

Teachers' Factors as Predictor of Quality Service Delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated the factors that predict quality service delivery in ECE in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria with a view to the analysis of the factors affecting the quality service delivery. The study used descriptive survey research design. The population used in this study was teachers in public primary school in the study area. Multistage sampling procedure was used and a sample size of 150 respondents was selected. A questionnaire has been developed by the researcher was used in data collection. Validation of the instrument was carried out by expert and the reliability was obtained by Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Pearson product moments correlation method at 0.05 level of significance were used to analyze the collected data. The results showed that the quality of service provided in Early Childhood Education in the study area was good. The study also revealed that teachers' factors had significant influence on the quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education, $r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$). The study results show that there are significant factors in service provision in early childhood education related to the characteristics of the teachers. The research recommended that there was a need for the government to recruit qualified Early Childhood Education teachers and organize regular training sessions for teachers to enhance their abilities in providing quality services in the Early Childhood Education centers.*

Keywords: teachers' factors, quality service delivery, early childhood education, Atiba local government

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) is recognized as the bedrock of holistic child development and lifelong learning all over the world. The purpose of this learning phase is to provide for children's cognitive, affective, social, physical and linguistic development before they start school. High-quality early childhood education is essential for better learning outcomes and sustainable national development, according to international organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2019). The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013) defines early childhood education in Nigeria as pre-primary education, which is the instruction given to children between the ages of three and five prior to starting primary school.

Efficient service delivery in early childhood education is when qualitative education services provided in early childhood centers meet the accepted criteria that can facilitate efficient teaching and learning, care, and child development, is called 'service delivery in early childhood education that is of good quality'. The provision of high-quality services includes both process quality and structural quality characteristics. Process quality focuses on classroom interactions, instructional practices, learning experiences, and emotional support provided to children, while structural quality relates to teachers' qualifications, teacher-child ratio, class size, school facilities, instructional materials, and physical infrastructure. The quality of children's early learning experiences is well established to be a key factor in their success in school and social development in later years. (Owojori & Gbenga-Akanmu, 2021); (Nkemjika & Okika, 2025); (Adedeji, Fabunmi & Olaniyan, 2021). The need for high-quality early childhood education services has been a worry in Nigeria as lots of early childhood education facilities are still facing challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of teachers' teaching resources, overcrowded classrooms and inadequately trained teachers. (Nkemjika & Okika, 2025); (Ibrahim, Igba, Alhaji, & Haruna, 2025)

In early childhood education, teachers continue to be essential to achieving high-quality service delivery. The successful teacher's professional qualifications, teaching experience, pedagogical competency, work ethic, classroom management skills, motivation and involvement in professional development programs all play a significant role in the successful teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Teacher-related factors are important in school outcomes, and the popular idea that there is nothing better for a student than a good teacher is reflected in this. In fact, several studies have shown that there is a positive effect on children's cognitive development when the teachers are skilled and competent, on children's engagement in the classroom, and on the preparedness of children for the school. Bakori (2024); Adedeji, Fabunmi, and Olaniyan (2021).

Teacher factors are especially significant in Early Childhood Education as children in this age group need specific methods of teaching which involve play, emotional responsiveness, language

stimulation and individual attention. However, in many early childhood centres in Nigeria, there are problems with the appointment of unqualified caregivers, lack of teacher training, low pay for teachers and lack of professional commitment. The problems are frequently a barrier to the provision of quality education to young children. The study in Nigeria revealed that ECEs' preparation is weak in three critical domains of importance in the effective teaching of early childhood development, which are: Child psychology, Classroom management and Instructional strategies. (Nkemjika & Okika, 2025); (Bakori 2024); (Owojori & Gbenga-Akanmu, 2021).

Teacher qualification is the professional and academic qualifications which teachers have so they can be effective teachers. Qualified teachers have specialized knowledge and skills in child development, instructional strategies, classroom management and curriculum implementation. Studies show that teachers with more credentials have positive correlations with learning environments and educational outcomes. (Manning, Garvis,, Fleming, & Wong, 2017); (Manning, Fleming, Wong, & Garvis, 2019).

Teacher qualification is important in the field of early childhood education because young children learn in a unique way, and require a unique educational approach, including play-based learning, individualized teaching and emotional support. However, some studies were carried out in Nigeria and it was revealed that many of the Early childhood centres involved were headed by people who have not received any training in early childhood pedagogy and child psychology. (Nkemjika & Okika, 2025); (Ibrahim, Igba, Alhaji, & Haruna, 2025). Teaching experience refers to the year of the teachers' experience in teaching. Less experienced teachers may not be as effective in their classroom management, instruction or child behaviour management skills as experienced teachers. Experience helps develop the confidence, flexibility and knowledge of the teachers' personal learning needs of the children.

Pedagogical competence is the ability of teachers to use the appropriate teaching method, instructional strategy and classroom practice so that learning would be effective. Pedagogical competence in Early Childhood Education consists of skills required to utilize the pedagogical method of play, story-telling and songs, games and interactive learning. The competency of teachers is one of the important factors that influence the interaction, language development and engagement in learning of preschool children in the classroom revealed by Nkemjika and Okika (2025). Classroom management skills involve the activities organised by teachers, keeping the classroom orderly, managing classroom time and creating learning climate in the classroom. Classroom management is an effective way to develop positive teacher-child relationships and enhance child learning.

Professional development is, defined as, training programmes, workshops, seminars and continuous learning activities to improve teachers' knowledge and skills. CPD provides teachers with the tools and resources they need to stay up-to-date on the evolving and emerging needs of education and the teaching methods used. Bakori (2024) highlighted that the roles of teacher

training and professional development in improving instructional quality and service delivery in Early Childhood Education is paramount.

Atiba is one of the most popular Local Government Areas in Oyo State with an increasing number of public ECD facilities. Despite the region's growing awareness of early childhood education benefits, it is evident that there are quality issues with teachers and inconsistent service delivery quality across schools. The accomplishment of educational goals at the pre-primary level may be adversely impacted by these problems. It is therefore important to examine the impact of teacher factors on the delivery of quality ECD services in Atiba LGA Oyo State, Nigeria. This study therefore seeks to examine the extent to which teacher-related factors contribute to effective service delivery in Early Childhood Education centres in the study area.

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood education is regarded as the foundation for future learning and development of children and thus has become a priority for all stakeholders including educators, parents and legislators in Nigeria. Although the government has been promoting the importance of ECD and many ECD programs have been established in Nigeria, many early development centers struggle with substandard teaching and learning methods and with poorly qualified staff. Ibrahim, Igba, Alhaji, and Haruna (2025); Owojori & Gbenga-Akanmu (2021); Okewole & Ajibade (2024). In the rural areas of Atiba Local Government Area, some instructors who work with young children are not professionally competent, do not have teaching experience and are not trained to work effectively with young children. These deficiencies can impact children, classroom relationships, the quality of instruction and learning outcomes. Bakori (2024); Lamidi & Adeyemi (2019); Nkemjika & Okika (2025). Even though there are several studies that have examined the issue of quality assurance and educational service delivery in Nigeria, only a few empirical studies have focused on the effect of teacher variables on quality service delivery in early childhood education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State. This investigation is required due to this information gap. Therefore, the problem of this study is to determine whether teacher's factors significantly predict quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' factors as predictor of quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. assess the level of quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State, Nigeria;
2. investigate the influence of teachers' factors on quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State, Nigeria;

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the level of quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. What influence do teachers' factors have on quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The hypothesis will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' factors and quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research was used for this study. Descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate as it allows the researcher to gather data from a representative sample of the respondents on teachers' factors and quality service delivery in the ECD. Secondly, the design enables the researcher to describe the existing situation of Early Childhood Education centres in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo State. Population of interest is all the early childhood education teachers in public primary schools of Atiba LGA. In the Atiba local government, the science and technology ministry of education, Oyo state, according to the Oyo state universal basic education board (2025), has a total of 490 teachers in 79 public primary schools. A sampling technique of multiple stages was employed to draw respondents' sample from the population. The selection of Schools was stage one and from the study area 50 schools were selected through simple random sampling technique. In the second stage, purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 3 teachers with early childhood classes in each school as they are directly involved in the service delivery of the early childhood education. A sample size of 150 teachers was used in analysed schools for this study.

The data gathering instrument is a self designed questionnaire entitled: "Teachers' Factors and Quality Service Delivery Questioner (TFQSDQ)" that is divided into three parts, namely: Part A: Demographic Information. It includes questions related to the personal details of the respondents, including gender, age, educational qualification, experience as a teacher, location of the school. Section B: Teachers' Factors. Some of the items in this section are related to teachers' factors such as their professional qualification, pedagogical competence, classroom management skills, professional development and attitude to work. Section C: Quality Service Delivery. Items in this section include: Instructional quality, teacher-child interaction, classroom engagement, learning environment, child participation and emotional support. The questionnaire items was structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1.

Face and content validity of the instrument was done by experts in Early Childhood Education, Educational Management, and Measurement and Evaluation. The experts examine the instrument with regard to the following: clarity of the instrument, relevance of items to the research objectives, coverage of the instrument of the variables under study and appropriateness of the questionnaire items. The instrument was revised in the final version based on the comments received from experts before administering the instrument. A pilot study was carried out with the teachers in the E.C.E. centres in the study area to assess the reliability of the instrument used in the study. The questionnaire was given to a group of 20 teachers that were chosen for a pilot study. To measure the internal consistency of the instrument, analysis of the data obtained was carried out using the Cronbach alpha reliability method. The reliability of the study was 0.78 indicating that the data was reliable and can be used to collect.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis of the collected data for the study. The descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while inferential was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was tested and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in particular.

RESULTS

Respondents Demographic Information

Table 1: Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	42	28.0
Female	108	72.0
Total	150	100

According to Table 1, 108 respondents, or 72.0% of the sample, were female and 42 respondents, or 28.0% of the sample, were male. This suggests that the majority of responders in the research area's Early Childhood Education centers were female instructors.

Table 2: Respondents by Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
NCE	48	32.0
B.Ed./B.Sc. Ed	76	50.7
M.Ed.	18	12.0
Others	8	5.3
Total	150	100

Table 2 reveals that most respondents possessed B.Ed./B.Sc. Ed qualifications with 50.7%, indicating that many teachers in the study area were professionally trained educators.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1–5 years	52	34.7
6–10 years	61	40.7
11–15 years	25	16.6
16 years and above	12	8.0
Total	150	100

Table 3 indicates that majority of the respondents had between 6–10 years of teaching experience, representing 40.7%.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean Analysis on Quality Service Delivery

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Children actively participate during classroom activities	3.21	0.71	Agree
2	Teachers provide quality learning experiences	3.18	0.69	Agree
3	Teacher-child interaction is positive	3.30	0.66	Agree
4	Learning activities promote cognitive development	3.15	0.72	Agree
5	Classroom environment encourages creativity	3.10	0.74	Agree
6	Instructional activities are age appropriate	3.26	0.63	Agree
7	Children demonstrate readiness for primary education	3.11	0.77	Agree
Grand Mean		3.19	0.70	High

Table 4's grand mean score of 3.19 shows that the Atiba Local Government area provided high-quality early childhood education services.

Research Question Two: What influence do teachers' factors have on quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA of Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 5: Mean Analysis on Teachers' Factors

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Teachers possess professional qualifications	3.24	0.68	Agree
2	Teachers demonstrate pedagogical competence	3.20	0.71	Agree
3	Teachers use play-based instructional methods	3.16	0.75	Agree
4	Teachers attend professional development programs	3.02	0.79	Agree
5	Teachers manage classrooms effectively	3.27	0.65	Agree
6	Teachers maintain positive relationships with children	3.35	0.61	Agree
7	Teachers use instructional materials effectively	3.18	0.72	Agree
Grand Mean		3.20	0.70	High

In table 5, the grand mean score of 3.20 indicates that teachers' factors positively influenced quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba Local Government area.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' factors and quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education in Atiba LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing Relationship between Teachers' Factors and Quality Service Delivery

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Factors	150	3.20	0.70	0.682	0.000	Significant
Quality Service Delivery	150	3.19	0.70			

Table 6 shows that excellent service delivery and instructors' characteristics were significantly correlated ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis was therefore disproved. This suggests that early childhood educators' considerations have a major impact on the provision of high-quality services.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Level of Quality Service Delivery in Early Childhood Education

The study's findings demonstrated that the Atiba Local Government District provided high-quality early childhood education (ECE) services. Teachers' favorable comments on the quality of teaching, teacher-child interaction, students' involvement in the classroom, their inventiveness, and their preparedness for school all mirrored this. This implies that a sizable portion of the research area's ECE centers are working to provide nurturing learning settings that may aid in the development of kids' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skills. The outcome shows that educators in the selected schools are making an effort to make sure that teaching strategies and classroom interactions are both successful and developmentally appropriate. The findings corroborate UNESCO's (2022) assertion that high-quality early childhood education helps kids become school-ready, socially competent, creative, and lifelong learners. It also supports the results of Owojori and Gbenga-Akanmu (2021), who found that excellent service delivery in early childhood education in South-Western Nigeria is facilitated by effective teaching strategies and favorable learning settings.

The outcome is in line with the findings of Nkemjika and Okika's (2025) study, which discovered that language development and learning engagement in Nigerian early childhood education centers are significantly influenced by emotionally responsive teaching and quality classroom interactions. The finding may also be explained by the increasing awareness among parents, school administrators, and other educational stakeholders that a high-quality preschool education is crucial to the school's curriculum for preparing kids for future academic success.

Influence of Teachers' Factors on Quality Service Delivery

The results of the research demonstrated that the quality of ECD services was significantly influenced by the characteristics of the instructors. Effective service delivery was shown to be significantly influenced by the teacher's credentials, pedagogical ability, classroom management, professional development, communications, and strong teacher-child relationships. The results imply that the quality of the services provided to children in ECE centers is determined by the caliber of the instructor and her/his working methods. Teachers with professional qualifications and training are better equipped to provide engaging and encouraging learning settings for young children. This finding supports the widely held belief that no educational system can outperform or surpass the caliber of its instructors, which is supported by the Nigerian National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013). The Early Childhood Education curriculum and child-centered learning techniques may be successfully developed and implemented by qualified instructors. The results align with the findings of Bakori's (2024) research, which found that professional development and teacher training greatly enhance educational standards, teacher efficacy, and children's learning outcomes in early childhood education.

The result is also in line with that of Nkemjika and Okika (2025), who found that teacher competences, classroom management, cultural responsiveness, and classroom environmental quality are strongly correlated in Nigeria. The results corroborate the findings of Manning, Garvis, Fleming, and Wong's (2017) systematic study, which found a favorable correlation between higher teacher credentials and better learning environments and educational outcomes in ECE settings. This implies that having a teacher with professional training is associated with more effective classroom interaction and the implementation of developmentally appropriate activities. Furthermore, the results support the findings of Owojori and Gbenga-Akanmu's (2021) research, which found that effective early childhood education in South-Western Nigeria depends on teaching methodologies, teacher dedication, and instructional competency. Teachers' crucial involvement in classroom interaction, emotional support, education, behavior control, and socialization of children throughout their formative years may also be linked to the significance of their position in providing high-quality services.

CONCLUSION

The quality of early childhood education services was excellent, according to research findings. Additionally, instructors play a significant role in providing high-quality services in Atiba LGA, ECE. The study revealed that the qualified and competent teachers with experiences play an important role in providing good classroom quality learning experience, good classroom management and good teacher-child interaction in ECE centres. This has resulted in a high standard of teacher's qualities as a key to upgrading the quality of ECD in Atiba Local Government area of Oyo State and Nigeria at large.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were made from the study results:

1. Government should begin to use professionally qualified teachers who are specialised in ECE in preschool centres to enhance quality service provision.
2. Teachers should be urged to regularly participate in conferences, workshops, seminars and in-service training programmes to enhance their pedagogical competence and professional skills.
3. Monitoring and supervision of ECE centres by educational authorities should be increased and made to be in compliance with minimum educational standards.
4. Government should increase support for Early Childhood Education programmes to better the infrastructure and teachers' welfare.

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