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Assessing Primary School Teachers' Skills, Qualifications and Material Resources Utilization in Plateau State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined primary and early childhood care education (ECCE) and primary school teachers' perceptions of their teaching effectiveness and monitoring challenges in Plateau State, Nigeria. Using a survey design, 100 teachers were selected through stratified random sampling across the 17 Local Government Areas. Data was collected using the "Teacher Skills Assessment Questionnaire (TSAQ)" instrument. The study assessed six key domains: pedagogical knowledge and skills, classroom management, assessment practices, ICT proficiency, professional development, and ECCE teachers' professional competence.

Findings revealed a low overall level of teacher competence (Grand Mean = 2.86), with significant variations across skill domains. Teachers demonstrated relatively higher competence in pedagogical knowledge (M=3.36), classroom management (M=3.34), and assessment practices (M=3.29). However, critical weaknesses were identified in ICT proficiency (M=2.07) and professional development engagement (M=2.26). ECCE and primary school teachers showed moderate to low specialized competence (M=2.85), particularly in understanding child development milestones and implementing developmentally appropriate practices.

The study concluded that despite significant investments in primary education through various interventions, educational outcomes remain suboptimal due to inadequate teacher preparation, limited professional development opportunities, and insufficient specialized training for ECCE and primary school teachers. The findings support the need for targeted interventions, including comprehensive professional development programs, specialized ECCE and primary school teacher training, ICT skills development, and the establishment of continuous professional development structures.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the cornerstone of societal development, with primary education forming the foundation upon which all subsequent learning is built. Primary education faces numerous challenges in Nigeria, particularly in states like Plateau, where educational indicators often lag behind national targets (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019). The quality of education delivered at this level is heavily influenced by three critical factors: teachers' professional skills, their qualifications (particularly for Early Childhood Care and Education [ECCE] and primary school teachers), and the availability of teaching and learning materials. Like in many parts of Nigeria, primary school education in Plateau State has undergone significant transformations since the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in 1999. The UBE Act of 2004 made provisions for free, compulsory basic education, which includes early childhood education, primary education, and junior secondary education (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2020). However, the successful implementation of this policy depends mainly on the quality of teachers and the availability of appropriate resources.

Recent studies by Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2015) indicate that teacher quality remains the most significant school-related factor influencing student achievement. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education stipulates that the minimum qualification for teaching at any level should be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Nevertheless, Akpan et al. (2020) research revealed that many teachers in northern Nigerian primary schools, including those in Plateau State, do not possess the requisite qualifications. This situation is even more pronounced among ECCE teachers, where specialized training is essential for effective early year's pedagogy.

The material resource dimension adds complexity to the educational landscape in Plateau State. Comprehensive assessments conducted in various Nigerian states reveal that many schools lack adequate infrastructure, sufficient textbooks, and necessary teaching aids (Ogunniyi, 2018). These shortcomings greatly hinder both teaching and learning, ultimately impacting educational results. Sufficient teaching and learning materials are critical elements of successful education delivery. Ajoku (2017) found that schools equipped with an adequate supply of textbooks, teaching aids, and functional facilities yield better learning results than those lacking them. In Nigeria's Middle Belt area, the unequal distribution of resources between urban and rural schools further intensifies educational inequality, as rural schools often have fewer resources compared to their urban counterparts (Ezeanyanike et al., 2019).

This research investigates the connections between the skills of primary school teachers, the qualifications of ECCE teachers, and the material resources present in primary schools in Plateau State. By analyzing these connections, stakeholders can create more focused strategies to improve the quality of primary education in the state.

Statement of the Problem

Despite considerable investment in primary education in Plateau State through various interventions, such as the UBE program, UBEC matching grants, and other initiatives funded by donors, educational outcomes remain lacking. Recent evaluations show that students in many northern Nigerian states, including Plateau State, have underperformed relative to national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy assessments (Nigeria Education in Emergency Working Group, 2020). This underachievement indicates fundamental issues that negatively impact the quality of educational delivery.

Initial research has uncovered several obstacles facing primary education in Plateau State, including inadequate teacher preparation, lack of teaching resources, and poor classroom management skills (Shettima et al., 2019). However, there is a scarcity of research specifically focused on how these elements interact and together influence educational delivery within the primary schools of the state.

Furthermore, while previous research has focused on teacher qualifications and resource availability separately, there has been limited investigation into their combined effect on the quality of education, particularly in Nigeria's Middle Belt region. This is especially significant for ECCE teachers, as their specific training needs are often overlooked in broader discussions and policy -making related to education. Moreover, there are discrepancies between the policy frameworks concerning teacher qualifications and skills development and the actual implementation of these policies at the school level. The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) has mandated professional certification for all teachers, yet compliance remains low in many states (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2018).

Limited access to continuous professional development opportunities for teachers further compromises the quality of instructional delivery. According to Arop et al. (2019), less than 35% of primary school teachers in northern Nigeria participated in any professional development program in recent years, with ECCE teachers being particularly disadvantaged.

Moreover, the issue of material resources extends beyond mere availability to include their efficient utilization. Research by Udoh (2020) observed that even in schools where some teaching and learning materials are available, their utilization is often suboptimal due to a lack of skills, awareness, or proper storage facilities.

This study, therefore, addresses a critical gap in understanding how teacher skills, ECCE teacher qualifications, and material resources collectively influence the quality of primary education in Plateau State. This understanding is essential for developing evidence-based interventions to improve educational outcomes in the state.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the current status of primary and ECCE teachers' skills, qualifications, and material resources in Plateau State primary schools and to examine how these factors influence the quality of education delivery. By providing empirical evidence on these critical aspects of primary education, this research aims to inform policy decisions and practical interventions to enhance educational quality in the state.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the current skill levels of primary school teachers in Plateau State primary schools across various domains, including pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, assessment practices, and ICT proficiency.
2. To examine the qualifications and specialized training of ECCE teachers in Plateau State, including their academic credentials, professional certifications, and relevant early childhood education training.
3. To evaluate the availability and adequacy of material resources in Plateau State primary schools, including textbooks, teaching aids, infrastructure, technology resources, and learning facilities.
4. To analyze the relationship between teachers' skills, ECCE teachers' qualifications, and material resources in Plateau State primary schools.
5. To determine the combined influence of teachers' skills, ECCE teachers' qualifications, and material resources on the quality of education delivery in Plateau State primary schools.
6. To identify challenges and opportunities for enhancing teacher skills, improving ECCE teacher qualifications, and optimizing material resources in Plateau State primary schools.
7. To propose evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educational administrators, and other stakeholders on strategies to improve the quality of primary education in Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the pedagogical knowledge and skill level of ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau State?
2. What is the level of skill possessed by ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau State in classroom management?
3. How do ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau assess their students?

4. What level of ICT proficiency do ECCE and primary school teachers possess in Plateau State?
5. How professionally developed are ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau State?
6. How professionally competent are ECCE and primary teachers in Plateau State?

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a survey design to assess primary and ECCE teachers' perceptions of the challenges of innovation and technology integration as they relate to teacher effectiveness. The target population consisted of primary and ECCE teachers in Plateau State. Stratified random sampling was used to select participants, ensuring representation across urban, semi-urban, and rural areas. Based on power analysis (Cohen, 1988) and considering the population size, a sample of 100 teachers was selected from across the 17 LGAS of Plateau State. The instrument used for data collection was a five-point Likert scale titled "Teacher Skills Assessment Questionnaire (TSAQ)" developed by the researchers. It is a well-structured questionnaire based on the Nigerian Professional Standards for Teachers framework, measuring classroom management, content knowledge, teaching methods, assessment practices and professional conduct. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, means and standard deviation).

RESULT

Research Question 1

What is the pedagogical knowledge and skill level of ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau State?

Table 1: Mean Score and Standard Deviation Measuring Primary and ECCE School Teachers Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill

No.	*Statement*	*SA*	*A*	*N*	*D*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
1	I can effectively adapt my teaching methods to different learning styles	30	25	10	17	18	3.32	1.49
2	I am knowledgeable about child development theories and their educational implications	19	22	10	26	23	2.88	1.47
3	I can design lesson plans that align with curriculum objectives	30	34	6	14	16	3.48	1.45
4	I use appropriate teaching methodologies for different subject areas	39	31	3	14	13	3.69	1.44
5	I can effectively implement activity-based learning approaches	28	32	10	12	18	3.40	1.46
6	I use appropriate teaching methodologies for different subject areas	35	37	8	10	10	3.77	1.30
7	I can effectively implement activity-based learning approaches	30	30	15	10	15	3.50	1.40
8	I integrate play-based learning in my teaching (especially for early grades)	30	34	14	16	6	3.66	1.23
9	I can effectively teach literacy skills using phonics and other approaches	20	21	9	22	28	2.83	1.53
10	I can effectively teach numeracy concepts using concrete materials	25	19	18	11	27	3.04	1.55
Overall Mean							**3.36**	**1.43**

The teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills analysis reveals moderate to high self-reported competencies across most dimensions, with an overall mean of 3.36. Teachers demonstrated higher confidence in using appropriate teaching methodologies for different subject areas (M=3.77, SD=1.30 and M=3.69, SD=1.44), integrating play-based learning (M=3.66, SD=1.23), and implementing activity-based learning approaches (M=3.50, SD=1.40).

However, teachers reported lower competencies in teaching literacy skills using phonics (M=2.83, SD=1.53) and knowledge about child development theories (M=2.88, SD=1.47). The ability to teach numeracy concepts using concrete materials also showed room for improvement (M=3.04, SD=1.55).

The relatively high standard deviations (ranging from 1.23 to 1.55) indicate considerable variability in teachers' self-reported pedagogical knowledge and skills, suggesting inconsistent levels of competence across the teacher population.

Research Question 2

What is the level of skill possessed by ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau State in classroom management?

Table 2: Mean Score and Standard Deviation Measuring Classroom Management Skills

S/No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	I can effectively manage large class sizes	21	22	23	20	14	3.16	1.35
2	I establish clear classroom rules and routines	30	20	8	20	22	3.16	1.58
3	I use positive behavior management strategies	33	31	6	20	10	3.57	1.38
4	I can handle disruptive behavior effectively	33	30	10	17	10	3.59	1.36
5	I organize the physical classroom space to facilitate learning	23	25	15	19	18	3.16	1.44
6	I manage instructional time efficiently	30	31	12	15	12	3.52	1.37
7	I create an inclusive learning environment for all children	36	29	3	16	16	3.53	1.50
8	I can effectively manage multi-grade or multi-level teaching	12	10	25	25	28	2.53	1.33
9	I involve students in classroom management processes	20	20	30	20	10	3.20	1.26
10	I maintain appropriate teacher-student relationships	55	21	0	15	9	3.98	1.41
Overall Mean							**3.34**	**1.40**

The analysis of classroom management skills shows an overall mean of 3.34, indicating a moderate level of self-reported competence among teachers. Teachers demonstrated relatively high confidence in maintaining appropriate teacher-student relationships (M=3.98, SD=1.41), handling disruptive behavior (M=3.59, SD=1.36), and using positive behavior management strategies (M=3.57, SD=1.38).

However, teachers reported notable difficulties in managing multi-grade or multi-level teaching (M=2.53, SD=1.33), which is particularly concerning given the prevalence of multi-grade classrooms in rural areas. Managing large class sizes also presents challenges (M=3.16, SD=1.35).

Research Question 3

How do ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau assess their students?

Table 3: Mean Score and Standard Deviation Measuring Distribution of Responses on Assessment Practices for ECCE and Primary School Teachers in Plateau State.

S/No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	I use a variety of assessment methods (formative and summative)	25	28	0	22	25	3.06	1.61
2	I provide timely and constructive feedback to students	39	25	10	14	12	3.65	1.42
3	I can develop valid and reliable assessment tools	18	21	36	18	7	3.25	1.16
4	I use assessment results to modify my teaching	27	27	11	23	12	3.34	1.40
5	I conduct continuous assessment throughout the term	29	29	10	19	13	3.42	1.41
6	I keep accurate records of student performance	39	20	10	15	16	3.51	1.52
7	I communicate assessment results effectively to parents	50	17	2	20	11	3.75	1.51
8	I can identify learning difficulties through assessment	20	27	15	20	18	3.11	1.42
9	I use portfolio assessment to track student progress	18	11	30	20	21	2.85	1.38
10	I involve students in self-assessment practices	20	20	20	20	20	3.00	1.42
Overall Mean							**3.29**	**1.42**

The analysis of assessment practices reveals an overall mean of 3.29, indicating a moderate level of competence. Teachers reported higher confidence in communicating assessment results to parents (M=3.75, SD=1.51) and providing timely and constructive feedback to students (M=3.65, SD=1.42).

Areas of weakness include using portfolio assessment to track student progress (M=2.85, SD=1.38) and involving students in self-assessment practices (M=3.00, SD=1.42).

Research Question 4

What level of ICT proficiency do ECCE and primary school teachers possess in Plateau State?

Table 4: Mean Score and Standard Deviation Measuring ICT Proficiency of ECCE and Primary School Teachers in Plateau State

No.	*Statement*	*SA*	*A*	*N*	*D*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
1	I can use basic computer applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)	3	5	10	40	42	1.87	0.98
2	I can search for educational resources online	5	8	6	30	51	1.86	1.14
3	I integrate technology into my teaching when available	8	7	6	48	31	2.13	1.17
4	I can use digital tools for student assessment	6	8	5	50	31	2.08	1.10
5	I can create digital learning materials	0	13	10	50	27	2.09	0.93
6	I am comfortable using educational apps and software	7	6	9	40	38	2.04	1.14
7	I can troubleshoot fundamental technical problems	0	8	2	44	46	1.72	0.84
8	I understand issues of internet safety for children	0	7	29	30	34	2.09	0.96
9	I can use social media for professional development	20	20	10	23	27	2.83	1.53
10	I keep up-to-date with educational technology trends	5	9	9	33	28	2.01	1.05
Overall Mean							**2.07**	**1.08**

The analysis of ICT proficiency reveals significantly low levels of competence across all dimensions, with an overall mean of 2.07. This represents the weakest area among all skill domains assessed in the study. Teachers demonstrated minimal abilities in troubleshooting fundamental technical problems (M=1.72, SD=0.84), searching for educational resources online (M=1.86, SD=1.14), and using basic computer applications (M=1.87, SD=0.98).

Research Question 5

How professionally developed are ECCE and primary school teachers in Plateau State?

Table 5: Mean Score and Standard Deviation Measuring Professional Development of ECCE and Primary School Teachers in Plateau State.

No.	*Statement*	*SA*	*A*	*N*	*D*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
1	I regularly participate in professional development activities	0	4	10	46	40	1.78	0.78
2	I collaborate with colleagues to improve my teaching	20	26	6	30	18	3.00	1.45
3	I reflect on my teaching practices regularly	29	26	2	23	20	3.21	1.57
4	I keep up-to-date with educational research and best practices	9	5	29	30	27	2.39	1.19
5	I seek feedback from supervisors to improve my teaching	9	7	19	30	35	2.25	1.25
6	I have adequate opportunities for professional growth	0	0	0	60	40	1.60	0.49
7	I apply what I learn from professional development in my classroom	0	0	0	54	46	1.54	0.50
8	I am a member of a professional teaching association	6	4	0	50	40	1.86	1.00
9	I mentor or support other teachers	4	4	40	30	22	2.38	1.00
10	I engage in action research in my classroom	10	16	20	30	24	2.58	1.29
Overall Mean							**2.26**	**1.05**

The professional development analysis reveals low engagement and opportunities, with an overall mean of 2.26. Most concerning is the unanimous response regarding inadequate opportunities for professional growth (M=1.60, SD=0.49) and the limited application of professional development learning in classrooms (M=1.54, SD=0.50).

Research Question 6

How professionally competent are ECCE and primary teachers in Plateau State?

Table 6: Mean Score and Standard Deviation Measuring ECCE and Primary School Teachers' Professional Competence

No.	*Competence Area*	*VH*	*H*	*M*	*L*	*VL*	*Mean*	*SD*
1	Understanding of child development milestones	23	7	0	37	33	2.50	1.58
2	Creating developmentally appropriate learning activities	20	15	10	34	21	2.79	1.44
3	Implementing play-based learning approaches	25	6					

Summary of Findings

Table 7 summarizes mean scores and standard deviations for all six skill domains assessed in this study.

Table 7: Summary of Plateau state ECCE and primary teachers' skill Levels across domains

S/NO	*Skill Domain*	*Overall Mean*	*Overall SD*
1	Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills	3.36	1.43
2	Classroom Management Skills	3.34	1.40
3	Assessment Practices	3.29	1.42
4	ICT Proficiency	2.07	1.08
5	Professional Development	2.26	1.05
6	ECCE Teachers' Professional Competence	2.85	1.49
Grand Mean		2.86	1.31

The overall analysis of teachers' skills across the six domains reveals low self-reported competence (Grand Mean = 2.86), with significant variations between domains. Teachers demonstrated relatively higher competence in pedagogical knowledge and skills (M=3.36), classroom management skills (M=3.34), and assessment practices (M=3.29).

Critical areas of weakness include ICT proficiency (M=2.07) and engagement in professional development (M=2.26), both of which fall below the scale's midpoint. ECCE teachers' professional competence (M=2.85) also shows considerable room for improvement, particularly in fundamental areas such as understanding child development milestones and implementing specialized early childhood education methodologies.

The relatively high standard deviations across all domains (ranging from 1.05 to 1.49) indicate significant variations in teachers' competencies, which may reflect inequalities in teacher preparation, support, and continuing professional development opportunities. This variability is particularly relevant to research objective 4, which analyses the relationship between teachers' skills, ECCE teachers' qualifications, and material resources.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study reveal a concerning picture of teacher competence in Plateau State primary schools. As shown in Table 7, the grand mean of 2.86 across all skill domains indicates that teachers' overall competence falls below the expected standard on the 5-point scale. This finding aligns with Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014), who established that teacher quality remains a significant challenge in northern Nigerian states. However, this result contrasts with more optimistic assessments by Oluremi (2013), who suggested that teachers in the Middle Belt region demonstrate adequate competence levels when provided with appropriate support systems.

Table 1 reveals that teachers demonstrated moderate competence in pedagogical knowledge and skills (M=3.36, SD=1.43), representing the highest mean score among all domains assessed. Specifically, teachers showed strong confidence in using appropriate teaching methodologies for different subject areas (M=3.77, SD=1.30) and integrating play-based learning approaches (M=3.66, SD=1.23). This finding is consistent with Akinbote (2020), who noted that Nigerian teachers generally possess foundational pedagogical knowledge despite systemic challenges.

However, significant weaknesses emerged in specific areas. Teachers reported limited competence in teaching literacy skills using phonics (M=2.83, SD=1.53) and knowledge about child development theories (M=2.88, SD=1.47). These findings support concerns raised by Amadi and Iheanacho (2014) regarding inadequate specialized training for early literacy instruction. The high standard deviations (ranging from 1.23 to 1.55) indicate substantial variability in competence levels, which Arop et al. (2019) attribute to inconsistent teacher preparation programs across different institutions.

As presented in Table 2, classroom management skills achieved a mean score of 3.34 (SD=1.40), indicating moderate competence levels. Teachers demonstrated particular strength in maintaining appropriate teacher-student relationships (M=3.98, SD=1.41) and handling disruptive behaviour effectively (M=3.59, SD=1.36). These findings align with Ekine and Okoye (2015), who found that Nigerian

teachers generally develop strong interpersonal skills through experience, even when formal training is limited.

A critical weakness identified was teachers' inability to effectively manage multi-grade or multi-level teaching (M=2.53, SD=1.33). This finding is particularly concerning given the prevalence of multi-grade classrooms in rural areas of Plateau State. Udosen (2014) similarly identified multi-grade teaching as a significant challenge in northern Nigerian states, attributing this to inadequate teacher preparation and insufficient support systems. The issue of handling large class sizes (M=3.16, SD=1.35) further supports the findings by Obasi (2014), who observed that crowded classrooms have a considerable effect on teaching effectiveness in environments with limited resources.

Table 3 indicates that the assessment practices of teachers yielded a mean score of 3.29 (SD=1.42), reflecting a moderate level of competence. Teachers showed a high level of proficiency in communicating assessment outcomes to parents (M=3.75, SD=1.51) and offering prompt feedback to students (M=3.65, SD=1.42). This result aligns with the observations made by Joshua et al. (2006), who highlighted that Nigerian educators excel in communication with parents despite facing systemic challenges.

However, significant gaps were identified in modern assessment approaches. Teachers showed limited competence in using portfolio assessment to track student progress (M=2.85, SD=1.38) and involving students in self-assessment practices (M=3.00, SD=1.42). These findings contrast with recommendations by Ndem (2016), who emphasized the importance of diverse assessment strategies for improving learning outcomes. The reliance on traditional assessment methods reflects broader systemic issues Oduolowu and Olowe (2019) identified regarding resistance to educational innovations in Nigerian schools.

The most alarming finding emerged from the analysis of ICT proficiency, as shown in Table 4. With an overall mean of 2.07 (SD=1.08), this represents the weakest area among all skill domains assessed. Teachers demonstrated minimal abilities across all ICT dimensions, including basic computer applications (M=1.87, SD=0.98), searching for educational resources online (M=1.86, SD=1.14), and troubleshooting fundamental technical problems (M=1.72, SD=0.84).

These findings strongly support concerns Okafor and Okorie (2021) raised regarding the digital divide in Nigerian primary schools. The low ICT competence levels align with broader national statistics indicating that less than 20% of primary school teachers in northern Nigeria have received any form of ICT training. However, these results contrast sharply with policy expectations outlined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013), which mandates ICT integration at all levels of education.

The limited use of social media for professional development (M=2.83, SD=1.53) represents a missed opportunity for low-cost professional growth, particularly relevant given the findings of Arop et al. (2019) regarding limited access to formal professional development programs.

Table 5 reveals severely limited engagement in professional development activities, with an overall mean of 2.26 (SD=1.05). Most concerning is the unanimous response regarding inadequate opportunities for professional growth (M=1.60, SD=0.49) and limited application of professional development learning in classrooms (M=1.54, SD=0.50). Teachers also reported minimal participation in regular professional development activities (M=1.78, SD=0.78).

These findings strongly corroborate research by Arop et al. (2019), who found that less than 35% of primary school teachers in northern Nigeria participated in any professional development program. The lack of professional development opportunities contradicts policy provisions by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (2018), which mandates continuous professional development for all registered teachers.

However, teachers showed some engagement in peer collaboration (M=3.00, SD=1.45) and reflection on teaching practices (M=3.21, SD=1.57), suggesting informal professional learning occurs despite systemic limitations. This finding aligns with Oluremi's (2013) observations that teachers develop coping strategies through informal networks when formal support systems are inadequate.

Table 6 (though incomplete in the provided data) indicates that ECCE teachers demonstrated moderate to low specialized competence (M=2.85, SD=1.49). The limited understanding of child development milestones (M=2.50, SD=1.58) and the creation of developmentally appropriate learning activities (M=2.79, SD=1.44) are significant concerns for early childhood education quality.

These findings support concerns raised by Amadi and Iheanacho (2014) regarding inadequate specialized training for ECCE teachers in Nigeria. The low competence levels contrast with international best practices outlined by UNESCO (2015), emphasizing the critical importance of specialized early childhood education training. However, the findings align with national assessments by UNICEF (2017), which identified ECCE teacher preparation as a critical gap in Nigeria's education system.

The overall pattern of findings, summarized in Table 7, reveals a complex competence profile among Plateau State teachers. While teachers demonstrate basic pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills, critical gaps in ICT proficiency, professional development, and specialized ECCE competence significantly limit their effectiveness. The high standard deviations across all domains (ranging from 1.05 to 1.49) indicate substantial inequality in teacher competence levels, which may contribute to the educational disparities noted by the Nigeria Education in Emergency Working Group (2020).

These findings provide empirical support for the statement of the problem, confirming that despite

significant investments in primary education, underlying issues related to teacher preparation and professional development continue to impact educational quality. The results align with broader World Bank (2018) assessments, which identified teacher quality as a primary constraint to educational improvement in sub-Saharan Africa.

The significant variations in competence levels across domains reflect the complex interplay of factors affecting teacher development in Plateau State. Compared to modern approaches (such as ICT integration and contemporary assessment practices), the relatively stronger performance in traditional pedagogical areas suggests that teacher education programs have not adequately adapted to changing educational requirements. This finding supports observations by Okoye and Okwelle (2014) regarding the need for curriculum reform in teacher preparation programs.

The particularly low engagement in professional development activities reflects broader systemic challenges the Universal Basic Education Commission (2020) identified, including limited funding for teacher support programs and inadequate infrastructure for delivering professional development in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

This analysis provides empirical evidence addressing several of the research objectives and questions outlined in the study. The findings highlight significant skill gaps among primary school teachers in Plateau State, particularly in ICT proficiency and professional development. ECCE teachers demonstrate moderate to low levels of specialized competence, suggesting inadequate qualifications and training for early childhood education.

The data supports the premise outlined in the statement of the problem that despite significant investments in primary education in Plateau State, educational outcomes remain suboptimal due to underlying issues affecting the quality of education delivery, including inadequate teacher preparation and insufficient professional development opportunities.

Recommendations

i. Targeted Professional Development Programs: Develop and implement comprehensive professional development programs focused on the identified areas of weakness, particularly ICT skills, assessment practices, and specialized ECCE methodologies.
ii. ECCE Teacher Specialization: Establish specialized training programs for ECCE teachers focusing on child development, play-based learning, and developmentally appropriate practices.
iii. ICT Integration: Prioritize the development of teachers' ICT skills through practical, hands-on training and the provision of necessary technological resources.
iv. Continuous Professional Development Structures: Establish formal structures for continuous professional development, including mentoring programs, professional learning communities, and regular in-service training.
v. Resource Allocation: Align resource allocation with identified teacher and school needs, ensuring equitable distribution between urban and rural schools.
vi. Further analysis incorporating data on material resources and additional contextual factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape in Plateau State and inform more targeted interventions.

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