

## ASSESSMENT OF PRIVATE SCHOOL PRACTITIONERS' INVOLVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN JOS METROPOLIS, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

**Hulda Maxwell Davwet (Ph.D)**

Department of Science and Technology Education,  
Faculty of Education University of Jos  
[davweth@unijos.edu.ng](mailto:davweth@unijos.edu.ng)

**Irene Wanaemi Yakubu (Ph.D)**

Department of Science and Technology Education  
Faculty of Education, University of Jos  
[Iyakson2000@gmail.com](mailto:Iyakson2000@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The study assessed Private School Practitioners' involvement in the implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. Three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population was made of 162 private schools with 225 teachers. Twenty-seven schools and 40 early childhood education teachers were randomly sampled for the study. A structured Questionnaire for Early Childhood Education Teachers (QECET) with 20 items on 4points scales was used for data collection alongside observation checklist on learning materials and facilities. The instrument for data collection was validated by experts in Early Childhood Education, Curriculum Studies and Test, Measurement and Evaluation units respectively from university of Jos. Internal consistency of the instrument was established through Cronbach alpha with a correlation coefficient index of 0.89. The instrument was coded and the data obtained were analysed using SPSS version 25.0. Descriptive statistics of frequency table, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and the hypothesis was tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that, majority of early childhood education teachers have their teaching qualifications in education. Most schools had limited play grounds and play facilities, inadequate learning materials, lack of government grants, use of foreign curriculum in some schools which posed major hindrances to effective curriculum implementation at early childhood education level in Nigeria. Hence, the study recommended that, learning resources should be provided and the state ministry of education should harmonize the curriculum used for implementing early childhood education while government through its educational agencies to frequently monitor the practices of private schools' operators in Plateau State, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Implementation, Early Childhood Education, Private School Practitioners

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a pillar that uplifts the development of any individual or nation. Investing in education does not only lead to the training of the mind of the individual and development of critical thinking but it inculcates the right values, skills, knowledge, attitude that equip the individuals to live in, and contribute meaningfully to his/her society. The level to which a nation attains development can be best said of the quality of education provided. Hence, education in Nigeria at whatever level becomes the concern of the government at both federal and state as

well as the private individuals, communities or organisations. However, education in Nigeria is prioritized among other philosophies of education and made as the right of every Nigerian child to access, irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities (Federal Republic Nigeria (FRN) 2014). Private schools' practitioners' involvement in education is to augment the efforts of the Nigerian government in promoting education and achieving its national goals. Private school practitioners are individuals, organisations or communities who owned and managed their schools. Private school practitioners involvement in education is blamed to the failure of the government at all levels to provide the required education through the establishment and sustenance of schools that would cater for the growing population and demands for education by the citizens of Nigeria. Hence, private school practitioners' involvement in education is seen as an intervention to redeem the collapsing public institutions rather than for the economic benefits (Omede, 2015). To that regards, governments officially licensed private school practitioners such as individuals, churches, mosques and communities the right to involve in establishment of schools at all levels of education. They are to be responsible for the funding and management of their schools. Sometimes the government grant aided some private schools whereas some thrive to survive on their own by raising funds through charging high fees or obtain loans from commercial institutions. Despite that, some private schools may still be partially funded and regulated by the state government while those operating independently of the government still interact with the government for support (Ashely, 2014).

Private schools in Nigeria are the most preferred and patronized than the public schools which are fees free or lower charged fees. This is because most people who are very rich and averagely rich always want to show their class distinctions by enrolling their children in the most expensive schools. Other people may have other reasons for opting for private schools because they want to avoid strikes which are very common features of public schools. Despite most of these private schools may not be operating to the preferred standard desired by the government, parents still patronize such schools. Omede (2015) blamed the involvement of private school practitioners of promoting class consciousness and distinction through constant upward review of fees even though some of them operate below the required standard by using unqualified teachers, inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities and some even serve as centres for examination malpractice. Parents who use physical structures and high fees to judge the quality of education in some cases fall victims of the deceptions of their private school educating practitioners by paying exorbitant school fees.

However, the establishment of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria is one of the priorities of the government in promoting education at the early age through the establishment of creche', nursery and pre-primary classes. This education is to cater for the needs of working-class mothers who have taken up jobs outside their homes while providing education and protection for their children. This type of education provides the care, protection, stimulation, and learning promoted in children between the age of 0 – 5 years, while their mothers are at work or markets (FRN, 2014). In the national policy on education, the objectives of Early Childhood Education are clearly stated among which are to; effect a smooth transition from the home to the school, prepare the child for primary education, provide adequate care and supervision for the child, teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colors, shapes, forms, through play. In order to achieve these objectives, the government is to be fully involved in providing conducive learning environment as well as the private individuals, organisations or communities to support early

childhood education. In addition, government is to regulate and control the operations of private school practitioners and to ensure a teacher – pupil ratio of 1:25. This is to set and monitor minimum standard for early childcare centers. In achieving these, curriculum has been planned by Nigerian Educational Research and development council (NERDC) in 2007 to cater for the education of children within the ages 0 – 5years. Curriculum contents of Early Childhood Education are embedded in the curriculum to be covered within the periods of three years before primary age: These contents are physical development, affective/psychosocial development, cumulative development, food and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation and safety measures. While the instructional methods of delivering are basically through play way methods, discussion and storytelling. Okowole, Iluezi and Osinowo (2015) asserted that the early childhood curriculum has been designed to achieve the objectives stated in the national policy on education. Consequently, the implementation of the early childhood education curriculum is to be focused on achieving these objectives. This is because education at this level requires special attention regarding the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of the children that will prepare them for future learning process (Global Regional Review (GRR), 2019).

Curriculum implementation is the process whereby the contents and methods of a designed curriculum are brought before the teacher and the learners to interact with in classroom encounters. Curriculum implementation is considered as a crucial and delicate stage in curriculum process because it is at this stage that the success or failure of a well-designed curriculum is determined. Over the years, many well-designed plans failed, not because they were not properly planned but because they were marred at the implementation level due to some unforeseen challenges. These challenges are revealed in scores of studies such as those by: Cheung and Wong (2012); Olibie (2012); Mkala and Wanjau (2012); Ngwoke, Baseki, Diara and Chukwuma (2013); as shortage of materials and facilities, use of wrong methods, inadequate government supports, unqualified teachers, inexperienced teachers, heavy workloads and overcrowded classes.

Furthermore, studies have shown that the implementation of early childhood curriculum in Nigeria and other parts of the world are confronted by some challenges that undermine the promotion of early childhood education at this level. According to Adams (2019) findings on, some private and public schools use imported (foreign) curriculum on pre-primary schools which are considered culturally inappropriate for the setting. This is because the content of the curriculum may not be appropriate for the development of the skills required of the children to participate in their own community's development. Other challenges include: poor management and leadership style, poor remuneration, unavailability of the recommended national early childhood education curriculum in some states, failure to apply contemporary methods, lack of continuous teachers' education, lack of supervision, learners background, parental desires not in line with the NPE are constrained to smooth implementation of ECE curriculum (Oludele, Abuovbo & Abosede, 2015). Studies by Ntumi (2016), Akinrotimi and Olowe (2016) Akweng (2018), Ayoola, Ojoko and Olowe (2020), also asserted that shortage of learning materials, unavailability of space for the installation of play facilities and as well the use of converted residential houses as classrooms contribute to the scores of challenges. Similar challenges were also observed in the study conducted by Gollopeni, Bekteshi and Avdiu (2022) that, 60% of the children live in rural areas and do not gain access to early childhood education. The study further revealed that the urban centers have high significant numbers of institutions both public and

private with high number of children exceeding their capacities. Consequently, the concern of this study, the falling standard of education in Nigeria especially at the primary and secondary education level may be credited to the myriads of challenges observed in the scores of studies discussed above. Omode (2015) blamed the fallen standards and quality of education to governments' ineptitude to revitalize the educational sector. Thus, this becomes imperative for private school practitioners to salvage the situation. The failure of government may not be unconnected to the view of Omode that, government has failed in the educational sector. Hence, this gives room for the continuous increase in the involvement of private school practitioners who make education as a profit driven business and not a service to the nation. This phenomenon sets one wondering if the government is any longer interested in providing such services to her citizenry as the private school practitioners have taken over education from the government which is supposed to be government's sole responsibility. Government might have compromised the standard of education by not controlling the number of schools being established on a daily basis by private practitioners, the quality of education provided and whether they operate within the standard required. Private school practitioners may express their motivations as a combination of competing commitments to philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, and business interests (Ashley, 2014).

The scenario above is not different from the experience in Jos metropolis of Plateau state. Being the metropolitan city and the capital of Plateau state, there has been streaming up of private primary schools established alongside pre-primary sections popularly called nursery schools (early childhood education) of which some are considered mushroom by their standard of settings. Every morning of working week days, thousands of pupils are seen with different colours of uniforms rushing to their various schools. Most of the preschools internal physical spaces by the standard for establishment of schools do not meet the criteria for providing early childhood education services (Agi, 2013; Golopeni Bekteshi & Avdiu, 2022). Under such unfavourable environments, children can be exposed to danger of safety during play, pollution from homes as well insecurity. These challenges are considered notto be in consonance with the norms and standards necessary for the provision of early childhood education. Hence, this can jeopardize the efforts of the government in prioritizing education at the early age in the state as well the standard of education in Nigeria. It is on this backdrop that the study sought to achieve the following objectives: to

1. find out educational qualifications of Early Childhood Education teachers in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis.
2. determine the implementation strategies of early childhood curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis.
3. determine the availability of learning resources for the implementation of early childhood curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis.

The study poses the following research questions:

1. What are the educational qualifications of ECE teachers in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis?
2. What are the implementation strategies of early childhood education curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis?
3. How available are learning resources for the implementation of early childhood curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis?

The study postulated a null hypothesis which was tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the mean responses of teachers on the strategies for implementing early childhood education curriculum and learning resources available for implementation in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis.

## METHOD

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population was made of 162 private pre-primary schools and 225 teachers in which 27 schools and 40 teachers were randomly sampled to collect data. A structured Questionnaire for Early Childhood Education Teachers (QECET) with 27 items was used for data collection. Alongside, a four rating scale (modified) with response options Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (1) were used for items 8 to 27. Unstructured Observation technique was also used to check on the learning resources to be compared with the responses of the respondents. The study raised three research questions with one null hypothesis. Internal consistency of the instrument was established through Cronbach alpha with a correlation coefficient index of 0.89. Descriptive statistics of frequency tables, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A mean criterion of 2.50 was used to agree or disagree with items under research questions 2 and 3 such that any mean score equal to or above 2.50 was considered 'Agreed' or 'Disagreed' when the calculated mean score is less than the criterion mean. Similarly, an independent sample t-test was used in testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance such that a p-value  $\leq .005$  implies rejection or  $\geq$  acceptance of the null hypothesis.

## RESULTS

### Research Question One

What are the educational qualifications of ECE teachers in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis?

**Table 1: Educational Qualifications of ECE Teachers in Private Pre-Primary Schools**

Item	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
1.	NCE in Early Childhood Education	13	32.5%
2.	B.Sc. Ed in Early Childhood Education	8	20%
3.	Diploma in Non-Education	8	20%
4.	Degree in Non-Education	6	15%
5.	Degree in Education	1	2.5%
6.	Higher National Diploma in Education	3	7.5%
7.	Higher National Diploma in Non-Education.	1	2.5%

Source: Field Study, 2025

As shown in Table above, out of the population, 13 of the teachers, which represent 32.5% of the population, have NCE and 8 teachers (representing 20%) with degrees in ECE, followed by another 8 teachers with diploma and another 6 teachers (15%) with degrees all in non-education among others. It was deduced from the analysis that majority of early childhood education teachers have their teaching qualification in education as only a few had certifications not education.

### Research Question Two

What are the implementation strategies of early childhood curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Implementation Strategies of Early Childhood Education Curriculum**

Item	Statement	$\bar{X}$	$\delta$	Remark
8.	ECE teachers use the recommended curriculum by NERDC	3.10	1.01	Agreed
9.	Teaching is basically through play way methods	2.88	1.16	Agreed
10.	Children hardly go out to play	2.25	0.98	Disagreed
11.	The number of pupils in my class are from 1-25	2.80	1.07	Agreed
12.	There is prompt supervision of the school by government educational supervisors.	3.08	1.02	Disagreed
13.	Government gives grants to aid in managing the schools	2.00	1.04	Disagreed
14.	Teachers' salaries are well paid	2.30	1.09	Disagreed
15.	ECE teachers also teach in the primary section	2.93	1.08	Agreed
16.	Children learn letter words through Rhymes	3.10	1.08	Agreed
17.	Songs are used to teach numbers	3.13	0.97	Agreed
18.	Foreign curriculum is used for teaching in ECE	2.88	1.02	Agreed

Source: Field study, 2025

**Key:** N = Number of Respondents  $\bar{X}$  = Mean,  $\delta$  = Standard Deviation

As presented in Table 2, with the exceptions to items 10, 12, 13, and 14, which the respondents disagreed with (for having a mean value each below the criterion mean of 2.50), the respondents agreed with all other items as strategies being employed in implementing early childhood curriculum in private pre-primary schools within the study area. Also, the values of the standard deviations of the entire items fall within the range of 0.97 and 1.16. As these values were not far from each other, it implied that there was no variability in the responses of the respondents.

### Research Question Three

How available are learning resources for the implementation of ECE curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Learning Resources Available for the Implementation of ECE Curriculum**

Item	Statement	$\bar{X}$	$\delta$	Remark
19.	Toys with game materials are available in good quantity in the classrooms.	1.93	1.07	Disagreed
20.	The care centres are equipped with enough colourful charts, pictures,	2.05	1.11	Disagreed
21.	Colourful books, pictorial books, colours are provided in good quantity	2.38	0.95	Disagreed
22.	The school surrounding is well spaced with a playground	2.33	0.89	Disagreed
23.	School is located in a residential house	2.83	1.08	Agreed
24.	There are toiletry facilities	2.08	1.05	Disagreed
25.	There are enough beddings for the crèche	2.30	1.14	Disagreed
26.	Care centre is located near a stream	2.35	1.10	Disagreed
27.	There are households waste dumps around the school	2.25	0.84	Disagreed

Source: Field study, 2025

Analysis presented in Table 3 revealed that, aside item 23 which the respondents agreed with, each other item was disagreed by the respondents. It was drawn from the table that, learning resources for the implementation of ECE curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis were not available. Similarly, the table showed that the standard deviations of the items fell within the range of 0.84 and 1.14. As these values seemed closer to each other, it signified that there was a higher degree of unanimity of response among the respondents. From the observation lists of learning materials /facilities by the researchers, it observed to be grossly inadequate in most of the schools.

### Testing of Hypothesis

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between the mean responses of teachers on the strategies for implementing early childhood curriculum and learning resources available in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis.

**Table 4: Chi-Square t-test on the Relationship between the Mean Responses of Teachers on Strategies for Implementing ECE Curriculum and Learning Resources Available**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.892 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	50.538	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.289	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	40		

Analysis presented in Table 4 showed Pearson Chi-Square at 49.892 with a p-value of 0.000 which was less than the value of the significance level (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was therefore established that, there was a significant relationship between the mean responses of teachers on the strategies for implementing early childhood curriculum and learning resources available in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis.

Furthermore, finding from the researchers unstructured observations on learning resources in the sampled schools observed the following:

1. Some schools operate in converted residential houses
2. Some schools did not have enough space for children to play
3. Play facilities were observed inadequate due to the space available in some schools
4. Most schools had colourful charts decorated in the classrooms
5. Most schools maintain 1: 25 ratio
6. Some school environments were on rough surfaces which can hurt children during play
7. Some classrooms spaces were not up to a standard required.

## DISCUSSION

Findings based on research question one which determined the educational qualifications of ECE teachers in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis revealed that, majority of early childhood education teachers have their teaching qualifications in education as only a few had certifications not education. As most of the teachers within the study area specialized in ECE, it can be contended that the schools had qualified teachers that can effectively implement ECE curriculum. This finding agrees with Omode (2015) who characterized private schools as promotion of class consciousness, distinction, and use of qualified teacher and administrative staff.

Similarly, finding in relation to research question two as regards implementation strategies of early childhood education curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis revealed that, teachers use foreign curriculum, some combined foreign curriculum and national curriculum and others use the national curriculum recommended curriculum by NERDC. Finding as regards the use of foreign curriculum in teaching children ECE agreed with Adams (2019) who also found that some private and public schools use imported (foreign) curriculum on pre-primary schools which was considered culturally inappropriate for setting as the content did not sufficiently develop the skills required of the children to participate in their own communities.

Also, finding according to research question three with respect to learning resources available for the implementation of ECE curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis revealed that, the required learning resources for the implementation of ECE curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis were not available. From this revelation, it was established that primary schools within the study area were not well equipped to implement early childhood curriculum. This finding aligns with Golopeni Bekteshi and Audiu (2022) and Agi (2013), who also found in their studies that in terms of preschools internal physical space, about half of the schools do not meet the criteria for providing early childhood education services. To further support this finding, the studies by Ayoola, Ojoko and Olowe (2020), Akweng (2018), Ntumi (2016), and Akinrotimi and Olowe (2016) also revealed shortage of learning materials,

unqualified space for installation of play facilities and most private preschools operate at converted residential houses.

Finding based on the hypothesis revealed that, there was a significant difference between the mean responses of teachers on the strategies for implementing early childhood curriculum and learning resources available in private pre-primary schools in Jos metropolis.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study on the assessment of the implementation of early childhood education curriculum in private pre-primary schools in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria, it was concluded that, despite the majority of early childhood education teachers have their teaching qualifications in education as only a few had certifications not education, the implementation of early childhood curriculum in private schools in the study area was not effective due to unavailability of the required learning resources such as toys with game materials, colourful books, pictorial books, colourful charts, pictures among others.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study made the following recommendations:

1. State ministry of education should ensure harmonization of curriculum used for implementing early childhood education in private schools while government through its educational agencies to frequently monitor the practices of private schools' operators in Plateau State, Nigeria.
2. Teachers are encouraged to avoid the use of imported (foreign) curriculum on pre-primary schools as it is considered culturally inappropriate for setting as the content cannot sufficiently develop the skills required of the children to participate in their own communities.
3. Learning resources such as toys with game materials, colourful books, pictorial books, colourful charts, pictures among others should be provided for effective implementation of early childhood curriculum in private schools in the study area.

## REFERENCES

- Akwennings, J. J. (2018). Assessment of the implementation of early childhood care development education in Plateau State, Nigeria. An unpublished masters' thesis submitted to the postgraduate studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Adams, F. (2019), "Quality of Early Childhood Education in Private and Government Preschools of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia", *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 51(2)163-176, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13158-019-00248-1>.
- Agi, U .K. (2013).The challenges and prospects of managing private schools systems in Rivers State.*An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia* 7(1), 340-351
- Akinrotimi, A.A. &Olowe, P. K. (2016). Challenges in the implementation of early childhood education in Nigeria: The way forward. *Journal of Education and Practice* 7(7), 33-39.
- Ayoola, N. O., Ojoko, B. A. &Olowe, P. K. (2019). Availability and implementation of national earl childhood curriculum for ages 0-5 in preprimary schools in Ondo State, Retrieved: 9/10/2023 from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331310529>

- Cheung, A. C., & Wong, P. M. (2012). Factors affecting the implementation of Curriculum reform in Hongkong. Key findings from a large scale survey study. *International Journal of Education Management*, 26(1), 39 – 54.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). National Policy on Education. Lagos: NERDC Publishers.
- Gollopeni, B., Bekteshi, E. & Avdiu, E. (2022). Challenges facing early childhood education in developing countries. *Journal of Education and Social Research*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365165967>.
- Global Regional Review (GRR) (2019). Proposed strategies for the effective implementation of early childhood progame in Punjab 4(1) 77-86. Retrieved URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019\(IV-1\).09](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2019(IV-1).09).
- Oludele, J. O. Abuovbo, I. V. & Abosede, O.O. (2015). An evaluation of the implementation of early childhood education curriculum in Osun State. *Journal of Education and Practice* 6(4) 48-55.
- Ntumi, S. (2016). Challenges pre-school teachers face in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum in the cape coast metropolis. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(1) 54-62.
- Parker, R. (2022). Learning through play and global education policy and practice. *Journal Frontiers in Education* 7, 1-12.