

**The Impact of Teaching Methods on
Pre-Primary School Pupils' Learning Achievement in
Protection Issues in Selected Nursery and Primary
Schools in Ondo West Local Government**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of three teaching methods on pre-school pupils' learning achievement in some selected nursery and primary schools in Ondo West Local Government. Three public schools were randomly selected from Ondo West Local Government Area, for the study. 124 pupils were pre-tested in Protection issues being cognitive aspect of learning development. 35, 43, 46 pupils were respectively taught using play-way, demonstration and conventional methods and post-tested. Questionnaires were also administered to their teachers to generate their characteristics and challenges to effective teaching. Furthermore, observation note was made by research assistants on the classroom situation and the entire process during pre-test and post-test. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse mean differences in pupils' scores while post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine the direction of the differences. Descriptive statistics namely frequency and percentages were employed to analyse pupils' and teachers' characteristics and challenges of teaching. The study found that pupils' age range between 4 and 6 while all the eight teachers have NCE with 75% of them having over 11 years teaching experience and 50% majored in Pre-primary and Primary education. Pupils did significantly better in the post-test than the pre-test. No significant main effect of method was found yet pupils taught by demonstration method performed relatively better than play-way and conventional methods. Furthermore, the study found no significant main effect of gender and teaching methods on pupils' achievement scores. However, girls performed relatively better than boys in the post-test. The study also found that pupils inattention particularly among boys, inadequate instructional materials, lack of uniform ECCD curriculum in use, insufficient learning space are major challenges facing effective teaching and learning. Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers should be encouraged to use play-way method and other methods suitable for promoting learning at this level of education. In the same vein, teachers' capacity need be built while relevant and adequate instructional materials, current ECCD curriculum and adequate space including pupils' chairs and tables are provided to aid teaching and learning. Furthermore, more ECCD teachers need be recruited and inducted to de-congest over-crowded classes.

Key words: Teaching methods, pre schooling, protection issues, student's achievement.

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Introduction

In the last few years, Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) became part of the primary school education. A preschool (also nursery school, kindergarten outside the US) is an educational establishment offering early childhood education to children between the ages of three and five, or seven, prior to the commencement of compulsory education at primary school. They may be privately operated or government run, and the costs may be subsidized (Wikipedia). According to (2004) National Policy on Education, ECCDE includes the crèche, the nursery and the kindergarten. The 2013 National Policy on Education makes modification in the categorization into ECCDE and Kindergarten. It describes Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) as *the care, protection, simulation and learning promised in children from age 0-4 years in a crèche or nursery*, p5. The kindergarten according to the policy is *the one-year education given to children aged 5 prior to their entering primary*, p6. The kindergarten has been included in the free, compulsory, universal and qualitative basic education. The purpose of the pre-primary education include to effect a smooth transition from the home to the school; prepare the child for the primary level of education; teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms, etc through play etc.

One of the responsibilities of government for pre-primary education is to promote the training of qualified pre-primary school teachers in adequate number. This indicates that government recognises the importance of qualified teachers in implementing pre-primary education curriculum. The type of methods teachers use in imparting knowledge and skills go a long way in determining the success of pre-primary education but what the teachers do not have they cannot give. As rightly put by NPE (2004), no educational system can rise above the quality of its teacher. In the same vein, can a nation rise above the quality of her education? Teachers need to ensure that appropriate teaching method or a combination of two or more methods are used in order to achieve the stated aims and objectives of the lesson note.

The skilful and competent teacher uses as many methods and techniques as possible because, there is no single method which is regarded as the best for every teaching situation. In a single lesson therefore, the teacher can employ more than one method to facilitate learning. The success of every method depends on the caliber of the teacher and his professional experience in the field of teaching. Studies have shown that coupled with appropriate instructional materials, right choice of methods facilitate learning achievement to a large extent. This applies at all levels of education and particularly pre-primary which deals with foundation of learning and development.

Literature Review

The success of teaching always lies mainly on the know-how of the subject involved and the use of appropriate method(s) that is required per time during the process of transfer of knowledge. A successful teaching is a product of effective and efficient teaching process. Vin-Mbah (2012) cited South and Laslett (1993) and Oyekan (1994) who described teaching as an all-purpose profession engaged in human resource development for individual and economic growth. Teaching is also as an attempt to help someone acquire or change, some skill, attitude, knowledge, idea or appreciation. In other words, the teacher's task is to create or influence desirable changes in behaviour, or in tendencies toward behaviour in his students/pupils. Effective teaching involves informing and explaining stimulating, direction, guiding, administrating, identifying what to learn, method of learning, problems, evaluating, reporting, recording, classroom management, socialization and school-community relationship among others

There are many definitions of teaching method by different authors. Teaching method can be defined as a practical application of teaching principles based on the nature of learner, the nature of the subject and the learning needs of the pupils/students. According to Oyekan (1994), teaching methodology is concerned with what method techniques or approach, individuals or group of teachers select and use in actual classroom situation. Some of the methods that are applicable to Pre-primary Schools level of education include Play method, Supervised Activity method, Activity method, Demonstration method, Games method, Excursion method, Storytelling method, Pictural method and Assignment method.

Play is natural to children and involves their personal experience. Fredrich Froebel (1782-1852) a German educator who developed the Kindergarten or children's garden is also considered to be the inventor of the Play-way Method of education as well. Onukaogu, Oyinloye and Iroegbe (2010) found that pioneers of early childhood education like Froebel, Montessori, Piaget, Vygotsky and John Dewey believed that the preschool curriculum should be based on play way. For instance, Froebel in Essa (1999) believed that the child's natural unfolding occurs through play. According to Biswas (2012), the significance of play in teaching is that a child is happiest when engrossed in play and play can happen in different forms – imitation of family members, to playing with toys, or playing tag, hide seek or simply running about in groups. Play helps children to improve their motor skills, enhance their power of imagination and creativity which have implications for the 21st century teachers for steering away the act of imparting education from being a tutor

centric activity to a learner centric one. Esomonu, (2005) maintains that playful situations keep the children alert, active and responsive. Using this method in a pre-school, involves incorporating the various learning activities in a subject into play. Children learn best by doing and this confirmed by a study by John (2004) which found that play-way method led to better achievements in social studies than in group learning and conventional methods. More so, when their interest is aroused children are found paying attention and concentration for considerable longer periods. Similarly, Popoola (2014) in a study of the effect of play way method on the numeracy skills of Early Basic Education School pupils in Ekiti State showed that there was significant difference in the performance of students in favour of those in guided play group. Also, gender has no influence on the pupils' achievement in each group.

Demonstration method refers to the type of teaching method in which the teacher is the principal actor while the learners watch with the intention to act later. In demonstration method, the teacher does whatever the learners are expected to do at the end of the lesson by showing them how to do it and explaining the step-by-step process to them (Ameh, Daniel and Akus, 2007 cited by Ekeyi, 2013). According to Mundi (2006), demonstration is a display or an exhibition usually done by the teacher while the students watch with keen interest and this involves showing how something works or the steps involved in the process. Ogwo and Oranu (2006) affirmed that demonstration method is the most widely used instructional method for acquisition of practical skills as it involves verbal and practical illustration of a given procedure. The method can be used at any level of education to facilitate learning. The demonstration method is used to show the students, good sitting position, how to hold the pencil, how to turn over the notebook page, good outline formation, how to build mental storage etc. At the pre-primary level, teacher can demonstrate counting of objects, how to add or subtract objects which is addition and subtraction of numbers. According to Daugherty (1974), showing students how to perform an activity as well as telling them about the activity to stimulate both visual and auditory responses and therefore accelerates the learning process. In a study by Ekeyi (2013) students taught by demonstration method had significant effect on their achievement than those taught with the conventional lecture method. On the other hand, Ayang and Idaka (2012) found no significant difference in the joint effect of demonstration and project instructional methods and aptitude on psychomotor performance of students in basic electricity.

Conventional teaching method refers to a common strategy teachers employ in the teaching of any subject. According to Gbamaja (1991), it is also called talk and chalk or textbook method. It is the most commonly used method and in the course of employing it, the teacher dominates the teaching with very little participation on the part of the learners. Education sector analysis conducted in Nigeria in 2005 found that teacher talks for an average of 35 minutes out of the 40 minutes of the instructional time in secondary school. A study by Oduolowu and Oyesomi (2012) revealed that pre-school teachers used teachers centered method of teaching with few materials provided. In conventional method, the teacher is seen as the repository of all knowledge while the students are passive recipients of knowledge transmitted by the teachers in the process of learning and hence, it is teacher centred. The method has the advantage of covering a wider area within a short time may not be ideal for pre-primary pupils; however, it is not uncommon to find teachers using them at this level. In view of the methods, Ogwu (2005) posits that there is not one best approach to instruction.

There is no consensus on the role pupil's gender play in learning achievements. To some, girls perform better in languages than boys while boys perform better in the sciences and mathematics than girls. At the pre-school level, Popoola (2014) found no difference between the achievement of the male and female pupils taught by play way and guided demonstration methods. This finding is supported by other studies like Popoola (2004), Oyinloye and Babalola (2012) which found that male and female pupils can perform well without disparity if they were exposed to the same condition. On the other hand, Kolawole (2002) and Popoola (2008) indicated that gender has influence on students learning in Science and Mathematics.

Having critically examined three methods of teaching, the question now is what is the comparative effect of play way, demonstration and conventional teaching methods on students' academic pupils' learning achievements in protection skills and to what extent is this mediated by their gender?

Statement of the Problem

Having a sound foundation at the formative stage of a child to a large extent portends quality primary education and later secondary education. Right from pre-primary school, child's interest, learning outcomes and attitudes are significantly determined by teacher use of appropriate methods. Thus, in view of the significance of teacher as facilitator of learning through use of relevant methods, the study investigated the impact of play-way, demonstration and conventional methods on pupil's learning achievements in the rudiments of numbers and shapes. It further sought to determine the extent to which pupils' gender mediates on the learning achievements.

Purpose of Study

The objective of the study is to find out the impact of three teaching methods on pre-school pupil learning achievement in some selected Nursery and Primary schools in Ondo West Local Government. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- i. determine pupils and teachers' characteristics
- ii. examine the impact of play-way, demonstration and conventional methods of teaching on protection issues.
- iii. find the extent pupils' gender influence their learning outcomes.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the pupils' characteristics?
2. What are the teachers' characteristics?
3. What are the challenges of teaching pre-primary school?

Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores.

H₀₂: There is no significant main effect of the teaching methods on pupils' achievement scores.

H₀₃: There is no significant main effect of pupils' gender on their achievement scores.

Significance of the Study

There is dearth of studies on pedagogies at the pre-primary school level in Nigeria partly because the level of education was most prominent in private schools and received less attention by government and scholars until recently. More so, pre-primary education as a course is not offered by many universities in the country. The findings of the study will therefore provide among others information on most useful of the three methods in facilitating learning at pre-primary school level. Such findings will be useful to the in-service pre-primary schoolteachers in pedagogy application and as well contribute to knowledge of pre-service teachers. Furthermore, the findings will serve as feedback to proprietors/proprietresses and the education sector

particularly Inspectors of education and school heads on the methods most applicable to pre-primary school level. The study provided basis for further investigation by future researchers for scaling up and generalising.

Methodology

The research design employed is quasi-experimental study involving three groups in pre-test and post-test.

Experimental group

- A. Play-way method
- B. Demonstration method

Control group

- C. Conventional method

The research design is as depicted in the table

Research design showing teaching methods, pre-tests, treatments and post-tests

Teaching methods	Pre test	Treatment	Post test
Play way	O1	X1	Q4
Demonstration	O2	X2	Q5
Conventional	O3	X3	Q6

Population and sample

The population of the study are all pre-primary school pupils ages 4 to 6 and their teachers in Ondo state. The sample comprised eight pre-primary school teachers and 124 pupils randomly selected from three primary schools located in the inner city of Ondo in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo state.

Sampling procedure

First, the researchers visited Ondo West Local Government Education Authority to obtain the list of public primary schools having pre-primary section. Second, three schools having required enrolment were purposively selected from 15 model and regular primary schools within the inner city of Ondo town. These schools consist of two models and one regular. The models have more conducive learning environment than the regular.

Research Instruments

The research instruments include teachers' questionnaire, protection issues achievement tests (pre-test and post-test) and observers' rating scale. The questionnaire was prepared on a wide range of their characteristics and challenges of teaching at ECCDE. The questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A dealt with background information of the respondents such as gender, teaching experience, qualification, etc. Section B sought issues relating to teaching/learning process and use of instructional materials.

Pupils' achievement test was drawn using pre-primary school curriculum. The section on cognitive development dealing with protection issues such as child rights and responsibility, crude and inhuman treatments, denial of parental protection, sex exploitation, child trafficking, physical and mental violence, neglect and exploitation were selected and developed into questions after consulting with their teachers. The draft test was given to experts in pre-primary education to scrutinise. This was edited accordingly and final copies produced for pre-test.

Procedure for data collection

Having obtained written permission from the Education Authority, the researchers visited the selected schools to meet the heads and later the teachers to brief them on the assignment and make necessary arrangements for the research exercise. Thereafter, the schools were visited for purpose of administering the pre-test and teachers' questionnaire with the assistance of their teachers. The scripts and questionnaires were collected back immediately after completion, marked and scores were recorded and coded respectively. Subsequently, teachers were taught and detailed on the assignment. Teachers then carried the teaching based on the assigned method in their respective schools. At the end of the teaching which lasted for two weeks, post test was administered to the pupils in their classes. The post-test was marked and scores recorded. Necessary observations were made and noted during the teaching.

Data analysis

Data collected from the teachers' questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages while the test scores were subjected to inferential statistics like t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Results

The results are presented in order in which the research questions and the hypotheses were stated. The first part of the analysis provides answers to the research questions while the second part provides empirical evidence on the impact of three teaching methods on pre-school pupils' learning achievements. The third part provides information on challenges of teaching and learning process as well as instructional materials in the pre-primary school level.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the Pupils' Characteristics?

Table 1

Pupils' Characteristics

Age	Frequency	Percentage
4	62	50.0
5	46	37.1
6	16	12.9
Total	124	100.0

Table 1 shows that age 4 pupils constitute half (50.0%) of the entire pupils studied while 37.1% and 12.9% were ages 5 and 6 respectively. This shows that pupils in Nursery 2 are not of the same age meaning that the cohort included overage.

Teaching Method by Pupils' Gender

Table 2

Methods of Teaching by Pupils' Gender

Teaching methods	Male	Female	Total
Play-way method	19	16	35
Demonstration method	23	20	43
Conventional method	21	25	46
Total	63	61	124

Intact classes were used and therefore the population of the subjects are not the same. Thus, table 2 shows that a total of 124 pupils participated in the research process. 35 pupils were involved in play-way method which comprised 19 male and 16 female. Demonstration method involved 43 pupils made up of 23 male and 20 female respectively. For Conventional method, 46 pupils comprising 21 male and 25 female participated respectively. Overall, total of 63 male and 61 female pupils were involved in the research work.

Teachers' Characteristics

Research Question 2: What are the Teachers' Characteristics?

Table 3

Teachers' Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
NCE	8	100%
B.Ed	-	-
M.Ed	-	-

Table 3 shows eight (8) teachers teaching these kids involved in the research have the requisite minimum qualification. In other words, all the teachers were NCE holders which means that they are professionally qualified. To determine if they are meant to teach at this level as recommended by the National Policy on Education, the teacher teaching experiences were sought and the finding is as highlighted in table 4.

Table 4

Teachers' Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5	1	12.5
6 – 10	-	0
11 – 15	2	25
16 years and above	4	50
No indication	1	12.5

Table 4 shows that among the eight teachers whose teaching experience were sought, 12.5% fell within the range of 1 – 5 years, while 50% fell within 16 years and above. This implies that half of the teachers sampled have experience of 16 years and over which indicates that experienced teachers teach at pre-primary schools.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference the Pre-test and the Post-test scores

Table 5 shows that there is significant main effect of pre and post test score since the significant probability is less than the 0.05 level of significant. **H₀₁** is therefore rejected.

Table 5
ANOVA table showing effects of Pre-test and Post-test scores

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	13.408	18	.745	3.514	.000
Intercept	204.908	1	204.908	966.620	.000
SCORE	13.408	18	.745	3.514	.000
Error	48.332	228	.212		
Total	622.000	247			
Corrected Total	61.741	246			

t-test in Table 6 further shows the level of difference between pre and post test scores.

Table 6
t-test for difference of Means between pre-test and post-test

Residence	N	\bar{X}	Df	t critical	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
Pre	125	3.8680				
Post	122	5.9672	121	5.126	0.000	Reject Ho1

The t- test analysis in Table 6 shows that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the post and pre-test examination with a p-value of 0.000. The table further reveals that the average score of pupils in the post test exam was 5.9672 and 3.8680 for the pre-test. This shows that the pupils performed significantly better in the post test than the pre-test exam which indicates that the treatment had significant effect on the pupils.

H₀₂ : There is no significant main effect of the teaching methods on pupils' achievement scores.

Table 7 shows that there is no significant main effect of teaching methods on the achievement test since $F(18, 228) = 1.056$, $P > 0.05$. H₀₂ is therefore not rejected. In spite of this, post-hoc analysis was computed to determine the relative means of the teaching methods

Table 7*ANOVA table showing effects of teaching methods on pupils' achievement scores*

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	11.984 ^a	18	.666	1.056	.399
Intercept	386.629	1	386.629	613.200	.000
SCORE	11.984	18	.666	1.056	.399
Error	143.757	228	.631		
Total	1112.000	247			
Corrected Total	155.741	246			

Table 8*Estimated Mean Scores by Method*

Teaching Method	\bar{X}	Std
Conventional	4.358	3.153
Demonstration	5.851	3.904
Play way	5.574	3.237

Table 8 shows the respective mean scores of the teaching methods which are: Conventional (\bar{X} =4.358); Demonstration \bar{X} =5.851) and Play way (\bar{X} = 5.574). Pupils taught by demonstration method performed relatively better than those taught by conventional and play way methods. While pupils taught by play way performed negligibly better than those taught by conventional method. This indicates that demonstration method is most suitable for teaching Pre-primary pupils in protection issues.

H₀₃: There are no significant main and interaction effects of pupils' gender on their achievement scores.

Table 9*ANOVA showing the main and interaction effects of gender on pupils' achievement scores*

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	6.688 ^a	18	.372	1.542	.077
Intercept	233.008	1	233.008	966.992	.000
Gender	6.688	18	.372	1.542	.077
Error	54.939	228	.241		
Total	634.000	247			
Corrected Total	61.628	246			

Table 9 shows that there is no significant main effect of gender on the achievement test since $F(18, 228) = 1.542, P > 0.05$. H_{03} is therefore not rejected. In spite of this, post-hoc analysis was computed to determine the relative means of gender on pupils' achievement.

Table 10

Estimated Mean Scores by Gender

Gender	\bar{X}	Std Dev
Male	5.192	3.448
Female	5.648	3.715

Table 10 depicts the respective mean scores of male and female pupils. Male (mean=5.192) and Female (mean = 5.648). This shows that female pupils performed relatively better than the male counterparts.

Discussion

The study sought to find the impact of three teaching methods namely play-way, demonstration and conventional on pre-school pupils learning achievements in cognitive development (protection issues). Three schools were randomly selected for the study. The pupils were pre-tested, taught using the three methods and post tested. Their teachers were also served questionnaire on challenges facing effective teaching and learning. Findings of the study are as discussed.

Pupils involved in the study are between age 4 and 6. A total of 124 pupils comprising 63 boys and 61 girls constituted the subject. All the teachers were females having NCE which means they are professionally qualified to teach at that level as recommended by the National Policy on Education (2013). Besides, being females implies that they have the requisite patience to teach the children. However, only half of the teachers are specialist in pre-primary education while others studied Art and Management education courses. The effect of not having all teachers specialising in pre-primary education could have been minimised by the long length of teaching experience of most of the teachers. Teachers' performance at this level of education is enhanced by accelerated promotion and commendations.

Pupils performed significantly better in the post-test than the pre-test indicating that the treatments were worthwhile. It suffices to say that teachers are very important in facilitating pupil's knowledge particularly at pre-primary school level where pupils believe so much in their teachers. Teaching at this level involves individual attention yet teachers were able to impart knowledge meaningfully. Pupils

better performance in the post-test indicates that the teaching instilled some degree of confidence and knowledge in them to attempt the questions than the pre-test when most of them were afraid to attempt the questions. It implies that good teaching raises pupils' knowledge, competence and prepares them for future tasks.

Comparing the three methods, pupils taught using demonstration method did better than play way and conventional methods while those taught using play way method performed relatively better than their conventional method counterparts. This suggests that demonstration method is relatively better in teaching cognitive development and specifically protection issues. Thus, child rights and responsibilities, crude and inhuman treatments, denial of parental protection, sex exploitation, child trafficking, physical and mental violence, neglect and exploitation are better taught using demonstration and play-way methods than conventional method.

The study found no significant main effect of gender on pupils' learning achievement. Girls did not do significantly better than boys though girls had higher mean scores than boys in each of the methods. This indicates that irrespective of the methods used by the teachers and the environment, girls learn relatively better than boys at pre-primary school level. This indicates that girls are more receptive to learning at this level of education than boys. Besides, use of teaching strategies and instructional materials by teachers, teaching experience and teachers' course specialisation could account for the variance in scores apart from pupils' gender. It was however found that facilities such as chairs, instructional materials namely curriculum and textbooks, teaching aids and understanding of the new system of education, adequacy of teachers and incentives to teachers are some of the challenges of effective teaching and learning.

Conclusion and recommendations

The type of teaching methods employed by the teacher to a large extent determines the learning outcomes. The study found that pupils did significantly better in the post-test than the pre-test indicating increase in knowledge was mediated by use of different methods, qualified and experienced teachers teaching at the pre-primary school level as well being females who had skills of managing children. Besides, play way method was found to be more effective than demonstration and conventional methods suggesting that children learn best through play because of the age.

The findings of the study have far reaching implications for educational practice. Thus, it is recommended that school heads and inspectors should encourage pre-primary teachers to use methods suitable for facilitating learning among which are play way and demonstration methods. Use of experienced female teachers to teach at pre-primary school needs be sustained with re-training in modern knowledge and skills in handling children at this level. More instructional materials, uniform curriculum, chairs and tables, as well as classroom space and skilled teachers need be provided to make teaching and learning more efficient. Besides, government should train and employ more teachers in early childhood education to aid effective teaching and learning at the pre-primary school in order to provide sound foundation for primary education in line with the objective of the National Policy on Education.

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