

Article

Promoting Green Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre in Nigeria through Adequate Funding

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Abstract: The paper discussed the importance of providing adequate funds for the development of green programmes in early childhood care education centres in Nigeria. The paper is a position paper. Secondary data were used in the paper. The sources of the data were online publications and print resources. The study showed that adequate funding of green programmes in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria will aid the development of greening early childhood care education centres in Nigeria. The adequate funding of green programmes in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria will lead to the development of green infrastructure facilities, green curricula for early childhood care education centres, green instructional resources and implementation of green programmes in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria. Based on this discovery, the paper hereby recommends the provision of special funds for the development of green programmes in Nigerian schools especially the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria.

Keywords: Green Programme, Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre, Child, Early Child

1. Introduction

The Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE), as defined by the National Policy on Education (2013), encompasses the care, protection, stimulation, and learning of children aged 0 to 4 years in a crèche or nursery setting. According to Maduewesi (1999), early childhood care education refers to the education provided to children who have not yet attained the legal age to commence primary school. He asserted that it constitutes a semi-formal educational framework, typically conducted outside the home, wherein young children, approximately three years of age, engage in play-based activities within a group environment, facilitating mental, social, and physical development appropriate to their developmental stages, until the compulsory age for government-sanctioned formal education. Early childhood care education serves as the cornerstone of preschool education, constituting a vital component of a child's initial educational experience, whether formal or informal, provided in an educational institution for children aged 1 to 5+ prior to their entry into primary school (Nakpodia 2011). Early childhood care and education is a structured program designed for early learning that include playgrounds and enjoyable activities. It is education that introduces foundational learning to students. The objectives of ECCDE, as delineated in the National Policy on Education (2013), are to facilitate a seamless transition from home to school; prepare the child for primary education; ensure adequate care, supervision, and security for children while their parents are employed; instill social and moral norms and values; foster a spirit of inquiry and creativity through exploration of nature, the environment, art, music, and

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play; cultivate cooperation and teamwork; encourage the development of beneficial habits, including healthful practices; and impart foundational knowledge of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, and forms through play. ECCDE is intended for the comprehensive development of children (Ogunode, Akinsua-Ajape & Jegede, 2021; Nakpodia, 2011). The Green Schools Initiative is a program implemented by the Nigerian government to achieve environmental sustainability and foster a conducive learning environment.

Review of Literature

A. Concept of Green Initiative

The Green Programme is a significant opportunity for schools to establish an innovative curriculum that empowers students to spearhead good change while acquiring essential, marketable skills (United States Environment Protection Agency, 2020). The Green Campus project encompasses all activities organised by student associations aimed at mitigating energy and water waste on campus. The Green Campus Initiative has broadened its scope to encompass other volunteers, notably students, as well as academic and administrative personnel having a vested interest in the matter. The aims and objectives of the green campus initiative encompass enhancing efficiency in energy generation, transmission, and consumption on campus, mitigating inefficient or wasteful energy use, reducing carbon dioxide emissions to achieve sustainable energy costs, conserving natural resources through a land use and rainwater management plan, preventing environmental pollution via a waste management plan, raising awareness of energy and environmental issues within the community, and exploring sGreen campuses, as defined by Ogunode, Daniel, and Daniels (2024), are initiatives designed for educational institutions to foster environmental sustainability by conserving natural resources such as water and biodiversity, enhancing energy efficiency, and managing waste both within and beyond the school premises. Green Campus is a structured initiative aimed at optimising the natural environment and safeguarding resources to promote sustainability within the educational setting. The objectives of the Green Campus initiative encompass the promotion of environmentally sustainable activities on campus, enhancing awareness of waste recycling within this esteemed educational institution, fostering effective awareness that extends beyond campus boundaries, establishing a broad sensitivity network, and ensuring sustainable environmental management alongside the conservation of finite resources. The Green Campus Initiative is a proposed sustainable environmental program for schools that emphasises ecological conservation, resource continuity, and carbon footprint reduction, aiming for a sustainable future. The green program aims to prevent adverse effects on communities (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2024).

Greening Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre Greening Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centres encompass policies and programs aimed at fostering an environmentally sustainable school atmosphere.

Greening Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centres entails fostering initiatives that guarantee clean energy, effective waste management, and sustainable behaviours and practices for students and educational staff. Greening the school entails eliminating costly inefficiencies and implementing beneficial adjustments. Greening the school encompasses initiatives aimed at transforming and addressing the quotidian, practical elements of campus life—proper disposal, management, and storage of cleaning agents and materials related to laboratories and automotive facilities; procurement of eco-friendly supplies; and efficient recycling programs. Additional modifications may necessitate substantial, overarching investments (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2020).

Benefits of Greening Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre include:

1. Sustainability in environmental and economic domains: A comprehensive culture of sustainability aids in preserving and augmenting the institution's current and future values. This aligns with the sustainable development agenda. Sustainable development entails fulfilling the requirements of the current generation without compromising the demands of future generations (Ulu & Ayeni, 2019).
2. Leadership reputation established via exemplary conduct: Numerous schools significantly underperform as environmental leaders due to their inability to implement in practice what they advocate in the classroom. Consequently, it has been contended that the calibre of leadership is fundamental to progress in every nation globally (Ayeni, 2018). Despite the availability of courses in environmental management, engineering, legislation, and evaluation, numerous schools have not adhered to environmental mandates or engaged in pollution control initiatives.
3. Financial advantages: An established, curriculum-oriented environmental audit program that uncovers waste and inefficiency in school operations, along with the discovery of sustainable alternatives, can generate substantial cost savings for the institution. Schools can identify measures—often straightforward measures—that can be implemented to rectify and enhance environmental issues without engaging external contractors. By implementing the suggestions derived from these audits, colleges and schools can achieve cost savings through the reduction of energy and water consumption, the minimisation of campus waste, the enhancement of system reliability, and the optimisation of heating and air conditioning efficiency, among other benefits.
4. Authentic professional experience for your students: Environmental audits and pollution control assessments can be incorporated into the curriculum, offering students practical investigative and problem-solving experience applicable in their future careers. This experience enhances students' marketability and equips them with the critical thinking skills necessary for success and prosperity in their careers (United States Environment Protection Agency 2020). Training enhances job effectiveness by rectifying deficiencies in human effort (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2023).

2. Materials and Methods

This paper is a position paper. It employed a systematic scoping method to collect the data. The data were collected from online publications and print literature that include international organization reports, government documentaries, abstracts, books and conference papers among others. Content analysis was adopted to select the final literature for the study. The reason for using a documentary research method that employed secondary sources of data collection in providing an answer to the research question being asked is because non-positivism which is coterminous with the documentary research method is a system of enquiry or method of carrying out research that tries to explain social phenomenon with the aid of research question, without necessarily testing hypotheses (Ayeni, Saman, & Sani, 2019).

3. Results

A. Promoting Green Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre in Nigeria through Adequate Funding

Proper finance is essential for the advancement of any educational initiative, including the Green Programme of Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre in Nigeria. It has been observed that money is the essential sustenance of every institution or society (Ayeni, 2017). Proper funding is crucial for the advancement of the green Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre in Nigeria. Isa, Sedhu, Lop, Rashid, Nor, and Iffahd (2021) noted that sufficient funding for green initiatives might enhance green infrastructure in educational institutions, including the Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centre. Infrastructure protects the economy and enhances development (Ayeni, 2024). The European Commission (2024)

characterised green infrastructure as “a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas alongside other environmental features, designed and managed to provide a diverse array of ecosystem services while simultaneously enhancing biodiversity.” These services encompass water purification, enhancement of air quality, provision of recreational spaces, and assistance with climate mitigation and adaptation.

This network of green (land) and blue (water) spaces enhances environmental quality, the condition and connectedness of natural regions, and the health and quality of life of residents. The development of infrastructure mitigates the issues associated with structural violence (Ayeni & Ezirim, 2023). Establishing green infrastructure might additionally bolster a sustainable economy and generate employment chances. Sfpuc (2024) and the Directorate of Technical Education Madhya Pradesh (2020) observed that green infrastructure provides numerous advantages for schools, including the enhancement of community spaces and the beautification of streets; the improvement of street conditions and safety for cyclists and pedestrians; the augmentation of biodiversity and the introduction of greenery to neighbourhoods; the creation of a more habitable environment for birds, native flora, and residents; the replenishment of groundwater; the mitigation of the urban heat island effect; the enhancement of air quality; the generation of green employment opportunities; and the reduction of wastewater treatment expenses and energy consumption (Sfpuc 2024; Ogunode, Johnson, & Ahmed 2024).

According to Ogunode et al. (2024), green infrastructure facilities are designed with a sustainability model that fosters collaboration among students, teachers, and natural elements, thereby enhancing the social, economic, and environmental conditions that support teaching, learning, research, and community services. Green facilities are designed to mitigate the adverse effects of environmental pollution and support human health, hence fostering environmental sustainability in educational institutions. Increased and sustained support for green initiatives in schools will facilitate the establishment of green infrastructural facilities, including Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centres in Nigeria (Dada & Ogunode, 2024a; Centre for Green School, 2022; Aziz & Said, 2018). Furthermore, sufficient financing of green initiatives in the Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) Centres in Nigeria will ensure the establishment of green curriculum for these centres. Greening the curriculum entails equipping students to confront the 21st-century challenges of global warming and climate change, social inequities, unsustainable lifestyles, and the pressing necessity to transition to a renewable energy economy. Integrating environmental education entails recognising nature as an educator, the outdoors as a learning environment, and prioritising the sustainability of life for future generations as the paramount purpose of our curriculum (Green Heart Education, 2023). The establishment and execution of a green curriculum necessitate substantial financial investment from the school administration. The formulation of a green curriculum necessitates consultation with experts and specialists in environmental science.

The program necessitates training, retraining, and the provision of educational materials. Significant financial resources will be required to comprehensively establish and execute the green curriculum in Nigeria's higher institutions. Consistent and sufficient funding is essential for the government and other educational stakeholders in the execution of the green campus initiative program (Ogunode, Daniel, & Daniels, 2024). Sherif (2023) and Wagner (2023) found that sufficient budgetary allocation for green programs in schools will facilitate the establishment of green curriculum. Makemyassignment (2024) and Dada & Ogunode (2024) stated that the establishment of an effective green curriculum relies on continuous financial support from governmental and private entities. Amaechi, Ayeni, and Madu (2019) have expressed concerns on the demand for continuous funding, noting that corruption remains a significant issue in Nigeria.

Sustained funding of green programmes for the early childhood care education centres

in Nigeria will ensure the development of green instructional resources. Green resources are specialized resources for teaching green education in schools. Green instructional resources are materials produced and made for implementing green curricula in schools. Green instructional resources include; pictures of forests, plantation, maps, charts, collection of video on green facilities, pictures of gardens and solar energy, electric cars and waste bins. Green instructional resources are very expensive and it requires a lot of funds to procure them. Adequate budgetary allocation to schools will guarantee the procurement of these resources. Investment in the green programme will enhance the provision of green instructional resources (Hile, 2024; Inspirecleanenergy, 2022). Ogunode, and Ukozor, (2024); Ogunode, Oweikpodor and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2024) concluded that increment in the budgetary allocation to green programme in school will aid the development of green schools programme and the procurement of green facilities and resources. The foregoing is on the ground that infrastructural development has often been sacrificed for stomach infrastructure in the past (Ayeni, Tusayi, Joseph & Obatayo, 2018).

There is doubt that there is adequate funding of infrastructure, including green infrastructure (Ayeni, Doosuur & Kefas, 2021). Adequate funding of green programmes in early childhood care education centres in Nigeria will aid the full implementation of green programmes in the centre. This will enhance access to education that can empower people to provide for their basic needs (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019). Green programmes are programme designed and implemented to promote environmental sustainability in the school environment. Green programme in schools includes; the establishment of a Green school programme, provision of adequate funds, adoption of energy conservation and efficiency, waste reduction and recycling programs, water management and conservation system, sustainable transportation system, green spaces and biodiversity conservation, sensitization and awareness campaign programme, digitalization of school service and eradication of disposable items in schools and installation of water stations around school and adoption of Green infrastructure facilities in the schools (Ogunode et al 2024). The development of these green programmes and implementation demands a large sum of funds. These funds if made available by relevant institutions will aid the development of the green programme in the schools. Association for promoting sustainability in Campuses and communities (2024) and Filho, Tripathi, Guerra, Giné-Garriga, Lovren, & Willats (2018) recommended adequate budgetary allocation for the implementation of a green programme to support execution of green programmer in the schools.

B. Findings

The study revealed that adequate funding of green programmes in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria will aid the development of greening early childhood care education centres in Nigeria. The adequate funding of green programmes in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria will lead to the development of green infrastructure facilities, green curriculum for early childhood care education centres, green instructional resources and implementation of the green programme in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria.

4. Discussion

This study confirms that proper funding acts as a fundamental driver for developing environmental efforts within Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) centers across Nigeria. The availability of financial resources enables the development of green infrastructure as well as environmentally sustainable programs while building curricula and instructional resources. These instruments blend to create an environmentally sustainable learning environment that adheres to international sustainable development goals (SDGs).

A. Green Infrastructure Development

When ECCDE centers implement green infrastructure they receive environmental quality benefits with additional rewards of enhanced biodiversity along with desirable learning spaces. Appropriate funding enables schools to build needed ecological infrastructure through which they implement innovative water management solutions and efficient energy systems as well as green spaces. Young students can learn important lessons about environmental protection through practical teaching methods which follow international standards. Research outcomes validate previous studies showing how infrastructure expansion creates better environmental results and educational improvements and reduces societal inequalities (Ayeni & Ezirim, 2023).

B. Green Curriculum Integration

The development of green curricula for ECCDE centers constitutes a main part of greening efforts within these facilities. Green school curricula teach students about environmental issues while providing them with tools to learn solutions for climate change combined with resource sustainability. The successful implementation of green curriculum content depends on ongoing funding for educator training sessions combined with material acquisition expenses and environmental consultant fees. The lack of continuous financial support causes barriers that limit both growth potential and overall impact for such educational projects. The findings identified in Ogunode et al. 2024 demonstrate that an adequately funded green education curriculum leads to improved environmental awareness and better scholastic results for students.

5. Conclusion

The paper discussed the importance of providing adequate funds for the development of green programmes in early childhood care education centres in Nigeria. The study concluded that adequate funding of green programmes in the early childhood care education schools in Nigeria will support the development of greening programmes in early childhood care education centres in Nigeria. The adequate funding of green programmes in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria will lead to the development of green infrastructure facilities, green curriculum for early childhood care education centres, green instructional resources and implementation of the green programme in the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the paper hereby recommends the provision of special funds for the development of green programmes in Nigerian schools especially the early childhood care education centres in Nigeria.

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