

Play Facilities as Predictors of Pre-Reading Skills Acquisition among Preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area of Niger State

Maryam Musa

Department of Department of Early Child Care Education, Niger State College of Education Minna, Nigeria **Email:** maryammusaedu@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigates the play facilities as predictors of pre-reading skills acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area of Niger State. Two research questions and Two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlation survey research design. The population of the study is 4087 preschoolers in the 29 early child care centers in all the public primary schools in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger state. A sample of 356 preschoolers were used for the study. Play Facilities Questionnaire (PFQ) and Pre-reading Skills Acquisition Rating Scale (PSARS) were used for data collection. The two sets of the instrument were face validated by three experts (Two in Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education all from Faculty of Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka). Internal consistency reliability through Cronbach alpha gave a reliability coefficient for pre-reading rating scale as 0.886. The internal consistency reliability coefficients for the clusters of A and B are given as 0.85, and 0.84 respectively in pre-reading skills. Linear regression analysis was used in answering the research question while t-test associated with linear regression was used in testing the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed that play facilities have a high significant predictive power on print motivation skills and print awareness skills of preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority of Niger State. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made, that the school authority should provide pictorial and video games that can increase pupil' s motivation skills. The parents of preschoolers should provide print materials as based on school text listings in order to enhance the acquisition of print awareness skills.

Keywords: Play Facilities, Pre-schoolers, Pre reading skills, Print motivation, Print awareness

Introduction

Pre-reading skills build preschoolers foundation pertaining to reading materials which are identifications of alphabet or Alphabet knowledge, print motivation, Print awareness, Phonological awareness, and Vocabulary, among others. Heilmann et al, (2018) found that early alphabet knowledge is a powerful predictor of long-term reading and academic outcomes. Children who enter school with robust alphabet skills are more likely to achieve reading proficiency by third grade, which correlates strongly with ongoing academic success. This was in view with the studied of Albuquerque and Martins (2022) who observed that letter-writing skills are significant predictors of spelling abilities. This highlights the importance of alphabet knowledge not only for recognizing and naming letters but also for writing and spelling skills among the pupils. Throne (2020) asserts that

the development of spelling skills, which starts in preschool, involves letter-writing and blending skills as well as print knowledge. Effective instructional strategies are key to enhancing alphabet knowledge.

Pre-reading activities are enabling activities, which also provide early readers with comprehensive and necessary background to organize activities and to comprehend materials to be read. Thus, in this view, pre-reading activities unearth and elicit prior knowledge, the purpose for reading and building a knowledge base necessary for dealing with the content and the structure of the materials ascertained (Yılmaz & Saraçoğlu, 2022). Nicholas and Rouse (2021) emphasize that skills such as letter recognition and letter-writing contribute significantly to name writing, letter writing, and spelling. These abilities are foundational as they support more complex literacy tasks, including decoding and word recognition. Understanding letter-sound correspondence and letter recognition forms the bedrock upon which reading proficiency is built.

Print motivation is a child's interest in and enjoyment of books (McGeown, et al, 2020). According to the authors above, a child with strong print motivation enjoys being read to plays with books, pretends to write and asks to be read to. Children who enjoy books and reading will be curious about reading and motivated to learn to read for themselves. The authors further encourage parents to print motivation for their children by making shared book reading a special time, keeping books accessible and letting their child see that they enjoy reading. Similarly, Sandhu, (2016) studied that print awareness is also a crucial foundational skill for preschoolers as it involves recognizing and understanding the function and structure of print. This awareness encompasses a child's ability to identify symbols and signs such as letters, words, punctuation marks, logos, and warning signs.

It also includes understanding that letters form words, words create sentences, and sentences are structured with capital letters and punctuation. According to Jaluo (2021), print awareness involves recognizing the directionality of text knowing that text is read from left to right and top to bottom and understanding how to navigate a book, including which page to read first, how to hold a book, and how to turn pages. This skill is vital for developing pre-reading abilities because it lays the groundwork for reading comprehension and fluency. Children who develop strong print awareness are better equipped to understand the relationship between written and spoken language, which is essential for decoding text and making meaning from it. Bayraktar and Temel (2017) studied that print awareness also helps children grasp the conventions of print, such as the spaces between words and the purpose of punctuation, which are critical for developing literacy.

They also point out that fostering print awareness in preschoolers, educators can enhance their ability to read and write effectively, setting them on a path toward academic success. To encourage the acquisition of a child's pre-reading skills, it is critical to actively engage in quality interactions on a daily basis, such as talking with learners and naming commonly used objects, exposing them to books and puzzles, allowing the

learners to move around and explore toys and move around which are very important to early childhood education. Preschoolers, typically aged 3-5, are in the early childhood phase and are often experiencing school for the first time. This stage, often called pre-primary education, focuses on preparing children for primary school (UNESCO, 2022). The government showed concern in recognizing the importance of pre-primary education since this level of education must start early in life.

Statement of the Problem

Preschool serves a vital role in early childhood development, laying the groundwork for both social-emotional growth and academic readiness. The acquisition of pre-reading skills during this period is particularly crucial, as it sets the stage for future literacy and learning success. Preschool provides children with opportunities to interact with peers, helping them develop essential social skills such as sharing, cooperation, and conflict resolution. These interactions foster emotional intelligence and confidence in social settings.

The acquisition of pre-reading skills among preschoolers is essential for their future literacy and academic success. However, several challenges have hindered this development. Some of the primary issues faced by preschoolers in the Chanchaga local government of area of Niger state.

Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the play facilities as predictors of pre-reading skills acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area in Niger State, Niger, is the determinant of this study

1. Predictive power of play facilities on print motivation skills acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area, Niger State.
2. Predictive power of play facilities on print awareness skills acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area, Niger State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the predictive power of play facilities on print motivation skill acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area, Niger State.?
2. What is the predictive power of play facilities on print awareness skills acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area, Niger State.?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: Play facilities has no significant predictive power on the acquisition of print motivation skills among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area, Niger State.

H₀₂: Play facilities has no significant predictive power on print awareness skills acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area, Niger State.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlation survey research design. The design seeks to establish the relationships method of data collection and method of data analysis. The population of the study is 4087 preschoolers in the 29 early child care centers in all the public primary schools in Chanchaga local government area of Niger state. A sample of 356 preschoolers was used for the study. The sample size was ascertained using Krejcie and Morgan sample table. Multi stage sampling technique was used to ascertain the sample size. Two self -designed instrument were used for the purpose of data collection. The instruments are Play Facilities checklist (PFQ) and Pre-reading Skills Acquisition Rating Scale (PSARS). The instruments were face validated by three experts Two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education all from Faculty of Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to determine the internal consistency reliability coefficient of application of play facilities to be 0.182. The reliability coefficient for pre-reading rating scale is 0.89. The internal consistency reliability coefficients for the clusters of A and B are given as 0.85 and 0.84. Linear regression analysis was used in answering the research question while t-test associated with linear regression was used in testing the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: linear regression analysis of the predictive power of play facilities on print motivation skill acquisition among preschoolers

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.870 ^a	.757	.756	2.46155

Data of table 1 showed that the regression and regression square coefficients are 0.870 and 0.757 respectively. The regression square coefficient value of 75.7% showed that play facilities to a high extent has a predictive power on print motivation skill acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Area, Niger State.

Table 2: t-test associated with linear regression analysis of the predictive power of play facilities on print motivation skill acquisition among preschoolers

Model		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.458	.981		2.505	.013
	Play facilities application	.913	.028	.870	33.119	.000

Data on table 2 showed that the t-test value associated with linear regression is given as 33.119. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, play facilities have a significant predictive power on the acquisition of print motivation skills among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority, Niger State.

Table 3: linear regression analysis of the predictive power of play facilities on print motivation skill acquisition among preschoolers

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.779 ^a	.607	.606	2.93575

Data of table 3 showed that the regression and regression square coefficients are 0.779 and 0.607 respectively. The regression square coefficient value of 60.7% showed that play facilities to a high extent has a predictive power on print awareness skill acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority, Niger State.

Table 4: t-test associated with linear regression analysis of the predictive power of play facilities on print awareness skill acquisition among preschoolers

Model		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.342	1.170		6.274	.000
	Play facilities application	.767	.033	.779	23.318	.000

Data on Table 4 showed that the t-test value associated with linear regression is given as 23.318. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, play facilities have a significant predictive power on the acquisition of print awareness skills among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority, Niger State.

Discussion

The finding showed that play facilities have a high predictive power on the acquisition of motivation skills among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education. The hypothesis showed that play facilities have a significant predictive power on the acquisition of print motivation skills among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local

Government Education, Niger State. The finding of this study has shown that play facilities are very important in improving preschoolers' motivation in pre-reading activities. This implies that schools with the required play facilities are more likely to record to a high extent print motivational skill in pre-reading activities in the school. The finding of this study is in line with that of Chebutuk and Aiko (2019) who reported that play facilities are needed for the improvement of preschoolers' interest and motivation.

The finding showed that play facilities have a high predictive power on the acquisition of print awareness skills among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority. The hypothesis showed that play facilities have a significant predictive power on print awareness skills acquisition among preschoolers in Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority, Niger State. The finding of this study has shown that play facilities can create awareness on the usage, importance and application of print materials in pre-reading skills development. Print awareness skills were able to develop to high extent because through play facilities provision and utilization, the preschoolers can have concrete understanding of print materials. The finding of this study buttressed that of Bayraktar (2018) which revealed a significant relationship between print awareness skills and play method. The finding of this study supported that of Charles, Anthonia, Olisaeke, Ibiam, and Ebizie (2022) which revealed that children taught basic science using the play-way method acquired significantly higher basic science process skills than those taught using conventional methods. Similarly, the finding of this study corroborated that of Taylor (2022) which indicated that dialogic reading was effective and that print awareness tasks were performed slightly better with printed books.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that play facilities are indispensable in the promotion of preschoolers pre-reading skills in Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority of Niger State. Seeing that play facilities predicted pre-reading skills acquisition among preschoolers, teachers are encourage to implement this in the classroom learning. More so, this support the policy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that skill should be used in teaching preschoolers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made.

1. The school authority should provide pictorial and video games that can increase pupils' motivation skills
2. The parents of preschoolers should provide print materials as based on school text listings in order to enhance the acquisition of print awareness skills.

Reference

- Albuquerque, M., & Martins, L. (2022). Letter-writing skills as predictors of spelling abilities in young learners. *Early Literacy Journal*, 14 (2), 112-127.
- Bayraktar, S. (2018). Investigation of the print awareness skills of preschool children in terms of child and parent variances in Cankaya district of Ankara Province, Turkey. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 46(5), 609-618.
- Bayraktar, V., & Temel, F. (2017). Yazıfarkındalığıbecerileri. In F. Temel (Ed.), *Dilveerkenokuryazarlık*(pp. 63-88). Ankara: Hedef CS.
- Heilmann, J., Moyle, M., & Rueden, K. (2018). Using alphabet knowledge to track emergent literacy skills among children in Head Start. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110 (5), 631-644. doi:10.1037/edu0000265
- Charles, A., Olisaeke, I., Ibiam, E., & Ebizie, C. (2022). The effectiveness of the play-way method in teaching basic science: A comparison with conventional methods. *Journal of Science Education*, 45 (2), 121-134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jse.2022.03.001>
- Chebutek, J., & Aiko, S. (2019). The availability of play materials and their influence on children's acquisition of physical skills in Koibatek Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 51 (2), 87-100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-01055-6>
- Throne, A. (2020). The impact of letter-based instruction on preschool literacy development. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 48 (1), 23-35. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01161-1>
- Jaluo, W. M. (2021). *Teacher Classroom Practices and English Language Reading Readiness of Children in Grade One at Kericho Rehabilitation School, Kenya*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi.
- Nicholas, M. & Rouse, E. (2021). Learning to read: where should early childhood educators begin?. *Literacy*, 55(1), 3-13.
- McGeown, S., Bonsall, J. Andries, V Howarth, D & Wilkinson, K (2020). Understanding reading motivation across different text types: Qualitative insights from children. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 43 (4), 597-608.
- Sandhu, R. (2016). What is Reading? - Definition & Process. Retrieved June 2022, from *Study.com*:<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-readingdefinition-process.html>
- Taylor, Marissa, (2022). *An Examination Of Print Awareness When Using Electronic And Printed Books With Preschool-Aged Children*. Online Theses and Dissertations. 770.

UNESCO. (2022). *Pre-primary education*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/early-childhood-care-and-education>.

Yılmaz, R., & Saraçoğlu, S. (2022). Effects of the Flipped Classroom Model on Learners' Reading Strategy Use and Attitudes. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, 12(2), 118-137.