



MALE EDUCATORS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE CHILD IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

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Abstract

Early childhood education lacks male educators. This paves way to children being exposed to majorly female influence. The more male educators get into early childhood education, the more likely they are to develop the whole child. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was 700 male civil servants from which a sample of 10% was drawn. The study adopted a descriptive research. A set of Researcher – made Questionnaire was employed to obtain the needed data from the sample. The instrument was validated by experts with a reliability of 0.60. Percentage and t – test were used to answer the research questions and test null hypotheses respectively. The results indicate that male educators’ roles and pay package have influence on the development of the whole child. Based on the findings and conclusions, it was recommended that male educators’ roles and pay package be reviewed to attract more male educators into early childhood education in order to develop the whole child.

Keywords: *Male educators’ roles, pay package, early childhood education and whole child.*

Introduction

Early childhood education, also known as nursery education, is a branch of education theory that concerns the teaching of children from birth up to the age of eight. Early childhood education is described as an important period in child development. It is the foundation of a child’s journey: every stage of education that follows relies on its success. Failure to provide early childhood education

limits children's future by denying them opportunities to reach their full potentials. It also limits the future of countries, robbing them of the human capital needed to reduce inequalities and promote peaceful and prosperous societies (Progress, 2020). Early childhood education is fundamental to the development of a child and can significantly shape the later years of an individual's life (Tuga, 2021). This vividly suggests that just like the child needs father and mother at home to become a balanced child, the same is applicable in the school. The child needs both female and male educators for a whole development. It is the yearning of every sincere society to develop the child as a whole.

Whole child refers to a holistic development in which the child's development is seen as a whole rather than a separation of the different areas. An example of this is, while there is an effort to develop the physical, the social and every other aspect of the child have to be developed side by side. It looks absurd for a child to be good in physical activities but cannot express himself/ herself before people or does not have feelings for others. The whole child development embraces the concept that education should consider all influences on a child's development. Whole child development empowers children as creative and engaged citizens who can strengthen the wellbeing of a society. Whole child development prioritizes the full scope of a child's developmental needs as a way to advance the total progress and ensure that every child reaches his or her fullest potentials without a neglect to any part of the development ; be it the cognitive, social, psychomotor or psycho- social (Dirionyenma, 2021). According to Yande (2021) whole child development understands that learners' education and life outcomes are dependent upon their access to deeper learning opportunities in and out of school, as well as their school environment and relationships. Shifting towards a whole child development has far-reaching implications if education systems are to promote children's learning, well-being, and healthy development. "The whole child development supports and nurtures all areas of children's development and learning—from social-emotional and cognitive skills to literacy, math, and science understanding— and is a powerful strategy as preschool children's transition to other levels of education (Ukpabi, 2020). It encourages children's learning and thinking by being responsive to children's understandings, interests, and abilities, allowing them to deepen their natural curiosity and their eagerness to want to discover and learn more. Whole child development looks away from a focus on narrowly-defined learning skills to one that incorporates a broader view of the skills and knowledge that all children must develop for long-term success.

Success is not relegated to classroom alone. It is expected of every human to develop in a variety of domains such as the physical, cognitive, emotional and moral. Addressing the whole child is precisely the method to hobble early learning to the rest of the educational system (Wokeagbaloso, 2022). Thus educators require an approach that allows them to integrate the multitude of critical learning outcomes that serve as the foundation for success. A focus on the whole-child is needed in the contemporary more than ever. Each domain develops in context of all others and could be marred if there is any attempt to separate them. The whole child development in learning requires one to modify the educational experience and the classroom environment so that the social – emotional learning of the children is addressed and enhanced, in turn creating a future of confident and holistically developed children. The objective of the whole child development is not just to improve children’s competences but also contribute to their overall development (Agua, 2020). This approach aims to provide children with the assistance and structure for attaining long-term success in all areas of their life. When children are healthy, safe, supported, engaged and challenged, they are then able to learn to the best of their ability. A whole child development gives credence to the full scope of a child’s developmental needs as a way to advance educational equity and ensure that no child lacks in any area development. The development of a whole child entails grasping the fact that children’s education and life are determined by the way attention is given to every facet of developmental process. It is based on the fact that the development of all aspects of the child takes place *pari passu* without a clear demarcation. The lofty height of whole development of the children suggests that early childhood education needs not only female educators but also the male educators.

Male educators are viewed as having roles to play in classrooms. In schools around the world and spanning all age groups, when there are men in the early education settings, children are able to observe and experience positive professional relationships between men and women. According to Rochas (2021) during young age, children absorb much of what is modeled before them, so those relationships have a huge lasting impact on them. They are often role-models for many children where the male parents may not be present due to social or economic reasons, the male educators have to fill the gap. Children are good imitators, it becomes absurd to subject every child to the feminine because of the absence of male educators. Let there be both female and male educators

for each child to make his or her choice of who to model. Early years education is one of the most critical points in a child's learning and a time when they will develop a range of skills which will be required throughout not only for their school life but into adulthood. It is a vital time and their early experiences at school will mould them. The presence of male educators in early childhood education cannot be handled with a wave of the hand. Therefore it is disappointing to have few male educators or none in early years education. The importance of children being exposed to a variety of experiences which includes different gender teachers cannot be overemphasized. Stephen (2020) opted that male educators working with early childhood education makes for firm educational foundation and holistic development. Similarly, Anthony (2021) explained that the presence of male educators in a given early childhood education center helps children to receive a balanced education and development.

Development of children is not void of the males especially in the school. It is important for children to see that men can be just as compassionate and loving as any other person. When children feel the presence of male educators in the classroom, it shows not just the male children what it means to share the greatest experience of love with others but reflects everybody's behaviour for life. Relatively for girls, if later in life they happen to meet a man who does not treat them well, they know they deserve more and are more valued because of the respectful interactions they had with the male educators in the past. As stated by Koska, (2020) for boys, they learn from male educators that it is not a weakness to show and share love. Having men in the classroom at the early childhood education can create positive male role models for children and redefine the idea of masculinity (Wellington, 2020). In schools around the world spanning all age groups, male teachers are viewed as having a positive influence in classrooms (Christopher, 2021). The presence of male educators equally sends a strong signal to the male children to see early childhood education as one of institutions to work during their adulthood. This sounds as if there should be awareness campaign in every early childhood education centre of the necessity of male educators.

Male educators, particular among young children, can almost become father-like figures and persons who can be trusted. In any educational establishment, there always needs to be a gender balance and this should be something that begins in early years schooling and in a child's main formative years. Boys and girls learn

differently, things which are more apparent in these formative years. Boys tend to be a little more dominant and boisterous - something that often, male teachers encourage or at the very least, accept. Female teachers often try to stop the behaviour and encourage “nice” play. Chimka (2021) suggested that in most circumstances, female teachers associate aggression as being negative while males saw it as a sign of masculinity. Of course, everything needs to be kept in context but without the positive male influence, there is a danger that masculinity can be lost or displayed in more unhealthy ways further down the line. In some situations, males play little to no active role in the upbringing of younger children and for this reason; we try to create a male-friendly environment (Ndifreke, 2022). Male educators tend to subconsciously encourage male parents to become more involved as they can relate more to one another. There is a common belief that early childhood education is too female-focused and that this is another reason for male teachers staying away (Dibia, 2020). Whatever the reason, promoting male participation should be encouraged. In our world and our communities, there should be no stereotypes of gender roles. It is important for children to see different possibilities and paths they can take. Joel (2021) and Lead (2020) said that a child’s development without the roles of his or her father is like a pot of soup prepared without even a pinch of salt. However, Justice (2021) declared that a child can become whatever he is destined to be irrespective of the presence or absence of a male educator. In the same vane, Tijani (2021) said that male role models are hard to come by especially in early childhood education classrooms from the time education moved out of the home to traditional classrooms, women were expected to teach and there is nothing special in males’ roles. In addition, Mader (2022) explained that it should not matter which gender you are if you want to help enrich someone’s life, the determining factors should be your capability, experience, willingness but not whether or not you are a female. It is also important to keep in mind that men bring a different perspective to the field. Like all things, diversity in perspective is very valuable and can contribute negatively to the field. According to him, male teachers may inspire young male children to disregard societal constructs and to pursue their selfish passions. One wonders if the reason for men being few in early childhood education is because of the educators’ pay package.

Pay package has long been acknowledged as a major issue in the early childhood field. It is a great factor which determines where a job seeker works. Nyeche (2021) described pay package as a payment that the workers earn at the agreed

time. This could be a small (low) or big (high) amount of money. High pay package determines expenditure towards healthcare and educational desires. Pay package is associated with whether an individual worker would have challenges of increased stress, low self-esteem, a greater tendency to engage in unhealthy behaviours or not. Ogekwe (2021) said that the health effects of unsatisfactory pay become a vicious cycle, in which poor health hinders employment and income growth. Despite having the great responsibility of moulding the future of Nigeria, the payment of the teacher is low and is discouraging male educators from working in early childhood education sector in the country. Emmanuel (2020) explained that the plight of Nigeria's teachers is pitiful as many of them have died of hunger, diseases and out of frustration due to low pay package. The system has turned a good number of them into beggars and destitutes such that the male educators dread the idea of becoming teachers in early childhood education. When teachers are not appreciated and recognized which culminate to low pay package, men who are saddled with the responsibility of finances in the family, would be forced to turn their noble job of inspiring the children to other fields of endeavour for excellent pay package Ikurute (2021) . Teachers are core nation-builders and are in the centre of the educational configuration but today, teachers' pay package is so low that most of them can barely put food on their tables by the time they settle their children's school fees, utility and medical bills, yet they are expected to develop the children holistically. It is quite absurd that under this unpalatable conditions, men are expected to join the workforce in this sector. Ifejirika (2020) added that Low pay package makes workers insecure and makes it virtually impossible for them to invest in education or training, or to buy a car, to get to a better job. Low pay package can cause certain situations to the workers as follows:

1. Workers in low pay careers are less likely to marry and more likely to divorce and experience family instability.
2. Low pay makes child care unaffordable, causing enormous strains on families and single
3. Low pay is unhealthy. While arduous work and unsafe working conditions take their own toll, low pay workers are less likely to get decent health care.

A high paid job satisfies one's basic needs and at the same time provides the key to spend the surplus in fulfilling one's dreams like buying homes, cars and another luxury lifestyle. Reddy (2022) , Owhor (2020) and Nelly (2021) stated

that a good pay package is a driving force to most people respectively. Similarly, concerning high pay package, Samuel (2021) stated the following:

1. The most attractive word in professional life is “pay package”. Moreover, when this pay package is high it gives a great motivation to the one who is drawing it after a laborious work.
2. Respect comes with high pay package: When one draws a high pay package, the job tends to be a very respectable one.
3. Security in Job: High pay package jobs are such that their demand curve is never downward. A doctor’s demand is ever- rising, wherein a well-experienced engineer is a treasure to a company.

However, Ubaka (2022) explained that the shortage of male teachers in early childhood education has nothing to do with low pay. It is not that males totally hate the teaching in early childhood education merely because low payments. Some do not just have people to fight for them. Most women have ‘long legs’ to get the jobs, compared to the males,” he said. The male school children can imitate and look up to anyone as a role model. Onyomi (2021) opined that the joy of job satisfaction cannot be equated with the pay package. Similarly, Morrison (2022) opined that teaching has historically been “women’s work,” and men have statistically stayed out of the classroom. He further added that the lack of male educators in early childhood education is greatly influenced by the associations of early education with mothering and being “natural” for women, while men interested in the field were “unnatural” or deviants.

Statement of the problem

Educators are the bases of holistic development of the learners. Sometimes it appears as if the female educators tend to inhibit knowledge, behaviours, trainings and skills necessary for the learners to develop in whole rather than in parts. This is because they are limited by their natural endowments. Therefore the responsibility does not rest on the shoulders of the female educators only but the male educators also. What the child learns from the male educators cannot be duplicated by the female educators. Boys and girls learn differently, things which are more apparent in these formative years. Children are good imitators, it becomes absurd to subject every child to be feminine because of the absence of male educators. Let there be both female and male educators for each child to

make his or her choice of who to model. Invariably, for children to develop holistically, they need male educators in addition to females to avoid stereotypes. The stakeholders of early childhood education have invested so much that any child who goes through early childhood education would have a holistic development but the results prove futile due to lack of male educators. Government organizes workshops, seminars, symposiums and the likes for the holistic development of the learners. Surprisingly, none of these efforts is actually making a visible impact because of lack of male educators at the early childhood education level which is pivotal to educational ladder. The government has even made it compulsory for early childhood education to co-exist with the primary schools. The development of the child is not supposed to be compartmentalized but lack of male educators in the profession and in practice keep staring at the holistic development of the child. More often than not, people make such a statement as early childhood education pupils are only good in “rote learning”. This is a pointer to lack of other areas of developments like the psychomotor because of lack of male educators in the classroom. When young children do not experience a comparable range of models of masculinity, their view of what it means to be a boy or a man may hinder individual variations.

The problem of this study therefore, is to determine if male educators influence development of the whole child in order to propose solutions for the development of the whole child. Indeed, the assumption that all females are safe to be left with children is naïve. Sadly, the old-fashioned views that men in paid childcare are not “real” men still exist, especially at the early childhood education level. Childcare is still very much viewed as a “women’s role”, and this is something that needs to overcome to break down much of the stigma. In some schools, women are perceived to be doing a good job and to introduce a male into the environment would upset the situation. These are all unhelpful attitudes and barriers that need to be broken. It is based on these problems that the researcher decided to embark on the topic, “Male Educators and the Development of the Whole Child in Early Childhood Education.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if male educators influence the development of the whole child. Specifically, the objectives of the study were:
To assess the influence of males’ roles on the development of the whole child.
To ascertain the influence of pay package on the development of the whole child.

Research Questions

To what extent do male educators' roles influence the development of the whole child?

To what extent does pay package influence the development of the whole child?

Null Hypotheses

H01: Male educators' roles do not significantly influence the development of the whole child.

H02: There is no significant influence of pay package on the development of the whole child.

Research Method

The study is descriptive survey. The population for the study comprised of 4000 civil servants in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area – Omoku, Rivers State. The sample consisted of 400 male civil servants, using multi – stage sampling technique for the sample selection. The instrument used for this study is questionnaire. Researcher – designed questionnaire, Male Educators' Influence on Pupils Questionnaire (MEIOPQ) was used to gather the needed data from the male civil servants. The instrument (MEIOPQ) was content and face validated by five experts in measurement and evaluation, University of Uyo, Uyo in Akwa Ibom State. The value of the reliability of the instrument was 0.65 after the pilot test. The researcher and research assistants visited the three (3) towns involved. The research assistants also assisted the researcher to collect the instrument (questionnaire) which was administered on the subjects. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage and t – test

Results

Research Questions

Research Question 1: To what extent do male educators' roles influence the development of the whole child?

Table 1: The extent male educators' roles influence the development of the whole child?

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Constructive Role | 63 | 90 |
| Recitation Role | 07 | 10 |

TOTAL 70
100

Data in. 1 shows the roles response rate of the respondents based on the roles they can play if they were educators in early childhood education. The males who could play consecutive roles were 63 (90%). The males who could play recitation roles were 07 (10%). This suggests that the early childhood education children would have acquired more of creative skills than rote learning which is the order of the day. Male educators are prone to inculcate creativity that would have positively effected the larger society.

Research Question 2: To what extent does pay package influence early childhood education?

Table 2: The extent pay package influences the development of whole child in early childhood education.

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Low Salary | 14 | 20 |
| High Salary | 56 | 80 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

Data in. 2 indicates the pay response rate of the respondents based on the pay package. The male civil servants who could accept being employed in early childhood education with low pay package were 14 (20%). On the other hand, the male civil servants who accepted they could work in early childhood education if offered a high pay package were 56 (80%). This suggests that the male educators would be more than enough in the early childhood education centres if offered high pay package.

Testing of Null Hypotheses

H01: Male educators' roles do not significantly influence the development of the whole child.

Table 3: t – test on the extent Male educators' roles do not significantly influence the development of the whole child.

| Role | N | Mean. | SD. | T | P | Remark |
|------------|----|-------|------|------|-----|--------|
| Creativity | 63 | 56.74 | 7.78 | 2.43 | 2.5 | S |
| Recitation | 07 | 51.50 | 8.81 | | | |

In addition, a t - test was conducted to establish whether there was any significant influence of male educators' roles on the development of the whole child in early childhood education. The results presented, Data in. 3 reveals that there is significant influence of male educators roles on the development of the whole child in early childhood education (M=56.74, SD=7.78), compared to recitation roles (M=51.50, SD=8.81), $t = 2.43$ and $P = 2.5$. Going by the results of this analysis, H_{01} is not supported and hereby rejected. The conclusion is that male educators' roles do significantly influence the development of the whole child.

H02: There is no significant influence of pay package on the development of the whole child.

| Pay Package | N. | Mean | SD | T | P | Remark |
|-------------|----|--------|------|------|------|--------|
| Low | 14 | 58.536 | 5.21 | 1.78 | 2.60 | S |
| High | 56 | 54.789 | 6.93 | | | |

Table 4: t - test on the extent pay package do not significantly influence the development of the whole child.

Similarly, , a t - test was conducted to establish whether there is any significant influence of pay package on the development of the whole child in early childhood education. The results presented, Data in. 4 shows that there is significant influence of low salary on the development of the whole child in early childhood education (M=58.536, SD=6.93), compared to high salary (M=54.789, SD=6.93), $t = 1.78$ and $P = 2.60$. Going by the results of this analysis, H_{02} is not supported and hence rejected. The conclusion is that pay package does significantly influence the development of the whole child.

Discussion

The result shows that male educators' roles exert significant influence on the development of the whole child in early childhood education. This result may have been in this form due to the fact that no child lacks the impact of a father in his or her life and remains whole. The gap always surfaces anywhere, anytime since holistic development reflects every aspect of the child. Children learn best through modeling. This is in line with the studies of Joel (2021) and Lead (2020) who said that a child's development without the roles of his or her father is like a pot of soup prepared without even a pinch of salt. However, the result negates

the report of Justice (2021) who declared that a child can become whatever he is destined to be irrespective of the presence or absence of a male educator. Also, the result indicates that pay package has significant influence on the development of the whole child in early childhood education. This result may be attributed to the fact that a man is the head of the family and the financial responsibilities of the family rest on him. Probably every man wants a high pay package to meet the needs of the family. A high salary will attract male educators to settle for early childhood education work. Though in the real sense of life, no man likes to settle for low package especially considering the high cost of living in the contemporary times. The result is in consonance with the studies of Reddy (2022) , Owhor (2020) and Nelly (2021) who stated that a good take home is a driving force to most people. On the other hand, the result contradicts the study of Onyomi (2021) who explained that the joy of job satisfaction cannot be equated with the pay package.

Summary of Major Findings

Major findings were made from the analyses of the data collated for the study as follows :

Male educators' roles significantly influence the development of the whole child in early childhood education. Having men in the classroom can create positive male role models for children and redefine the idea of masculinity. Pay package influences the development of the whole child significantly. Every jobseeker on the labor market wants to get high-paying jobs. When pay package is high, it gives a great motivation to the worker but when the pay is low, people, especially the men would frown at it.

Conclusion

There exists significant influence of male educators' roles on the development of the whole child in early childhood education. This means teaching in early childhood education should not be seen as jobs for women. Therefore, work needs to be done to change the perceptions.

There exists significant influence of pay package on the development of the whole child in early childhood education. The monetary benefit that comes with high-paying jobs is the most obvious reason why people want it. Similarly, if a worker is highly paid, that doubles his motivation. The better the employee's pay package, the more focused he is on the job and the better he achieves the

objective of the organization. Thus, having a high-paying job does not only heighten the individual's focus but also leads to the realization of the set goals.

Recommendations

The stakeholders of early childhood education should place premium on the roles of male educators so that sincere and concentrated efforts be made to employ and retain male educators in order to have their roles played for the development of the whole child. Boys and girls learn differently, so it is good to have role models that are both male and female. There are many ways to express male gender and so boys need many experiences of this close through their formative years. Girls need male teachers to enrich and flavour learning. A year in a male teacher's classroom usually builds a great reservoir of trust. Girls will be better equipped for society as they learn to appreciate the strengths of men. In a classroom environment they can see how male teachers discipline and arrange their classrooms differently to female teachers and very effectively too.

The government and the school proprietors should review the pay package to attract more male educators in order to develop the whole child. These teachers need to make ends meet. This is because they have their own children in schools and want to train them properly. The employers of labour of early childhood education should have a higher pay for the male educators to attract them into the field.

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