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STAKEHOLDERS' UNDERSTANDING AND ATTITUDE  
ON PLAY-BASED APPROACH IN  
NIGERIA PRESCHOOLS

QUADRI MOJEED AKOREDE



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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

2016



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## ABSTRACT

This research presents the stakeholders' understanding and attitude towards play-based approach in Nigeria preschools. The study dwelt on the different understanding and attitude of stakeholders on the relevance of play-based approach, the relationship between educational qualifications and its relevance to the implementation of play-based approach in preschools. Other issues investigated were the suitability and possibility of play-based approach in developing the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills and the language needs of children attending the preschools system in Nigeria. The research used the qualitative approach, whereby data collection were made through written text, interview and observation. Thus, collected data were analysed through hermeneutics procedure. The participants of this study included twenty classroom teachers and twenty parents from ten different schools, five preschools' owners and also two officials from the Ministry of Education. The findings revealed that the majority of the participants in this study showed positive understanding and attitude towards the use of play-based approach and that the availability of qualified educators in childhood education was a key factor for effective use of play-based approach in preschools. The play-based approach is also found to be suitable in developing various domains of learning among pre-schoolers. In order to enable preschools to provide a good foundation for all other stages of learning, the stakeholders suggested that schools' owners should organise periodic training for teachers, provide conducive learning environment and materials, and stress on the importance of effective use of play-based approach in the preschool system. Awareness programmes should be organised for parents to show more interest in their children's learning. The government should therefore strengthen their intervention and required supports needed in order to reposition the present state of preschools system in Nigeria.





## **PEMAHAMAN DAN SIKAP PIHAK BERKEPENTINGAN MENGENAI PENDEKATAN BERASASKAN BERMAIN BAGI PRASEKOLAH DI NIGERIA**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini membentangkan kefahaman dan sikap pihak berkepentingan terhadap pendekatan berasaskan bermain bagi prasekolah di Nigeria. Kajian ini mengupas pemahaman dan sikap pihak berkepentingan yang berbeza mengenai perkaitan pendekatan berasaskan bermain, hubungan antara kelayakan pendidikan dan kaitannya dengan pelaksanaan pendekatan berasaskan bermain di prasekolah. Isu-isu lain yang disiasat adalah kesesuaian dan kemungkinan pendekatan berasaskan bermain dalam membangunkan kemahiran-kemahiran kognitif, afektif dan psikomotor serta keperluan bahasa kanak-kanak yang mengikuti sistem prasekolah di Nigeria. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, di mana pengumpulan data telah dibuat melalui penulisan teks, temu bual dan pemerhatian. Oleh itu, data yang dikumpul dianalisis melalui prosedur hermeneutik. Peserta kajian ini termasuk dua puluh orang guru kelas dan dua puluh orang ibu bapa dari sepuluh buah sekolah yang berbeza, lima orang pemilik prasekolah dan juga dua orang pegawai dari Kementerian Pelajaran. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa majoriti peserta dalam kajian ini menunjukkan pemahaman dan sikap yang positif terhadap penggunaan pendekatan berasaskan bermain dan bahawa pendidik yang berkelayakan dalam bidang pendidikan kanak-kanak adalah faktor utama untuk keberkesanan penggunaan pendekatan berasaskan bermain di prasekolah. Pendekatan berasaskan bermain juga didapati sesuai dalam membangunkan pelbagai domain pembelajaran dalam kalangan kanak-kanak prasekolah. Untuk membolehkan prasekolah menyediakan asas yang baik untuk semua peringkat pengajian, pihak berkepentingan mencadangkan bahawa adalah perlu bagi pemilik sekolah menganjurkan latihan secara berkala untuk para guru, menyediakan persekitaran pembelajaran yang kondusif dan bahan-bahan pengajaran, dan menekankan terhadap kepentingan keberkesanan penggunaan pendekatan berasaskan bermain dalam sistem prasekolah. Program-program kesedaran perlu dianjurkan untuk ibu bapa supaya mereka menunjukkan lebih minat terhadap pembelajaran anak-anak mereka. Oleh itu, kerajaan perlu mengukuhkan intervensi dan sokongan yang diperlukan untuk mengubah semula keadaan semasa sistem prasekolah di Nigeria.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bsc	Bachelor of Science
CIE	The Chief Inspector of Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EPPE	Effective Preschool and Primary Education
ETF	Education Tax Fund
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IPA	The International Play Association
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAPPS	National Association of Private Proprietors of Schools
NCE	Nigeria Certificate of Education
NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPCS	National Preschool Curriculum Standard
NPE	National Policy on Education
NPEC	National Primary Education Commission
NRC	National Research Council
NUT	National Union of Teachers
PBA	Play-Based approach
PGDE	Post graduate Diploma in Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SPEB	State Primary Education Commission Board
SSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate
SSS	Senior Secondary School
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UN	United Nation



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UNICEF

United Nations Children's Education Fund

UPE

Universal Primary Education

UPSI

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- K Transcribed Interview-ADM 5
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- M Inter-Rater Reliability 2
- N Student Verification for Conducting Research
- O Letter of Introduction



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction



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This chapter presents the background of this study for readers to appreciate what Childhood or Preschool Education is all about. The chapter highlights the statement of problem, the research questions and its objectives, the significance of the study and definition of terms used contextually. Also, the theoretical and conceptual theories relating to the study are among the issues discussed here.



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## 1.2 Background of the Study

Childhood education is regarded globally as the foundation level of all the stages of education from the primary till tertiary level. For this reason, both government and private sectors invest heavily on it.

This level of education faces many inadequacies that are hindering its effectiveness and results in global orientation based on literature reviewed. One of the problems identified is the deficiency of proper pedagogy for teaching and learning in the sector. A play-based approach for example, is enshrined in the Nigeria National Policy of Education for teaching in preschools but implementation of this method remained utopian. Observations have revealed that one of the major setbacks is the attitude of the stakeholders involved and their understanding about play-based approach which required empirical research (Stephen, 2010). This research studied how stakeholders' understanding and attitude affect the full implementation of this method in the preschool system in the Uvwie Local Area of Delta-Sate, Nigeria. Prior to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act in 2004, there was not much government intervention in the provision or supervision of Childhood Educational Centres in Nigeria. This assertion is reflected in the findings of a feasibility study conducted by the Federal Government of Nigeria, Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council (NERDC) and the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) in 2003 to work out the early childhood education facilities in Nigeria. The result showed that a greater percentage of the facilities are privately owned, 42% is owned by private sectors based on sample size,

34% is owned by the government, while 21% is credited to local communities. Others who also joined in the provision of this service are Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and religious groups.

Since the intervention of the Federal Government of Nigeria through the UBE act, 5% of the UBE matching grant belonging to the 36 states of the Federation, including the Federal Capital Territory-Abuja was to be set aside quarterly for early childhood education in Nigeria otherwise known as Pre-primary Education. That marked the beginning of government support to early childhood care and education. Despite the development that early childhood education is now being supported by the intervention of the government leading to the building of more centres and an increased enrolment of children in both urban and rural areas, early childhood education still suffers some setbacks.

According to Tombowua (2013), the problems faced in the preschool system in Nigeria are numerous. Prominent among them are inadequate educational quality and qualification of the educators, inappropriate teacher-child ratio, inadequate support from the government, insufficient monitoring and regulation by the respective bodies in charge as well as high increase in its operation mostly by the private sectors. Other problems noticed were divergent opinions of the stakeholders whether early childhood education is needed or not, inadequate trained personnel, little or no uniformity in the service among the service providers, facilities provided are not at par with the growing numbers of learners, and play-based education has not been used to the fullest in the various centres

here in Nigeria as enclosed in the National Policy on Education (NPE). Also, some private owners charge large sums of money as fees and this prevents some children from enrolling because of their parents' financial status. With all these prevalent challenges facing the early education in Nigeria, there is a critical need for research to investigate the current status and need for: strategic uniform pedagogy to improve the current status, provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities, provision of conducive learning environments to champion early childhood programmes, government opportunities for teacher training and education in various tertiary institutions across the nation as enshrined in the National Policy on Education.

Childhood education or preschool system is a type of education that is given to children prior to their enrolment in primary school. Since it is recognised as the foundation of all other levels of education, it is therefore very pertinent to all stakeholders involved in providing this type of education to work successfully. Different evidences from various scholars however suggest that childhood education has a positive influence on the educational development of children later in life as they continue their educational journey. Some writers argued that investing in early childhood education can yield high returns (Barnett, 2006; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003).

Nakpodia (2011) laid emphasis on this speculation that the foundation level of all other stages of education in a man's career is the Early Childhood Education (ECE). It is therefore important for all stakeholders concerned to play their roles to ensure a hitch-free implementation as defined in the National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria.