



FACTORS INFLUENCING EARLY CHILDHOOD IN-SERVICE TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN OYO STATE.

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Abstract

This study examined factors influencing early childhood in-service teacher's pedagogical practices in Oyo State. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one local government area in Oyo state. Random sampling technique was also used to select 10 public and 10 private primary schools, from each of the schools, 5 teachers were purposively selected. One (1) research instrument was used and three (3) research questions were raised. Data was analyzed using frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation and T-test. Findings shows that the extent of pedagogical practices displayed by teachers is high (Mean Average 3.76). Findings also shows that teaching experiences, beliefs and approaches, educational qualifications and cultural background, unique needs, abilities and interests of the children, school policies are factors influencing Early Childhood in-service teacher's pedagogical practices. Also, there is a significant difference between private and public school pedagogical practice display ($t=4.590$; $df=98$; $p<0.05$). Teacher is aware of the instructional materials and method to build the teachers-pupils relationship effectively. It is recommended that strategies, methods approach the teachers displayed should improve and develop the pupil's academics performance.

Keywords: Early childhood; In-service Teachers; Pedagogical Practices

Introduction

Early childhood Education is an education given to a child from age one to eight years, prior to elementary system of

education and in most cases some scholars refers to it as preschool programme offered to children in order to achieve smooth transition from home to school. It is an holistic approach that fosters learning and

development of numeracy, non-verbal cognitive skills; self-regulation; emotional health, social well-being and social and emotional skills (OECD, 2017). In early childhood education, children learn through a variety of methods that cater for their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development which is the basis of teachers' pedagogical practices. Pedagogical practices play a crucial role in the development of pupil's cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being. Effective pedagogical approaches can enhance students' cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. By using learner-centered techniques, such as active learning, collaborative projects, and inquiry-based methods, teachers can foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity in their pupils. Research studies have shown that the positive impact of various pedagogical practices on student achievement and engagement create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that promotes holistic development (Brown et al., 2014; Hattie, 2009; Mahamud, 2021). So, teachers are expected to constantly explore and implement evidence-based pedagogical strategies to support pupils' growth and success.

Children also learn through hands-on activities through hands-on experiences like arts and crafts, gardening, and experiments which fosters sensory development, fine motor skills, and cognitive understanding of concepts. They could also engage in Learning which introduces children to structural activities, such as circle time and educational games which develops attention

span, listening skills, and the ability to follow instructions, which prepares children for formal education (Salami & Egiethua, 2012). These diverse methods used to teach children in early childhood education provides a holistic learning experience, for the purpose of nurturing children's growth across various domains, (Salami & Egiethua, 2012; Radha & Rinki, 2021; Melek et al., 2024). In using these methods, the role and responsibilities of teachers is extremely important to the education, growths and development of learners (Lunga et al., 2022; Mohamad et al., 2024). Teachers play an important role in fostering the intellectual development of children during their formative years and also they keep children safe from harm, as well as providing space for them to move around the childhood centers for exploration so that they can develop their large and small muscles (Robert, 2019). Teachers create a nurturing and supportive learning environment. Encouraging curiosity and exploration, building positive relationships with children and families, adapting instruction to meet diverse learning needs and styles, fostering social-emotional development and self-regulation skills, encouraging children to take risks, experiment, learn from failures, collaborating with families and communities to promote continuity and extension of learning (Ogunsanwo, 2019).

Teachers' classroom and professional practices in teaching children in early childhood can vary, but there are some common approaches and strategies. Teachers often create a warm and nurturing environment that promotes positive

relationships and encourages children's social and emotional development. They are supposed to use age-appropriate materials and activities to engage children in hands-on learning experiences (Montesori, 1986; Eseyin, 2022). Teachers may use age-appropriate materials and activities to encourage children to engage in hands-on activities by selecting resources that match their developmental abilities and interests. For example, for younger children, they may provide manipulative toys like blocks or puzzles that promote fine motor skills and problem-solving. For older children, they might introduce science experiments or art projects that challenge their critical thinking and creativity. By closely observing how children engage with activities, interact with peers, and demonstrate their understanding, teachers can identify their strengths and areas for growth. This information helps them adapt their teaching strategies, provide targeted support, and create individualized learning experiences that meet the unique needs of each child (Salami, 2023).

Collaboration with families and continuous professional development are also important aspects of their practice. When teachers and families work together, they can create a strong support system that positively impacts a child's learning and well-being. Collaboration allows teachers to gain valuable insights into a child's background, interests, and strengths, which helps them tailor their instruction (Nweke et al., 2020; Obiagwu, 2020). Families can provide important context and share their expertise, making the learning experience more meaningful. By fostering a collaborative relationship, teachers and

families can create a united front that promotes the child's success in and out of the classroom (Laura, 2020). However, teachers face challenges in their pedagogical practices. Some common issues can include lack of resources or support, limited time for individualized instruction, and difficulty in adapting to diverse learning needs (Douglas & Queen, 2025). Additionally, there may be challenges in effectively integrating technology into the classroom or keeping up with evolving educational approaches. However, it is important to remember that teachers are constantly learning and evolving in their practices but certain factors such as inadequate funding, time management and limited resources can affect their practice.

Limited resources can vary depending on the educational context and location. Some examples of limited resources that teachers may face include: Insufficient classroom material this can include a lack of textbooks, workbooks, or other essential learning resources that pupils need to fully engage in the curriculum. Limited technology access in some cases, schools may have limited access to computers, tablets, or internet connectivity, which can hinder teachers' ability to incorporate technology into their lessons effectively (Khalid, 2009; Sandra, 2011; Manar, 2023)

Inadequate funding or budget constraints may also limit the availability of supplies, equipment, or even basic classroom necessities like art materials, science lab equipment, or musical instruments. Also, when classrooms are overcrowded, it can be challenging for

teachers to provide individualized attention and support to each learner (Hassan, 2020; Amarachi, 2025).

Professional development opportunities; limited funding or access to professional development programs can hinder teachers' ability to stay updated with the latest teaching strategies and methodologies. Time management can also be a significant issue in teacher pedagogical practices. With numerous responsibilities, such as lesson planning, grading, and administrative tasks, teachers often find it challenging to allocate enough time for individualized instruction and pupil support. The limited time available in a classroom setting can make it difficult to address the diverse learning needs of pupils effectively. However, teachers can strive to find strategies to manage their time efficiently, prioritize tasks, and create a balanced schedule to ensure they provide quality education to their pupils (Ogunode & Ojo, 2021; Racheal, 2024).

Research Questions

The present study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors influencing early childhood in-service teacher pedagogical practices in Oyo state?
2. What are the pedagogical practices displayed by teachers?
3. Is there any significant difference between the pedagogical practices displayed by early childhood in-service teachers in public and private schools?

Theoretical framework

Albert Bandura Social Cognitive Theory:

Albert Bandura developed the Social Cognitive Theory based on the concept that learning is affected by cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1991). In contrast to the traditional psychological theories that emphasized learning through direct experience, Bandura posited that virtually all learning phenomena can occur by observing other people's behavior and its consequences of (Bandura, 1991).

Social learning can be utilized to teach people positive behaviors in corporate scenarios. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory suggests that individuals learn by observing others and their environment. Early childhood in-service teachers are likely to imitate and adopt the teachings they have observed during their training or in educational settings. The social environment, which includes interactions with colleagues, parents, and learners, influences their pedagogical practices. By understanding the social cognitive process, we can identify the influential role of observational learning and provide meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers.

Firstly, the social cognitive theory, proposed by Bandura, serves as a valuable framework for corporate in-service teachers aiming to cultivate positive behaviors and mitigate counterproductive ones in the workplace. By highlighting the significance of observation and imitation in behavior and development, this theory provides a fresh perspective for guiding learners.

Secondly, to maximize its potential in developing an appropriate pedagogical

knowledge trainers can exemplify desirable behaviors, recognizing that learners are more likely to emulate the actions of influential figures in their professional lives. Establishing a supportive and respectful learning environment becomes crucial in instilling these positive attitudes and behaviors among learners.

Furthermore, grasping the cognitive processes underlying human behavior allows trainers to devise more effective learning strategies. Incorporating verbal instructions alongside demonstrations and role-playing activities reinforces desired behaviors, enhancing learners' cognitive understanding and fostering essential social skills. Additionally, trainers can harness the influence of peer dynamics to shape learners' behavior. By fostering a collaborative learning environment and promoting positive social interactions, trainers can create a synergistic effect that reinforces the adoption of desirable behaviors. Peer-led activities and collaborative projects can facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences, enabling

learners to glean insights from each other's successes and challenges. Ultimately, integrating the principles of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory into corporate training practices can significantly impact learners' overall professional development

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Simple random sampling technique will be used to select one local government area in Oyo state. Random sampling technique will also be used to select 10 public and 10 private primary schools, from each of the schools, 5 teachers will be purposively selected. This section was based on the fact that the teachers to be selected are those who teach pre-primary and primary one to four. Teachers Pedagogical Practices questionnaire was designed to elicit response from the respondents. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics of t-test.

Findings

Research Question 1: what are the pedagogical practices displayed by teachers?

Table 1: The pedagogical practices displayed by teachers

S/N	Items	A	S	R	N	Mean	Std.D
	TEACHING METHODOLOGIES						
1	When teaching, I keep the children engaged and interested in teaching	81 (81)	19 (19)	-	-	3.81	3.94
2	When teaching, I use techniques to promote social and emotional development in the classroom	83 (83)	17 (17)	-	-	3.83	.378
3	When teaching, I incorporate play and	86	12	2	-	3.84	.420

	hands-on activities in my teaching approach	(86)	(12)	(2)			
4	When teaching I assess and track the progress of young children in my class	81 (81)	16 (16)	3 (3)	-	3.78	.484
5	When teaching, I individualized instruction for young learners' ability	74 (74)	23 (23)	3 (3)	-	3.71	.518
	TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP						
6	When teaching, I establish a positive and nurturing relationship with my pupils	92 (92.9)	7 (7.1)	-	-	3.93	.258
7	When teaching, I build trust and create a safe learning environment	89 (89)	11 (11)	-	-	3.89	.314
8	When teaching, I encourage open communication and active participation from my pupils	93 (93)	6 (6)	1 (1)	-	3.91	.371
9	When teaching, I practice activities that promote collaboration and teamwork among my pupils	96 (96)	4 (4)	-	-	3.96	.197
	USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS						
10	When teaching, I incorporate visual aids or props into my lesson	52 (52)	43 (43)	5 (5)	-	3.47	.594
11	When teaching, I use hands-on materials and activities in the classroom	67 (67)	27 (27)	6 (6)	-	3.61	.601
12	When teaching, I use specific resources and audiovisuals as my instructional materials	56 (56)	32 (32)	12 (12)	-	3.44	.701
	Weighted Average					3.76	

“A = Always”, “S = Sometimes”, “R = Rarely”, “N = Never”

Decision Value 0.00-2.44 = Low Extent, 2.45-4.00 = High Extent

The above results revealed the pedagogical practices displayed by in-service teachers. As shown in the table, the pedagogical practices are as follows: keep the children engaged and interested ($\bar{x} = 3.81$), use techniques to promote social and emotional development ($\bar{x} = 3.83$), I incorporate play and hands-on activities ($\bar{x} = 3.84$), assess and track the progress ($\bar{x} = 3.78$), individualized

instruction ($\bar{x} = 3.71$), establish a positive and nurturing relationship ($\bar{x} = 3.93$), build trust and create a safe learning environment ($\bar{x} = 3.89$), encourage open communication and active participation ($\bar{x} = 3.91$), activities that promote collaboration and teamwork ($\bar{x} = 3.96$), incorporate visual aids ($\bar{x} = 3.47$), hands-on materials and activities ($\bar{x} = 3.61$), specific resources and audiovisuals ($\bar{x} = 3.44$).

Research Question 2: What are the factors influencing early childhood in-service teacher pedagogical practices in Oyo state?

To answer this question, descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to determine the factors influencing early childhood in-service teacher pedagogical practices.

Table 2: Factors Influencing Early Childhood In-service Teachers Pedagogical Practices.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.D
1	When a teacher does not have enough years or teaching experience, it can affect how they teach the children	42 (42)	46 (46)	8 (8)	4 (4)	3.26	.774
2	When teachers have different beliefs and approaches to education, it can affect how they teach the children	51 (51)	39 (39)	7 (7)	3 (3)	3.38	.749
3	Teachers' educational qualifications and cultural background can affect how they teach the children	51 (51)	40 (40)	6 (6)	3 (3)	3.39	.737
4	When teachers consider the unique needs, abilities, and interests of the children, it can affect how they teach the children	62 (62)	29 (29)	6 (6)	3 (3)	3.50	.745
5	School policies can greatly affect teachers' teaching methodology and approach	52 (52)	34 (34)	9 (9)	5 (5)	3.33	.842
	Weighted Average					3.37	

“SA = Strongly Agree”, “A = Agree”, “D = Disagree”, “SD = Strongly Disagree”

Decision Value 0.00-2.44 = Low Extent, 2.45-4.00 = High Extent

The above results revealed the factors that are influencing early childhood in-service teachers. As shown in the table, the factors the teachers are as follows: teacher does not have enough years or teaching experience (\bar{x} =3.26), different beliefs and approaches (\bar{x}

=3.38), educational qualifications and cultural background (\bar{x} =3.39), teachers consider the unique needs, abilities, and interests of the children (\bar{x} =3.50), School policies (\bar{x} =3.33).

Research Question 3: Is there any significant difference between the pedagogical practices displayed by public and private schools?

Table 3: Significant difference between The Pedagogical Practices displayed by Public and Private Schools

Test Variable (Digital Skill)	Grouping Variable (Male & Female Knowledge Skill)	N	Mean	Std.D	T	Df	Sig(P)	Remark
PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES	Private	43	4.00	0.000	4.590	98	0.000	Significant
	Public	57	3.67	0.476				

Having a p-value = 0.000 which is lesser than the level of significance (α) = 0.05, then we do not accept the null hypothesis and conclude that, the pedagogical practices displayed by public schools is the same as private schools. Shows that there is a significant difference between private and public school pedagogical practice display ($t = 4.590$; $df = 98$; $p < 0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

Findings from research question one revealed the Factors Influencing Early Childhood in-service teachers’ pedagogical practices includes. Teachers not having enough years or teaching experience, different beliefs and approaches, educational qualifications and cultural background, consideration of the unique needs, abilities, and interests of the children as well as School policies. This suggests that the teachers are aware of the elements that are affecting them both internally and externally in how they teach the children. In other words, teachers can handle all the factors effectively. This study is in support of Hammond (2020) reveals that at the core of pedagogical challenges lies the diverse array of learning needs present in any classroom. Every student brings with them a unique set of strengths, weaknesses, interests, and backgrounds, making it essential for

educators to employ varied instructional approaches to meet these diverse needs.

Findings from research question two revealed the pedagogical practices displayed includes keeping children engaged and interested, using techniques to promote social and emotional development, incorporating play and hands-on activities, assess and track the progress, individualized, establish a positive and nurturing relationship, build trust and create a safe learning environment, encourage open communication and active participation, activities that promote collaboration and teamwork, incorporate visual aids, hands-on materials and activities and specific resources and audiovisuals. This is in tandem with Ogunsanwo (2019) who submitted that teachers create a nurturing and supportive learning environment. Encouraging curiosity and exploration, building positive relationships with children

and families, adapting instruction to meet diverse learning needs and styles, fostering social-emotional development and self-regulation skills, encouraging children to take risks, experiment, learn from failures, collaborating with families and communities to promote continuity and extension of learning. However, traditional assessment methods often prioritize memorization and regurgitation of facts over deeper understanding and critical thinking skills.

The Findings from research question three revealed the pedagogical practices displayed by public school is not different from private school. The table also revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean score of pedagogical practice in private and public school. Result from the mean shows that private schools are more effective in making learning more interesting than public schools.

Conclusion

Teachers use different strategies, methods, and approaches to facilitate learning and development in early childhood education settings. These include the use of instructional materials, teaching methodologies, and teacher-pupil relationships. Also, the strategies, methods, and approaches to facilitate learning and development in early childhood education settings in private school is different from public school. Provided all these methods are fully implemented, it will affect the academic performance of the pupils. The reflection on the part of the educator plays a very important role in the application of these pedagogical practices and their adaptations. This reflective process only

contributes to the formation of an educator tuned to different contexts and updated the new pedagogical practices. Reflection is essential for the construction of the teaching identity and for its professional development, because it allows the teacher to be able to transform his practice and constitute himself as an autonomous subject that can bring about changes in the educational context

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are made by the researcher.

- In-service teachers should receive adequate training on inclusive educational practice to ensure that they can overcome the factors influencing early childhood in-service teachers' pedagogical practices.
- The in-service teachers' curriculum materials and teaching methods should be updated in line with the best practices in early childhood education.
- When teaching, teachers should enhance their skills, knowledge base, and confidence in pedagogical practices and incorporate difference teaching methodologies, teacher-pupils, relationship to enhance the academic performance of the pupils.
- In addition, the government and non-government organizations should address the infrastructural challenges in schools such as inadequate classrooms, limited resources, and lack of good furniture, in order to

have a conducive learning environment for pedagogical practice.

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