Tracking and Assessing Performances of Community Based Early Childhood Care Education Children, Transited to Primary Schools in Bauchi and Gombe States, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study tracked and assessed Community Based Early Childhood Care Education children that transited to the primary schools in Bauchi and Gombe states in Nigeria. Four research questions were posed and two hypotheses were formulated. An evaluation research design was used for this study. The population for the study comprised the 40 CBECCE centers in the two states. A purposeful sampling technique was employed to draw the sample for the study made up of 10 CBECCE centers for each state. The instruments used for the collection of data for the study were 'School Register' and Pupils Performance Test (PPT) in three areas of the school curriculum which are Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts.The results obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results from the study showed that only 754 pupils representing 31.4% transited to Primary 1-3 from the two states making up 383 (32.5%) males and 371(30%) females. Factors that affected the transition rate include the migration of some parents as a result of crises, teachers' irregular attendance at schools, and a lack of enabling environment. The results further showed that the performances of the pupils from primary 1-3 in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts were par and there are no significant differences when the results of the two states were compared. Furthermore, results between the male and the female pupils show an insignificant difference from the gender perspective. Recommendations made are the need to reduce crises, provision of enabling environment and regular monitoring and supervision of primary school teachers and head teachers by all the relevant stakeholders.*

Keywords: *assessment, CBECCE, performance, primary school, transition*

1. INTRODUCTION

Realizing the importance of education to national development and the need to catch the children young, various governments especially in developing countries put on policies that would ensure that schooling commences early for all children. Unfortunately, most of those that benefit from these policies are children within the urban and sub-urban sections of the society while the majority of the children in rural and hard-to-reach communities are neglected. This situation gives rise to a high number of children not having access to western education. In Nigeria for example, the current figures put between 10.5 and 13 million children are out of school (UNICEF, 2020; Umar, 2020). This is very alarming bearing in mind its consequences on the larger society. This accentuates Jacob's (2022) assertion that when children are allowed to stay out of school, it undermines the efforts made by the government and other organizations at nation building.

To address this national crisis above, one of the strategies embarked upon by the Federal Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education in collaboration with UNICEF was the establishment of Community Based Early Childhood Care Education (CBECCE) centers in 14 states in Nigeria. This was done based on its potency to increase enrolment especially in rural and hard- to- reach communities. The other benefits in line with Early Childhood Education (ECD) as outlined by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (nd) are to boost brain development especially in the first three years of life, builds children's confidence and self-esteem, support the increased achievement of education outcomes in primary school and higher education, improves good health in childhood through adulthood, strengthens family and community relationships and values etc. In the same document, three importance of quality Pre-primary Education are highlighted which are to ensure school readiness; to provide a solid foundation for future learning and success and is a key strategy for addressing out-of-school children's crises.

Among the 14 states that participated in using the strategies of CBECCE to achieve its laudable objectives are Bauchi and Gombe from the northeast of the country. The two states in collaboration with UNICEF established 20 CBECCE centers each of the two states between 2014 and 2016. Since their establishment, assessments are carried out to ascertain the enrolment, quality of facilities and teachers at these centers (Jacob and Olakunle, 2022). Based on their findings from 15 out of 20 CBECCE centers from each of the two states, a high number of children enrolments were recorded. For Bauchi state, between 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 academic year, a total of 605 (291 males and 314 females) children were enrolled in the 15 CBECCE centers sampled for the study. For Gombe state within the same period, a total of 891 (485 males and 406 females) children were also enrolled in the 15 CBECCE. These give a total of 1,496 (776 males and 720 females) children for the two states. From the period of establishment and the time of this research, it is estimated that the first set of children is expected to be in primary three. The question that readily comes to mind is, can these children be traced to primary 1-3? If yes, how many? If not all, what could have contributed to their non-transition to the primary school? For those that transited to various primary schools, what are the levels of their performances?

In the light of the foregoing, , it is obvious that any programme put in place by government, organisations and individuals must be assessed from time to time to see the level of the attainment of the set objectives. For the CBECCE, apart from getting a high number of children enrolled at this level of education, it is also anticipated that after completing the one or two years at these centers, the children are to transit to the nearby primary schools thereby addressing out-of-school children syndrome. In addition to these expectations, Munthali, Mvula and Silo (2014) and UBEC (nd) stated that early cognitive development is associated with attendance of Early Childhood Education and in this case, CBECCE. This assertion is believed to be one of the major factors that determine school performance and progress at a later stage in life. In supporting this point, Munthali, Mvula and Silo (2014) averred that there is a strong association between early childhood factors and primary school performance and progress. Based on their position that children who have participated in Early Childhood Education and related programmes generally remain in school, and are unlikely to repeat classes and their class performance is much better compared to those who have never attended pre-primary programmes; to what extent can these claims apply to the establishment of CBECCE in the two states of Bauchi and Gombe?

To address most of the questions raised above, the following research objectives, questions and hypotheses are set for this investigation:

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To ascertain how many male and female children from the CBECCE centers have transited to Primary 1-3.

2. To compare the pupil's performance in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts between the two states.

3. To examine Primary 1-3 pupils' performance in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts across the two states.

4. Establish Primary 1-3 pupils' overall performance in the assessment exercise based on their gender across the two states.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How many male and female children from the CBECC centers have transited to Primary 1-3?

2. Is there any difference in the average performances of Primary 1-3 pupils in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts between Bauchi and Gombe states?

3. What is the average performance of Primary 1-3 pupils in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts across the two states?

4. What is the overall average performance of Primary 1-3 pupils in the assessment exercise based on their gender?

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in primary 1-3 pupils' performance in the three assessment areas between the two states.

2. There is no significant difference between male and female pupils' performance in the assessment exercise across the two states.

5. METHODOLOGY

This assessment was done using only 20 CBECCE centers (10 per state) out of 40 established in the two states. They were purposefully selected because of the consistency in their usage by UNICEF for one activity or the other since their establishment. The 10 CBECCE centers chosen per state cuts across 6 Local Government Areas. The 'School Registers' were used to get the accurate number of children that were enrolled for the period between 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 academic year. These children were projected to be in Primary 1, 2 and 3 at the time of this research. For the 'Subjects' to be used for assessing the level of pupils' performances, Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts were considered to create room for both cognitive and creative aspects. The Test items were based on the National Curriculum content for primary 1, 2 and 3 and questions were set by the Researcher based on his experiences in training teachers of basic level of education. For Numeracy and Literacy, ten- test items were set for the three levels while for Creative Arts, the pupils were either asked to paint or draw and paint depending on their levels. A period of 5 days was used for each state to administer the tests and to collect other qualitative and quantitative data. The research assistants were trained on the procedure to be used for the administration of the tests after which they were divided into teams. For ease of tracking the pupils that transited from the CBECCE Centers, the headteachers of the CBECCEs whose children were to be tracked were earlier contacted and instructed to keep the list of the primary schools where such children could be found. The research assistants had their first contact with the headteachers who guided them to where their former pupils could be found. At each school, the headteachers along with the Research Assistants peruse through the School Registers and identify the right children across the classes. After the identification of these children through the help of the CBECC headteachers, the Research Assistants then administered the tests. In the administration of the tests, interpretations were mostly done by either the Research Assistants or some teachers from the schools that understood the local languages. Test items were collected immediately after their administration. The test items were marked by the Researcher. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean, standard deviation and chart were used to answer the research questions while independent sampled t-test was used to test the formulated hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance.

6. RESULTS

Research question 1. How many male and female children from the CBECCE centers have transited to primary 1-3?

Table1. *Number of Pupils That Transited and Enrolled From 2015/2016 To 2017/2018 Academic Session*

State	Male	Female	Total	State	Male	Female	Total
Gombe	238	222	460	Gombe	712	703	1415
Bauchi	145	149	294	Bauchi	466	532	998
Total	383	371	754		1178	1235	2413

The table presents the result of the assessment exercise that took place in the two states, a total of seven hundred and fifty-four (754) pupils were found in various schools to have transited from CBECCEs to primary one to three. From this figure, four hundred and sixty (460) pupils were from Gombe State out of which two hundred and twenty-two (222) were females and two hundred and thirty-eight (238) were males. On the other hand, two hundred and ninety-four (294) pupils transited for Bauchi State with one hundred and forty-nine (149) females and one hundred and forty-five (145) males.

From the data collected based on their School Registers between 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 academic years, a total of 1415 (712 males and 703 Females) children were enrolled for Gombe state while in Bauchi state, 989 (532 females and 466 males) children were enrolled. If these figures are compared with those children that transited to primary schools, the following can be deduced:

1. For Gombe state, a total of 1415 (712 males and 703 females) children were enrolled but only 460 pupils representing 32.5% transited to the Primary school levels, (238 ie 33.4% males and 222 ie 31.6% females).

2. For Bauchi state, a total of 989 (523 females and 466 males) children were enrolled but only 294 pupils representing 29.7% transited to Primary school levels, (149 ie 28.5% females and 145 ie 31.1% males).

3. For the two states combined, a total of 2404 (1178 males and 1235 females) were enrolled but only 754 representing 31.4% transited to Primary 1-3. The males were 383 ie 32.5% and the females were 371 ie 30%.

Based on the above number of pupils that transited to the primary school levels and viz a viz the total number of children in CBECCs in 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic sessions from the sampled used, we can observe that most of these children dropped out of school (68.6%). This finding does not agree to a very large extent with the position of UBEC (nd) that ECD and by extension CBECCE is a key strategy for addressing out-of-school children.

The reasons attributed to the low transition from the qualitative data collected include parents' preference of sending their children to farm and koranic schools (Makaranta Allo); instability of some parents that settled temporarily in the communities where their children were enrolled for CBECCE as a result of crises but later left. In addition to these, poor attendance was occasioned by the inadequate number of teachers and unfortunately too, the few available are always absent and uncommitted to their work thereby making some parents withdraw their children from schooling. Also, the lack of adequate classrooms led to overcrowding in the few facilities available while some children learn under trees and open spaces. This gives room to a poor learning environment thereby demotivating learners to continue with their studies.

Added to the above unfortunately, was the inability of head teachers to enroll pupils in Primary one in some schools even though the research took place during the second term of the school year. Bauchi and Gombe accounted for two each in this ugly situation. When the head teachers were asked the reason for this abnormality, no serious reason was given. Interestingly too, three Primary schools in Bauchi state have primary one and three without primary two. These non-registration of pupils into their next classes can be inferred to be also responsible for low enrolment.

This was also presented in the chart below
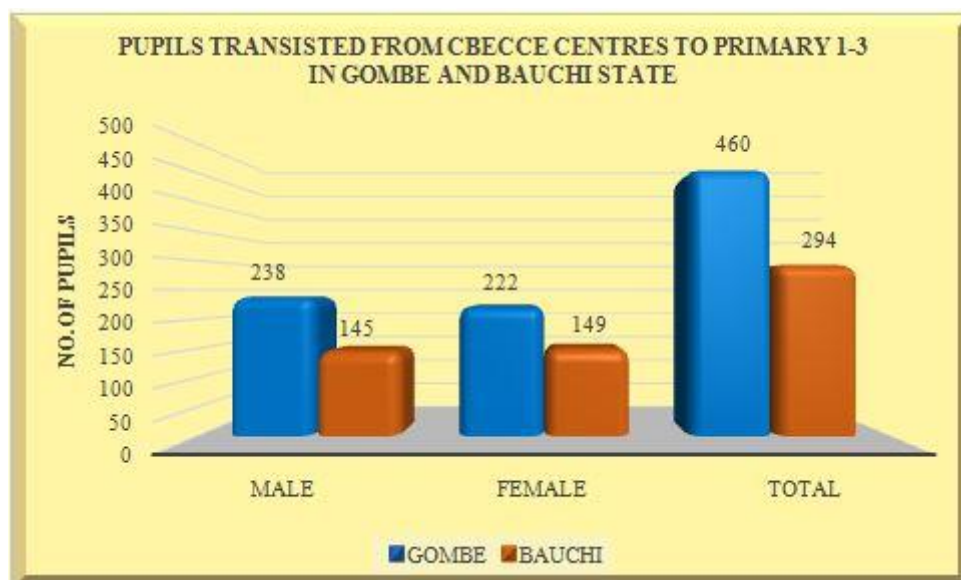
Figure1. *Showing Number of Pupils transited from CBECCE centres to primary 1-3 in Gombe and Bauchi state*
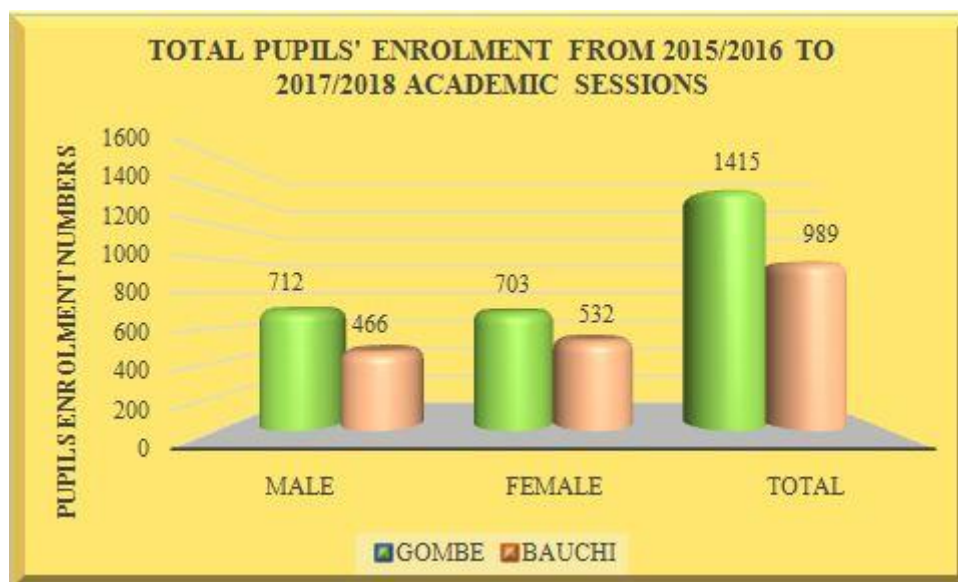
Figure2. *Showing Total Number of Pupils Enrolled from 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 Academic Sessions*

Research question 2: Is there any difference in the average performances of Primary 1-3 pupils in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts between Bauchi and Gombe states?

Table2.

Classes	State	Numeracy Average	Literacy Average	Creative Arts Average	Total Average
Primary 1	Gombe	6.76	7.50	5.99	20.18
	Bauchi	7.15	6.46	6.76	20.36
primary 2	Gombe	5.28	6.61	3.42	15.27
	Bauchi	5.93	6.08	2.98	14.82
primary 3	Gombe	6.68	4.23	3.81	14.67
	Bauchi	6.66	3.96	3.42	14.04

The table presents the Primary 1-3 pupils' performances in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts between Bauchi and Gombe states. The average score per area of assessment as presented in table 2 is over 10 while the total average score is over 30. The result revealed that primary one pupils in Gombe and Bauchi states have a mean of 6.76 and 7.15 in Numeracy test, 7.50 and 6.46 in Literacy test and 5.99 and 6.78 in Creative Arts respectively. The overall Numeracy test average was 20.18 (67.3%) and 20.36 (67.9%) for Gombe and Bauchi states respectively. This shows a very insignificant difference of .6% in favour of the Bauchi state.

Also, the result revealed that the Primary two pupils in Gombe and Bauchi states had a mean score of 5.28 and 5.93, in Numeracy test, 6.61 and 6.08 in Literacy test 3.42 and 2.98 in Creative Arts test respectively. The overall mean performance was 15.27 (50.9%) and 14.82 (49.4%) Gombe and Bauchi state respectively. The difference is just 1.5% in favour of Gombe state.

For Primary three pupils in Gombe and Bauchi states, a mean score of 6.68 and 6.66 in Numeracy test, 4.23 and 3.96 in Literacy test and 3.81 and 3.42 in Creative Arts respectively were attained. The overall pupils' mean performance was 14.67 (48.9%) and 14.04 (46.8%) in Gombe and Bauchi states respectively. The difference is 2.1% in favour of Gombe state.

The results of the three areas assessed for this study revealed a close average performance with slight differences between the two states from primary 1-3 pupils. The insignificant differences are .6%, 1.5% and 2.1%. This shows that the pupils' performances from Primary 1-3 when the two states were compared are at par.

The result of the pupil's overall performance is also presented in the chart below
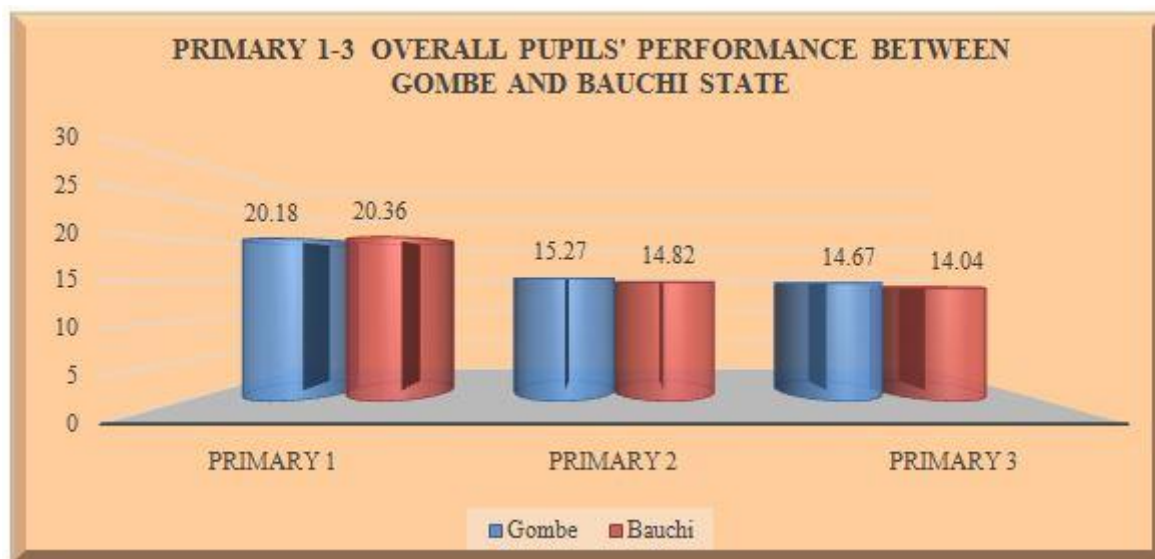
Figure3. *Showing Primary 1-3 pupils' overall performance between the two states*

Research question 3: What is the average performance of Primary 1-3 pupils in Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts across the two states?

Table3.

Classes		Numeracy	Literacy	Creative Arts	Total Ave
Primary 1	**Mean**	**6.9**	**7**	**6.4**	**20.3**
	Std. Dev	1.38	1.51	1.36	2.80
primary 2	**Mean**	**5.5**	**6.4**	**3.3**	**15.2**
	Std. Dev	1.38	2.02	0.52	3.09
primary 3	**Mean**	**6.7**	**4.1**	**3.7**	**14.5**
	Std. Dev	1.59	1.14	1.04	2.10

The table presents the average performance of Primary 1-3 pupils' performance in the exercise in Gombe and Bauchi states. The performance revealed that the Primary one pupils had a mean score of 6.9 in Numeracy, 7.0 in Literacy and 6.4 in Creative Arts. This cumulated to a total average of 20.3 (68%) in all the assessment areas of the research. The Primary two pupils' performance across the two states revealed that they had a mean score of 5.5 in Numeracy, 6.4 in Literacy and 3.3 in Creative Arts. The overall pupils' performance was 15.2 (51%). Similarly, Primary three pupils had a mean score of 6.7 in Numeracy, 4.1 in Literacy and 3.7 in Creative Arts. The overall average performance for Primary three pupils was 14.5 (48%). The study established that the pupil's performance was on the average except for the Primary one pupils that performed quite above the average marks across the two states under consideration. These findings did not also agree with Munthali, Mvula and Silo (2014) that asserted that there is a strong association between early childhood factors and primary school performance and progress. The downward regression from the results especially in Primary two and three was attributed to the lack of a proper enabling environment for the children to learn. The summary of the above result is also presented in the chart below.
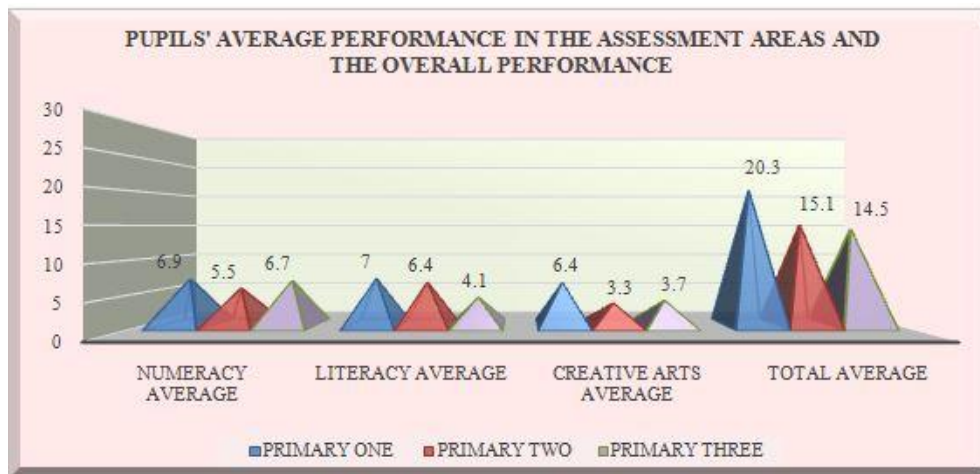
Figure4. *Chart showing primary 1-3 pupils' performance in the assessment*

Research question 4: What is the overall average performance of primary 1-3 pupils in the assessment exercise across the two states based on gender?

Table4.

Performance based on Gender	Mean	Std. Dev
Primary One Male Average	20.10	2.84
Primary One Female Average	19.25	6.11
Primary Two Male Average	15.68	3.58
Primary Two Female Average	15.22	3.09
Primary Three Male Average	14.61	2.49
Primary Three Female Average	14.45	1.92

The table presents Primary 1-3 overall pupils' performance in the assessment exercise based on gender across the two states. The overall average performance was based on the cumulative of the assessment areas with a total score of thirty (30) marks. The result shows that Primary one males had a mean score of 20.10 (67%) while their females counterparts had a mean score of 19.25 (64%). Primary two males had a mean score of 15.68 (52%)while their females' counterpart had a mean score of 15.22 (50.7%). Similarly, Primary three males had a mean score of 14.61(48.7%) and the female counterpart had a mean score of 14.45 (48.2%). From the findings on the data presented based on gender, the performances of the male and the female pupils are at the same levels across Primary one to three. These findings are in agreement with the research of Mwaba, Kusanthan and kepson (2016); Adikwu and Shwamut (2021) that if male and female pupils are taught under the same condition, they are most likely to perform at the same level.

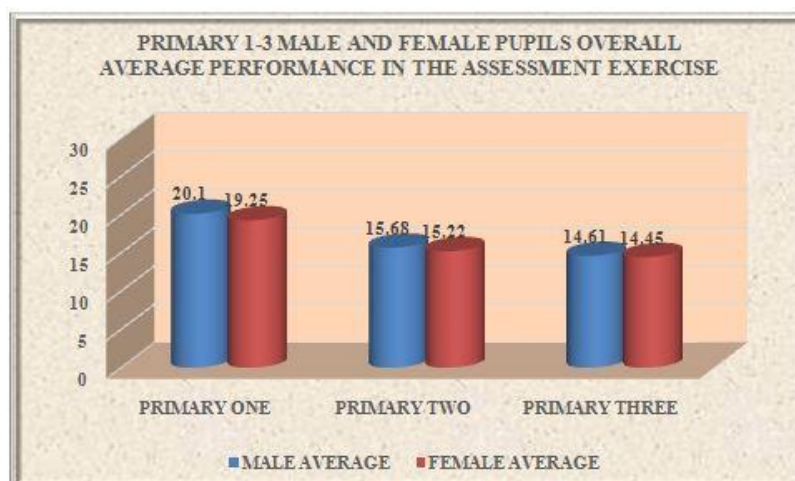The summary of the result is also presented in the chart below

Figure5. *Chart showing male and female pupils' performance*

7. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in primary 1-3 pupils' performance in the three assessment areas between the two states

Table5.

Classes	State	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Primary one	Gombe	9	20.18	2.62	**0.132**	**15**	**.897**	**Not Sig.**
	Bauchi	8	20.36	3.16				
Primary two	Gombe	9	15.26	2.04	**0.228**	**15**	**.823**	**Not Sig.**
	Bauchi	8	14.93	4.13				
Primary three	Gombe	9	14.60	1.94	**0.306**	**13**	**.764**	**Not Sig.**
	Bauchi	6	14.25	2.48				

The table presents the independent t-test result on the significant difference between Gombe and Bauchi state overall pupils' performance in the assessment areas for primary 1-3. The result of the hypothesis test was accepted since the p-values obtained of 0.897, 0.823 and 0.764 for primary 1, 2 and 3 respectively were greater than the 0.05 significance level set in the study. Hence it was concluded that there is no significant difference in the pupil's performance between the two states in focus.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between male and female pupils' performance in the assessment exercise across the two states

Table6.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Primary One Male	16	20.10	2.84	**.480**	**28**	**.635**	Not Sig.
Primary One Female	14	20.62	3.11				
Primary Two Males	16	15.68	3.58	**.391**	**30**	**.698**	Not Sig.
Primary Two Female	16	15.22	3.09				
Primary Three Male	14	14.61	2.49	**.204**	**27**	**.840**	Not Sig.
Primary Three Female	15	14.45	1.92				

The table presents the independent sampled t-test result on the significant difference between Primary 1-3 male and female pupils across the two states. The hypothesis was accepted since the p-values of 0.635, 0.698 and 0.840 for Primary 1-3 male and female performance was greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, it was concluded that there is no significant difference in the male and female pupils' performance in the overall assessment

8. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Only 754 pupils representing 31.4% transited to Primary 1-3 from the two states.

2. The male pupils that transited were 383 (32.5%) and the females were 371(30%).

3. Parents whose children were enrolled in CBECCE as a result of their migration to such communities because of crises that later moved out affected finding out such children to ascertain if they transited or not.

4. Lack of enabling environment like poor attendance by teachers, inadequate classrooms and lack of learning materials discouraged the parents from sending and retaining their wards in schools and also demotivated the learners to continue with their studies.

5. Some head teachers from the two states did not enroll pupils in primary one and two.

6. The results of the three areas assessed for this study revealed a close average performance with insignificant differences between the two states from primary 1-3.

7. There is also an insignificant difference between the performances of pupils in Bauchi and Gombe states.

8. The male and female pupils from the two states performed at the same levels across the three assessed areas.

9. Pupils in primary one from the two states perform better than primary two and three pupils.

9. CONCLUSION

From the results and findings of this research, it can be concluded that if the variables that affected the smooth transition and retention of pupils as identified in this research are taken care of, higher transition and retention can be attained. Furthermore, creating an enabling environment for the pupils to learn will also enhance better performances by them across the different levels in the two states.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proffered towards enhancing higher transition, retention and better performances of Pupils at the primary school levels:

1. Efforts should be made by the government, communities and other stakeholders in reducing communal crises to the minimum levels in order to ensure the stability of parents in their communities thereby enhancing continuing education of children.

2. Effective supervision should be done on regular basis by State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Local Education Authority (LEA) and other relevant stakeholders in order to ensure that teachers are not only consistent in attendance in their schools but are also committed to teaching the pupils effectively.

3. A conducive learning environment should be created by the government and other stakeholders in the provision of adequate classrooms, and indoor and outdoor learning resources to motivate the pupils towards regular attendance and excellent performance.

4. SUBEB and LEA officials should ensure that head teachers not only mobilize children to attend school but should also be compelled to officially register them in the relevant school documents.

5. Employment of more qualified teachers should be done by the relevant government agencies and communities to teach the appropriate classes in order to enhance pupils' better performances.

6. Proper monitoring of the CBECCE pupils should be done by the SBMCs, government agencies and community leaders to ensure a smooth and 100% transition to primary schools.

7. More primary schools should be established to ensure the closeness of the school to various communities and CBECCE centres.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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