

Combatting the Danger of a Single Story: Empirical Comparison of Resource Availability among Ibadan Rural and Urban Pre-School Centers, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Learning in the early years of life is not just an intra-personal effort of the child alone; rather, it involves the interplay of several social factors, which can affect a child's development. However, literature that considered and presented these factors as obtainable within preschools mostly revealed their facts and figures in a single story of either urban or rural preschools, cheering an uneven intervention from developmental agencies afterward. This study sought to provide an empirical comparison of the state of preschool resources in Ibadan rural and urban communities. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population includes public preschool centers in Ibadan. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select 20% of the preschools from two selected local governments of Ibadan which represent the urban and rural communities. A total sample of 33 preschools was used. Data was collected using Pre-primary School Resources Availability Checklist (PREPSRAC, $r = 0.89$). Findings were that classroom resources are more available in urban preschools compared to rural pre-primary schools of Ibadan contrary to generalized remarks. Equity rather than equality of resources distribution is therefore recommended as a way of discontinuing the danger of a single story in pre-primary education for promoting equal learning.

Keywords:

Equal-Access; Pre-Primary Education; Preschool Resources; Rural-Urban Learning

ABSTRAK

Belajar di tahun-tahun awal kehidupan bukan hanya upaya intra-pribadi anak; sebaliknya, ini melibatkan interaksi dari beberapa faktor sosial, yang dapat mempengaruhi perkembangan anak. Namun, literatur yang mempertimbangkan dan menyajikan faktor-faktor sebagaimana dapat diperoleh di prasekolah sebagian besar mengungkap fakta dan angka mereka dalam satu cerita baik prasekolah

perkotaan atau pedesaan, mendukung intervensi yang tidak merata dari lembaga pembangunan sesudahnya. Studi ini berusaha untuk memberikan perbandingan empiris tentang keadaan sumber daya prasekolah di masyarakat pedesaan dan perkotaan Ibadan. Desain penelitian survei deskriptif diadopsi. Penduduknya termasuk pusat prasekolah umum di Ibadan. Teknik pengambilan sampel bertingkat proporsional digunakan untuk memilih 20% dari prasekolah dari dua pemerintah daerah Ibadan yang dipilih yang mewakili masyarakat perkotaan dan pedesaan. Sampel total 33 prasekolah digunakan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan Daftar Periksa Ketersediaan Sumber Daya Sekolah Pra-SD (PREPSRAC, $r = 0.89$). Temuannya adalah bahwa sumber daya kelas lebih tersedia di prasekolah perkotaan dibandingkan dengan pra-sekolah dasar pedesaan Ibadan bertentangan dengan pernyataan umum. Oleh karena itu, pemerataan daripada persamaan distribusi sumber daya direkomendasikan sebagai cara untuk menghentikan bahaya satu cerita dalam pendidikan pra-sekolah dasar untuk mempromosikan pembelajaran yang setara.

Kata Kunci:

Akses Sama; Pendidikan Pra-Sekolah Dasar; Sumber Daya Prasekolah; Pembelajaran Pedesaan-Perkotaan

1. Introduction

It is believed that the life of every individual is wired in such a way that, at any stage or level, there is a formation stage to which the current status could be attributed to. This formation stage could be seen as early years which serve as a beginning of several other stages of life and the plethora of social experiences, environments, and relationships that children have in the early years, sets the stage for their lifelong development.

It has been recognized that education given to children at the formative years is being crucial not just because of its ability to make the recipients literate but because of its ability to raise a whole child. A whole child is a child that develops holistically in terms of all the domains- social, emotional, physical, and intellectual as well as creativity (Anderson & Shane, 2012; Salami, 2016). Bringing about this development at the early phase of life is not just an intra-personal effort of a child alone, rather, it involves the coming together of several factors, which can affect development in various ways, all of which are important to put into consideration. As much as some of these factors could be human (parents, guardians, teachers, paraprofessionals, developmental partners, government, and so on), it is pertinent to establish that there are some of these other factors in which their availability solely rely on human's clemency and mostly come as material resources provided by the government in sane climes.

These resources are critical to the successful implementation of any Early Childhood Education (ECE) program (Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016) especially one intended to achieve a child's holistic

development. This early childhood education program is the formal system of schooling made available for children in early years whereby resources, activities, and services rendered are developmentally appropriate for the child in terms of the child's age, level, need, and culture. The National Minimum Standards for the establishment of Basic Schools, although opened up its pages with a clear statement that an Education for all is the responsibility of all, (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, [FRN], 2007). The document also did not fail to spell out in clear terms, the shouldering of resources responsibilities that are succinct to be provided by the government for any basic school to be regarded as standard which included the provision of material and human resources with consideration of schools in urban areas and rural schools very much in the picture. According to the document, it operationalized the concept of standard as an established norm or requirement that all systems work towards achieving. Standards are of three types, namely resource standards, process standards, and performance standards of which this work, however, focuses on the resource's standards.

With the prescriptions captured in the policy documents guiding the standardization and regularization of pre-primary and primary education, one could imagine the level of equity and equal-accessed pre-primary education aimed at by the federal government of Nigeria. In September 2019, Ibadan city in Nigeria was one of the ten cities from around the world that received the UNESCO Learning Cities Award in Colombia on the eve of the Fourth International Conference on Learning Cities.

This award, according to the director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, was in recognition of exemplary progress made by cities in promoting inclusive, equity, and lifelong learning in local communities (UNESCO, 2019). The feat attained is such that makes it possible to settle with the fact that, for the third-most populous city in the country, and home to one of Africa's leading academic institutions, the University of Ibadan, much is being done in the area of providing equal availability of learning resources to schools to enhance learning regardless of the socio-geographical status of such preschool centers.

However, the fact remains that the city is not excluded from statistical submissions rendering the nation at large as occupying over one-fifth of the global burden for out-of-school children with a record of around 10.5 million children (UNICEF, 2017). As much as learning in Ibadan city might appear to be "learning heaven," Ibadan has its fair share of educational challenges as well. Added to these are the concomitant issues of the dearth of quality infrastructure, including furniture, equipment, and facilities; and the fact that some of the existing ones fall below the expected minimum standard specifications in terms of quality and quantity that will make the desired impact inefficient basic education service delivery.

Resources are paramount in developing quality education. The success or failure of any nation's educational system depends on the quality and quantity of resources made available to it (Ayoku, 2016). Educational resources are both human and non-human resources meant for achieving

educational goals. Emetarom (2014) defined educational resources as the physical and spatial teaching and learning enablers that increase the production of results.

The education system also faces challenges of equity in terms of resource provision and regulation practices. Jimoh and Oduolowu (2019) posited that the location of a school determines the patronage such a school will enjoy to a very large extent. Rural-urban disparities are one fact that has continually raised its ugly heads in the discus of early childhood education. With various interactions targeted towards the school system, it does not appear to command best practices among teachers, nor even make available best environmental resources to rural areas (Olalowo, 2020). In most remote areas, the majority of those working with the child seem to be untrained, most of the identified developmentally appropriate practices are not to the knowledge of those to implement it to talk less of it being adhered to.

In a study conducted by Johnson and Strange (2015), it was reported that in terms of financial resources, pre-primary schools in rural communities receive fewer state and local resources in terms of per-pupil expenditures than schools in more wealthy/urban communities. Those in poor communities tend to go to schools with fewer resources, and those in affluent communities tend to go to well-resourced schools.

Resource in the physical environment of a school is the framework for learning and as this can contribute to either promoting or impeding the overall development of the child, it must be put into maximum consideration as much as possible. Resources suitably and richly ordered indeed make up part of the teacher's and learner's resources factored into the school setting as personal power depending on how it is put to work. Meticulous care given to the planning and organization of the physical environment can enable the child to utilize his/her developmental prowess optimally as a result of an ordered engagement with such environment which makes learning environment matters a lot to children development. (Oduolowu, 2011). Be it a traditional schooling system or a formal one, a multiplicity of concerns is involved, but chiefly it entails arranging, organizing, or utilizing satisfactorily in both rural and urban pre-schools, such matters as seating and layout, teaching aids, materials for activity-based lessons, visual resources, activity-based learning centers, white/chalkboards and so on.

It would be fair to say that the physical impression of the classroom can be an ally or an enemy to the development of a child and part of the beauty of the physical environment is to make readily available, resources that can make the child engage the environment. Contrariwise, in a bid to describing the nature of the preschool section in Nigeria public primary schools as of the year 2015, Salami (2015) reported that the only resources in the learning centers were chairs and tables for the children and caregivers, and a chalkboard. Learning resources were either not supplied at all or grossly inadequate, those that were supplied were kept out of reach of children in the name of protection from getting damaged. It is to this end that such resources can have a dictate on the child,

else the two may end up as disjointed commodities that could have been wired together to help the child achieve optimal development.

Thoroughly organizing the child's resource needs in this respect helps to establish an environment fitting and beneficial to the development of the child and Jill and Joy (2016) submitted that a well-prepared school environment influences the certain behavior of learners. Ndukwu (2002), Ahmad (2015), and Oginni et al (2013) recommended in their separate studies on school location that pupils could perform better with an enriched locational environment. These assertions have also been confirmed in the studies of Adedoja et al (2013).

In the multifaceted arguments of the distribution of resources in pre-primary schools, there still exists a gap in the literature as well as a recent empirical basis to work with on the current state of pre-primary children's school-based environmental factors such that compares between the rural and the urban community in Nigeria. Also, little had been done in a single study that compared the state of these resources in both rural and urban communities which later informs the unbalanced interventions carried out leading the nation on a far path from achieving equal-accessed pre-primary education. Furthermore, the main problem of a widened education gap in Nigeria is still mostly addressed at other levels of education (upper primary, secondary and tertiary education), the subject is still often silenced with regards to the pre-primary level of education which is the bedrock for every other level of education. It is against this backdrop that this study is carried out on the phenomenon of learning on unequal grounds by surveying resource availability among pre-school centers of Ibadan and its implication for equity in pre-primary education towards 2030.

This study is homed within the social exclusion theory. The theory is associated with the works of scholars such as (Black & Muddiman, 1997; Pacione, 1997; Walker, 1997) among others and its first publication was pronounced in 1997. The theory argues that social exclusion subjects individuals and groups to discriminatory practices that expose them to humiliations and deprivations. It asserts that social exclusion separates and isolates some groups of individuals from the mainstream of society with resultant negative effects on their citizenship and other socio-economic rights. These exclusions are not just limited to material resources but also matters like social participation, culture and education, access to social services, and power. This theory is ideal for this study because it not only examines the complexity of the persistent access to quality education arising from systemic deprivations, disempowerment, alienation, and hardship facing the ungoverned populations in the rural part of Nigeria but their effects on how return and reintegration processes will have to be conducted, as well as the time and level of resources that will be required.

Generally, the objective of this study is to determine the extent of availability of social learning resources in preschool centers of Ibadan rural and urban communities. Manageable unit objectives will revolve around; determining the extent of school (Playground) resources availability in pre-primary schools of rural communities as compared to urban communities, determining the extent of school (Classroom) resources availability in pre-primary schools of rural communities as compared

to urban communities, and determining the extent of school (health/safety) resources availability in pre-primary schools of rural communities as compared to urban communities.

2. Methods

Quantitatively, this study has to do with examining the state of certain school resources factors that has to do with pre-school; this made it necessary to adopt a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design according to Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) is research that provides an accurate portrayal of characteristics of a particular individual, situation, or group. A multistage sampling procedure was adopted so that an accurate sample would be arrived at for the study. All public primary schools running the one-year pre-primary program in Ibadan, Oyo State constituted the population of the study. Generally, Ibadan has a total of eleven Local Governments. A stratified sampling technique was used to divide these local governments into two which will cover the urban settlements and rural settlements to end up at 5 local governments and 6 local governments for the two settlements respectively. A simple random sampling technique was used to select one local government from each settlement (Ona-Ara and Ibadan North local government). Due to the unequal number of schools the two local governments have, proportionate sampling was used to select 20% of the schools in each local government.

Table 1. School selection by Local Government Areas in Ibadan

S/N	Local Government Selected	No. of Pre-primary Schools	20% selected
1	Ibadan North	68	14
2	Ona-Ara	95	19
	Total		33

Adapted From: Oyo State 2016/2017 Annual School Census Report

A total sample of 33 preschools (14 from Ibadan North and 19 from Ona-Ara local government governments) was used as shown in the table above. A self-designed instrument titled 'Pre-primary School Resources Availability Checklist (PREPSRAC) with reliability coefficient of ($r = 0.89$) was used to take a record of resources available in the school environments of both rural and urban schools for the child to interact with and explore. The instrument has two parts. Part one dealt with demographic data of the school that is, the location; part two takes records of the kind of physical facilities and materials available in the school. The items under this part covered (i) playground resources (ii) classroom resources (iii) health/safety resources as obtainable from the Nigeria minimum standard document for establishing schools and learning centers. Data gathered were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency counts distribution.

3. Results and Discussion

To answer each research question, the Pre-primary School Resources Availability Checklist (PREPSRAC) was used at the thirty-three schools covered in this study. The resources found available are presented in tables

Research Question 1: What is the extent of school (Playground) resources availability in pre-primary schools of rural communities as compared to urban communities?

Table 2. Availability of Resources (Playground) in Ibadan Pre-Primary Schools

Playground Resource	N	Location	
		Rural	Urban
		Avail.	Avail
Wheeled Toys	19	4 (21.1)	11 (78.6)
Swing	19	9 (47.4)	10 (71.4)
Balls	19	12 (63.2)	11 (78.6)
Sea-saw	19	1 (5.3)	10 (71.4)
Slide	19	7 (36.8)	12 (85.7)
Climbing Trees	19	11 (57.9)	12 (85.7)
Tyres	19	8 (42.1)	1 (7.1)
Tunnel	19	9 (47.4)	9 (64.3)
Sandpit	19	11 (57.9)	3 (21.4)
Garden Area	19	16 (84.2)	13 (92.9)
Total Availability		Rural = 46.33%	Urban = 65.71%

Description *percentage in brackets, *N= Number of Schools

From: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2 presented above shows the availability of playground resources in rural and urban preschools. Out of the 19 rural schools visited, only 4 (21.1%) have wheeled toys available, while 11 (78.6%) out of the 14 schools in the urban area have. The preschools in the rural area that has a swing on their playground are 9 (47.4%) which is a bit less than average compared to preschools in the urban area 10 (71.4%) which is more than average. Both schools in the rural and urban areas have quite some footballs for the children to play as 12 (63.2%) out of the 19 schools in the rural area have a football while 11 (78.6%) out of the 14 urban schools also own a football. Of the schools visited, only 1 (5.3%) of the rural school and 10 (71.4%) of the urban schools has a See-saw on their playground. 11 (57.9%) rural preschools have slides compared to the urban preschools where 12

(85.7%) of the schools visited have slides on the playground. While the numbers of preschools in the rural areas that have tires on their playground are 8 (42.1%), only 1 (7.1%) school in the urban settlement has a tire on the playground. 9 (47.4%) rural preschools have a tunnel where the children can play while urban preschools are also 9 (64.3%). The sandpit was found in 11 (57.9) rural preschools compared to the preschools in the urban preschools where only 3 (21.4%) schools were having a sandpit. In the rural areas, 16 (84.2%) schools have an open space that served more as a garden area while out of the 14 preschools visited in the urban area, 13 (92.9%) of the schools had a garden area where one or two flowers can be seen.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of school (Classroom) resources availability in pre-primary schools of rural communities as compared to urban communities?

Table 3. Availability of Resources (Classroom) in Ibadan Pre-Primary Schools

Classroom Resource	N	Location	
		Rural Avail.	Urban Avail
Children's Desk	19	13 (68.4)	14 (100)
Children's Seats	19	9 (47.4)	14 (71.4)
Picture Books	19	5 (26.3)	14 (71.4)
White/Blackboard	19	4 (21.1)	14 (92.9)
Paints	19	5 (26.3)	14 (78.6)
Brushes	19	6 (31.6)	14 (100)
Crayons	19	4 (21.1)	14 (92.9)
Measuring scales	19	5 (26.3)	14 (92.9)
Magnetic Alphabets and Letters	19	4 (21.1)	14 (28.6)
Charts	19	8 (42.1)	14 (92.9)
Shelves	19	2 (10.5)	14 (78.6)
Globes	19	3 (15.8)	14 (78.6)
Total Availability		Rural = 29.83%	Urban = 81.56%

Description *percentage in brackets, *N= Number of Schools

From: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3 shows that from the schools surveyed for this study; out of the 19 rural schools visited, 13 (68.4%) has enough children’s desks available, while the 14 (100%) schools in the urban area all had chairs sufficiently supplied. In the same order, 9 (47.4%) preschools in the rural area have seats for the children in the classroom compared to the 10 (71.4%) preschools in the urban area which is more than average. Unlike in the urban area where 10 (71.4%) of the schools visited had picture books in the classroom, only 5 (26.3%) schools in the rural area had picture books for the children. Of the schools visited, only 4 (21.1%) of the rural school and 13 (92.9%) of the urban schools have either white/blackboard in the classroom. 5 (26.3%) rural preschools have paints for the children to perform artworks compared to the urban preschools where 11 (78.6%) of the schools visited have water paints. While the numbers of preschools in the rural areas that have brushes for artwork are just 6 (31.6%), the 14 (100%) schools in the urban area have brushes in the classroom for artworks. In line with this, crayon was found available in 4 (21.1%) rural preschools compared to the preschools in the urban preschools where 13 (92.9%) schools were having crayons available. Out of the 19 rural schools, only 5 (26.3%) have measuring scales available, while 13 (92.9%) schools had to measure scales. Only 4 preschools in both the rural and urban areas (21.1%) and (28.6%) respectively have magnetic alphabets and letters. In the rural areas, 8 (42.1%) schools have charts hung on the class walls while out of the 14 preschools visited in the urban area, 13 (92.9%) of the schools had were having different kinds of charts pasted and hung on the classroom walls. Only 2 (10.5%) preschools in the rural area have shelved for the children’s belongings compared to the preschools in the urban area where 11 (78.6%) of their preschools have shelves in the classroom. Lastly, the availability of globes in rural preschools is very low as only 3 (15.8%) of the classes have a globe compared to the urban area where 11 (78.6%) schools have them.

Research Question 3: What is the extent of school (Playground) resources availability in pre-primary schools of rural communities as compared to urban communities?

Table 4. Availability of Resources (health and safety) in Ibadan Pre-Primary Schools

Other Resources	Location			
	N	Rural Avail.	N	Urban Avail.
Water Closet/Ventilated Improved Pit	19	4 (21.1)	14	12 (85.7)
Wash-hand basins	19	1 (5.2)	14	11 (78.5)
Borehole/Deep well	19	3 (15.7)	14	12 (85.7)
First Aid Box	19	4 (21.1)	14	10 (71.4)
Sick-Bay	19	0 (0)	14	3 (21.4)
Fire-Extinguisher	19	0 (0)	14	4 (28.6)
Perimeter fence	19	2 (10.5)	14	12 (85.7)
Waste Bin	19	11	14	13

Total Availability	(57.9)	(92.9)
Description *percentage in brackets, *N= Number of Schools	Rural=16.44%	Urban = 68.74%

From: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4 above presents the availability of some other resources which are categorized as either health or safety resources in preschools. In the 19 rural schools visited, 4 (21.1%) has a Ventilated Improved Pit, while 12 (85.7%) schools in the urban area all had either the water closet or Ventilated Improved Pit. On 1 (68.4%) preschool in the rural area have a wash-hand basin compared to the urban area where 10 (71.4%) preschools have wash-hand basins in their pre-primary class. Also, only 3 (15.7%) of the rural school and 12 (85.7%) of the urban schools have either a borehole/deep well. 4 schools which made up (21.1%) in the rural schools had a first-aid box which is far much lower to the number of 10 preschools (71.4%) in the urban area where there are first-aid boxes. Only 3 (21.4%) schools in the urban area had a sick-bay for the children to make use of, however, and 4 (28.6%) had fire-extinguishers, neither a sick-bay nor a fire-extinguisher was found in any of the preschools in the rural area. 12 (85.7%) preschools in the urban area had perimeter fencing around them compared to preschools in the rural area where only 2 (10.5%) schools were fenced. Out of the 19 rural schools, 11 (57.9%) had a waste bin or refuse site, whereas, only 1 school out of the 14 urban schools visited was not having a refuse dump

The findings from this study revealed that school resources are more available in urban pre-primary school centers than rural pre-primary centers of Ibadan. Explicitly, the empirical data gathered showed that schools in the rural community had very limited or no classroom resources where the children learn, also most resources that may be regarded as miscellaneous but necessary around the school are found wanting to a large extent in rural areas of Ibadan when compared with what is obtainable in urban preschool centers. For instance, resources that cater to the child's safety, health, and wellbeing generally are mostly unavailable in rural preschools.

The availability of school resources in Ibadan urban pre-primary schools may be connected to several prepositions ranging from the massive investment of the state's current administration into the educational sector in the state which gave premium to raising the quality of education at all levels. Also, there is a general paradox of most government, corporate bodies, and agencies emphasizing development projects in urban areas as this practice is often seen as more beneficial and visible to a larger populace since it attracts recognition and accolades faster. This stand is in similar view with the submissions of Nkasiobi (2011) who posited that there are observed inequalities in the distribution of socio-economic facilities in Nigeria. From the findings that preschools in rural communities are short of availability of school resources; this may be unconnected from point of view that certain amenities and practices which enables the distribution of these resources are not in place. Some of these amenities include the state of motorable roads to these schools which are not in good states. This one amenity may have gone a long way to discourage lazy officials and responsible agencies from ensuring even distribution of school resources to rural communities as well as proper monitoring

in such areas. This is in kith and kin to the view of Jimoh and Oduolowu (2019) that believed that the location of a school determines the patronage such a school will enjoy to a very large extent.

All these, among other reasons, may have accounted for the much availability of school resources in Ibadan urban preschool centers compared to how available such resources are in rural communities. However, this finding agrees with the findings of Osho et al (2014) who found out that only 30% of the schools sampled in their study had furniture suitable for ECE, and in these schools, the classes were overpopulated. Also, some ECD centers lack desks or good sitting spaces. Some children are compelled to sit on stones or remain standing during lessons. Corroborating this report from the global view is the assertion of Chepkonga (2017) on the availability and adequacy of learning facilities in public ECDE centers in West Pokot County that the available classrooms in preschools are in a worrisome state.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that pre-primary schools in Ibadan, most especially rural communities are still experiencing a deficiency in various school resources such as playground resources, classroom resources, and other necessary resources such as health and safety resources. This sends a strong message to the government on the need to jack up investment in the provision of resources to ensure even distribution of basic school needs around the state. The idea of pulling all efforts into education in urban communities alone or more than rural areas should be stopped. Failure to do this will transcend beyond educational matters alone but more to economic development issues such as brain drain syndrome from rural to urban areas for individuals in desire for a better and quality education and generally poses a threat to Nigeria as a nation in achieving sustainable development goal 4. This is also an eye-opener for non-governmental organizations and early childhood socio-scientific researchers who may want to carry out intervention -exercises in preschools to know what best resources are needful to embark on.

Based on the findings of this study, it is needful to recommend that education bodies at the grassroots level such as the Local Government Education Authorities (L.G.E.A) should devise a more pragmatic and productive process of regularly presenting and connecting the deficient status of rural education at the State level since they are directly close in identifying such statuses. This could mean that the need for a regular public briefing between L.G.E As and State education boards (e.g State Universal Basic Education Board – SUBEB) should be effectively organized.

Also, as it is observed that resources mostly common in the rural communities are those categorized as playground resources, it is recommended that a community-based system of education should be fostered more, even in government-owned preschools especially in the aspect of providing locally available materials for improvisation of schooling resources.

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