staff personnel administrative practices are a specific subset of administrative practices that focus on managing and supporting the human resources within a school—specifically the teaching staff (Uko, Umosen and Caleb, 2015). These practices are geared towards ensuring that teachers are properly recruited, trained, motivated, and retained. When these practices are effectively applied, they create a supportive environment that promotes teacher dedication and commitment to their roles. Aja-Okorie (2016) reiterated that the staff personnel administrative practices lies in their ability to create a work environment where teachers feel valued and supported. This includes providing professional development opportunities, fostering positive relationships between school leaders and teachers, and implementing policies that recognize and reward teacher achievements.

It is the function of the head-teachers to adopt various administrative practices to ensure that teachers perform their duties creditably. Staff personnel administrative practices are geared towards attracting, retaining and developing a team of highly dedicated, committed and motivated workforce that is willing to contribute meaningfully to improve instructional delivery. In the same vein, Ezeugbor et al., (2018) and Anachunam (2024) stated that staff personnel administrative practices include: orientation, decision making, delegation of duties, supervision, staff professional development and motivation. Similarly, the staff personnel administrative practices adapted in this study were staff professional development practices and staff motivation practices. These two were of great interest in view of their relevance in positioning teachers for greater growth in ICT knowledge enhancement at this 21st century inter-generational technology with regards to teaching and learning. This can be achieved through organizational bodies of education such as TRCN, UNICEF, UNESSCO among others.

It is imperative to note that teaching is a public service that requires exceptional expertise, knowledge and specialized skill sustained through vigorous and continuous professional development (Ezeugbor, 2015). Educational organizations sees professional development as a basic instrument that provides head-teachers and teachers with the tools to

meet professional challenges, ensuring that they are up-to-date with information; materials, adequate financial outlay and commitment. Staff development practices range from structured activities such as workshops, seminars, training, observation and assessment and discussion and others (Desimone, 2019). Alhassan (2014) argued that in-service training teachers has been one of the major practices of school heads to develop their teachers. In furtherance, Alhassan enthused that in-service training can be delivered in areas such as lesson planning, teaching strategies and also open opportunities for further studies.

Therefore, the head-teachers are expected to assist teachers to undertake professional development programmes, keep them abreast with innovative strategies in teaching, and in the performance of other instructional duties to bring about positive improvement in pupils' academic performance. Invariably, as teachers are obliged to engage in various professional development programmes, their motivation tendencies are intrinsically enhanced towards effective job performance.

Motivation involves the use of internal and external factors to stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to job and role or to make effort to attain a goal (Gbollie and Keamu, 2017). Head-teachers' motivational practices include: the use of good communication pattern, regular meeting with teachers, praise and appreciation of excellent performance of teachers, as well as ensuring teachers' welfare (Aja-Okorie and Usular, 2016). Head-teachers' motivational practices also include; recommending staff for promotion, maintaining good interpersonal relationship with them, creating atmosphere for teamwork, rendering counseling services to staff, among others. Notwithstanding, Nwobi (2013) observed that the probable declining of quality in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County in Kenya in general could be attributed to head-teachers' inability to regularly engage teachers in professional development training.

School heads play a crucial role in applying administrative practices that support and enhance teacher commitment, but there has been limited research on how these practices which are, operationalized in rural Liberian settings, particularly in Voinjama City. Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between administrative practices and teacher commitment. While previous studies, such as those by Bennell and Akyeampong (2021) and Ingersoll (2020), have investigated the relationship between administrative practices and teacher commitment in

different contexts, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research specific to Liberia, particularly Voinjama City, Lofa County. The educational challenges in Voinjama City, such as limited infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, and low salaries, require a tailored approach to staff personnel administrative practices. Current literature has not adequately explored how these practices are applied in rural Liberian primary schools and how they specifically influence teacher commitment in such settings based on this, the research investigates the staff personnel administrative practices applied by school' heads for enhancing teachers job commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Statement of the Problem

Primary education in Voinjama City could be facing several challenges that are negatively impacting teachers' commitment to their roles. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited teaching resources, poor remuneration, and a lack of opportunities for professional growth. Additionally, school heads in this region may lack the necessary training or strategies to implement effective staff personnel administrative practices that foster teacher engagement and long-term commitment. This is compounded by the rural nature of Voinjama, where schools often operate with limited oversight, making it difficult to monitor and improve administrative practices that are vital to teacher motivation. While studies have established a relationship between administrative support and teacher commitment in various global contexts, the application of these findings to the specific context of Voinjama City remains largely unexplored. This study is very imperative on staff personnel administrative practices applied by school' heads for enhancing teachers job commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

This study specifically sought to establish the:

1. professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.
2. motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Research Questions

1. What are the professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.
2. What are the motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 65 head-teachers and 841 teachers from all the 65 government primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Liberia. The sample consisted of 65 head-teachers and 300 teachers. The entire population of 65 head-teachers was used as the sample size, hence, no sampling technique. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 300 teachers. This made a total of 365 respondents that participated in the study. A validated structured questionnaire titled "Staff Personnel Administrative Practices of Head-teachers (SPAPH) was employed. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; part 'A' sought for the information on the job designation of the respondents (principal or teacher). Part 'B' is made up of 20 items on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD). Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.78 respectively for the two sections of part (B' of the instrument, making a total reliability coefficient of 0.81. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Any item with mean of 2.50 and above

depicts agreement while an item with a mean rating below 2.50 was considered as disagree. The hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Respondents’ ratings on staff professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers’ commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia

S/N	Item statement	Head- teachers (n= 65)			Teachers n= 300)		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1	Encourages teachers to participate in staff discussion forum	3.74	0.91	Agree	3.58	0.79	Agree
2	Identifies areas that requires teachers to develop creative skills leading to positive change in teaching	3.88	0.85	Agree	3.45	0.97	Agree
3	Involves teachers in collaborative teaching for the purpose of sharing knowledge	2.99	0.73	Agree	3.30	1.01	Agree
4	Identifies the specific areas requiring re-training for teachers	2.41	0.70	Disagree	2.30	0.81	Disagree
5	Organizes workshops to enlighten teachers about innovation on teaching methodologies	3.58	1.01	Agree	3.33	1.03	Agree
6	Encourages in-service training for advancement of knowledge in teachers’ areas of specialization	3.53	0.91	Agree	3.46	0.88	Agree
7	Organizes symposium for teachers to enhance their managerial skills in planning and organizing school activities with minimal supervision	3.67	0.76	Agree	3.55	1.01	Agree
8	Sponsors teachers for ICT proficiency to up-date their knowledge based on the current trend in technology advancement in teaching and learning	2.11	0.83	Disagree	2.23	0.88	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.24		Agree	3.15		Agree

Table 1 reveals that all the items with the exception of items with serial numbers 4 and 8 have mean scores above the bench mean of 2.50 in both the head-teachers and teachers column. This shows that they are the professional development practices applied by school-heads for

enhancing teachers' commitment. The mean of means of 3.24 and 3.15 in head-teachers and teachers' column respectively indicates that both respondents agree that head-teachers adopt staff professional development practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. The standard deviation reveals that the responses of head-teachers' and teachers' rating for each item is close, suggesting that their responses are homogeneous.

Table 2: Respondents' ratings on staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia

S/N	Item statement	Head-teachers (n= 65)			Teachers n= 300)		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
9	Involves teachers in decision-making as a way of increasing their sense of belonging in school	3.70	0.92	Agree	3.60	1.00	Agree
10	Gives incentives to teachers as a means of encouraging them to work harder	3.56	0,88	Agree	3.47	0.98'	Agree
11	Establishes good interpersonal relationship with teachers thereby promoting work friendly environment	3.85	1.01	Agree	3.00	1.00	Agree
12	Endeavours to meet teachers' welfare needs as a source of building their trust in the school	3.68	0.88	Agree	3.48	0.93	Agree
13	Provides sporting activities for teachers to encourage themselves in exercises for fitness	3.28	1.02	Agree	3.04	0.86	Agree
14	Provides teachers with well-furnished offices as a way of creating conducive environment for work	2.38	0.79	Disagree	2.21	0.82	Disagree
15	Organizes medical check-up to improve teachers' well-being	2.24	0,88	Disagree	2.35	0.89	Disagree
16	Gives praise and commendations to teachers as deserved to boost their ego	3.79	0.96	Agree	3.66	0.87	Agree
		2.90		Agree	3.10		Agree

As revealed in table 2, all the items except items numbers 14 and 15, have mean scores above the bench mean of 2.50 in both the head-teachers and teachers column. This indicates that they are the motivational practices applied by head-teachers for enhancing teachers' commitment. The

means of 2.90 and 3.10 in the head-teachers and teachers column respectively depicts that head-teachers applied motivational practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. The standard deviation scores for all the items in the cluster are within the same range, showing that the respondents are homogeneous in their responses.

Table 3: t-Test significance on the difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	sig	α	Decision
Head-teachers	65	3.34	0.87	363	11.02	0.74	0.05	Not significant
Teachers	300	3.21	0.93					

The t-test analysis presented in table 3 indicates that at 363 degree of freedom and t-cal value of 11.02; the p-value is greater than 0.05 (df = 355; $p > 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis is upheld. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff professional development practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Table 4: t-Test significance on the difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and teachers on the staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	sig	α	Decision
Head-teachers	65	2.97	1.06	363	8.89	9.06	0.5	Not significant
Teachers	300	3.06	0.93					

The t-test analysis presented in table 4 indicates that at 363 degree of freedom and t-cal value of 8.98; the p-value is greater than 0.05 (df = 355; $p > 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis is upheld. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of head-teachers and

teachers on the staff motivational practices applied by school-heads for enhancing teachers' commitment in primary schools in Voinjama City, Lofa County, Republic of Liberia.

Discussion of Findings

The result in table 1 reveals that both head-teachers and teachers were of the view that head-teachers applied staff professional development practices in enhancing teachers' commitment. This finding is in concordance with the views of FRL (2014) in her education sector plan and Ezeugbor (2015) when they attested that staff professional development impacts on the teachers' professional knowledge, skills and attitudes required to help the school achieve its objectives. The findings is in line with that of Ayeni (2011) who posits that the head-teachers organize in house seminars and workshops for teachers and encouraged teachers to attend conferences to improve their capacities for effective job performance. This may account for the reason why primary school teachers in Liberia have been observed to be highly committed to their duties as evident in the excellent performance of the pupils' common entrance and primary six examination in the recent times. However, both head-teachers and teachers disagreed that the head-teachers identify specific areas requiring retraining for teachers and sponsorship for teachers ICT proficiency. This finding was a surprise giving the fact that the current technological advancement in all the facets of the education system would have made the head-teachers to see teachers' ICT proficiency and identification of each teacher's areas of training needs an imperative for an overall progress of the system.

The test of null hypothesis was not significance indicating that there was no variation in the perceptions of head-teachers and teachers in the head-teachers' application of staff professional development practices. The findings of the study equally revealed that both head-teachers and teachers agreed that staff motivational practices were applied by head-teachers for enhancing teachers' commitment. This agreement was made explicit in some areas like; recommending teachers for promotion, giving out incentives, involving teachers in decision making and praising and commending deserving teachers. This finding is in line with the findings of Abbas and Fauzia (2013); Aja-Okorie and Usulor (2016) when they espoused that attention to teachers' welfare needs, positive reinforcement and their involvement in decision making process promote their job involvement and performance.

The finding in research question two revealed that head-teachers applied motivational practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. On the other hand, the head-teachers and teachers disagreed that teachers are provided with well-furnished offices and organized medical checkup in the school. Obviously, the reason for this scenario may not be far-fetched in view of the fact that the financial capacity of the head-teachers are quite limited for such engagement. The finding that teachers are not provided with well-furnished office was not unexpected giving the observation in most primary schools where teachers are jam-packed in supposedly classrooms converted into staff rooms with desks and chairs equivalent of what pupils use in their classrooms. This finding was in line with that of Ingersoll (2020) that when head-teachers employ positive motivational strategies, it not only reduces turnover but also encourages greater teacher involvement and commitment to their roles. Owolabi (2012) highlighted that while head-teachers may implement motivational practices, the impact of these efforts can be limited by external factors such as poor remuneration, lack of government support, and inadequate facilities. The study argued that these broader systemic issues diminish the effectiveness of motivational practices, as teachers remain disengaged due to dissatisfaction with their working conditions.

The finding with regards to the null hypothesis indicates that there was no variation in the opinions of head-teachers and teachers on the staff motivational applied motivational practices for enhancing teachers' commitment. The reason for no significance difference could be deduced from the back drop of the fact that both groups of respondents are noted as carrier teachers. The principal is just the administrative head who could not have attained that position without years of teaching experience. This is affirmed when Okpe (2016) recognized that head-teachers are teachers elevated as administrative heads of primary schools who still possess the innate teaching characteristics.

Conclusion

This study investigated the staff personnel administrative practices applied by head-teachers in enhancing teachers' job performance. It established that head-teachers adopt staff professional development and motivational practices. These were found to be important components of head-teachers' responsibilities for effective teaching and learning to take place.

Head-teachers failure to adopt the professional development practices of identifying specific areas of re-training needs for teachers as well as sponsoring teachers for ICT proficiency training on one hand and motivational practices of furnishing teachers offices as well as-organizing medical check-up for teachers, seemingly could have a negative impact on teachers' optimum performance in the school. It was also found that there was no significant difference in the responses of head-teachers and teachers and thus, the null hypotheses were not rejected.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Head-teachers should explore as a matter of urgency the need to expose their teachers to ICT proficiency training so that they will not be left out of the moving train of the inter-generational development in ICT developments
2. Head-teachers should as a matter of priority explore possible ways of making furnishing staff offices so as to make them more conducive for work. This is to create a healthy environment for teachers to stay in the school for lesson preparation, marking of pupils' exercises and other important school works.

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