

Influence Of Professional Development Programmes On Early Childhood Education Teachers' Classroom Practices In Yaba Local Council Development Area Of Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: This study examined the influence of professional development programmes on early childhood education teachers' classroom practices in Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State. The study was motivated by the increasing need to improve the quality of early childhood education through effective teacher competence, instructional delivery, classroom management, and utilisation of instructional materials.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all Early Childhood Education teachers in public and private nursery and primary schools within Yaba LCDA. A sample of 120 teachers was selected using multistage sampling techniques involving stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling procedures. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Professional Development Programmes on Early Childhood Education Teachers' Classroom Practices Questionnaire (IPDPETCPQ)." The instrument was validated by experts in Early Childhood Education and Measurement and Evaluation, while a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. The collected data were analysed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results: Findings revealed that workshops and seminars had a significant influence on instructional delivery among early childhood education teachers ($r = 0.684, p < 0.05$). The study also found that in-service training programmes significantly influenced classroom management practices ($r = 0.721, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, professional development programmes significantly influenced teachers' use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms ($r = 0.697, p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The study concluded that professional development programmes significantly enhance teachers' classroom practices and recommended regular training programmes, workshops, and continuous professional support for early childhood education teachers.

Keywords: Professional Development Programmes, Classroom Practices, Instructional Delivery, Classroom Management, Instructional Materials

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I. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is widely recognised as the foundational stage of formal education upon which subsequent learning, behaviour, cognitive growth, and social development are built. Across the globe, increasing attention has been directed toward improving the quality of early childhood education because experiences acquired during the formative years significantly influence children's future academic achievement, emotional stability, and lifelong productivity. International organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund have consistently emphasised that quality early childhood education contributes immensely to sustainable national development, social inclusion, and human capital advancement. Consequently, the effectiveness of early childhood education systems largely depends on the competence, preparedness, and classroom practices of teachers who interact directly with young learners.

Teachers in early childhood settings play a strategic role in shaping children's developmental outcomes. Their pedagogical approaches, instructional delivery methods, classroom management strategies, communication patterns, and assessment practices determine the quality of learning experiences provided to pupils. In contemporary educational discourse, classroom practices encompass all activities, methodologies, instructional interactions, and behavioural management techniques that teachers employ to facilitate meaningful learning among children. Effective classroom practices in early childhood education involve child-centred teaching approaches, play-based learning, inclusive participation, creativity, emotional support, use of

instructional materials, and continuous assessment strategies that address the developmental needs of children (Bredekamp & Copple, 2020). These practices are essential because young learners require nurturing, stimulating environments that foster holistic growth.

However, teachers' ability to implement effective classroom practices is closely linked to their level of professional competence and their ongoing exposure to relevant pedagogical innovations. This has made professional development programmes an indispensable component of educational improvement efforts worldwide. Professional development programmes refer to organised training activities, workshops, seminars, mentoring processes, conferences, in-service education, collaborative learning activities, and capacity-building initiatives designed to enhance teachers' knowledge, instructional skills, and professional competence. Such programmes are intended to update teachers on emerging teaching methodologies, curriculum reforms, technological innovations, classroom management strategies, and learner-centred pedagogies required for effective educational delivery (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The increasing complexity of educational demands in the twenty-first century has made continuous professional development necessary for teachers at all levels of education, especially in early childhood education. Unlike in previous decades, when teaching was perceived as a static profession requiring limited retraining, contemporary education systems now recognise that teachers must continually improve their competencies to respond effectively to changing learner needs, curriculum expectations, technological advances, and societal transformations. As educational policies evolve and new pedagogical approaches emerge, teachers who lack continuous professional development may struggle to implement effective classroom practices that meet modern educational standards.

Professional development programmes have therefore become major instruments for improving teachers' instructional competence, pedagogical effectiveness, and classroom performance. Studies have shown that teachers who actively participate in continuous professional development programmes demonstrate greater confidence, improved instructional delivery, better classroom management, enhanced learner engagement, and stronger assessment practices than teachers with limited opportunities for professional training (Guskey, 2018). This suggests that professional development programmes have the potential to positively influence the quality of classroom practices among early childhood education teachers.

In early childhood education specifically, professional development programmes are particularly important because the developmental characteristics of young children require specialised pedagogical approaches. Young learners differ significantly from older students in cognitive ability, emotional maturity, language development, and attention span. Consequently, early childhood teachers must possess specialised skills in classroom interaction, play facilitation, child psychology, emotional support, language development, and inclusive education. Professional development programmes help teachers acquire these competencies by exposing them to evidence-based practices and innovative teaching methods that enhance children's learning outcomes.

Globally, governments and educational stakeholders continue to invest heavily in teacher professional development as a strategy for improving educational quality. In countries such as Finland, Singapore, Canada, and the United Kingdom, continuous professional training for teachers is institutionalised as part of educational reform initiatives aimed at strengthening classroom effectiveness and learner achievement. Research evidence from these countries indicates that sustained professional development contributes significantly to instructional improvement and learner performance (OECD, 2020). Teachers who engage in continuous training tend to adopt learner-centred teaching approaches, integrate technology more effectively, and demonstrate improved classroom organisation and instructional flexibility.

In developing countries, including Nigeria, the importance of professional development programmes has equally gained recognition due to concerns about declining educational quality, inadequate instructional delivery, and poor learner outcomes. The Nigerian educational system has experienced persistent challenges relating to teacher quality, insufficient instructional resources, overcrowded classrooms, and inconsistent implementation of educational policies. These challenges are more pronounced in early childhood education, where qualified teachers are often in short supply, training opportunities remain limited, and classroom conditions are sometimes unfavourable for effective teaching and learning.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Federal Ministry of Education and agencies such as the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria and the National Commission for Colleges of Education, has introduced various policies and programmes to strengthen teacher capacity through continuous professional development. The National Policy on Education emphasises the importance of teacher training and retraining as mechanisms for improving educational standards in the country (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Despite these policy efforts, evidence suggests that many teachers, particularly at the foundational education level, still experience limited access to quality professional development opportunities.

In Lagos State, which remains one of Nigeria's most educationally advanced and densely populated states, early childhood education continues to receive significant attention due to rising enrolment rates,

urbanisation, and increasing parental awareness of the importance of quality foundational education. Lagos State has implemented several educational reforms targeted at improving teacher effectiveness and educational delivery in both public and private schools. Nevertheless, concerns persist regarding the quality and consistency of classroom practices among early childhood education teachers. Some teachers continue to rely heavily on traditional instructional methods characterised by rote memorisation, teacher dominance, inadequate learner participation, and limited use of instructional materials. These practices often conflict with modern child-centred pedagogies advocated for effective early childhood education.

The situation in Yaba Local Council Development Area (LCDA) is particularly significant because it is one of the most educationally vibrant regions in Lagos State. Yaba LCDA hosts numerous public and private primary schools serving children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The rapid growth of educational institutions in the locality has increased the demand for qualified, professionally competent early childhood education teachers. However, variations in teacher qualification, training exposure, institutional support, and access to professional development opportunities may influence the classroom practices adopted by teachers across schools in the area.

The relationship between professional development programmes and classroom practices has become a major subject of educational research because effective teaching practices are essential for achieving quality educational outcomes. Multiple factors, including teacher qualification, years of teaching experience, institutional support, motivation, availability of instructional resources, and participation in professional development activities, influence classroom practices among early childhood teachers. Among these variables, professional development programmes remain particularly critical because they provide opportunities for teachers to update their skills, reflect on their practices, and adapt to changing educational demands.

Professional development programmes can influence classroom practices in several ways. First, they expose teachers to innovative instructional strategies that can improve learner engagement and participation. Through workshops and seminars, teachers acquire knowledge of interactive teaching techniques, such as storytelling, collaborative learning, play-based instruction, inquiry-based learning, and differentiated instruction, suitable for young learners. Second, professional development programmes enhance teachers' classroom management skills by equipping them with effective behavioural management techniques and strategies for creating supportive learning environments. Third, such programmes improve teachers' assessment competencies, enabling them to monitor children's progress effectively through formative and developmental assessment methods.

Additionally, professional development programmes facilitate teachers' adaptation to educational technologies and digital instructional tools increasingly used in modern classrooms. The integration of information and communication technology into teaching and learning has transformed the delivery of education globally. Early childhood teachers are now expected to utilise digital learning resources, multimedia tools, and interactive educational technologies to enhance children's learning experiences. Professional development programmes help teachers develop digital literacy competencies necessary for effective technology integration within classroom settings.

Despite the recognised benefits of professional development programmes, several challenges continue to hinder their effectiveness in Nigeria. Many teachers face limited funding opportunities, irregular training schedules, inadequate institutional support, poor implementation of training policies, and a lack of follow-up mechanisms after training. In some cases, professional development activities are organised without adequate consideration of teachers' practical classroom needs, thereby reducing their impact on instructional practices. Furthermore, disparities often exist between public and private schools regarding access to professional development opportunities, which may contribute to differences in classroom effectiveness among teachers.

Another critical issue relates to the sustainability and relevance of professional development programmes. Educational researchers have argued that one-time workshops and isolated seminars may not produce lasting changes in classroom practices unless accompanied by continuous mentoring, peer collaboration, practical demonstration, and institutional support (Avalos, 2011). Effective professional development should therefore be ongoing, context-specific, collaborative, and directly linked to teachers' instructional realities. Teachers are more likely to improve their classroom practices when professional development programmes address real classroom challenges and provide opportunities for practical application of acquired knowledge.

The influence of professional development programmes on early childhood education teachers' classroom practices has also attracted scholarly attention due to increasing emphasis on learner-centred education. Child-centred approaches require teachers to act as facilitators of learning rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. This pedagogical transformation demands continuous teacher training because many teachers were initially trained under traditional instructional models that emphasised memorisation and rigid teacher authority. Professional development programmes therefore become essential for reorienting teachers toward more interactive, participatory, and developmentally appropriate classroom practices.

Furthermore, classroom practices in early childhood education are directly linked to children's academic readiness, social competence, language acquisition, emotional development, and problem-solving ability. Poor classroom practices during early childhood education may negatively affect children's future educational achievement and overall development. Consequently, improving teachers' classroom practices through effective professional development programmes is necessary to strengthen foundational education outcomes. This is particularly relevant in urban communities such as Yaba LCDA, where educational competition and parental expectations continue to increase.

Theoretical perspectives also support the relationship between professional development programmes and classroom practices. Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura emphasises that individuals acquire behaviours and skills through observation, interaction, and continuous learning experiences. In the context of teacher professional development, educators improve their classroom practices by observing demonstrations, participating in collaborative activities, and reflecting on professional experiences shared during training programmes. Similarly, Adult Learning Theory, proposed by Malcolm Knowles, suggests that adult learners are motivated to learn when training activities are relevant to their professional responsibilities and practical needs. Professional development programmes that incorporate practical classroom applications are therefore more likely to positively influence teachers' instructional practices.

Empirical studies conducted across different educational contexts have established significant relationships between teacher professional development and instructional effectiveness. For example, Desimone and Garet (2015) observed that teachers who participated in sustained professional development programmes demonstrated improved instructional quality and greater use of learner-centred teaching methods. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that effective professional development contributes to teacher competence, instructional innovation, and improved student learning outcomes. In Nigeria, studies have also indicated that teachers' participation in workshops, seminars, and in-service training positively influences classroom effectiveness and educational delivery (Aina & Bipath, 2020). Nevertheless, few studies have focused specifically on early childhood education teachers in local contexts, such as Yaba LCDA in Lagos State.

The present study is therefore necessary because it seeks to examine how professional development programmes influence the classroom practices of early childhood education teachers in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State. The study is expected to contribute to educational knowledge by establishing the extent to which teachers' participation in professional development activities affects instructional delivery, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment practices, and overall teaching effectiveness. Findings from the study may assist policymakers, educational administrators, teacher-training institutions, and school proprietors in designing more effective professional development initiatives to improve classroom practices and enhance educational quality.

The study is significant because improving early childhood education remains essential for achieving national educational objectives and sustainable development goals. Since early childhood education serves as the bedrock of formal learning, ensuring that teachers employ effective classroom practices through continuous professional development is critical to strengthening foundational educational outcomes in Nigeria. By focusing on Yaba LCDA, the study also provides localised evidence to inform policy implementation and teacher support mechanisms in urban educational settings.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of professional development programmes on early childhood education teachers' classroom practices in Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the influence of workshops and seminars on early childhood education teachers' instructional delivery in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State;
2. determine the influence of in-service training programmes on classroom management practices among early childhood education teachers in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State;
3. investigate the influence of professional development programmes on teachers' use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State;

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant influence between workshops and seminars on instructional delivery among early childhood education teachers in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence between in-service training programmes on classroom management practices among early childhood education teachers in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

H₀₃: There is no significant influence between professional development programmes on teachers' use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

II. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study will comprise all Early Childhood Education teachers in public and private nursery and primary schools within Yaba Local Council Development Area. A sample of 120 Early Childhood Education teachers will be selected from the study area. The study will employ a multistage sampling technique. A stratified sampling technique was used to group schools into public and private schools. Thereafter, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 public and 10 private schools from each stratum. 12 teachers were selected from each school using purposive sampling based on their participation in professional development programmes. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Professional Development Programmes on Early Childhood Education Teachers' Classroom Practices Questionnaire (IPDPETCPQ)", with a four-point Likert scale. Face and content validity were assessed by experts in Early Childhood Education Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Lagos, Akoka. The reliability of the instrument will be established through a pilot study involving 20 Early Childhood Education teachers from outside the study area who have characteristics similar to the study population. Cronbach's alpha reliability method was used to assess the instrument's internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. The data collected was analysed using inferential statistics, namely Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC).

III. Results

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant influence between workshops and seminars on instructional delivery among early childhood education teachers in Yaba Local Council Development Area.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Analysis Showing the Influence of Workshops and Seminars on Instructional Delivery

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p	Decision
Workshops and Seminars	120	3.42	0.61	0.684	0.000	Rejected
Instructional Delivery	120	3.55	0.58			

The results in Table 1 revealed that the calculated r (0.684, $p < 0.05$) indicated a strong positive relationship between workshops and seminars and instructional delivery among early childhood education teachers. The p -value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that workshops and seminars significantly influence the instructional delivery of early childhood education teachers in the Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant influence between in-service training programmes on classroom management practices among early childhood education teachers in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis Showing the Influence of In-Service Training Programmes on Classroom Management Practices

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p	Decision
In-Service Training Programmes	120	3.36	0.65	0.721	0.000	Rejected
Classroom Management Practices	120	3.48	0.60			

The findings in Table 2 showed that the calculated r (0.721, $p < 0.05$) indicated a strong positive relationship between in-service training programmes and classroom management practices among early childhood education teachers. Since the p -value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that in-service training programmes significantly influence classroom management practices among early childhood education teachers in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

Hypothesis Three

H03: There is no significant influence between professional development programmes on teachers' use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis Showing the Influence of Professional Development Programmes on Teachers' Use of Instructional Materials

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p	Decision
Professional Development Programmes	120	3.51	0.57	0.697	0.000	Rejected
Use of Instructional Materials	120	3.63	0.55			

The result in Table 3 indicated that the calculated $r = 0.697$ ($p < 0.05$) showed a significant positive relationship between professional development programmes and teachers' use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms. The p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 significance level; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that professional development programmes significantly influence teachers' use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms in Yaba LCDA of Lagos State.

IV. Discussion Of Findings

The findings from hypothesis one revealed that workshops and seminars significantly influence instructional delivery among early childhood education teachers. The result showed a strong positive relationship between participation in workshops and seminars and effective instructional delivery. This implies that teachers who regularly participate in professional development activities tend to improve their teaching strategies, classroom interaction, lesson presentation, and learner engagement.

The finding aligns with the study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), which found that professional learning opportunities, such as workshops and seminars, improve teachers' pedagogical knowledge and instructional effectiveness. Similarly, Guskey (2002) stated that continuous professional development enables teachers to update their instructional methods and adapt to modern educational practices. The finding also supports the view of Desimone (2009), who noted that effective professional development enhances teachers' classroom performance and students' learning outcomes. This result indicates that workshops and seminars are essential tools for improving instructional delivery in early childhood education settings.

Hypothesis two showed that in-service training programmes significantly influence classroom management practices among early childhood education teachers. The finding suggests that teachers who attend in-service training programmes acquire better classroom control strategies, communication skills, behavioural management techniques, and the ability to create conducive learning environments.

This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Everson and Emmer (2013), who reported that teacher training programmes improve classroom organisation and management effectiveness. In the same vein, Marzano (2003) emphasised that professional development helps teachers develop effective classroom management skills that positively affect pupils' behaviour and academic achievement.

The findings of hypothesis three revealed that professional development programmes significantly influence teachers' use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms. This means that teachers who participate in professional development programmes are more likely to utilise appropriate instructional materials effectively during teaching and learning activities.

The finding corroborates Piaget's (1972) study, which emphasised the importance of concrete learning materials in promoting children's cognitive development. It also supports Vygotsky's (1978) work, which highlighted the significance of instructional resources and guided learning experiences in children's educational development. The finding therefore suggests that professional development programmes play a vital role in enhancing teachers' effective use of instructional materials in early childhood classrooms.

V. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of professional development programmes on early childhood education teachers' classroom practices in Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State. Based on the study's findings, it was concluded that professional development programmes significantly improve teachers' effectiveness in classroom practice. Specifically, the study established that workshops and seminars positively influence instructional delivery by enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills, lesson presentation techniques, classroom interaction, and learner engagement. Teachers who actively participate in such programmes tend to demonstrate greater competence and effectiveness in teaching activities.

The study further concluded that in-service training programmes contribute significantly to effective classroom management practices among early childhood education teachers. Teachers who engage in regular training acquire improved behavioural management strategies, communication skills, classroom organisation techniques, and the ability to create conducive learning environments that support pupils' academic and social

development. The study concluded that continuous professional development remains an essential factor in improving the quality of early childhood education teachers' classroom practices and educational outcomes in Yaba Local Council Development Area.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educational authorities and school administrators should organise regular workshops and seminars for early childhood education teachers to improve their instructional delivery skills and expose them to modern teaching methods.
2. Government agencies and school management should provide adequate support for teachers to participate in in-service training programmes aimed at strengthening classroom management practices and professional competence.
3. Early childhood education teachers should be encouraged to engage in continuous professional development activities in order to remain updated with current educational practices and innovations.
4. Schools should provide sufficient instructional materials and train teachers on effective selection, improvisation, and utilisation of teaching resources to enhance pupils' learning experiences.
5. Professional development programmes should be designed to address practical classroom challenges faced by teachers, particularly in instructional delivery, classroom management, and the use of instructional materials.

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