

## Resuscitating the Nigerian Economy Through Community Participation in Early Childhood Education

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### Abstract

Policy makers, educators and other researchers from other sectors are seeking for ways to overcome the challenges of Nigeria in this current dispensation. However, one of the ways to combat this menace is through the intervention of the educational sector. Early childhood education is the foundation of formal level of education and this formative stage needs careful attention, policies and expertise of professional input. To this effect, the commitment of experts in various communities is pertinent. This study therefore investigated the impact of community participation on preschool education for sustainable Nigeria economy. The study adopted a descriptive survey research. The respondents were 40 teachers, 5 head teachers and 5 community representatives from 2 local governments. Two validated and structured questionnaire were used for data collection. The study provided answers to 5 research questions raised and data collected were analyzed descriptively. Results show that there was low participation of community members in preschool education; some factors were identified as hindrances and finally, factors that can promote community participation were identified. Recommendations were made from the findings of the study.

**Key words:** *Community participation, preschool education, sustainable economy.*

### Background to the Study

Policymakers, education specialists and others involved in the educational sector are seeking ways to overcome the challenges of this sector and at the same time ensure that children get quality education. This has made the need for community participation in education to become more glaring as one of the strategies to improve quality and accessibility to education in Nigeria. The wider effect of community participation in pre-school education in a challenging environment is the resolution of the national challenges in this current dispensation. The necessity of community participation is brought to light through the various challenges of the typical Nigerian pre-school environment which Sooter (2013) termed as quality and qualification of teachers; ineffective supervision; language policy implementation; teacher-pupil ratio and negligence on the part of government. The National Policy on Education (2004) also recognizes the need for community participation in pre-school education in section 2 no. 14 especially in (a), (f), which states that government shall:

- (a) Establish pre-primary sections in existing public schools and encourage both community / private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education;
- (f) Ensure full participation of government, communities and teachers associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood facilities.

According to these statements in the National Policy on Education, especially no. 14 (f), the participation of the community in pre-school education is needed and expected. The community is expected to take part in “running” early childhood facilities like the pre-school. Therefore, participation of members of the community are expected through donations, teaching and support staff positions, not for their private gain but to make sure the pre-schools are established and kept open. The community participation also includes the maintenance of social amenities which they have provided or that which are already on ground. The World Health Organization has identified a conducive school environment as one which has basic necessities like sanitary facilities and adequate ventilation; protection from biological threats; protection from chemical threats, etc. Any school environment which lacks the above can be categorized as a challenging environment. The peculiarity of the challenges pre-schools have in Nigeria were highlighted in the study of Uche (2010) as inadequate financial resources; lack of facilities and infrastructure; the nature of manpower demand; no uniform curricular; no uniformity in the medium of instruction; among others.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child “article 28” proclaims that every child has a right to education, however it had earlier stated in “article 20” that “children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language [this refers to the community]”. These community roles/expectations apply to situations where pre-school authorities' are unable to take care of the children in their care, due to factors such as lack of finance, infrastructure, teaching staff. Also, when the quality and quantity of services rendered in pre-schools are watered down due to challenges arising as a result political instability or lack of government sensitivity, leading to inconsistent policies which cause delay in release of funds or other resources, this call for community participation as the respond to the occasion make adequate provision. Unfavorable social situations like floods, insecurity issues, etc. That

affect the day to day running of the school or spread of pre-school education centres should be jointly addressed by members of the community through raising funds and materials for the relocation of the pre-schools or the organization of local security like the vigilante to keep watch over the children, school and facilities.

#### Statement of the Problem

Preschool education holds great interest not only for the parents but the community alike. Community participation as stated in government policy is to foster better outcomes for children in the community. The intervention of the community is critical to grassroots capacity building if government will achieve education for all; the channel to achieve this is linked with the community where preschool education is located. This is the focus of this study as it examined the impact of community participation on preschool education for sustainable Nigerian Economy.

#### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- i. To what extent are community members involved in Pre-school education?
- ii. What are the roles played by community members in Pre-school education?
- iii. What are the factors that can hinder the involvement of community members in Pre-school education?
- iv. What are the factors that promote a community's participation in pre-school education in a challenging environment?

#### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between the roles of community members and the success of Pre-school education.
2. There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic status of community members and the success of Pre-school education.
3. There is no significant relationship between community participation in pre-school education and a challenging environment.
4. There is no significant effect of gender on community participation in pre-school education.

#### Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It was geared towards the collection of data on the impact of community participation on pre-school education in a challenging environment. A sample of 50 participants made up of 40 teachers, 5 head teachers and 5 community representatives from the 2 local government areas were purposively selected for the study. The research instruments used for the study are the questionnaire and the interview schedule. The interview schedule was divided into two sections (A & B), to elicit information from the community representatives, the head teachers and classroom teachers who were respondents. The researcher visited 5 (five) schools in the research areas to interview and administer the questionnaires to the study participants who included the representatives of the community, head teachers and classroom teachers

respectively. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, means, standard deviations, and percentages from the responses and Pearson's correlation and Independent Sample T-Test were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### Research Question 1

To what extent are community members involved in Pre-school education?

Table 1a: Frequency Distribution Table of Community Participation in Pre-School Education

| Interview Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| VALID 2.00      | 3         | 5.8     | 15.8          | 15.8               |
| 3.00            | 2         | 3.8     | 10.5          | 26.3               |
| 4.00            | 3         | 5.8     | 15.8          | 42.1               |
| 5.00            | 5         | 9.6     | 26.3          | 68.4               |
| 6.00            | 2         | 3.8     | 10.5          | 78.9               |
| 7.00            | 2         | 3.8     | 10.5          | 89.5               |
| 8.00            | 2         | 3.8     | 10.5          | 100.0              |
| YES             | 19        | 36.5    | 100.0         |                    |
| No              | 31        | 63.5    |               |                    |
| TOTAL           | 50        | 100.0   |               |                    |

From the above table, the total level of community participation in Pre-school education is 36.5%, which is low.

Table 1b: Descriptive Statistics of Community Participation in Pre-school Education

|                     | N  | MINIMUM | MAXIMUM | MEAN   | STD. DEVIATION |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| PARTICIPATION       | 50 | 2.00    | 8.00    | 4.4200 | 1.61738        |
| Valid N (list wise) | 50 |         |         |        |                |

From the preceding table, the mean and standard deviation of community participation in Pre-school education are 4.4200 and 1.61738 respectively, which is indicative of a relatively low participation of the community in pre-school education.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the roles played by community members in Pre-school education?

Table 2a: Descriptive Statistics of Roles played by Community Members in Pre-School Education

|                     | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | STD. Deviation |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| PREEDUCATION        | 50 | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.0000 | .00000         |
| DONATION            | 50 | .00     | 1.00    | .8000  | .40406         |
| FREE TEACHING       | 50 | .00     | 1.00    | .1600  | .37033         |
| FREE MEDICALS       | 50 | .00     | 1.00    | .5400  | .50346         |
| BASIC MATERIALS     | 50 | .00     | 1.00    | .8000  | .40406         |
| AMENITIES           | 50 | .00     | 1.00    | .9400  | .23990         |
| DIRECTING           | 50 | .00     | 1.00    | .5000  | .50508         |
| Valid N (List wise) | 50 |         |         |        |                |

Table 2b: Frequency Distribution of roles played by Community members in Pre-school education

|                    | Prepuce | Donation | Teaching | Fmedic | Bmat   | Amen   | Direct |
|--------------------|---------|----------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| N Valid            | 50      | 50       | 50       | 50     | 50     | 50     | 50     |
| Mean               | 1.0000  | .8000    | .1600    | .5400  | .8000  | .9400  | .5000  |
| Std. Error of Mean | .00000  | .05714   | .05237   | .07120 | .05714 | .03392 | .07143 |
| Median             | 1.0000  | 1.0000   | .0000    | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | .5000  |
| Mode               | 1.00    | 1.00     | .00      | 1.00   | 1.00   | 1.00   | .00a   |
| Std. Deviation     | .00000  | .40406   | .37033   | .50346 | .40406 | .23990 | .50508 |
| Variance           | .000    | .163     | .137     | .253   | .163   | .057   | .255   |
| Range              | .00     | 1.00     | 1.00     | 1.00   | 1.00   | 1.00   | 1.00   |
| Minimum            | 1.00    | .00      | .00      | .00    | .00    | .00    | .00    |
| Maximum            | 1.00    | 1.00     | 1.00     | 1.00   | 1.00   | 1.00   | 1.00   |
| Sum                | 50.00   | 40.00    | 8.00     | 27.00  | 40.00  | 47.00  | 25.00  |

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

From tables 2a and 2b, the means for the roles played by the community members in pre-school education are ranked as follows:

- Acknowledgement to participating in Pre-school education (PREEDUC) 1.0000
- Donation .8000
- Teaching .1600
- Free medical care .5400
- Provision of basic materials e.g. writing materials .8000
- Provision of amenities e.g. clean water .9400
- Directing human and vehicular traffic .5000

From table 2a&2b acknowledgement of participant in preschool education was rated highest by the respondents (X=1.00) this is followed by the provision of amenities (X=.9400) .Next to this is the provision of basic materials and donations (X=.8000), free medical care (X=.5400) and directing human and vehicular traffic(X=.5000) while teaching ranked the least with a mean of 9(X=.1600)

Table 2c: Frequency Tables of roles played by community members in pre-school education

i. Pre-school education

| Interview Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid               |           |         |               |                    |
| No (00)             | 2         | 3.8     | 4             | 4                  |
| Yes (1.00)          | 48        | 96.2    | 96            | 100.0              |
| Total               | 50        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

The table above shows that 96.2% of community members acknowledged participating in pre-school education which implies that they are fully aware of the need for them to take up active roles in aiding pre-school education in their community.

ii. Donation

| Interview Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No (00)       | 10        | 19.2    | 20.0          | 20.0               |
| Yes (1.00)          | 40        | 76.9    | 80.0          | 100.0              |
| Total               | 50        | 96.2    | 100.0         |                    |

The table above shows that there is 76.9% community participation in donation of funds towards pre-school education. This shows that donation of funds towards pre-school education stands as the highest tangible role played by community members in the bid to aid pre-school education in their community.

iii. Teaching

| Interview Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No (00)       | 42        | 80.8    | 84.0          | 84.0               |
| Yes (1.00)          | 8         | 15.4    | 16.0          | 100.0              |
| Total               | 50        | 96.2    | 100.0         |                    |

The above table shows that only 15.4% of community members take part in offering free teaching services in the pre-school within their community. This shows that the effort of community members towards providing direct services of teaching the pupils is very low and rarely occurs, this might be due to their low level of education or enlightenment in the area of pre-school education.

#### Iv. Free Medicals

| Interview Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No (00)       | 23        | 44.2    | 46.0          | 46.0               |
| Yes ( 1.00)         | 27        | 51.9    | 54.0          | 100.0              |
| Total               | 50        | 96.2    | 100.0         |                    |

From the above table, 51.9% of community members provide free medical treatment for pupils in the pre-school located within their community.

#### V. Basic Materials

| Interview Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No (00)       | 10        | 19.2    | 20.0          | 20.0               |
| Yes (1.00)          | 40        | 76.9    | 80.0          | 100.0              |
| Total               | 50        | 96.2    | 100.0         |                    |

The above table shows that 76.9% of community members provide basic materials for teaching and learning for the pre-school in their community. This shows that the effort of community members towards the provision of writing materials, uniforms, textbooks, etc. is on the high side.

#### vi. Directing

| Interview Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No (00)       | 25        | 48.1    | 50.0          | 50.0               |
| Yes( 1.00)          | 25        | 48.1    | 50.0          | 100.0              |
| Total               | 50        | 96.2    | 100.0         |                    |

From the table above, 48.1% of community members help in directing human and vehicular traffic within and outside the pre-school in their community. The effort of community members in this is quite low, this might due to their lack of recognition of the effect this could have in saving the lives of the children.

vii. Amenities

| Interview Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No (00)       | 9         | 17.3    | 18.0          | 18.0               |
| Yes (1.00)          | 41        | 78.9    | 82.0          | 100.0              |
| Total               | 50        | 96.2    | 100.0         |                    |

The above table shows that 78.9% of community members help in providing basic amenities for the pre-school within their community. The efforts of community members towards the provision of clean water, power supply, etc. for pre-schools in their community is on the high side, as this is a general problem faced by the whole community they will be interested in solving it.

Research Question 3

What are the factors that can hinder the involvement of community members in pre-school education?

Table 3: Frequency Distribution Table of Factors that hinder community participation in Pre-school education

|                    | Level of Education | Non Invol in Policy | Unemployment | Lack of Finance |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| N Valid            | 50                 | 50                  | 50           | 50              |
| Mean               | 2.5400             | 2.2800              | 2.3400       | 3.3400          |
| Std. Error of Mean | .15704             | .13413              | .15282       | .32902          |
| Median             | 3.0000             | 2.0000              | 2.0000       | 3.0000          |
| Mode               | 3.00               | 2.00                | 3.00         | 3.00            |
| Std. Deviation     | 1.11043            | .94847              | 1.08063      | 2.32651         |
| Variance           | 1.233              | .900                | 1.168        | 5.413           |
| Range              | 4.00               | 3.00                | 4.00         | 11.00           |
|                    | .00                | 1.00                | .00          | 1.00            |
| Minimum            | 4.00               | 4.00                | 4.00         | 12.00           |
| Maximum            | 127.00             | 114.00              | 117.00       | 167.00          |
| Sum                |                    |                     |              |                 |

From the table above, the greatest hindrance to community participation in pre-school education is lack of finance as it has the highest mean of 3.3400. Next is low level of education having a mean of 2.5400, followed by unemployment with the mean of 2.3400 and non-involvement in educational policy formulation with the mean of 2.2800. Lack of finance is a cumulative effect of low level of education and unemployment, this is probably the reason it ranks as the highest, as little income or no income will be found in the hands of an individual who lacks adequate education and who is unemployed.



Research Question 4

What are the factors that can promote the participation of community members in pre-school education?

Table 4a: Frequency Distribution Table of the Factors that Promote Community's Participation in pre-School Education

|                     | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | STD. Deviation |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| PEEP                | 50 | 1.00    | 4.00    | 2.8200 | .94091         |
| EDUCATION           | 50 | 1.00    | 4.00    | 2.8800 | .77301         |
| EMPLOYMENT          | 50 | 1.00    | 4.00    | 2.7800 | .95383         |
| Valid N (list wise) | 50 |         |         |        |                |

The table 4 above shows that high level of education as a factor that promotes community participation; it has the highest mean of 2.8800, followed by that of Organization of People Empowerment Programmes (PEEP) with a mean of 2.8200 and provision of employment opportunities with a mean of 2.7800.

Hence, it can be deduced that the higher the level of education of members of a community the more their participation in pre-school education. Also, the members of the community will be encouraged to participate if the government embarks on empowerment of community members through programmes and schemes that make them financially buoyant as well as provision of employment opportunities.

Table 4b: Frequency Tables

i. People Economic Empowerment Programme (PEEP)

| Questionnaire Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid SD 1.00           | 5         | 9.6     | 10.0          | 10.0               |
| D 2.00                  | 12        | 23.1    | 24.0          | 34.0               |
| A 3.00                  | 20        | 38.5    | 40.0          | 74.0               |
| SA 4.00                 | 13        | 25.0    | 26.0          | 100.0              |
| Total                   | 50        | 96.2    |               |                    |

From the above information in the table, a total of 63.5% of the respondents agreed that organization of People Economic Empowerment Programmes by the government for members of the community will make them participate in pre-school education while 32.7% of the population disagreed. Hence, People Economic Empowerment Programmes are vital to participation in pre-school education by community members.

ii. Education

| Questionnaire Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Valid SD 1.00           | 3         | 5.8     | 6.0           |
| D 2.00                  | 9         | 17.3    | 18.0          |
| A 3.00                  | 29        | 55.8    | 58.0          |
| SA 4.00                 | 9         | 17.3    | 18.0          |
| Total                   | 50        | 96.2    | 100           |

From the table above, 23.1% of the respondents agreed that provision of a high level of education will promote the participation of community members in pre-school education. On the other hand, 75.1% agreed that a high level of education will promote the participation of community members in pre-school education.

Hence, the higher the level of education of the community members, the more their participation in pre-school education

iii. Employment

| Questionnaire Responses | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Valid SD 1.00           | 6         | 11.5    | 12.00         |
| D 2.00                  | 11        | 21.2    | 22.00         |
| A 3.00                  | 21        | 40.4    | 42.00         |
| SA 4.00                 | 12        | 23.1    | 100.0         |
| Total                   | 50        | 96.2    |               |

From the above, 32.7% of the sample disagreed that provision of employment will promote the participation of the community in pre-school education while 63.5% agreed that it will promote community participation in pre-school education. Therefore, the higher the rate of employment for members of the community, the higher their participation in pre-school education.

Test of Hypotheses

The test of the hypothesis stated for the study was conducted with the use of Pearson correlation to show the relationship between the variables.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the roles of community members and the success of pre-school education. For the test of the above hypothesis, the Pearson correlation analysis was adopted to show the relationship between the roles played by the community members and the success of pre-school education.

Table 5: Correlation of participation and Success

|               |                         | Success | Participation |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------|---------------|
| SUCCESS       | PEARSON CORRELATION     | 1       | .102          |
|               | SIGNIFICANCE (2-tailed) |         | .479          |
|               | N                       | 50      | 50            |
| PARTICIPATION | PEARSON CORRELATION     | .102    | 1             |
|               | SIGNIFICANCE (2-tailed) | .479    |               |
|               | N                       | 50      | 50            |

From table 5 above, the relationship between the two variables produced a correlation coefficient of 0.102 which depicts a weak relationship between the roles community member played and success of pre-school education. Also, the significance level of the correlation based on two tailed test is at a value of 0.479 which shows that correlation is not significant at 0.05 levels.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic status of community members and the success of pre-school education. For the test of the above stated hypothesis, the Pearson moment correlation analysis was analyzed to show the relationship between the socio-economic status of the community members and the success of pre-school education.

Table 2: Correlation of Socio-Economic Status and Success of pre-school Education

|               |                         | Success | Qualification | Occupation |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------|---------------|------------|
| SUCCESS       | PEARSON CORRELATION     | 1       | -.171         | -.142      |
|               | SIGNIFICANCE (2-tailed) |         | .235          | .326       |
|               | N                       | 50      | 50            | 50         |
| QUALIFICATION | PEARSON CORRELATION     | -.171   | 1             | .660**     |
|               | SIGNIFICANCE (2-tailed) | .235    |               | .000       |
|               | N                       | 50      | 50            | 50         |
| OCCUPATION    | PEARSON CORRELATION     | -.142   | .660**        | 1          |
|               | SIGNIFICANCE (2-tailed) | .326    | .000          |            |
|               | N                       | 50      | 50            | 50         |

Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed).

The relationship between the variables of success and qualification produced a correlation coefficient of -0.171, while the variables of success and occupation produced a correlation coefficient of -0.142. They both show a negative relationship between the success of pre-school education and either qualification or occupation, which hold in 0.06% and 2.02% respectively.

Also, qualification and occupation are significant .000 Decision reject Ho2, meaning there is a significant relationship between the socio economic status of community members.

Ho3: There will be no significant relationship between community participation in pre-school education and a challenging environment. To test the above hypothesis, the Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to reveal the relationship between community participation in pre-school education and a challenging environment.

Table 3: Correlation of Community participation in pre-school Education and Factors that present a challenging Environment

|               |                     | Participation | Leduc  | Unemply | Nonnvoll | Finance |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| PARTICIPATION | Pearson Corr.       | 1             | .303*  | .068    | .095     | -.012   |
|               | Sig. (2-tailed)     |               | .032   | .637    | .513     | .936    |
|               | N                   | 50            | 50     | 50      | 50       | 50      |
| LEDUC         | Pearson Correlation | .303*         | 1      | .609**  | .629**   | -.120   |
|               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .032          |        | .000    | .000     | .407    |
|               | N                   | 50            | 50     | 50      | 50       | 50      |
| UNEMPLY       | Pearson Correlation | .068          | .609** | 1       | .602     | -.079   |
|               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .637          | .000   |         | .000     | .584    |
|               | N                   | 50            | 50     | 50      | 50       | 50      |
| NONNVOLL      | Pearson Correlation | .095          | .629** | .602    | 1        | -.081   |
|               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .513          | .000   | .000    |          | .576    |
|               | N                   | 50            | 50     | 50      | 50       | 50      |
| FINANCE       | Pearson Correlation | -.012         | -.012  | -.079   | -.081    | 1       |
|               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .936          | .407   | .584    | .576     |         |
|               | N                   | 50            | 50     | 50      | 50       | 50      |

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From the information in the table above, the relationship between participation and level of education is significant and positive (.303, .032). The relationship between participation and unemployment is not significant (.637) but positive (.068). Also, the relationship between community participation and non-involvement is positive (.095) but not significant (.513) and finally, the relationship between community participation and finance is negative (-.012) but significant (.936).

Decision: do not reject hypothesis Ho3.

Ho4: There is no significant effect of gender on community participation in pre-school education.

To test the above stated hypothesis, T-Test analysis for groups was carried out to reveal the relationship between gender and community participation in pre-school education.

Table 4: Independent Sample T-Test of Gender.

| SEX             | N  | Mean   | STD. Deviation | STD. Error Mean | SIG. (2tailed) | Mean Difference |
|-----------------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| PARTICIPATION M | 14 | 4.7857 | 1.52812        | .40841          | .324           | .50794          |
| F               | 36 | 4.2778 | 1.64943        | .27491          |                |                 |

The table above shows that the means of males and females are 4.7857 and 4.2778 respectively with a standard deviation of 1.52812 and 1.64943. The significance level of the correlation based on two tailed test is at a value of 0.324. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant effect of gender on community participation in pre-school education was accepted.

Decision: do not reject hypothesis Ho4.

#### Discussion of Findings

Having carried out the analysis of data obtained for the study, especially with regard to the test of hypotheses via the use of Pearson Correlation, the following findings emerged:

- i. The study revealed that the roles community member's play do not contribute largely to the success of pre-school education. This means that the impact of community participation on pre-school education in a challenging environment is low, as the level of the community's impact on pre-school education was put at 36.5%.
- ii. The study revealed that the socio-economic status (qualification and occupation) of community members is significant to the success of pre-school education. Hence, the members of the community should be better qualified or engage in occupations that will promote the success of pre-school education in that community and influence the economy positively.
- iii. The study revealed that community participation in pre-school education is insignificant in a challenging environment. This implies that the community cannot perform adequately in a challenging environment. The challenges on ground have to be dealt with before the impact of the community can be felt.
- iv. The study showed that gender is insignificant to community participation in pre-school education. Hence, being a male or female does influence the ability of the community members to participate in pre-school education, so both males and females should be co-workers in the pursuit of making pre-school education a tool for sustainable economy development.

Also, in the course of this research, the roles played by community members in pre-school education in their community have been highlighted. It has been detected that community members generally tend to give an acknowledgment to participating in pre-school education and this acknowledgment, (at 96.2%) tends to be higher than their actual participation which can be tangibly ascertained. The roles they play include financial donations, which ranked highest (at 76.9%) , provision of free medical services ( at 51.9%), purchasing of materials like school uniforms and textbooks (at 76.9%), provision of basic amenities ( at 78.9%), directing traffic (at 48.1%) and serving as teaching staff (at 15.4%), which ranked lowest. The tendency to make donations as a form of participation in pre-school education ranks highest because it takes away the tendency of direct involvement of community members in the affairs of the school. Unlike teaching and the direction of vehicular and human traffic which will need the physical presence of the community member, participation through donations will transfer the direct involvement to the school authorities on ground. The identified marks of a challenging environment as created by low

level of education (at a mean level of 2.5400), unemployment (at a mean level of 2.3400) and non-involvement in educational policy formulation (at a mean level of 2.2800) did emerge as a ground for the community's non-participation in pre-school education. Although, the challenge of lack of finance did seem to be the highest deterrent of community participation as it had the highest mean value of 3.3400.

However, community participation in pre-school education in a challenging environment may not necessarily lead to the success of pre-school education in such an environment. This may be linked to inability of the community to provide efficient manpower to serve in capacities as that of teaching and support staff, traffic control officers, medical personal, etc. Since, the fundamental issues of adequate education, involvement in the formulation of educational policies, provision of jobs for community members have not been efficiently dealt with in our society.

#### Conclusion

Community participation which Ngesu et al, (2013) views as “the responsibility of the society and its members to do their best for each other, with the full knowledge and understanding that if the society prospers, its members will share that prosperity...” is very necessary in pre-school education. However, the level of impact the community will have would be determined by how well the 3 key aspects of any early childhood environment identified by Pairman and Terreni (2010) as the physical environment, the interactional environment (social interactions within the environment) and the temporal environment (routines/time) can be managed. The physical elements in the school environment identified by (Higgins et al 2005) as temperature, lighting, air quality, physical structures, infrastructure, furniture, school site, etc. have discernable effects on teachers and learners and must be at an optimum level of performance. This as well as other aspects of an early childhood environment should be well managed by the community members.

The peculiarity of the challenges which pre-schools have in Nigeria are highlighted by Uche (2010) as: inadequate financial resources; lack of facilities and infrastructure; the nature of manpower demand; no uniform curricular; no uniformity in the medium of instruction; etc. but the impact of the roles the members of the community play cannot be adequately felt till the challenges of the community members are dealt with. The challenges of the community members which include low level of education, unemployment, lack of financial resources, and non-involvement in educational policy formulation are invariably the challenges of the school environment too. Hence, all these challenges must be dealt with for the community to make head way in pre-school education, which would determine how the economy will fare in the long run.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the impact of the community in pre-school education has not translated to massive growth of the economy; therefore the following measures are proffered to ensure that;

- (1) There will be substantial translation of the participation of community members in pre-school education to the growth of the economy:

- (2) There should be greater enlightenment of community members on the importance of pre-school education to further years of study of the child. This will ensure that the members of the community commit themselves to the development of the child, who would be a future contributor to a healthy economy.
- (3) The government should intensify efforts in People Economic Empowerment Programme at the grassroots level to enable members of the community get means to be financially empowered to contribute to success of pre-school education, which will have a ripple effect on the economy.
- (4) Also, the community members must be included as stakeholders during the formulation of policies on pre-school education, so that the policies made in this sector of the economy would have captured the immediate needs of the community and promote the growth of the economy.
- (5) Lastly, efforts should be made by the Ministry of Education to get the government to make it mandatory for corporate organizations to have at least one pre-school as a beneficiary of their community service plan, this will ensure that the economy will have an educated future workforce to keep the economy going.

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