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Influence of Teachers' Factors and Availability of Learning Facilities on Quality Service Delivery in Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper discusses how the factors of teachers and availability of learning facilities affect the quality service provision in the Early Childhood Education (ECE). It is generally accepted that early childhood education is a key period in the life of children, the prerequisite of further education and socialization. In spite of this appreciation, provision of quality ECE in Nigeria still remains an issue especially in matters pertaining to teacher-related aspects and accessibility of learning facilities. The paper discusses the qualification of teachers, teaching experience, training and motivation of teachers and the access to learning facilities including classrooms, instructional materials and learning resources and how they affect service delivery in ECE centers. The paper shows that there is a need of comprehensive interventions in which teacher capacity-building and investment in infrastructure are taken seriously. The paper also provides a conclusion, which includes sustained professional development programs, enhancing teachers' motivation, implementing policies, as well as investing more government and community investment in ECE infrastructure. These interventions play a crucial role in terms of equitable access to quality early childhood education as well as quality service delivery.

Keywords: teachers' factors, learning facilities, quality service delivery, early childhood education, professional development.

Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is known to be the cornerstone of lifelong learning, cognitive growth as well as social adaptation. The first years of life play a significant role in brain development and the quality of experiencing early learning has major impacts on the success of children in their school and social lives (UNESCO, 2023). Policymakers and educators across the world are putting more importance on the need to bolster early childhood education to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, which has been stipulated in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, 2020). Provision of quality ECE however, is determined by a combination of human and material resources especially the factors related to the teacher and availability of learning facilities.

Teachers are mentioned to be the most key school based determinants of student learning outcomes. Academic qualifications, professional training, years of experience, motivation, and ongoing professional development are some of the most valuable teacher factors in early childhood education that contribute to the successful provision of services (Legede et al., 2024). Research indicates that educators with specific education on early childhood pedagogy have more skills in classroom management, more child-centered teaching methods, and they are more capable of promoting comprehensive child development (Onyema et al., 2022). On the other hand, poorly trained teachers or those who lack professional support may not be in a position to use age-comprehensive methodologies, which results in service delivery failure.

The learning facilities is also important whereby it entails physical learning facility, teaching and learning resources, child friendly facility, and the incorporation of instructional technology. According to scholars, sufficient learning facilities do not only enhance the performance of teachers, but will also increase the motivation of children, their creativity and involvement in learning. As an example, classrooms that are appropriately furnished in terms of seating, ventilation, safety facilities and instructional resources are related to increased teacher satisfaction and student achievement. Conversely, poor access to learning spaces including too many students in a single classroom, hygiene, and the absence of learning materials can seriously impact the quality of ECE services (Ayieko et al., 2021). Although the role of teacher competence and learning facilities has been admitted, there are still disparities in developing countries. Sub-Saharan Africa has shown that despite the increased accessibility of early childhood education by the government, the service delivery is not even, as the teachers are not qualified, the motivation of the teachers is poor, and the infrastructure is insufficient (Adebayo and Omotayo, 2023). In most cases, caregivers and teachers are employed without much or no professional training, schools run without a sufficient number of teaching resources, unsafe classrooms, and inadequate sanitary facilities (UNICEF, 2021). Such deficiencies make children unable to benefit fully on early learning programs and have been a source of inequity in the outcome of education. The issue thus represents a two-fold problem because on

one hand, teachers need to be knowledgeable, skilled and motivated to provide quality services; secondly, they need to have favorable learning environments in terms of adequate learning facilities to be able to apply the child-centered pedagogies successfully. Lack of either of these elements undermines the quality of early childhood education promised. Irrespective of this appreciation, quality provision of ECE in Nigeria has remained a problem especially when it comes to teachers related issues and access to learning institutions. The paper will focus on the aspects of qualification, teaching experience, professional development, and motivation of teachers, and the accessibility of learning facilities like classrooms, instructional material and learning resources and how these factors affect service delivery in ECE centers.

Quality Service Delivery in Early Childhood Education.

Most assessment of quality service delivery in ECE is based on evaluation of curriculum implementation, interactions between teachers and children, inclusiveness, and child learning outcomes. Research confirmed that the developmentally appropriate practices, favorable environments, and significant parental engagement are the features of high-quality services (UNICEF, 2021). According to Global Partnership for Education (2022), quality service is not a question of access but equity whereby the marginalized children should have access to supportive teachers as well as proper learning facilities. The competence of teachers, availability of resources and institutional support must also be aligned to deliver effective service delivery (Adebayo and Omotayo, 2023).

Quality service delivery in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has attracted increasing attention in recent years as global education systems strive to achieve equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education for all children. Scholars agree that both teacher-related factors and the availability of learning facilities are central to ensuring effectiveness. Hence quality services delivery combine developmentally appropriate practices with supportive environments and engaged communities.

Teachers' Factors and Quality Service Delivery in Nigerian ECE

Teachers are central to the delivery of high-quality service in early childhood education. Thus teachers are expected to design learning activities to facilitate young children's self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Therefore, teacher factors like qualifications, experience, motivation and professional development influence the teacher job performance

Teacher qualifications are central to effective ECE delivery. Research consistently demonstrates that teachers with specialized training in early childhood pedagogy provide rich learning experiences, better classroom management, and more developmentally appropriate practices (Onyema et al., 2022). Formal teacher education also equips educators with skills for child-centered learning, assessment, and the integration of play-based methods (Legede et al., 2024). In contrast, teachers with inadequate training often rely on rote memorization and

rigid instructional practices that undermine children's holistic development (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2023).

Experience has been shown to significantly influence the quality of instruction. Teachers with longer years of practice in early childhood classrooms typically exhibit higher confidence, stronger pedagogical strategies, and deeper understanding of child psychology (Chinedu & Musa, 2021). Nonetheless, years of experience might not be translated to quality service without continuous professional development since antiquated methodologies might still prevail. Researchers say that it is necessary to have a combination of experience and constant training (Adebayo and Omotayo, 2023).

The roles played by teacher qualification and experience in influencing quality service delivery in the early childhood education cannot be overestimated. As it was noted by Ezenwaji and Okafor (2021), teachers who received special training in early childhood pedagogy were more efficient in promoting social-emotional and cognitive growth in learning. On the same note, Liang and Zhang (2023) in their cross-national research conducted in China identified that continuous professional development by teachers led to improved curriculum delivery, particularly in the resource-challenged schools. This shows how teacher competence is a global factor which is highly significant towards quality service delivery in ECE.

Another important determinant of service delivery is teacher motivation in terms of job satisfaction and recognition coupled with working conditions that are conducive. Teachers who are driven have more enthusiasm, creative, and patience when working with young learners (Fapohunda, 2022). However, in most third-world nations such as Nigeria, inadequate pay, lack of career advancement and excessive workloads have a negative impact on teacher morale, a factor that has led to absenteeism and teacher turnover (Mupfumira and Makoni, 2020). All these have an indirect effect on early learning quality.

As a recurring problem, it was motivation, especially in the public schools. Teachers complained about low pay and low appreciation. Adegbile and Ojo (2020) believe that teacher motivation has a direct effect on classroom engagement and outcomes of children in preschools in Nigeria. Lack of good incentives deters teachers to put their best foot forward and the result would be poor service delivery. It is thus upon the policymakers to not only focus on teacher recruitment and training but also on incentive frameworks, reward schemes, career growth prospects to ensure that they retain a motivated workforce.

Recent research indicates that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) represents an equally essential aspect of future research on the issue of knowledge and adaptability in early childhood educational settings among teachers. Workshops, mentorship, and collaborative learning networks are among the CPD programs that have been demonstrated to increase teacher efficacy and children learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2023). States where CPD is part of the policy systems of education are more likely to report improvement in service delivery of early childhood education (Nguyen, 2022).

The absence of frequent professional development among the teachers may impede the delivery of quality services in ECE. Okeke and Adu (2022) argued that in many African

countries, professional development is sporadic and poorly funded. This situation creates a disconnect between evolving pedagogical best practices and classroom realities. Such underinvestment reduces the overall productivity and potential of the educational system. Thus, policy reforms that institutionalize mandatory, government-supported Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for ECE teachers are essential for sustained improvement.

Availability of Learning Facilities and Quality Service Delivery in ECE

Olugbenga (2019) defined learning facilities as all the available assets of a school that can be used to foster and facilitate effective teaching and learning as well as to protect the physical well- being of the occupants. The school facilities are the physical expression of the school curriculum. That is, the school curriculum determines to a large extent the nature of school facility to be erected and the purpose it will serve. School facilities are expected to be adequately and carefully planned, developed and maintained in order to ensure their relevance to the school curriculum and towards effective teaching and learning in educational institutions. Well designed and functional school buildings with a wide array of teaching aids therefore provides effective delivery of the school curriculum and are positively related to students' academic performance.

The learning environment, including classrooms, furniture, playgrounds, and sanitation, is a determinant of both teacher performance and child development. According to the Reggio Emilia philosophy, the physical environment acts as the "third teacher," supporting exploration and discovery (Wikipedia, 2025). Classrooms that are well-ventilated, spacious, and equipped with child-friendly furniture promote engagement and reduce behavioral challenges (Second Wave Media, 2021). On the contrary, crowded and unsafe learning conditions negatively affect the quality of teaching and the well-being of children (Ayieko, 2021).

Availability of proper teaching resources, e.g. storybooks, play materials, art materials, digital technologies makes a direct influence on the learning process. It has been proven that children who will be exposed to a variety of material will have more robust literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills (Okonkwo & Ede, 2022). Even teachers, also, have access to resources, which enable them to apply child-centered methods successfully. Regrettably, in the situation with many ECE centers in Nigeria, even simple supplies are absent, which forces educators to improvise and does not provide children with a chance to explore (Adebayo and Omotayo, 2023).

ECE has not been left out in the digital transformation of education and technology may assist in interactive learning, record-keeping and parental involvement. The latest data suggest that properly incorporated ICT technologies, including age-specific applications found on a tablet, might contribute to the cognitive growth of children and the efficiency of teachers (Nguyen, 2022). Nevertheless, digital gaps and lack of teacher training tend to put the potential of ICT in low resourced schools at a dead end.

The accessibility and sufficiency of learning facilities is a major determinant of quality service delivery in ECE. Researchers were in agreement that institutions with properly furnished classrooms, playthings, sanitation centers, and Information and Technology resources registered enhanced degrees of child attendance and inclusivity. As an example, UNESCO (2022) stated that the quality of infrastructure is a key factor that defines the effectiveness of ECE on the global level. In a similar manner, Oduolowu and Adeniyi (2021) have highlighted that poor infrastructure in the early childhood centers in Nigeria hinders implementation of the curriculum and discourages the holistic development of children.

This disproportion in the provision of facilities by the public and the private schools is a wider trend in the inequality in access to quality education. Whereas in most cases, private schools address government shortcomings by investing in the new facilities, most of the children in the public schools, which are attended by the majority, lack adequate resources (UNESCO, 2022). This twofold approach continues to promote educational inequity, which is against the principles of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4), which aims at providing equitable access to quality education to all. To close this gap, it is necessary to invest specifically in the government, create partnerships between the government and individuals, and engage the community in the development of the school infrastructure.

Combined Influence of Teachers' Factors and Learning Facilities on Quality Service Delivery in ECE

The interaction between the teacher factors and the learning facilities in quality service delivery in the early childhood education in Nigeria is not only important but also interdependent. Effective and well motivated teachers work better where they are supplied with proper learning conditions that would assist them utilize their pedagogical skills. In the same manner, the presence of learning facilities cannot ensure the provision of quality service delivery without the teachers who have the necessary knowledge and skills on how to use the facilities to their advantage. As an example, highly trained teachers might find it difficult to provide quality instructions in the settings that are resource deficient whereas resource endowed settings with poorly trained teachers may not make the most out of learning (Legede et al., 2024). The same study by Onyema et al. (2022) discovered that schools that had trained teachers and had proper learning facilities reported high child learning outcomes compared to those that were strong on one dimension. This implies that teacher training and infrastructural investment should not be isolated but instead they should be complementary in their interventions.

The combination between the competence of teachers and the learning facilities eventually dictates the level of service provision in the ECE centres in Nigeria. Where the two factors are well taken care of, children are subjected to enhanced learning experiences, which foster holistic development. On the other hand, lack of either of the above areas compromises the quality of instruction, involvement of the children and their development. Proper learning facilities are needed to enable trained teachers to apply the child-centered pedagogy and vice

versa training facilities will never deliver quality without the help of skilled teachers. Legede et al. (2024) proved that schools that had both qualified teachers and sufficient learning facilities had better child outcomes than other schools that were doing well on only one of the dimensions. This highlights the essence of combined strategies.

Professionally trained teachers of early childhood education can also maximize the amount of resources available in Nigeria through adaptation of materials, improvisation of instructional tools, and play-based methods. Nevertheless, a lack of learning facilities is a constant issue that limits even the most qualitative teachers and causes the teacher-centred teaching process and the low probability of meaningful teacher-child interaction (Ogunyemi & Ragpot, 2020). This relationship shows that learning facility gaps may increase teacher capacity limitations and that learning facilities adequacy may raise teacher efficacies. According to Onyema et al, (2022), the relationship between children and their guardians should be positive, warm and responsive to ensure the socio-emotional and cognitive development. K-12 educators are capable of developing trust, cooperation, and participation in the learning process by possessing the strong interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence.

Equal service provision also demands that the needs of the marginalized children like those with disabilities or whose families are low income earners are addressed. Adebayo and Omotayo (2023) emphasize that in the absence of trained educators and inclusive learning centers, the children who belong to disadvantaged backgrounds may be deprived of the opportunity to have their meaningful learning.

Conclusion

The relative impacts of teacher-related factors and access to learning facilities have a strong influence in the delivery of quality services in the early childhood education in Nigeria. The human component of ECE quality is composed of the qualifications, motivation, convictions, and interaction abilities of teachers, whereas the physical and material environment is the prerequisite of successful teaching and learning. The solution to problems facing the education of early childhood in Nigeria thus necessitates a multifaceted approach that places emphasis on teacher training and motivating as well as long term investment of learning organizations. These combined initiatives are necessary to enhance the quality, equity and effectiveness of the service delivery of early childhood education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Both capacity building and teacher building as well as providing the necessary learning facilities should be given serious attention by the policymakers and stakeholders in education in order to achieve the sustainable progress in the service delivery in early childhood education.
2. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) should be an obligatory practice of the governments to the early childhood educators, with the emphasis on child-centered pedagogy, inclusive practices, and digital literacy.

3. The education programs in the teacher training centers need to be reorganized to offer specialized teacher training in the area of ECE so that the teachers are well prepared in the developmental requirements of the young learners.
4. Teacher motivation should be enhanced by offering competitive remuneration packages, incentives and career advancement opportunities which should be implemented by policymakers.
5. Targeted investment in the infrastructure such as classrooms, child friendly furniture, teaching materials and ICT facilities should be invested in public schools.
6. The government should promote the idea of public-private partnerships (PPP) and involvement of the community in school improvement projects to close the facility gap.
7. To sustain long term institutional competitiveness and quality, government needs to have strong mechanisms to keep track of teacher performance as well as the learning facility maintenance.

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