

## Pre-Service Nursery and Primary Teachers' Knowledge of Pedagogical Practices in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Teacher education program of nursery and primary education seeks to prepare teachers who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to effectively integrate theory and practice in carrying out their professions. This study investigated pre-service nursery and primary teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. 294 respondents were selected from College of education, Ikere-Ekiti and Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti. The instrument used was Pre-service Nursery and Primary Teachers' Knowledge Test on Pedagogical Practices (PNPTKTPP). The instrument has face and content validity. The reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained with the use of Kuder-Richardson 20. Frequency count, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer questions raised. T-Test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test hypotheses. The findings revealed that college of education pre-service nursery and primary teachers in Ekiti State have low knowledge on pedagogical practices while university pre-service nursery and primary teachers in Ekiti State have average knowledge on pedagogical practices. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teacher training institutions in Ekiti State should introduce more courses related to pedagogical practices to the course content of pre-service nursery and primary teachers in Ekiti State among others.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Pre-service nursery and Primary teachers, Knowledge*

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### **Background to the Study**

The fortune of any education in whatever sphere of life rests solely on sound education system and such a system would take care of children from the early childhood education also known as pre-primary education to the tertiary level of education. Early childhood education is education given in an educational institution to children under the age of eight. It consists of crèche nursery and kindergarten (FRN, 2013). It is also an impetus to other forms of education, that is, it is a foundation and bedrock upon which other levels of education are built and so possesses a strong tendency that could influence other levels of education. The success of the education system depends to a large extent on the quality of the teachers that man the educational system. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) lends credence to this when it states that no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers and that teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. Training preschool teachers in higher institutions has shown that government recognizes the importance of preschool education. It outlines some steps in the National Policy on Education designed to achieve the objective of pre-primary education in Nigeria among which is making provision in teacher training institutions for preparation of specialist teachers in pre-primary education.

Teacher education can be said to be crucial to the achievement of overall educational goals of this nation since it goes a long way to affect the type of teachers who are products of such programs. This implies that, there is a need to train teachers who are knowledgeable and competent in good teaching skills because excellence in pre-school education depends on teachers that teach at this level of education. Pre-service teachers should be given adequate training on preschool pedagogical practices before they undertake the responsibility of nurturing and guiding pupils. They need to acquire knowledge in pedagogical practices in line with the objective requirements of preschool education that emphasizes holistic development.

Pedagogy relates to the how or practice of educating. It refers to set of instruction techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide the opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It concerns the how of adult and child interaction which is important in early childhood education context, given how children learn and develop during early childhood. How children learn and develop at this stage is subject not only to what is taught but more importantly, how it is facilitated (Anders, 2015). Pedagogy has a significant effect upon the quality of early childhood education and the impact early childhood can have on children. Effective pedagogies facilitate positive interactions by structuring environments and planning activities that fully engage children. This in turn enhances the children's cognitive, linguistic and social development, since positive relationships have the most consistent and enduring influence on a child's development (Bowman 2001, Shonkoff & Philips, 2000).

Pedagogical practice is a way of introducing pupils to the application of pedagogical knowledge and the implementation of the educational work with children. Siraj-Blatchford (2008) states that quality teaching is defined as pedagogical practices that facilitate for diverse children their access to knowledge, activities and opportunities to advance their skills in ways

that build on previous learning, assist in learning how to learn and provide a strong foundation for further learning in relation to the goals of early childhood curriculum. Some of these pedagogical practices are play, songs, dramatization, child-initiated activities, and reinforcement among others.

Early childhood education is concerned with ensuring children achieve positive outcomes. Study on teaching learning outcome shows that quality pedagogy is identified as a key level for improving children's outcomes. Early childhood pedagogy guides the practice of early childhood educators. The need to properly train teachers to acquire and be able to demonstrate appropriate teaching skills is so important that it should be a concern of teacher education. Okoro (2004) opines that the quality of teachers determine the strength of any educational system and the quality of learners. It is therefore necessary for teacher education programs to make pre-service teachers acquire all necessary skills that would impact on their work when they qualify as teachers in future. Salawu (1999) submits that teacher educators should not leave the acquisition of basic skills till the time the teacher trainees might have left their institutions of training but rather use the best practice to help teacher trainees learn and acquire essential skills and attitudes. Despite this important role of pedagogical practices in early childhood education, pre-service teachers have not been fully exposed to it. An observation of the way pre-service teachers' exhibit knowledge of pedagogical practices reveals some level of incompetence. Ogonor and Badmus (2006) observe that in Nigeria, teacher training institutions are deficient in producing teachers who are properly grounded in pedagogical practices and content knowledge

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study is aimed at identifying pre-service nursery and primary teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices in Ekiti State.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the level of knowledge of College of education pre-service teachers on pedagogical practices in Ekiti State?
- ii. What is the level of knowledge of University pre-service teachers on pedagogical practice in Ekiti State?

### **Hypotheses**

- i. There is no significant difference in the College Education and University pre-service teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices.
- ii. There is no significant influence of level of education on pre-service teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practice.

### **Methodology**

The research design employed for this study is descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of all nursery and primary pre-service teachers in College of Education Ikere-Ekiti and Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents for this study. The sample consists of 294 pre-service nursery and

primary teachers from 200level to 400 level. A self designed instrument titled Pre-service Nursery and Primary Teacher's Knowledge Test on Pedagogy Practices (PNPTKTPP) was used. To estimate the reliability coefficient of the instrument, Kuda-Richardson 20 was employed to obtain reliability coefficient of 0.72 level of significant to ascertain the reliability of the instrument.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics of T-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of the Analysis were held significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

## Result

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of knowledge of College of Education pre-service teachers on pedagogical practices in Ekiti State?

**Table 1:** Level of Knowledge of College of Education Pre-service Teachers' on Pedagogical Practices

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. D.
0-19	6	3.5	35.12	11.72
20-39	95	55.6		
40-59	65	38.1		
60-79	5	2.9		
80-100	0	0.0		
Total	171	100.0		

**Highest Mark Obtainable = 100**

**Decision Value:** Low ( $x = 0.00-39.00$ ), Average ( $x = 40.00-59.00$ ), **High** ( $x = 60.00-100$ )

Table 1 shows the level of knowledge of college of education pre-service teachers' on pedagogical practices. The table shows that 3.5% of the teachers scored 0 to 19 on the pedagogical practices test, 55.6% of them scored 20 to 39 on the test, 38.1% scored 40 to 59 and the remaining who constituted 2.9% scored 60-79. None of the pre-service teachers scored 80 to 100. The overall mean score of the pre-service teachers' knowledge is 35.12 with a standard deviation value of 11.72. Based on this result, it can be inferred that the college of education pre-service teachers in Ekiti State have low knowledge on pedagogical practices.

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of Knowledge of University Pre-service teachers on pedagogical practices in Ekiti State?

**Table 2:** Level of Knowledge of University Pre-service Teachers on Pedagogical Practices

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std . D
0-19	3	2.4	42.93	15.46
20-39	45	36.6		
40-59	57	46.3		
60-79	15	12.2		
80-100	3	2.4		
Total	123	100.0		

**Highest Mark Obtainable = 100**

**Decision Value:** Low ( $x = 0.00-39.00$ ), **Average** = 40.00-59.00), **High** ( $x = 60.00-100$ )

Table 2 shows the level of knowledge of university per-service teachers on pedagogical practices. The table shows that 2.4% and another 2.4% of the teachers scored 0 to 19 and 80 to 100 respectively on the pedagogical practices test, 36.6% of them scored 20 to 39 on the test, 46.3% scored 40 to 59 and the remaining who constituted 12.2% scored 60-79. The overall mean score of the university pre-service teachers' knowledge is 42.93 with a standard deviation value of 15.46. Based on this result, it can be inferred that the university pre-service teachers' in Ekiti State have average knowledge on pedagogical practices.

**Table 3:** Summary of T-test showing Difference in College of Education and University Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Pedagogical Practices

Variable	N	Mean	Std.D	Df	T	Sig(p)	Remark
<b>KNOWLEDGE ON PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES</b>							
College of Education	171	35.12	11.72	292	-4.927	.000	Significant
University	123	42.93	15.46				

Table 3 shows the difference in College of Education and University teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices. The table shows that there is significant difference between College of Education and University pre-service teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices ( $df = 292$ ;  $t = -4.927$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Based on this result, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

**Table 4:** Summary of T-test showing influence of Level of Education on College of Education Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Pedagogical Practices

Variable	N	Mean	Std.D	Df	T	Sig(p)	Remark
Knowledge on pedagogical practices	96	35.42	12.43	169	.377	.706	Not Significant
200 Level							
300 Level	75	34.73	10.81				

Table 4 shows that there is no significant influence of level of education on College of education pre-service teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices (df =169; t = .377;  $p > 0.05$ ). Based on this result, hypothesis 2(i) is rejected.

**Table 5:** Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance showing Influence of Level of EDUCATION on University Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Pedagogical practices.

Level of Education	N	Mean	SD
200 level	22	42.50	12.70
300 Level	47	41.49	15.88
400 Level	54	44.35	16.23
Total	123	42.93	15.46

  

Analysis of Variance						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	210.782	2	105.391	.437	.647	Not Significant
Within Groups	28935.559	120	241.130			
Total	29146.341	122				

Table 5 shows the influence of level of education on University pre-service teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices. The table shows the overall mean score of the teachers in 200 level is 42.50, those in 300 level had mean score of 41.49 while others in **400** level had

mean score of 44.35. These mean scores reveal no significant differences in values. Therefore, the ANOVA table shows that there is no significant influence of level of education on University nursery and primary teacher trainee's knowledge of pedagogical practices ( $F_{(2,120)} = .437$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Hence, hypothesis 2 (ii) is rejected.

### **Discussion**

The findings of revealed that the college of education pre-service teachers in Ekiti State have low knowledge on pedagogical practices while University pre-service teachers' in Ekiti State have average knowledge on pedagogical practices. It can be inferred that the training institutions of early childhood education programs in the state are delinquent in the training of specialized knowledge of early childhood pedagogies which aid the holistic development of the child. The results corroborate Bowman (2001) that teachers who have teaching certificate may not have had the specialized training that is critical to being knowledgeable early childhood professional and that most early childhood teacher preparation program tend to convey out dated child development knowledge.

It was stated in hypothesis one that there is no significant difference in the college of education and university pre-service teachers on knowledge of pedagogical practices. The result of T-test on table 4.3 showed that there is a significant difference between college of education and university pre-service teachers knowledge of pedagogical practices.

**Hypothesis 2** states that there is no significant influence of level of education on college of education and university pre-service teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices. The result on table 4.4 shows that there is no significant influence of level of education on college of education and university pre-service teachers' knowledge of pedagogical practices. This implies that irrespective of the academic level of the students, it has no influence on their knowledge of pedagogy.

### **Conclusion**

It could be concluded from the study that college of education pre-service teachers have low level of knowledge on pedagogical practices while University pre-service teacher have average knowledge on pedagogical practices. Also it can be concluded that the level of education of students in College of education and Ekiti State University has no influence on their knowledge of pedagogical practices.

### **Recommendations**

1. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:
2. Pre-service teachers should find a way of acquiring knowledge on early childhood pedagogy through professional development sessions and educational resources including texts, journals, surfing the net for current trends in pre-primary education
3. Teacher training institutions in Ekiti state should introduce more courses related to pedagogical practices to the course content of pre-service teachers in Ekiti State as it is the practice in other parts of the world.

4. Regular workshops, seminars and conferences on early childhood Education should be organized for pre-service teachers to keep them consistently abreast of current innovations and practices in the field.
5. Managements of teacher training institutions should employ more experts in childhood education to train students in order to produce effective and sound teachers.

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## APPENDIX

### Pre- Service Early Childhood Education Teacher's Knowledge Test on Pedagogical Practices (PECETKTPP)

Dear Respondents,

This test is designed mainly to assess your knowledge on appropriate pedagogical practices at early childhood education. High level of confidentiality is guaranteed, so please respond appropriately.

Thank you.

#### Section A

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. School type: College of Education ( ) University ( )
3. Level: 100 ( ) 200 ( ) 300 ( ) 400 ( )

#### SECTION B: PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

1. The set of instructional techniques and strategies used by caregivers/teachers to enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions can be regarded as pedagogy. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
2. Effective pedagogy does not necessarily involve child-initiated activities. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
3. Dramatization method is not one of the methods that give children opportunity to communicate and acquire use of language. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
4. Child-initiated activities should not be given priority when deciding on pedagogical approach to use in facilitating children's learning and development. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
5. The pedagogical practice that emphasizes the need for instructors to use the principle of behavior modification is known as reinforcement. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
6. Adapting to a particular method of teaching so that the children can get used to it is a good pedagogical practice at pre-primary and lower primary school levels. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
7. A good pedagogical practice at pre-primary level should not over emphasize play because it is not all children's learning activities that can be carried out through play. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
8. Using different approaches, strategies and techniques in pre-primary class can make children get confused about learning. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
9. Allowing children the freedom to select learning activities is a pedagogical practice that should be encouraged at pre-primary level. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
10. Allowing children to engage in constant communication and discussion with others is one pedagogical practice that must not be over-emphasized at pre-primary school level. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
11. The most obvious pedagogical role of the caregiver or teacher at pre-primary level is that of knowledge disseminator. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )

12. A pedagogical practice that cannot achieve much in the area of language for children is the use of rhymes and songs. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
13. The practice of providing children with different materials to play and learn with may result to making teaching and learning difficult to handle. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
14. It is not a concern of pedagogical practice at pre-primary level to pay attention to children's culture since it has no impact in what they learn. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
15. Scaffolding, feedback, modeling, questioning, encouraging, praising and acknowledgement are not part of pedagogical techniques and strategies needed at pre-primary school level. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
16. At pre-primary level, pedagogical practice of teachers should aim mostly at facilitating cognitive development. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
17. Task activities need not to be initiated by teachers if maximum results must be achieved. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
18. The practice of engaging children in cooperative learning spans engagement in classroom by encouraging interaction among children. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
19. Labeling corners of the classroom is a compulsory pedagogical practice at pre-primary school level to promote vocabulary development. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )
20. The pedagogical practice of considering the interest of each child in the class will lead to problem of choosing the best learning strategy to use. True ( ) False ( ) No Idea ( )