

Navigating The Early Years: An Investigation Into Pre-Primary Teachers' Knowledge And Implementation Of The One-Year-Pre-Primary Curriculum For Holistic Child Development In Nigeria

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Abstract: *The curriculum, encompassing lessons and academic content, serves as the primary vehicle for delivering educational programs and activities. In Nigeria, the government has actively supported the sustainability of early childhood education, notably including a compulsory one-year pre-primary level through financial investment, infrastructure development, provision of learning materials, and qualified staffing. However, the intended benefits of this pre-primary year for children and society appear unrealized. A key challenge identified is the limited curriculum awareness, encompassing both content and implementation strategies, among pre-primary teachers. This gap in appropriate teaching practices is often linked to inadequate qualifications, professional skills, school type, and experience necessary for providing high-quality early childhood services, particularly in fostering children's physical, social, and emotional growth. This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprise all public and private pre-primary schools and teachers in Ijebu-Ode Local Government. 100 pre-primary school teachers were randomly selected as sample for the study. Two (2) pre-primary teachers were selected from 25 randomly selected public and private schools. Six (6) research questions guided the study. Two Researcher- designed instruments were used for data collection namely; Teacher's Questionnaire on Knowledge of One-year pre-primary curriculum towards physical, social and emotional development of children (TQKOPCPSDC) and Teacher's Class Observation Schedule on Implementation of One-year pre-primary curriculum towards physical, social and emotional development of children (COS), the reliability index of the instruments are ($\alpha = 0.79$) and ($\alpha = 0.84$) respectively. The study among other revealed that the one-year-pre-primary curriculum is available and to some extent implemented. It was recommended among others that, further sensitization, training and retraining of teachers both on knowledge and implementation of the one-year pre-primary curriculum is pertinent. This would not only sustain the knowledge and expertise of the teachers but also improve their professionalism especially the implementation aspect. This if done, would have positive influence on the holistic development of children.*

Keywords: Curriculum, One-year pre-primary, Social, Physical, Emotional development

INTRODUCTION

Globally, education is increasingly recognized as the cornerstone of national progress, with early childhood care and stimulation acknowledged as crucial for laying a robust foundation for lifelong development (UNESCO, 2022). Early childhood education (ECE), the period preceding formal schooling, plays a vital role in children's cognitive growth and significantly influences their subsequent school engagement and achievement (Britto et al., 2017). This foundational stage is not merely an introduction to learning but a critical step towards fostering independent, confident, and well-rounded individuals (UNICEF, 2019). Developmental neuroscience underscores the rapid mental and physical growth occurring from conception to age six, highlighting the profound and lasting impact of quality early experiences. Children who receive nurturing care and stimulating environments during these formative years are more likely to thrive academically, socially, and civically in later life (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). The curriculum is the indispensable framework that guides educational practices within schools, ensuring structured learning experiences (NPE, 2013). A well-designed curriculum should be adaptable, transparent, acceptable to stakeholders, functional, relevant to learners' needs, valid in its content, dynamic to evolving contexts, comprehensive in its scope, and reliable in its outcomes (Nwagu, 2021). Recognizing the critical importance of early years, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2013) developed an early childhood curriculum aimed at addressing the holistic developmental needs of young children and enabling them to reach their full potential. However, the effective adoption and implementation of this curriculum by educators remain a significant concern. Curriculum implementation involves translating theoretical frameworks into practical classroom activities, utilizing recommended programs, guidance, and resources to facilitate children's holistic development. This process is inherently learner-centered, requiring educators to actively engage children in meaningful experiences (Fullan, 2016). Furthermore, the availability of adequate resource materials and the curriculum document itself are crucial prerequisites for successful implementation, necessitating the concerted

efforts of government and educational stakeholders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). Despite the acknowledged benefits of ECE and government initiatives to support it, including the integration of a compulsory one-year pre-primary level with resource allocation and staffing (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019), challenges persist in curriculum implementation. These include issues related to teacher qualifications, resource availability, curriculum relevance, professional development opportunities, staff-child ratios, and funding (UNESCO, 2021). The proliferation of under-equipped and substandard early childhood institutions further underscores the need to address quality standards in the sector (Onyango, 2015).

Alarming, observations indicate a significant lack of curriculum awareness, encompassing both content knowledge and effective implementation strategies, among many pre-primary teachers in Nigeria. This disconnect between policy and practice is often attributed to inadequate teacher preparation, limited professional development, and variations across school types and teacher experience (European Commission, 2019). Research suggests that when teachers lack the necessary content knowledge and pedagogical skills as outlined in the curriculum, children may exhibit increased stress behaviors, decreased positive social interactions, and limited problem-solving abilities (Bowman et al., 2001). Furthermore, inadequate early childhood instruction has been linked to lower academic performance and poorer social-emotional adjustment in later grades, potentially hindering children's future contributions to society (Duncan et al., 2007).

Therefore, recognizing the critical link between effective curriculum implementation and positive child development outcomes, this study aims to investigate kindergarten teachers' awareness and implementation of the one-year pre-primary curriculum in relation to the physical and social development of children. By examining this crucial aspect of early childhood education, this research seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform strategies for enhancing teacher capacity and ultimately improving the quality of early learning experiences for Nigerian children.

Research Questions

Research Question One: Are teachers aware of the one year pre-primary curriculum in their schools?

Research Question Two: Is the One-year curriculum available in schools in the selected local government?

Research Question Three (a): To what extent are preschool teachers aware of one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal fine motor development of children?

Research Question Three (b): To what extent are preschool teachers aware of one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal gross motor development of children?

Research Question Four: To what extent are preschool teachers aware of one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal social and emotional development of children?

Research Question Five: To what extent are preschool teachers implementing one-year pre-primary curriculum towards physical development of children?

Research Question Six: To what extent are preschool teachers implementing one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal social and emotional development of children?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consist of all public and private kindergarten teachers in Ogun State. Simple random sampling used to select ijebu-ode local governments in Ogun state. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to classify the school type into public and private kindergarten section of the selected primary schools in ijebu ode. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 30 kindergarten section of the selected primary schools in the selected local government whose composition are 25 private and 25 public schools kindergarten section of the selected primary schools. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 2 kindergarten class teachers in each selected class. The rationale for this is that, it is certain that at least two teachers will be in each kindergarten class. Hence, the sample for the study equalled 100 kindergarten teachers.

The following research instruments were used for data collection

- (i). Teacher's Questionnaire on Knowledge of One-year pre-primary curriculum towards physical, social and emotional development of children (TQKOPCPSDC): The TQKOPCPSDC is a self-designed questionnaire. The self-designed questionnaire has two sections, section A of the questionnaire reveals the demographic characteristics of the respondents, section B contains 10 questions on kindergarten teachers' knowledge of one-year pre-primary curriculum.
- (ii). Teacher's Class Observation Schedule on Implementation of One-year pre-primary curriculum towards physical and social development of children (COS): The COS is a self-designed class observation schedule which contains statements on the extent of implementation of one-year pre-primary curriculum by kindergarten teachers. The researcher selected statements from the contents of the curriculum that measure comprehensively the implementation of the curriculum based on teachers' competency. While section A contains the demographic information of the respondents, section B contains information on the teachers' implementation of the one-year pre-primary curriculum. The 16 items were rated on a 4-point likert scale in which 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good and 4 = Excellent.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

For the validation process, the instruments were given to experts in Early Childhood Education, and other experts in related field. This is done to ensure the face, construct and content validity of the questionnaire. The validation of the instruments was concluded after the necessary corrections were effected. To determine the reliability of the instruments, test-re-test reliability method was adopted. The instrument would be administered twice at the interval of 2 weeks to the same respondent. Cronbach alpha reliability technique and inter-rater technique were adopted to determine the reliability respectively. The reliability index of ($\alpha = 0.79$) and (0.84) was ascertained for TQKOPCPSDC and COS respectively.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of frequency count, simple percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions.

RESULTS

ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question One: Are teachers aware of the one year pre-primary curriculum in their schools?

Table 1 showing the Awareness level of Teachers as regards One-year pre-primary curriculum

| S/N | Items | YES | | NO | |
|-----|---|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| 1 | Are you aware of one year pre-primary curriculum? | 65 | 65 | 35 | 35 |

The table above revealed that majority of the teachers that participated in the study are aware of the existence of One year pre-primary curriculum. This result could be as a result of the fact that, many of these teachers might have been exposed to the document during their in-service training or might have attended learned conference in which extensive discussion on the nature of the document were made.

Research Question Two: Is the One-year curriculum available in schools in the selected local government?

Table 2 showing the Descriptive analysis showing the level of availability of One-year pre-primary curriculum in Schools

| S/N | Items | AVAILABLE | | NOT AVAILABLE | |
|-----|--|-----------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| 1 | Is the one year pre-primary curriculum available in your school? | 55 | | 45 | 45 |

The table above revealed that majority of the teachers that participated in the study accepted that the One year pre-primary curriculum is available in their schools. The document might have been provided by the government in public schools and in case of private

schools, the document might have been sourced at the ministries or even distributed at seminars organised by the government cutting across all the school types.

Research Question Three (a): What is the teachers knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards fine motor development of children?

Table 3 showing the descriptive analysis of teachers' knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards fine motor development of children

| A | DOMAIN: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|------|------|
| | THEME: FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT: are you aware that optimal fine motor development of children is ascertained when; | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1 | Children are allowed to practically involve in finger and toe tracing activities? | 50 | 50 | - | - | 3.50 | 0.50 |
| 2 | Children engage in effective manipulation and use table top materials? | 62 | 28 | 10 | - | 3.52 | 0.67 |
| 3 | Children are able to use appropriate materials to practice basic painting, moulding and drawing? | 70 | 24 | 6 | - | 3.52 | 0.67 |
| 4 | Children are exposed to age, individual, and context appropriate in fine motor activities? | 54 | 32 | 6 | 6 | 3.36 | 0.85 |
| 5 | Children are incorporated in planning child-centred activities around the materials familiar with children in their locality? | 38 | 18 | 28 | 16 | 2.78 | 1.12 |
| Weighted Average Mean= 3.3 (83.4%) | | | | | | | |

The table above revealed that the knowledge of teachers on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards physical development of children is High (Weighted Average Mean= 3.3). The detailed explanation is as follows; majority of the teachers are aware that optimal fine motor development of children is ascertained in the following situations; when Children engage in effective manipulation and use table top materials (mean=3.52), when Children are able to use appropriate materials to practice basic painting, moulding and drawing (mean=3.52), when Children are allowed to practically involve in finger and toe tracing activities (mean=3.50), and when Children are exposed to age, individual, and context appropriate in fine motor activities (mean=3.36). Although teachers are fairly aware that children should be incorporated in planning child-centred activities around the materials familiar with children in their locality (mean=2.78).

Research Question Three (b): What is the teachers knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards fine motor development of children?

Table 4 showing the descriptive analysis of teachers' knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards gross motor development of children

| A | DOMAIN: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|---|----|------|----|
| | THEME: GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT: are you aware that optimal gross motor development of children is ascertained when; | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | SD |
| | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------|------------|----------|----------|------|------|
| 1 | Children are able to handle and use indoor materials appropriately | 28 (28) | 64 (64) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 2.16 | 0.68 |
| 2 | Children involves clapping, rolling on the mat, playing football, bending, squatting, stooping and kneeling | 8 (8) | 64 (64) | 8 (8) | 4 (4) | 3.08 | 0.70 |
| 3 | Children are provided with a classroom environment that enhance exploration of materials relevant to gross motor development | 68 (68) | 26 (26) | 2 (2) | 4 (4) | 3.16 | 0.65 |
| 4 | Children have stimulating environment that allows for demonstration of different body postures | 60 (60) | 26 (26) | 2 (2) | 4 (4) | 3.02 | 0.84 |
| 5 | Children are given the opportunity to use gross/large motor development to control body parts e.g. clapping, dancing, rolling on the floor e.t.c | 60 (60) | 32 (32) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 3.20 | 0.70 |
| Weighted Average Mean= 2.92 (73.1%) High | | | | | | | |

The table above revealed that the teachers possess high knowledge of one-year pre-primary curriculum towards gross motor development of children (Weighted Average Mean= 2.29). The detailed explanation is as follows; majority of the teachers are aware that optimal gross motor development of children is ascertained in the following situations; when children are given the opportunity to use gross/large motor development to control body parts e.g. clapping, dancing, rolling on the floor (mean=3.20), when children are provided with a classroom environment that enhance exploration of materials relevant to gross motor development (mean=3.16), when Children involves clapping, rolling on the mat, playing football, bending, squatting, stooping and kneeling (mean=3.08), and when children have stimulating environment that allows for demonstration of different body postures (mean=3.02). Although, teachers are fairly aware that the optimal gross motor development of children is developed when children are able to handle and use indoor materials appropriately (mean=2.16).

Research Question Four: What is the kindergarten teachers knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards social and emotional development of children?

Table 5 showing the descriptive analysis of teachers' knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards social and emotional development of children

| C | DOMAIN: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | SD |
|---|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| | Are you aware that optimal social development of children is ascertained when; | | | | | | |
| 1 | Children are given the opportunity to demonstrate self-confidence by identifying their weakness and strength? | 49 (49) | 39 (39) | 12 (12) | – | 3.37 | 0.69 |
| 2 | Children are able to practise oral and personal hygiene? | 53 (53) | 34 (34) | 13 (13) | – | 3.40 | 0.71 |
| 3 | Children maintain a positive and progressive relationship with peers? | 24 (24) | 25 (25) | 37 (37) | 14 (14) | 2.59 | 1.01 |
| 4 | Children partake in cultural practices of their locality? | 35 (35) | 48 (48) | 12 (12) | 5 (5) | 3.13 | 0.81 |
| 5 | Children demonstrate compassion to peers, relatives and sick persons? | 19 (19) | 44 (44) | 24 (24) | 13 (13) | 2.69 | 0.93 |
| 6 | Children form positive attachment with adults around them? | 22 (22) | 48 (48) | 30 (30) | – | 2.51 | 0.67 |
| 7 | Children are able to identify and practise greeting forms and other cultural practices? | 27 (27) | 47 (47) | 22 (22) | 4 (4) | 2.97 | 0.81 |
| 8 | Children are able to trust their peers and obey elders? | 27 (27) | 47 (47) | 21 (21) | 5 (5) | 2.96 | 0.83 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------|------------|------------|----------|------|------|
| 9 | Children partake in activities such as role playing to demonstrate obedience and support for others? | 41 (41) | 29 (29) | 21 (21) | 9 (9) | 3.02 | 0.99 |
| 10 | Children engage in story-telling, reading rhymes that foster better relationship with peers? | 39 (39) | 30 (30) | 27 (27) | 4 (4) | 3.04 | 0.91 |
| Weighted Average Mean (2.9) 74% | | | | | | | |

The table above revealed that teachers' knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards social and emotional development of children is High (Weighted Average Mean=3.2). The detailed explanation is as follows; teachers are aware that optimal social development of children is ascertained when; Children are able to practise oral and personal hygiene (mean=3.40), Children are given the opportunity to demonstrate self-confidence by identifying their weakness and strength (mean=3.37), Children partake in cultural practices of their locality (mean=3.13), Children engage in story-telling, reading rhymes that foster better relationship with peers (mean=3.04), Children partake in activities such as role playing to demonstrate obedience and support for others (mean=3.02), Children are able to identify and practise greeting forms and other cultural practices (mean=2.97), Children are able to trust their peers and obey elders (mean=2.96). Although, teachers are fairly aware that, the social and emotional development of children develops optimally when; Children demonstrate compassion to peers, relatives and sick persons (mean=2.69) and when Children form positive attachment with adults around them (mean=2.51).

Research Question Five (a): To what extent are teachers implementing one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal fine motor development of children?

Table 6 Showing the extent to which teachers' implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal fine motor development of children

| DOMAIN: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| A | THEME: FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT: Teachers ability to; | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | Mean | SD |
| 1 | Provide for opportunities that allows children to practically involve in finger and toe tracing activities | 8 (8) | 30 (30) | 42 (42) | 20 (20) | 2.69 | 0.88 |
| 2 | Engage children in effective manipulation and use table top materials | 4 (4) | 27 (27) | 55 (55) | 14 (14) | 2.71 | 0.76 |
| 3 | Make provision for child appropriate materials for children to practice basic painting, moulding and drawing | 8 (8) | 27 (27) | 50 (50) | 15 (15) | 2.59 | 0.84 |
| 4 | Provide materials that are age, individual, and context appropriate in fine motor activities | 4 (4) | 33 (33) | 35 (35) | 28 (28) | 2.95 | 0.83 |
| 5 | Plan child-centred activities around the materials that children are familiar with in their locality | 11 (11) | 20 (20) | 35 (35) | 42 (42) | 2.71 | 1.15 |
| Weighted Average Mean = 2.73 (68%) | | | | | | | |

The table above revealed that teacher to some extent implement the one-year pre-primary curriculum towards the optimal fine motor development of children (weighted average mean=2.73). The detailed explanation is as follows; Majority of the teachers Provide materials that are age, individual, and context appropriate in fine motor activities (mean=2.95), majority of the teacher engage children in effective manipulation and use table top materials (mean=2.71), majority of the teacher Plan child-centred activities around the materials that children are familiar with in their locality (mean=2.71), also, majority of the teachers Provide for opportunities that allows children to practically involve in finger and toe tracing activities (mean=2.69), although, few of the teachers make provision for child appropriate materials for children to practice basic painting, moulding and drawing (mean=2.59).

Table 7 Showing the extent to which teachers' implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal gross motor development of children

| B | THEME: GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT: Teachers ability to; | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | SD |
|---|--|----------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| 1 | Guide and instruct children to handle and use indoor materials appropriately | 7 (7) | 28 (28) | 53 (53) | 12 (12) | 2.90 | 0.94 |
| 2 | Plan indoor and outdoor activities that involves clapping, rolling on the mat, playing football, bending, squatting, stooping and kneeling | 5 (5) | 10 (10) | 65 (65) | 20 (20) | 2.27 | 0.91 |
| 3 | Provide for an classroom environment that enhance exploration of materials relevant to gross motor development | 5 (5) | 10 (10) | 56 (56) | 29 (29) | 2.45 | 0.88 |
| 4 | Provide for a stimulating environment that allows for demonstration of different body postures | - | 34 (34) | 40 (40) | 26 (26) | 2.18 | 0.94 |
| 5 | To encourage the use of gross/large motor development to control body parts e.g. clapping, dancing, rolling on the floor e.t.c | 8 (8) | 8 (8) | 50 (50) | 24 (24) | 2.22 | 1.01 |
| Weighted Average Mean= 2.4 (60%) | | | | | | | |

The table above revealed that teachers' to some extent implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal gross motor development of children (weighted average mean=2.4). The detailed explanation is as follows; majority of the teachers to some extent Guide and instruct children to handle and use indoor materials appropriately (mean=2.9), also, majority of the teachers Plan indoor and outdoor activities that involves clapping, rolling on the mat, playing football, bending, squatting, stooping and kneeling (mean=2.7), majority of the teachers Provide for an classroom environment that enhance exploration of materials relevant to gross motor development (mean=2.45), however few of the teachers encourage the use of gross/large motor development to control body parts e.g. clapping, dancing, rolling on the floor (mean=2.4).

Research Question Six: To what extent are preschool teachers implementing one-year pre-primary curriculum towards social and emotional development of children?

Table 8 showing the extent to which teachers implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal social and emotional development of children

| A | DOMAIN: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Teachers ability to; | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | Mean | SD |
|---|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| 1 | Incorporate stories and songs about self-management in the classroom teaching | 3 (3) | 17 (17) | 52 (52) | 28 (28) | 2.04 | 0.45 |
| 2 | Encourage oral hygiene practices in the class | 4 (4) | 24 (24) | 72 (72) | - | 3.20 | 0.70 |
| 3 | Describe and employ basic tenets of hygiene, health and safety | 2 (2) | 14 (14) | 34 (34) | 50 (50) | 2.72 | 0.20 |
| 4 | Assist children develop awareness of self-identifying interests, strengths and weaknesses | 4 (4) | 44 (44) | 12 (12) | 50 (50) | 1.64 | 0.50 |
| 5 | Assist Children to possess self-esteem and act with self-confidence | 17 (17) | 36 (36) | 32 (32) | 32 (32) | 1.20 | 0.48 |
| 6 | Assist children to Freely interact/respect other peers, siblings, parents and neighbours | | 32 (32) | 68 (68) | - | 2.80 | 0.47 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| 7 | Create opportunity for children to share toys, food school items with others | | 32 (32) | 68 (68) | - | 3.68 | 0.47 |
| 8 | Assist children to appreciate things in the environment | 6 (6) | 30 (30) | 44 (44) | 20 (20) | 2.54 | 0.48 |
| 9 | Assist children to practice greeting forms and other cultural practices in their environment | 10 (10) | 24 (24) | 48 (48) | 18 (18) | 2.20 | 0.50 |
| 10 | Assist children to identity valuable things in the environment | 6 (6) | 32 (32) | 43 (42) | - | 2.72 | 0.47 |
| Weighted Average Mean= 2.5 (62%) | | | | | | | |

The table above revealed that the extent to which teachers implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal social and emotional development is Fair (weighted average mean=2.5). The detailed explanation is as follows; majority of the teachers Create opportunity for children to share toys, food school items with others (mean=3.6), Encourage oral hygiene practices in the class (mean=3.20), Assist children to Freely interact/respect other peers, siblings, parents and neighbours (mean=2.80), Describe and employ basic tenets of hygiene, health and safety (mean=2.72), Assist children to identity valuable things in the environment (mean=2.72), Assist children to appreciate things in the environment (mean=2.54). Although, few teachers Incorporate stories and songs about self-management in the classroom teaching (mean=2.04), Assist children develop awareness of self-identifying interests, strengths and weaknesses (mean=1.64), and Assist Children to possess self-esteem and act with self-confidence (mean=1.20).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Majority of the teachers that participated in the study are aware of the existence of One year pre-primary curriculum
- Majority of the teachers that participated in the study accepted that the One year pre-primary curriculum is available in their schools
- The knowledge of teachers on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards physical development of children is high
- Teachers' knowledge on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards social and emotional development of children is high
- Teacher to some extent implement the one-year pre-primary curriculum towards the optimal fine motor development of children
- Teachers' to some extent implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal gross motor development of children
- The extent to which teachers implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal social and emotional development is fair

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that one year pre-primary school curriculum is available and to some extent utilised towards the optimal development of children in the sampled schools. This finding may be as a result of the fact that there is vast circulation of the documents most especially in government owned schools and also, private school owners might have the opportunity for procurement at bookshops or other enterprise that deals with educational documents. This is contrary to the findings of (Adejobi, Omoare, and Oyediram, 2017) that almost all pre-primary schools in Nigeria have no ECE curriculum since it was launched in 2007. Furthermore, since the curriculum is available at schools, then, its fair utilization by teachers achieved. This could be as a result of the fact that, teachers receive fundamental training through seminars and workshop of pedagogical skills development. This result is contrary to Olaniyan and Salami (2019) who reported that kindergarten curriculum is scarcely available in kindergarten schools in Nigeria. The extent of the implementation of the one year kindergarten curriculum is fair and this might be as a result of the fact that the curriculum is available in most schools and that the level of education attainment of teachers in kindergarten classes is high and majority of the teachers are early childhood specialists who are believed to have accustomed themselves with the fundamentals and principles attached to the implementation of the curriculum. Although, this finding is contrary to the findings of Olaniyan and Salami (2019) who reported that the one-year kindergarten curriculum is not utilized in schools in Nigeria, inadequate provision of the document, lack of professional development, lack of curriculum support materials, are some of the challenges militating the successful implementation of the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study;

- Although, the knowledge of teachers on one-year pre-primary curriculum towards the physical, social and emotional development of children is high. Further sensitization, training and retraining of teachers both on knowledge and implementation of the one-year pre-primary curriculum is pertinent. This would not only sustain the knowledge and expertise of the teachers but also improve their professionalism especially the implementation aspect. This if done, would have positive influence on the holistic development of children.
- Majority of the teachers that participated in the study accepted that the One year pre-primary curriculum is available in their schools, hence proper monitoring on the path of the government and proprietors is necessary to ensure full implementation of the curriculum in the classroom. This if done, would have positive influence on the holistic development of children.
- Teachers' to some extent implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal physical development of children, the government and private school owners should further provide for teaching materials that are not only recommended but also suitable and appropriate considering children's age, individual personality and their culture. This would assist teachers in efficiently and effectively implementing the curriculum in the classroom.
- The extent to which teachers implement one-year pre-primary curriculum towards optimal social and emotional development is fair, hence, teachers who are qualified and experienced should be employed in pre-primary classes. These teachers are expected to have the rudimentary aspect of curriculum implementation during in-service training and this would serve as a foundation to which further training would be built.

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