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Care Givers' Knowledge of Integrating the Montessori; Indigenous Communicative Teaching Methods and Reggio Emilia in Early Child Care Education

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Abstract

Studies have identified the mismatch between theory and practice as the main reason for gap between the intended and the achieved curriculum objectives. The early childcare education is no exception. Theories of child development emphasize that children learn best through play and self-discovery. Unfortunately, research results revealed that caregivers do not adhere to the prescribed pedagogy and since pedagogy stems from the theory of the nature of the learner and how he learns; it implies that failure to use the right pedagogy adversely affects the achievement of the objectives. The study therefore sought to identify caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori, Indigenous Communicative Teaching and Reggio Emilia approaches in

Early Childhood Care Education in Owerri Educational zone, Imo State, Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey with the population comprising all caregivers in government approved pre-primary schools totalling 119, using a 39-item questionnaire and percentages as well as chi square for data analyses. Results showed that respondents were not knowledgeable. Recommendations include the need to monitor caregivers to ensure compliance to stipulated policy.

Key Words: childcare education, caregivers

Introduction

Early years of a child's life are widely accepted as the most important period during which the child experiences essential development in different dimension such as the cognitive, language development, emotional, motor development and adaptability skills. This phase is so critical to his/her learning in formal setting and his/her effective participation as a member of the social group. Akinrotimi & Olowe (2016) affirmed that the early years are remarkable period of growth and development in the lives of children that must not be toyed with; not just because it forms the foundation of the child's further learning but more because of their vulnerable nature which demands that they must be given adequate care, protection, attention and stimulation to enable them survive and to facilitate all round development. Little wonder, it is generally believed that the quality, intensity of care, nutrition and stimulation a child receives during this period prepares the ground for the child's education in subsequent levels of the system. In the same vein, any defect at this stage will definitely affect the child's intellectual and socio-psychological ability and adjustment as an adult (Nakpodia, 2011).

It is based on this that the early child care education is being emphasized. In Nigeria, the early child care education is a type of education given to children in a formal educational institution from ages three to five plus but by 2004 when the UBE Act was enacted its scope was widened to include the care of children between zero and three. Apart from this, early child care was incorporated into the Universal Basic Education programme contrary to what was in previous policies (FME, 1977, 1981, 1995 and 1998).

Pupils in the pre-primary/early child care centres fall within Piaget's sensory motor and pre-operational stages of development, the characteristics of children in this stage of development are factored in the way the ECCE programme is designed and implemented. The approaches to teaching them stems from different early childhood theorists, teachers' understanding of child development, and their experiences with children in their environments/cultures. This is the genesis of different theories and practices that support the ECCE programme in Nigeria which range from the Montessori, Indigenous Communicative Teaching Model and the Reggio Emilia Approach.

Though the three teaching approaches emanated from different sources, they all seem to have a common principle which is the fact that young children learn best through play and self-discovery. Play can be unstructured or structured play. However, the roles and activities assigned to them are never complex given their level of development. The environment may not just be the physical and cultural background, but also includes parents, peers, and resources that are available to the child as these provide stimulation and opportunities for exploration and intellectual growth.

To achieve the objectives of early child-care education some teachers and caregivers claim they used the Montessori approach. In practice, this demands that children be carefully observed and enough learning materials provided for learning to minimize errors. Having provided the learning materials, the teacher's role is to observe the child closely in order to connect him/her with the suitable materials (Goffin & Wilson, 2001). A lot of teaching emphasis is placed on learning by doing as the child is expected to manipulate the resources after the teacher had demonstrated the concept using learning materials. Pupils are encouraged to work independently rather than collaboratively in spaces provided for each of them. However, opportunities are created for them to learn using all the senses (touch, sight, smell, taste) and exploration than by just listening and the environment is usually aesthetically amiable to learners.

Research studies and anecdotal evidences have shown that with the incorporation of early child care in public schools in 2004, the principles of Montessori are not fully adhered to as the keen observation of learners by the teachers'/caregivers, provision of varied learning resources, enough learning space for each child and beautiful environment do not seem to be available in public ECCE centres (Sooter, 2013 & Nakpodia, 2011).

However, between 1997 and 1998 UNICEF A-Field and SPEB initiated and popularized the indigenous communicative teaching model and adopted it for teaching in pre-primary and primary 1-6 classes (Osakwe & Nwodo, 2003). Specifically, the indigenous communicative teaching model stems from the communicative approach to language teaching and the constructivists' approach. Both theories emphasize active participation of the learner in the teaching learning process based on the fact that knowledge is not given but constructed in a social process. This implies that the learners work in groups/pairs, interact and communicate in order to resolve a problem and the teacher acts as a facilitator not as dispenser of knowledge.

The concept 'indigenous' stems from the fact that this model of teaching emphasizes the use of teaching and learning resources sourced from the learners' their local environment and these are used in helping the learners make meaning from the content. The indigenous communicative teaching model highlights the importance of task based learning, gender responsive teaching and learning, and the use of locally sourced authentic resources in enhancing the teaching and learning of the core subjects (Osakwe & Nwodo, 2003).

While this is being popularized, in 2015 February, UNICEF -Nigeria launched another innovative teaching approach called the Reggio Emilia which originated in Italy. Whereas the indigenous communicative teaching method is adopted for teaching all classes in pre- primary, lower and middle basic levels, the Reggio Emilia is recommended only for the Early Child Care Education and lower basic levels. Incidentally, all these three methods are learner centred methods and were inspired by Piaget and Vygotsky's theories of cognitive and social constructivists' approach to teaching and learning.

However, it looks like the Reggio Emilia approach is quite distinct as it stems from social constructivist theory of Vygotsky which aims at providing children with an education that would enable them acquire critical thinking and collaboration skills to ensure the rebuilding and sustenance of a democratic society. Coincidentally, the indigenous communicative model of teaching and the Reggio Emilia being explored in

this study stem from the cognitive and social constructivist theory of Vygotsky and Bruner, but unlike the indigenous communicative model, Reggio Emilia recognizes the importance of ‘Emergent Curriculum’ in the teaching and learning rather than adhering to the prescribed/pre-planned curriculum that characterize Montessori and the indigenous communicative model.

Reggio Emilia approach placed a lot of importance on social collaboration, working in groups in which each child is an equal participant, having their thoughts and questions valued. They are encouraged to communicate, explore and to reflect on their experiences. The teacher’s task is to listen keenly to them with respect, believing that their questions and observations are opportunities to learn and delve deeper in their search to understand themselves and their environment. Reggio Emilia approach shares some similarities with Montessori in emphasizing the multisensory approach to learning, friendly learning environment and the provision of learning centres in the classroom for activities and simulation of learning. However, layout of the Reggio learning environment stems from the belief that children are capable of constructing their own learning and they are driven by curiosity and imagination, and are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. This makes the environment crucial in implementing Reggio Emilia pedagogy – in fact the environment is seen as the third teacher. The classroom and play-ground are free from clutter, which encourage collaboration, communication and exploration, (Falope, Nathan, & Bernstein, 2015). The use of learning centres with authentic local materials and tools encourage children to delve deeper and deeper into their interests.

The Montessori differs from Reggio because Reggio recognized the importance of the child’s culture in learning and hence recommended the use of locally sourced learning materials. Also, its unique view of the child as a competent, curious, active citizen with rights; which is why Reggio Emilia teachers are deeply aware of children’s potentials and construct all of their work and environment to suit children’s learning needs. Rather than seeing the child as an empty vessel waiting eagerly to be filled with knowledge (as in the Montessori approach), Reggio teachers believe strongly that children have unlimited potential and are eager to interact with and contribute to the world.

Much of the instruction at Reggio Emilia schools take place in the form of projects where children have opportunities to explore, observe, hypothesize, question, draw, paint and discuss to clarify their understanding. Teachers plan activities, studies and long-term projects in the classroom based on feedback from their observations of the pupils. The pedagogical basis of the whole Reggio approach has been called the ‘pedagogy of listening’ – listening being a metaphor for the educators’ attempt to gain a good understanding as much as possible of the children and their learning processes. In other words, learning is seen not as a linear process but as a spiralling progression and that is built on interest and development of each learner. This ensures that pupils are treated based on their individual needs and challenges unlike the Montessori approach that believe in the universal development of children (as postulated by Piaget) and recommends the same Montessori Curriculum to be used everywhere irrespective of varied background differences and needs of learners.

The differences and similarities between these three approaches to teaching are illustrated in the table below:

Table 1: Differences and Similarities between the Three Approaches

S/N	Indigenous Communicative Model	Reggio Emilia	Montessori Approach	SIMILARITIES in the Three Approaches
1.	It is learner centred	It is learner centred	It is learner centred	They are learner centred
2.	Emphasizes communication and learners' interaction	Emphasizes development of language and communication skills- literacy skills, arts. Children are encouraged to express themselves in different ways and take control over their learning.	Emphasizes development of language and communication skills- literacy skills and strict implementation of the Montessori programme	Provision of learner friendly environment
3.	Stems from social constructivists' theory	Stems from the social constructivists' theory	Stems from Cognitive constructivists' theory	Stem from constructivism
4.	It emphasizes a lot of hands- on- activities.	They have a positive image of the child as a creative, curious being and full of potential and ambitious. Who desires active construction of knowledge and not a receiver of knowledge	In as much as it recognizes the need for the child to discover and construct knowledge, the teacher leads the instruction	They emphasize learning by doing
5.	Encourages the use of group/pair activities	Children are expected to work together in communities to collaborate with one other on projects of their choices	The children work individually. Montessori encourages individual work with built-in controls of error by the teacher.	Emphasize play way and discovery learning
6.	Gender sensitive	Recognizes the rights of every child- irrespective of sex, race, religion etc.	Silent on gender issues.	
7.	Uses subject corners in teaching- which contains authentic learning resources in each of the subject areas in the curriculum	Uses learning centres like sensory corner, Art corner, etc.-all show the needs of pupils in the areas of fine and gross motor development, language and cognitive development etc	Uses learning centres like sensory corner, Art corner, etc.-all show the needs of pupils in the areas of	Emphasize the use of learning resources and manipulative in stimulating learning
8.	Resources are based on the topic taught and must be sources from the child's environment	Resources for learning must be culturally relevant and must be varied to take care of different needs of learners.	Recognizes the importance of learning materials but did not recommend that it should be sourced locally. Hence the use of the same model Montessori curriculum in different parts of the world	Emphasizes the provision of learning resources for hands on activities
9.	Uses pre-planned curriculum	Uses feedback from listening to each child as he/she plays and	Uses a pre-determined curriculum based on the	

	which is an indication that all children in the class are taught the same thing and in the same sequence.	documentation of this to determine appropriate learning experience for the child -hence it uses Emergent curriculum/ 'Listening Pedagogy'.	developmental stages of children.	
10.	Neither documentation nor observation is emphasized	Recognizes the power of documentation by caregivers/ teachers to collect information about their pupil which gave rise to the use of portfolio in teaching and assessment.	Montessori teachers observe the child like scientists, carefully recording the work and progress of the child. These observations are intended to lead the teacher to understand what lesson or materials to present next and to enable the teacher link the child to the learning materials	
11.	Silent on the role of the family	Recognizes the importance of the family for the pupil to learn and their well-being. Reggio Emilia school partners with parents and community in the education of the child.	While it recognizes the importance of the family but it does not emphasize family, community and school collaboration	
12.	The role of Parents is not emphasized	Parents are an essential component of the school. They are an active part of their children's learning experiences.	Not categorically specified in Montessori approach	
13.	The environment is considered important and enough space provided to take care of activities and for the creation of learning corners in the class to enhance learning	The learning environment is important in learning and it is considered as 'the third teacher'. They believe that children are deeply embedded in their culture so the cultural environment is crucial in teaching and learning.	The environment must be aesthetically amiable to stimulate learning	The importance of the learning environment is emphasized in all
14.	Art not emphasized	Much of the instruction in Reggio Emilia schools takes the form of projects (Art works- drawing, painting) which create opportunities for learners to explore, manipulate and express themselves. This help pupils have a deep understanding of the subject matter, and is referred to as "Hundred Languages of Children".	The visual arts of clay, paint, collage, drawing, are not a priority in the Montessori classroom.	

In the light of the foregoing, it is pertinent that caregivers/teachers in the ECCE centres should have sound knowledge of the principles underlying these approaches to be able to implement the curriculum effectively using them. Unfortunately, research results (Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016; Okewole, Iluezi-Ogbedu & Osinowo, 2015; Sooter, 2013; Obidike, 2012; Onu, Obiozor & Agbo, 2010) suggested the contrary. This study therefore sought to compare teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating elements of Montessori, Indigenous Communicative and Reggio Emilia approaches in Early Childhood Care Education in Owerri Educational zone.

Research Questions

1. What are the mean difference of teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori, Indigenous Communicative and Reggio Emilia approaches in ECCE?
2. To what extent does location affect teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori approach in ECCE?
3. To what extent does location affect teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Indigenous Communicative Approach in ECCE?
4. To what extent does location affect teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori approach in ECCE.
2. There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Indigenous Communicative approach in ECCE.
3. There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE.

Methods

The study is a descriptive survey with the population comprising all teachers/caregivers in government approved pre-primary schools in Owerri educational zone totalling 119. This number was all used as sample size. A 39-item questionnaire with sections A, B, C, and D was used. Sections A, dealt with background information, B, teachers'/caregivers' knowledge on Montessori Approach, C, Indigenous Communicative Approach and D, Reggio Emilia Approach. Options were provided as Very High Knowledge (VHK) (4), High Knowledge (HK) (3), Very Little Knowledge (VLK) (2), and Little Knowledge (LK) (1). Respondents were made to choose the one that best represents their opinion. The instrument was validated by two experts in the

three approaches under study and one expert in educational measurement and evaluation. Their inputs were included in the final draft. The instrument was subjected to test and retest for reliability using twenty respondents outside the study population. Data generated were analysed using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. An index of 0.78 was realized showing a high reliability. Instrument was administered on a face to face basis, and data analysed using grand mean, percentages and chi square.

Result

Research Question 2: What are the Mean difference of teachers’/caregivers’ knowledge of integrating Montessori, indigenous Communicative and Reggio Emilia approaches in ECCE?

Table 1: Mean responses of teachers’/caregivers’ knowledge of Montessori, Indigenous Communicative and Reggio Emilia approaches in ECCE

S/N	ITEMS	VHK	HK	LK	VLK	X
Section B: Knowledge of Montessori Approach						
1	Learner- Centred	324	36	26	13	3.35
2	Emphasizes development of language and communication skills	168	93	52	20	2.79
3	Stems from Piaget’s Cognitive constructivist theory	80	78	80	33	2.27
4	Teacher leads instruction and children learn by doing	368	30	54	-	3.63
5	Encourages individual work with built in control	323	84	40	13	3.10
6	Pupils are treated as if they are same	252	90	32	10	3.22
7	Recognizes use of learning resources but not creation of learning corners/centres	128	63	60	36	2.41
8	Does not prescribe the use of local resources	64	54	82	44	2.05
9	Observes and records the progress of the child	272	90	30	16	3.42
10	Learning materials are set up the teacher	280	105	-	14	3.35
11	Does not emphasize family, community and school collaboration	96	84	60	37	2.32
12	Environment must be aesthetically available to stimulate learning	240	117	40	-	3.33
13	The arts visual art of clay, collage, drawing, verbal arts-music dance etc. are emphasized	208	99	48	10	3.06
	Grand Mean			2.93		
Section C. Knowledge of Indigenous Communicative Teaching Model						
14	Learner Centred	300	75	-	19	3.31

15	Emphasizes communication and learners' interaction as they learn	320	60	18	9	3.44
16	Emphasizes hands on activities	176	78	38	30	2.70
17	Encourages use of group/pair activities	168	66	70	20	2.72
18	Gender sensitive	152	66	40	39	2.49
19	Uses subject corners/centres	192	114	38	20	3.05
20	Resources based on topic taught and local sources	204	90	20	28	2.87
21	Uses pre-planned curriculum	240	105	48	-	3.30
22	Documentation not emphasized	164	63	54	30	2.61
23	Silent on role of family, community	88	54	84	37	1.95
24	Parents are not emphasized	92	60	86	33	2.27
25	Environment is important with enough space for activities	84	66	92	30	2.28
26	Art not emphasized	100	45	80	39	2.21
	Grand Mean			2.47		

Section D: Knowledge of Reggio Emilio

27	Learner Centred	288	54	38	10	3.27
28	Emphasizes development of language and communications skills through various ways	160	63	68	24	2.64
29	Stems from social constructivism	-	48	102	52	1.69
30	Children are constructors of knowledge	40	66	76	49	1.6
31	Children work together in communities collaborating with each other	60	69	76	73	2.3
32	Uses sensory learning corners for development of motor and cognitive skills	124	45	88	29	2.4
33	Local resources are emphasized	168	84	32	33	1.99
34	Uses feedback to determine appropriate learning experience as well as emergent curriculum	80	54	84	39	2.08
35	Recognizes the power of documentation	112	75	66	33	2.4
36	Recognizes the importance family, community and parents	72	45	100	36	1.00
37	Parents not an essential component of the school	60	45	104	37	2.06
38	Environment is considered the third teacher	44	42	128	30	2.05
39	Uses projects to encourage deep understanding of subject matter	48	63	98	37	2.06
	Grand Mean			2.14		

The above table shows the grand mean for section B on teacher/caregivers' knowledge of Montessori approach as 2.93. Since this mean is greater than the reference mean 2.5, the respondents are seen as having a high knowledge of the integration of the

Montessori approach in the Early Childhood Care Education in Owerri Educational Zone.

Section C which dealt with knowledge of teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating the indigenous communicative approach showed a grand mean of 2.47. This finding shows that the respondents have little knowledge of indigenous communicative approach in ECCE.

Section D on teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia in the Early Childhood Care Education in Owerri educational zone showed a grand mean of 2.14. The conclusion is that respondents have very little knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia in ECCE.

Research Question 2: To what extent does location affect teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori in ECCE?

Table 3: Percentage response on teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of Montessori in ECCE

LOCATION	FVHK%	FHK%	FVLK%	FLK%	FTOTAL%
Urban	24 (20)	12 (10)	8 (6)	8(6)	52 (42)
Rural	28 (24)	14 (12)	14 (12)	11(10)	67 (58)
Total	52 (44)	26 (22)	22 (18)	19 (16)	119 (100)

The above table shows that 24 or 20% of urban teachers/caregivers have knowledge of Montessori at a very high extent, 28 or 24% of rural respondents showed a very high knowledge. A total of 52 or 44% and 26 or 22% of both urban and rural respondents showed very high and high knowledge respectively. The conclusion is that location is not implicated in teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori approach in ECCE.

Research Question 3: To what extent does location affect teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating indigenous communicative approach in ECCE?

Table 4: Percentage response of teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of indigenous communicative approach in ECCE

LOCATION	FVHK%	FHK%	FVLK%	FLK%	FTOTAL%
Urban	21(17)	15 (12)	8 (7)	8 (7)	52 (44)
Rural	22 (19)	9 (8)	18 (15)	18 (15)	67 (58)
Total	43 (36)	24 (20)	26 (22)	26 (22)	119 (100)

The above table shows that 21 or 17%, and 22 or 19% urban and rural respondents had very high knowledge of the integration of indigenous communicative approach in ECCE respectively. 15 or 12%, 8 or 7% of urban respondents have high knowledge, very low knowledge and low knowledge respectively while 9 or 8%, 18 or 15% and 18 or 15% of rural respondents had high knowledge, very low knowledge and low

knowledge respectively. The conclusion is that respondents showed borderline knowledge of integrating indigenous communicative approach in ECCE.

Research Question 4: To what extent does location affect teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE?

Table 5: Percentage responses on teachers/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia in ECCE

LOCATION	FVHK%	FHK%	FVLK%	FLK%	FTOTAL%
Urban	8 (15)	11 (9)	17 (14)	6 (5)	52 (44)
Rural	6 (5)	8 (7)	24 (20)	29 (24)	67 (56)
Total	24 (20)	19 (16)	41 (34)	35 (29)	119 (100)

Table 4 shows that a total of 24 or 20% of both urban and rural respondents had very high knowledge, 19 or 16%, high knowledge, while 41 or 34% of both urban and rural respondents had very low knowledge, 35 or 29% low knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE. The conclusion is that respondents have very low knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia in ECCE.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori in ECCE.

Table 6: Chi Square test on teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of Montessori

LOCATION	VHK	HK	VLK	LK	TOTAL	X ² Cal	X ² 0.05	DF	Decision
Urban	24(20)	12(10)	8(6)	8(6)	52(42)				
Rural	28(24)	14 (12)	14(12)	11(10)	67(58)	1.34	7.82	3	Not Significant
Total	52(44)	26(22)	22(18)	19(16)	119 (100)				

Since $X^2_{Cal} = 1.34$ is less than the $X^2_{0.05} = 7.82$ at degree of freedom 3, the null hypothesis is accepted and conclude that there is no significant difference between urban, rural teachers/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori approach in ECCE.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Indigenous Communicative Approach in ECCE

Table 7: Chi Square test of teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of Integrating Indigenous Communicative approach in ECCE

LOCATION	VHK	HK	VLK	LK	TOTAL	X ² Cal	X ² 0.05	DIF	Decision
Urban	21	15	8	8	52				
Rural	22	9	18	18	67	14.04	7.82	3	Significant
Total	43	24	26	26	119				

Since $X^2_{Cal} = 14.04$ is greater than the $X^2_{0.05} = 7.84$ at degree of freedom 3, we reject null hypothesis, uphold the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference between urban and rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating indigenous communicative approach in ECCE in favour of urban respondents.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE

Table 8: Chi Square test of teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE

LOCATION	VHK	HK	VLK	LK	TOTAL	X^2_{Cal}	$X^2_{0.05}$	DIFF	Decision
Urban	18	11	17	6	52				
Rural	6	8	24	29	67	21.65	7.82	3	Significant
Total	24	19	41	35	119				

Since $X^2_{Cal} = 21.65$ is greater than $X^2_{0.05} = 7.82$ at degree of freedom 3, we reject null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference between knowledge of integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE in favour of urban respondents.

Discussion

The study compared teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori, Indigenous Communicative and Reggio Emilia approaches in Early Child Care Education using care givers/teachers in government approved ECCE centres in Imo State totalling 119. The data analysed in table 2 showed that the respondents have high knowledge of the integration of the Montessori approach in the Early Childhood Care Education. On the other hand, they were seen as having little knowledge of integrating the indigenous communicative and the Reggio Emilia approaches in teaching ECCE. This supported Sooter (2013) who affirmed poor quality of ECCE teachers/ caregivers.

Results in tables 3, showed that location is not implicated in teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori approach in ECCE. The result in table showed that the respondents in rural and urban areas have borderline knowledge of integrating indigenous communicative approach in ECCE whereas in table 5, the respondents were seen as having very low knowledge of the integrating Reggio Emilia approach in ECCE.

When the same data was analysed using chi square in tables 6, 7 and 8, the results showed a no significant difference between urban, rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of integrating Montessori approach in ECCE; while a significant difference was revealed between urban and rural teachers' knowledge of integrating indigenous communicative approach and Reggio Emilia in ECCE in favour of urban respondents respectively. This agreed with Onu, Obiozor & Agbo (2010) and Nakpodia (2011) who said that very little is done to train and re-train teachers. In addition, governments' lack of concern for standards in infrastructure has however, affected teachers'/caregivers' performances.

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from this study is that teachers/caregivers in government approved ECCE centres in Imo State have high knowledge of the Montessori approach in teaching in ECCE whereas their knowledge of the Indigenous Communicative and Reggio Emilia Approaches in teaching ECCE is low. The results showed that while there was no significant difference between urban, rural teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of the integrating Montessori approach in ECCE, a significant difference existed between urban and rural teachers' knowledge of integrating indigenous communicative approach and the Reggio Emilia in ECCE in favour of teachers/caregivers in urban schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following has been recommended:

- i. teachers'/caregivers' knowledge of the Indigenous Communicative approach and the Reggio Emilia approaches in teaching should be built;
- ii. the knowledge of the use of the Indigenous Communicative and the Reggio Emilia approaches in teaching by teachers/caregivers in the rural schools should be improved on and
- iii. child care centres should be adequately equipped for effective teaching and learning.

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