



IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN RIVERS SOUTH EAST
SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of international organizations in the development of early childhood education programmes in River South East Senatorial District. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Two hundred and eighty-nine (289) teachers in 189 Early Childhood Centres within the study area were purposively sampled. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated. The instrument for data collection was titled: "Impact of International Organization in Development of Early Childhood Education Programmes Questionnaire (IIODECEPQ)". The reliability index of the instrument was 0.75. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer each research question. The independent sample t-test was used to test the three hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from hypotheses one and two revealed non-significant difference in the impact of the International organizations in the curriculum development and the provision of instructional materials in the development of early childhood education programmes in urban and rural areas of the district, depicting that these impacts were equally across the district. Hypotheses three revealed significant difference in the provision of infrastructural materials in the development of early childhood education programmes in the areas. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the distribution of infrastructural facilities from these organizations should be equitably distributed across the urban and rural areas of the district. The organizations should also increase their impacts and the indigenous Government agencies should endeavor to pay their counterpart funds to attract these organizations participate in these activities across the Senatorial District.

KEYWORDS: International organizations, Development, Early childhood Education Programmes, River South East Senatorial District.

INTRODUCTION

The early years of children has been described as the most important stages in their lives for the formation of intelligence, personality and social behaviour (Sooter, 2013). This has been the major reasons why modern societies show serious concern for the education of their young ones by providing needed support to prepare them to succeed later in school (Ejeh, 2006). Hence, it has been a common practice in most societies to make provision for early childhood education programmes of various sorts for children



below the official school-going age of 6years, mainly to prepare them for education in primary schools (Obidike, 2012). The Federal Government of Nigeria has recognized the importance of early childhood education in Nigeria and such has given it prominence in the National Policy of Education, seeing it as one of the programmes in the Nigerian educational system (FRN, 2004). It is revealed that, an estimated figure of one hundred million children, struggle daily for survival in villages and cities, and are also exposed to the risks of hunger, poverty, disease, illiteracy and abuses across the globe Bagudo (2008). In support of this view, Mahuta (2007) emphasized that, there is need to address the problems and salvage these children and the next generation of children from this menace. This gesture necessitates the establishment of programme for Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) in Nigeria. There is an increasing global concern that, investing in early childhood education will bring about the greatest returns on educational expenditures, particularly when initiatives are directed towards the most disadvantaged communities (Idiabana and Somieari-Pepple, 2025). Consequently, several international organizations, such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO, have urged national governments to promote early learning in their educational reform initiatives. For instance, in Nigeria, enhancing early childhood education programmes by these international organizations (World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO) especially in underprivileged regions such as some portions of Rivers State will require a coordinated strategy that will include policy implementation, community engagement, comprehensive teacher training, effective curriculum development, provision of instructional materials, provision of infrastructural facilities and continuous financial support. With such policies in place, the long-term developmental and educational results of children may be considerably enhanced, contributing to the general human capital development of the country.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study examined the role of foreign agencies in the development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Education zone. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Ascertain the impact of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Educational Senatorial Districts.
- Evaluate the impact of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Instructional materials for the development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District.
- Ascertain the impact of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Infrastructural facilities for the development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the impacts of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Educational Senatorial Districts?
- What are the impacts of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Instructional materials for the development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District?
- What are the impacts of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Infrastructural facilities for the development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District?

HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant difference in the impacts of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Educational Senatorial Districts.
- There is no significant difference in the impacts of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Instructional materials for the development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District.
- There is no significant difference in the impacts of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Infrastructural facilities for the development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. This research design involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. It makes use of questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules or checklist, tests, amongst others to generate data from respondents who participate in a study. This design was considered suitable for this study, as it measured and described accurately the variables under study.

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Rivers South East Senatorial District of Rivers State. The Rivers State is among the thirty-six States in Nigeria located in the Niger Delta between 4°45'N and 6°50'E with a total area of 11.077km² and a population of 6,689,087.



The Rivers South East senatorial district is one of the three senatorial districts in Rivers State and comprises of seven (7) Local Government Areas which are: Andoni, Eleme, Gokana, Khana, Opobo-Nkoro, Oyigbo and Tai. It is located at the Eastern part of Rivers State. It is bounded by Imo and Abia States to the North, Rivers East senatorial district to the West, the Atlantic Ocean to the South and Akwa Ibom State to the East. The National Population Commission, 2010 puts its population to be 1,720,790. The district is host to numerous National and Multinational companies/industries and government facilities. These include Port Harcourt Refinery, Indorama, Daewoo, Total Oil Company (Onne), Nigerian Ports Authority, Eleme petrochemical company, Notore Fertilizer Company, Onne sea port, Shell Petroleum Development Company, among others. The district has 189 pre-primary schools, 279 Government primary schools and one tertiary institution (Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic Bori).

Population of the study

The population of the study comprised of Two hundred and eighty-nine (289) caregivers found in One hundred eighty-nine (189) early childhood centres in Rivers South East senatorial district constitute the population of the study (RSUBEB, 2023).

Sample and sampling technique

Two hundred and eighty-nine (289) caregivers found in One hundred eighty-nine (189) childhood centres in Rivers South East Educational zone of Rivers State all formed the sample size for the study due to the small size of the population. This covered the 7 Local Government Areas in the Rivers South-East Senatorial District. Purposive sampling technique was used to gather information for the study.

Instrumentation

An instrument titled “Impact of International Organization in Development of Early Childhood Education Programmes Questionnaire (IIODECEPQ)” was used for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections, Section A, elicited information on the socio-demographic data of the respondents such as age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, and years of experience. Section B contained 12 test items that elicited response from the respondents on curriculum development by Government and international organizations; information on instructional materials available in the school and information on Infrastructural facilities available in the schools were elicited. The items were structured using a four-point Likert scale of Always (A-4), Often (O-3), Sometimes (S-2) and Never (N-1). The instrument was designed with both open and close-ended questions.

Validation of the instrument

The content and face validity of the instrument was established by two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education Studies, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. This was necessary to ascertain their language level and appropriateness.



Reliability of the instrument

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, thirty (30) copies of the validated questionnaire were administered among early childhood caregivers in Rivers South West Senatorial Districts in the Rivers South West Senatorial District. This population is homogenous to the Rivers South East Senatorial District. Similarly, after two weeks, the same instruments were re-administered to the same respondents and the data collected were analyzed to determine the reliability of the instrument using Pearson Moment Correlation (PPMC). The correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. This instrument was deemed reliable and used for the study.

Administration of the instrument

Prior to the administration of the copies of the questionnaire a letter of permission was obtained from the head teachers of the sampled schools before proceeding to distribute the 289 copies of questionnaires to the respondents on an agreed date and time. The questionnaires were administered in the company of trained research assistants. The instrument was distributed to all 289 caregivers in all the 189 early childhood education centres. All 289 questionnaires administered were retrieved showing a 100% retrieval rate.

Method of data analysis

The research questions were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation while the hypotheses were tested using the independent sample t-test a 0.05 level of significance.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research questions one: What is the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District?



Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the curriculum development of early childhood education programme in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial Districts

S/N	Impact of International organization in the curriculum development of early childhood education programmes	Urban, N = 148		Rural, N = 141	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	International organizations monitor and inspects the curriculum used by our school.	2.88	1.09	2.91	0.97
2	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are not interested in the development of curriculum used by our school.	3.26	0.84	3.29	0.93
3	World Bank recommends the NERDC curriculum being used in our school.	3.29	0.92	3.30	0.96
4	United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) ensure that developed curriculum are carefully followed by our school.	2.24	1.11	2.61	1.20
	Grand mean	2.92	0.65	3.03	0.64

Table 1 represents the overall mean and standard deviation on the level of participation of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in curriculum development of early childhood education programme in Urban and Rural areas. The values obtained were 2.92, SD=0.65 and 3.03, SD=0.64 respectively. The key role in curriculum development was that World Bank recommended the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) curriculum being used in schools.

Research Questions two: What is the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Instructional Materials in early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District?



Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Instructional Materials in early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District

S/N	Role of Foreign agencies in the provision of instructional materials in early childhood education programme	Urban, N = 148		Rural, N = 141	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provide nature table/corner for effective teaching/learning in our school.	2.87	1.02	3.13	1.02
2	International organizations do not provide charts and wall drawings to aid smooth teaching/learning process in our school.	2.48	1.11	2.51	1.24
3	World Bank provides televisions to our school.	3.35	0.91	3.40	0.94
4	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provide toys and models to aid learning in our school.	3.22	0.93	3.20	1.01
Grand mean		2.98	0.64	3.06	0.69

Table 2 represents the overall mean and standard deviation on the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Instructional Materials for early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas. The values obtained were 2.98, SD=0.64 and 3.06, SD=0.69 respectively. The key impact in the provision of instructional materials was that these organizations provided, table/corner for effective teaching/learning, televisions, toys and models to aid learning in schools.



Research question three: What is the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation on the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank and provision of Infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programme in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial zone

S/N	Role of Foreign agencies in the provision of Infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programmes	Urban, N = 148		Rural, N = 141	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	International organizations do not provide well-ventilated classrooms and spacious playground in our school.	3.20	1.00	3.29	1.01
2	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) builds school clinic/sickbay for our school.	3.35	0.93	3.36	1.00
3	World Bank provides child-sized furniture to our school.	3.07	1.05	3.18	0.98
4	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provide safe running water for our school.	2.24	1.11	2.61	1.20
Grand mean		2.96	0.67	3.11	0.67

Table 3 represents the overall mean and standard deviation on the level of participation of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas. The values obtained were, 2.96, SD=0.67 and 3.11, SD=0.67 respectively. The key role in the provision of infrastructural facilities was that, these international organizations, built school clinics/sickbays, provided child-sized furniture and safe running water for schools for urban and rural areas respectively.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Senatorial zone based on location.



Table 4: Summary of independent sample t-test on the difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in curriculum development of early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location

Variable	Location	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	T	Df	p-value	Remark/Decision
Curriculum development	Urban	141	2.92	0.65	0.05	-1.43	279	0.15	Not Significant/ Retained
	Rural	140	3.03	0.64	0.05				

Table 4 represent the summary of independent sample t-test on the difference in the level of participation of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Senatorial zone based on location. The result revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of role of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in curriculum development of early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location ($t = -1.43$, $df = 279$, $p > .05$). The null hypothesis was retained at 0.05 alpha level.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of instructional materials for early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location

Table 5: Summary of independent sample t-test on the difference in the role of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank and provision of instructional material for early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location

Variable	Location	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	T	df	p-value	Remark/Decision
Instructional materials	Urban	141	2.98	0.64	0.05	-0.97	279	0.34	Not Significant/ Retained
	Rural	140	3.06	0.69	0.06				

Table 5 represents the summary of independent sample t-test on the difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of instructional material for early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location. The result showed that there is no significant difference in the level role of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of instructional material for early



childhood education programme in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location ($t = -0.97$, $df = 279$, $p > .05$). The null hypothesis was retained at 0.05 alpha level.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Education zone based on location.

Table 6: Summary of independent sample t-test on the difference in the role of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank and provision of infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Education zone based on location

Variable	Location	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	T	Df	p-value	Remark/Decision
Instructional materials	Urban	141	2.96	0.67	0.06	-1.80	279	0.04	Not Significant/Retained
	Rural	140	3.11	0.67	0.06				

Table 6 represents the summary of independent sample t-test on the difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location. The result showed that there was a significant difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of infrastructural facilities of early childhood education programme in Rivers South East Education zone based on location. ($t = -1.80$, $df = 279$, $p < .05$). The null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 alpha level.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank and curriculum development of early childhood education programme in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District

Results of the study in Table 1 represents the impact of international organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank) in the curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas in Rivers South East Senatorial District. Table 4 shows the summary of the independent sample t-test on the difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South Senatorial District based on location. The result showed that there was no significant difference in the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the curriculum development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location. The findings of this study is in support of the fact that international agencies like UNICEF, UNESCO and



World bank significantly support Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum development in Nigeria, providing technical assistance, funding, and policy guidance for initiatives like play-based learning and the National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) (UNESCO, 2019). These partnerships, often with the Nigerian Universal Basic Education Commission (NUBEC) help develop training materials, curriculum frameworks, and national standards to improve ECE quality and access across the country.

The impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank and the provision of instructional materials for early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District

Results of the study in Table 2 represents the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Instructional Materials for early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas in Rivers South East Education zone. Table 5 also shows the summary of the independent sample t-test on the difference in the impact of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of instructional material for the development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location. The result showed that there was no significant difference in the role of international organizations in the provision of instructional material for the development of early childhood education in Rivers South Senatorial District based on location. The findings of this study are in support of the fact that international organizations like UNICEF, UNESCO and World bank actively provide instructional materials and support for education programs in Nigeria, partnering with the government to supply teaching/learning resources, digital tools, teacher training, and foundational literacy materials, to enhance the quality and accessibility of Nigerian education (World Bank, 2020).

The impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank and provision of infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas of Rivers South East Senatorial District

Results in Table 3 of this study represents the impact of UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of Infrastructural facilities for early childhood education programmes in Urban and Rural areas in Rivers South East Senatorial District. It reveals that, the international organizations provided infrastructural facilities, in terms of the building of schools, clinics and sickbay for schools. Similarly, Table 6 showed the summary of independent sample t-test on the impact of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision of infrastructural facilities for the development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Senatorial Districts based on location. The results revealed significant difference in the impact of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank in the provision



of infrastructural facilities for the development of early childhood education programmes in Rivers South East Senatorial District based on location. The findings of this study is in support of the fact that international organizations like UNICEF, UNESCO and World bank actively provide support, including funds, learning materials, and technical assistance, for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in Nigeria, often partnering with government bodies like the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) to develop policies, train caregivers, and improve infrastructure, though challenges in funding and implementation persist. It is however, pertinent to mention that, these agencies increase their support when the Nigerian government provides counterpart funding, helping to expand programs and supply essential teaching/learning materials (Idiabana and Somieari-Pepple, 2025). In line with the study the provision of infrastructural facilities by international agencies is generally considered to be unevenly and inequitably distributed, often showing a bias towards urban areas. This disparity is a widely acknowledged challenge in development planning and results in significant urban-rural divides in Nigeria (Bulus and Adefila, 2014).

CONCLUSION

International organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank have made noteworthy impacts in the development of early childhood programmes in the Rivers East Senatorial District in Rivers State. These they have done through the development of the curriculum, provision of instruction materials and infrastructural facilities. These services are carried out in collaboration with the indigenous Government agencies such as UBEC, SUBEC, NERDC, etc. In as much as creating these impacts in the urban and rural areas of these district, there is the problem of uneven distribution, often creating a bias towards the urban areas? This disparity has been widely acknowledged as a challenge that can affect the development and planning of early childhood education programmes in the rural areas and in Rivers State generally.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on this the following recommendations are proffered:

- The international organizations, should increase their roles in curriculum development for the development of ECE across the senatorial district.
- There should be equitable distribution of instructional materials and infrastructural facilities to ensure the effective development and planning of early childhood education programmes in the urban and rural areas.
- Collaborating State Governments should be prompt in the payment of their counterpart funds to attract the international organizations to partner with them to develop the ECE programmes across the Rivers South East Senatorial District and the entire Rivers State in general.



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