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Awareness and Attitude of Market Women towards Early Childhood Care, Development and Education in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

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Abstract*: Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) is recognised by the Nigerian government as the foundation of basic education, yet access remains limited. Market women in Ilorin Metropolis, who combine trading with childcare responsibilities, remain understudied. This study examines their awareness and attitude towards ECCDE, focusing on the influence of education, cultural beliefs, and structural factors. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guide the study. A descriptive survey design incorporating correlational and mixed-methods approaches will be used. The population comprises market women in Ilorin Metropolis with at least one child aged 0–5 years. A minimum sample of 384 respondents will be selected using Cochran's formula, multi-stage sampling, and systematic sampling across nine markets in three Local Government Areas. Data will be collected using the Market Women's Awareness and Attitude towards ECCDE Questionnaire (MWAATECCDEQ) and focus group discussions. Validity will be established through expert review, while reliability will be determined through a pilot study using Cronbach's alpha. Quantitative data will be analysed using SPSS version 26, while qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis. Ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation, will be observed. The study is expected to provide evidence for policies and interventions aimed at improving ECCDE access and quality for children of market women in Kwara State.*

Keywords: *Awareness, Attitude, Early Childhood Care Development and Education, Market Women, Ilorin Metropolis*

Background of the Study

Nearly two-thirds of Nigerian children aged 36 to 59 months are not accessing early childhood education, despite a national policy that promises quality care and learning for every child. This statistic represents not merely an educational deficit but a fundamental failure to invest in Nigeria's human capital at the most critical stage of development. Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) encompasses the care, protection, stimulation, and learning provided to children aged 0 to 4 years in crèches or nurseries, as well as the one-year education received by children aged 5 before entering primary school. The first five years of life are a sensitive window of opportunity for shaping the course of development, with evidence indicating that early interventions have greater returns than remediation at a later stage. For Nigeria, a nation with one of the largest populations of young children in the world, the consequences of neglecting this foundation are profound and far-reaching.

Early Childhood Care, Development and Education is formally recognised by the Nigerian government as the foundation of quality basic education and national development. The National Policy on Education articulates several objectives of early childhood education, including effecting a smooth transition from home to school, preparing the child for primary education, providing care and supervision for children of working parents, and fostering children's spirit of inquiry and creativity through play. The policy framework specifies minimum standards, caregiver-to-child ratios, and curriculum requirements, and commits the government to setting and monitoring these standards, developing curriculum materials, encouraging community and private participation, and ensuring compliance.

The Nigerian government has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to ECCDE. In January 2026, the Minister of Education emphasized at the annual Integrated ECCDE Consultative Committee meeting that ECCDE is critical to children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (Voice of Nigeria, 2026). The meeting provided an opportunity to review the 2025 ECCDE implementation report, assess progress recorded across states, and identify lingering challenges such as funding gaps, workforce capacity, weak coordination, learning environment standards, and monitoring mechanisms (Daily Post Nigeria, 2026). However, despite an increasingly robust policy framework, implementation continues to face persistent challenges that undermine the achievement of ECCDE objectives across the country.

In urban and semi-urban areas of Nigeria, market women constitute a vital pillar of the informal economy while also bearing primary responsibility for childcare. Research conducted by Dagunduro, Adenugba, and Omolawal, (2024) in Ibadan Metropolis found that market women stay away from home for more than ten hours daily, and that children of female breadwinners spend more time with their mothers in the marketplace regardless of whether the father is available. This study further revealed a statistically significant relationship between categories of women sampled and their relationship with children ($x^2 = 425.791$, $p<0.05$), implying a lower likelihood that female breadwinners would have cordial relationships with their children compared to their non-breadwinning counterparts. The study recommended that female breadwinners pay more attention to cordial relationships with their children to protect the stability of their marriage and society.

The market environment poses particular challenges to early childhood development. Market women who care for young children while selling goods often do so at the expense of child wellbeing, and Nigerian markets generally lack child-friendly infrastructure. A qualitative study conducted in Ibadan found that parents perceive Early Childhood Education much as custodial care rather than as essentially developmental. The study revealed that attitudes toward ECE were constructed primarily by socioeconomic realities, educational backgrounds, and exposure to information regarding child development. This perception gap is critical, as it suggests that even when market women access ECCDE services, they may not fully appreciate the developmental value of these programmes (Dagunduro et al. 2024).

Empirical research has explored the relationship between parental knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding early childhood education in Nigeria. Ogunbowale, Quadri, and Ukpere (2025) conducted a qualitative study exploring the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of early childhood education held by educators and parents in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study employed a qualitative design anchored to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, using in-depth interviews of ten educators and parents. The findings revealed clear differences in understanding and application of ECE principles: educators demonstrated some theoretical knowledge but little adaptation in the classroom, while parents perceived ECE much as custodial care rather than as essentially developmental. Practices consisted of a cocktail of traditional methods and irregular approaches, associated with issues of poor training, infrastructure limitations, and societal perceptions about early childhood learning. The study recommended better professional training for educators, mass parental sensitisation, and stronger policy support for ECE implementation. This study differs from the present study in its focus on educators and parents in Ibadan generally, whereas the present study specifically targets market women in Ilorin Metropolis, examining their unique position as informal sector workers with distinct structural constraints.

Madichie, Lomas, and Siciliani (2026) examined the association of maternal education with access to maternal care and child mortality in Nigeria using a secondary data regression-based analysis. The study employed the 2021 Nigeria Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS) and a sample of 10,820 women of reproductive age, using a bivariate probit framework supplemented by propensity score matching. The findings showed that higher levels of maternal education, particularly secondary schooling, were significantly associated with a 2.08 percentage point reduction in under-five mortality and a 6.74 percentage point increase in access to maternal care. Economic status modestly attenuated the size of the education association with under-five mortality but strengthened it for maternal care, while ethnicity and religion partly explained the observed associations. The study recommended economically and culturally tailored policies that improve female educational attainment. This study differs from the present study in its focus on maternal education and health outcomes, whereas the present study focuses on awareness and attitude toward ECCDE among market women, examining a different set of variables and a specific occupational group.

Dagunduro, Adenugba, and Omolawal (2024) investigated female breadwinning, parenting, and childcare among market women in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. The study employed a cross-sectional research design guided by Role Strain Theory, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to generate data from 903 respondents through structured questionnaires and ten in-depth interviews. The findings revealed that children of female breadwinners among market women spend more time with their mothers in the marketplace, and that these breadwinners stay away from home for more than ten hours daily. There was a statistically significant relationship between categories of women sampled and their relationship with children ($x^2 = 425.791$, $p<0.05$). The study recommended that female breadwinners pay more attention to cordial relationships with their children. This study differs from the present study in its focus on parenting and childcare outcomes among market women in Ibadan, whereas the present study examines awareness and attitude toward ECCDE specifically among market women in Ilorin Metropolis, focusing on a different geographical location and a distinct set of research variables.

UNICEF (2026) documented low access to early childhood education in North-West Nigeria, raising concern over persistently low enrolment in Jigawa, Kano, and Katsina States. The report indicated that only about 24 per cent of children in Jigawa have access to ECE, while Kano has 29 per cent and Katsina 32 per cent. The UNICEF Officer-in-Charge of the Kano Field Office described the situation as alarming, noting that the majority of children in the region are missing the critical early learning phase that shapes cognitive, social, and emotional development. The report identified limited parental awareness, a shortage of trained caregivers, weak infrastructure, and inadequate learning materials as key challenges affecting the sector. UNICEF called on state governments to prioritise ECCDE in budgets, recruit trained early childhood educators, and expand child-friendly learning spaces. This study differs from the present study in its geographical focus on North-West Nigeria and its methodological approach as a media dialogue report, whereas the present study focuses on Ilorin Metropolis in Kwara State using an empirical survey design targeting market women specifically.

The National Population Commission and ICF (2024) conducted the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, providing comprehensive data on child outcomes and education access across Nigeria. The survey revealed that approximately 41 out of every 1,000 infants die within their first month of life, and 63 die before reaching their first birthday, with an under-five mortality rate of 110 deaths per 1,000 live births. The data revealed significant regional disparities, with the North West zone reporting the highest childhood mortality rates and the South West recording the lowest. The survey highlighted the importance of maternal care in improving child survival rates and noted that while Nigeria has made some progress in reducing under-five mortality from 193 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990, neonatal mortality rates have stagnated. This study differs from the present study in its broad national scope and focus on health outcomes, whereas the present study focuses specifically on ECCDE awareness and attitude among market women in one metropolitan area.

UNICEF (2022) reported through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey that only 37.8 per cent of children between the ages of three and four have access to early childhood education in Nigeria. The data revealed large inequalities, with 75 per cent of children aged 36 to 59 months in the richest wealth quintile attending early childhood education, while only 11 per cent of those in the lowest wealth quintile do. This disparity highlights the significant socioeconomic barriers to ECCDE access that disproportionately affect poorer households, including those of market women. The report noted that children who lack access to quality early education are more likely to start primary school behind their peers and struggle to catch up, contributing to Nigeria's growing out-of-school children crisis. This study differs from the present study in its focus on national access statistics and wealth quintile analysis, whereas the present study examines awareness and attitude as precursors to access among a specific occupational group in a defined geographical area.

Statement of the Problem

The National Policy on Education envisions a system where every Nigerian child aged 0 to 4 years receives quality care, protection, stimulation, and learning, and where every child aged 5 receives one year of pre-primary education before entering primary school. In an ideal situation, market women in Ilorin Metropolis would be fully aware of these provisions and would hold positive attitudes towards utilising ECCDE services for their children. They would have access to affordable, quality ECCDE services near their markets, and their children would be developing to their full potential. The policy framework commits the government to setting and monitoring minimum standards, developing curriculum materials, encouraging community and private participation, and ensuring compliance, which should translate into accessible and quality ECCDE services for all children regardless of their parents' occupation or socioeconomic status.

However, the reality is starkly different. National data reveal that only 37.8 per cent of children aged three to four have access to early childhood education in Nigeria, with large inequalities persisting across wealth quintiles, as 75 per cent of children in the richest quintile attend ECCE while only 11 per cent in the lowest quintile do. Market women in Ilorin Metropolis, who spend more than ten hours daily away from home, face significant barriers to accessing ECCDE services, including cost, distance, and cultural beliefs. Furthermore, parental perceptions of ECE often emphasise custodial care over developmental value, meaning that even when services are accessed, their full benefits may not be realised. The market environment itself is not conducive to healthy child development, with poor sanitary conditions and a lack of child-friendly infrastructure, and research has shown that children of female breadwinners among market women spend more time in the marketplace and rarely enjoy intimacy with their mothers.

If this situation persists, the consequences will be severe and long-lasting. Children who do not receive adequate stimulation and care in the early years are more likely to experience cognitive delays, poorer school readiness, and lower academic achievement. They are also more likely to drop out of school, engage in risky behaviours, and earn lower wages as adults. The economic cost of this lost potential is enormous, as Nigeria loses billions of dollars annually in foregone productivity due to underinvestment in early childhood development. For market women in Ilorin Metropolis specifically, the consequence is that their children will be less prepared for school, more likely to struggle academically, and less likely to escape the cycle of poverty that their mothers endure.

Despite the existence of a national ECCDE policy and the critical importance of early childhood development, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the awareness and attitude of market women towards ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. Existing research in Ilorin has focused on stakeholders within the formal education system, such as teachers, caregivers, head teachers, and education inspectors. The perspectives of market women as informal caregivers and economic actors have not been adequately explored. This gap in knowledge hinders the design of effective interventions to improve ECCDE access and quality for the children of market women, and it is this gap that the present study seeks to fill.

Purposes of the Study

The study aims to achieve the following purposes:

1. To assess the level of awareness and knowledge of ECCDE among market women in Ilorin Metropolis;
2. To examine the attitude of market women towards ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis;
3. To determine the relationship between market women's level of education and their awareness of ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis;
4. To determine the relationship between market women's level of education and their attitude towards ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis;
5. To examine the relationship between market women's cultural beliefs and their attitude towards ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis;
6. To identify structural factors hindering market women's participation in ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of ECCDE among market women in Ilorin Metropolis?
2. What is the attitude of market women towards ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis?
3. What structural factors hinder market women's participation in ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

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

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between market women's level of education and their awareness of ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between market women's level of education and their attitude towards ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between market women's cultural beliefs and their attitude towards ECCDE in Ilorin Metropolis.

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey design is appropriate when the purpose of the study is to collect data from a sample in order to describe the characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or behaviours of a population at a particular point in time. The study also incorporates a correlational component, as it examines relationships between market women's level of education and their awareness of ECCDE, between their level of education and their attitude towards ECCDE, and between their cultural beliefs and their attitude towards ECCDE. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a correlational design is appropriate when the researcher seeks to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more variables. The combination of descriptive and correlational designs allows the study to both describe the state of affairs and explain the relationships among variables.

The study further adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative component involves the administration of a structured questionnaire to a large sample of market women, while the qualitative component involves focus group discussions with a smaller subset of respondents. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), mixed-methods research allows the researcher to triangulate findings, using qualitative data to explain and contextualise quantitative results. In this study, the focus group discussions will provide deeper insight into the cultural beliefs and structural constraints that shape market women's awareness and attitudes, which may not be fully captured by the questionnaire alone.

The population of the study comprises all market women in Ilorin Metropolis who have at least one child aged 0 to 5 years. Market women are defined for the purpose of this study as women who engage in buying and selling goods in markets in Ilorin Metropolis. The age range of 0 to 5 years is selected because it corresponds to the ECCDE policy age bracket, which covers children aged 0 to 4 years in crèches or nurseries and children aged 5 in pre-primary education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020).

The population is heterogeneous in terms of age, education level, marital status, number of children, income level, and years of trading. This heterogeneity is important because the study seeks to examine relationships between these socio-economic characteristics and awareness and attitude towards ECCDE. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2024), women constitute approximately 50 per cent of the population of Kwara State, and a significant proportion of them are engaged in informal sector activities, including trading. The exact population of market women with children aged 0 to 5 years in Ilorin Metropolis is not known because there is no official register of market women in the state. The study therefore relies on an estimated population based on market association records and previous studies.

The study employs a multi-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, three markets are purposively selected from each of the three Local Government Areas in Ilorin Metropolis, making a total of nine markets. The markets are selected based on their size, popularity, and the concentration of women traders. In Ilorin West, the markets selected are Ilorin Main Market (Oja Oba), Mandate Market, and Oja Tuntun. In Ilorin East, the markets selected are Oja Oba Ilorin East, Oke Oyi Market, and Eiyenkorin Market. In Ilorin South, the markets selected are Oja Oba Ilorin South, Gaa Akanbi Market, and Oja-Ganmo Ilorin South.

In the second stage, systematic sampling is used to select eligible respondents within each market. The researcher obtains the list of market women from the market association leaders and selects every second woman who meets the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are: (a) the woman must be engaged in buying and selling in the market, (b) the woman must have at least one child aged 0 to 5 years, and (c) the woman must consent to participate in the study. Women who do not meet these criteria are excluded from the study.

The sample size is determined using the Cochran formula for sample size calculation. The formula is $\mathbf{n = Z^2pq / e^2}$.

Where: n = sample size; Z = the standard normal deviate at the desired confidence level (1.96 for 95% confidence level); p = the estimated proportion of the population with the attribute of interest (0.5, which provides maximum variability).

q = 1 - p (0.5). e = the desired level of precision or margin of error (0.05)

Substituting the values:

$n = (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 / (0.05)^2$

$n = 3.8416 \times 0.25 / 0.0025$

$n = 0.9604 / 0.0025$

$n = 384.16$

Therefore, the minimum sample size is 384 respondents. The sample is distributed proportionally across the nine markets based on the estimated number of eligible market women in each market. In addition to the questionnaire survey, two focus group discussions are conducted in each of the three Local Government Areas, making a total of six focus group discussions with 8 to 10 participants per group. Participants for the focus group discussions are selected purposively from among those who completed the questionnaire and indicated willingness to participate in further discussion.

Two instruments are used for data collection: a structured questionnaire and a focus group discussion guide. The questionnaire is titled "Market Women's Awareness and Attitude towards Early Childhood Care, Development and Education Questionnaire (MWAATECCDEQ)." It is divided into five sections.

Section A collects demographic and socio-economic information about the respondents, including age, level of education, marital status, number of children, income level, and years of trading. This section contains six items. Section B measures awareness of ECCDE. It contains 15 items that assess knowledge of the concept of ECCDE, awareness of the National ECCDE Policy, knowledge of the types of ECCDE services available, and awareness of the benefits of ECCDE. The items are scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The minimum possible score is 15, and the maximum possible score is 75. A higher score indicates greater awareness of ECCDE. The awareness score is used to classify respondents into three categories: low awareness (15 to 35), moderate awareness (36 to 55), and high awareness (56 to 75).

Also, Section C measures attitude towards ECCDE. It contains 15 items that assess respondents' views on the importance of early childhood education, their willingness to enrol their children in ECCDE programmes, their beliefs about the role of formal ECCDE services, and their attitudes towards traditional childcare practices. The items are scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The minimum possible score is 15, and the maximum possible score is 75. A higher score indicates a more positive attitude towards ECCDE. The attitude score is used to classify respondents into three categories: negative attitude (15 to 35), neutral attitude (36 to 55), and positive attitude (56 to 75). Section D measures cultural beliefs. It contains 10 items that assess traditional beliefs about maternal caregiving, child development, and formal education. The items are scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The minimum possible score is 10, and the maximum possible score is 50. A higher score indicates stronger adherence to traditional cultural beliefs.

Lastly, Section E measures structural factors hindering participation in ECCDE. It contains 12 items that assess barriers related to cost, distance, operating hours, market conditions, availability of childcare support, and other structural constraints. The items are scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The minimum possible score is 12, and the maximum possible score is 60. A higher score indicates stronger perception of structural barriers.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

The focus group discussion guide contains open-ended questions designed to elicit in-depth information on the following themes: (a) understanding of early childhood education, (b) cultural beliefs and practices related to childcare, (c) challenges of caring for young children while trading, (d) awareness and perceptions of ECCDE services, and (e) suggestions for improving ECCDE access and quality for market women. The guide is designed to be flexible, allowing the moderator to probe further on emerging issues.

The questionnaire and focus group discussion guide are subjected to face and content validity. Face validity is established by presenting the instruments to three experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one expert in the Department of Test and Measurement. The experts are asked to review the items for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Content validity is established by ensuring that the items cover all the domains specified in the research questions and hypotheses. The experts' comments and suggestions are used to revise the instruments before the pilot study.

The reliability of the questionnaire is established through a pilot study conducted with 30 market women in a market outside the study area but with similar characteristics. The data collected from the pilot study are analysed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients are calculated for each section of the questionnaire. A coefficient of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable. The reliability of the focus group discussion guide is established through peer review and debriefing, ensuring that the questions are clear and that they elicit the intended information.

The researcher obtains an introduction letter from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education to the market association leaders in the selected markets. The letter explains the purpose of the study and seeks permission to administer the questionnaire to market women. Upon approval, the researcher and two trained research assistants visit the markets on market days to administer the questionnaire. The research assistants are trained on the objectives of the study, the content of the questionnaire, and the ethical principles guiding data collection. The questionnaire is administered face-to-face, and respondents who have difficulty reading the items are assisted by the research assistants, who read the items aloud in Yoruba and record the respondents' answers. The administration of the questionnaire takes approximately 20 to 30 minutes per respondent. The focus group discussions are conducted after the questionnaire survey, at a time and place convenient for the participants. Each focus group discussion lasts approximately 60 to 90 minutes and is moderated by the researcher, with a note-taker recording the proceedings. The discussions are audio-recorded with the permission of the participants.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected through the questionnaire are analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, are used to answer Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. Research Inferential statistics are used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Qualitative data collected through the focus group discussions are analysed using thematic analysis. The audio recordings are transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts are read repeatedly to identify recurring themes and patterns. The themes are coded and organised into categories that correspond to the research questions. Direct quotations from participants are used to illustrate the themes and to provide rich, contextualised descriptions of market women's experiences and perspectives.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to the ethical principles of research involving human participants. Ethical approval is obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Ilorin before the commencement of data collection. Informed consent is obtained from all participants. Because some participants may have limited literacy, the consent form is read aloud in Yoruba, and participants indicate their consent verbally or by thumbprint. Participants are assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the anonymity of their identities. They are also informed that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. The audio recordings from the focus group discussions are stored securely and are accessible only to the researcher. The recordings are destroyed after the completion of the study.

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RESEARCH INSTRUMENT (REVISED)
MARKET WOMEN'S AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE (MWAATECCDEQ)

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFORMATION

Instruction: Please tick (✓) the option that applies to you.

1. Age 20–29 years ( ) 30–39 years ( ) 40–49 years ( ) 50 years and above (0

2. Level of Education No formal education ( ) Primary school ( ) Secondary school ( ) Tertiary institution ( )

3. Marital Status Single ( ) Married ( ) Divorced ( ) Widowed ( )

4. Number of Children Aged 0–5 Years: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 and above ( )

5. Average Monthly Income: Below ₦20,000 ( ) 20,000–₦49,999 ( ) ₦50,000–₦99,999 ( )
₦100,000 and above ( )

6. Years of Trading in the Market 1–5 years ( ) 6–10 years ( ) 11–15 years ( ) 16 years and above ( )

7. Market Location Ilorin East ( ) Ilorin West ( ) Ilorin South ( )

SECTION B: AWARENESS OF ECCDE

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree (5), A = Agree (4), U = Undecided (3), D = Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I have heard of the term Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE).					
2	I know that ECCDE is meant for children aged 0 to 5 years.					
3	I am aware that the government has a policy on early childhood education.					
4	I know that ECCDE helps children develop thinking and social skills.					
5	I am aware that children who attend ECCDE programmes perform better in school.					

Scoring: Minimum = 5, Maximum = 25, Low awareness: 5–11, Moderate awareness: 12–18, High awareness: 19–25

SECTION C: ATTITUDE TOWARDS ECCDE

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree (5), A = Agree (4), U = Undecided (3), D = Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

S/N	**Statement**	**SA**	**A**	**U**	**D**	**SD**
6	Early childhood education is important for every child.					
7	I am willing to enrol my child in an ECCDE programme if one is available near my market.					
8	The government should provide free ECCDE services for all children.					
9	Sending a child to an ECCDE centre is a waste of money.					
10	Children below 5 years are too young to be separated from their mothers.					

Note: Items 9 and 10 are reverse-scored.

Scoring: Minimum = 5, Maximum = 25, Negative attitude: 5–11, Neutral attitude: 12–18, Positive attitude: 19–25

SECTION D: CULTURAL BELIEFS

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree (5), A = Agree (4), U = Undecided (3), D = Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

S/N	**Statement**	**SA**	**A**	**U**	**D**	**SD**
11	A child below 5 years should not be separated from the mother.					
12	Only family members can be trusted to care for a young child.					
13	A woman's place is in the home caring for her children.					
14	Traditional childcare practices are better than modern methods.					
15	It is the husband's responsibility to decide whether a child should attend ECCDE.					

Scoring: Minimum = 5, Maximum = 25. Higher score indicates stronger traditional cultural beliefs.

SECTION E: STRUCTURAL FACTORS HINDERING PARTICIPATION IN ECCDE

Instruction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree (5), A = Agree (4), U = Undecided (3), D = Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
16	A child below 5 years should not be separated from the mother.					
17	Only family members can be trusted to care for a young child.					
18	A woman's place is in the home caring for her children.					
19	Traditional childcare practices are better than modern methods.					
20	It is the husband's responsibility to decide whether a child should attend ECCDE.					

Scoring: Minimum = 5, Maximum = 25. Higher score indicates stronger perception of structural barriers.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this discussion. My name is _____, and I am conducting a study on the awareness and attitude of market women towards Early Childhood Care, Development and Education in Ilorin Metropolis. The purpose of this discussion is to hear your views and experiences regarding caring for your young children while trading. There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to share your honest opinions. With your permission, I will record this discussion so that I do not miss any important points. Your identity will remain confidential, and the recording will be used only for this study.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you understand by early childhood education?
2. Have you ever heard of ECCDE? If yes, what does it mean to you?
3. In your community, what are the traditional beliefs about how young children should be cared for?
4. How do you currently care for your young child while you are trading?
5. What challenges do you face in caring for your child in the market?
6. Are there any ECCDE centres or childcare facilities in your area or market?
7. Have you ever used any ECCDE service for your child? If yes, what was your experience? If no, why not?
8. What do you think are the benefits of ECCDE for children?
9. What would make it easier for you to send your child to an ECCDE centre?
10. If the government wanted to help market women with childcare, what should they do?

Closing

Thank you for your time and participation.