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SELF-CONCEPT AND QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN IFELODUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OSUN STATE

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Abstracts

The study examined self-concept and quality of service delivery among early childhood educators in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Osun State. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. All primary school teachers constitute the population of the study. 200 primary school teachers were randomly selected from 20 primary schools (ten public and ten private) that were equally randomly selected for the study. A description survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument was a self-designed questionnaire tagged "Questionnaire on Self-Concept and Quality of Service Delivery (QSCQSD)" was used to collect data from the respondents. Frequency count and percentage were used to analyse the demographic data while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), Independent sample t-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses formulated in the study at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between self-concept and quality of service delivery of early childhood educators. Also, there was significant relationship between self-concept of early childhood educators and the quality of their service delivery based on work experience and academic qualification. However, there was no significant relationship in the self-concept of early childhood educators and the quality of their service delivery based on gender and marital status. Hence, recommendations were made that workshop should be organised for early childhood educators on how to build their self-concept, early childhood educators should see teaching of children as a prestigious profession and they should be encouraged to give room for self-development as they further professional training and/or higher degrees that can further boost their self-concept as well as delivery of quality service.

Keywords: Self-concept, Quality of service delivery, Early childhood educators, Gender, Work experience, Academic qualification

Introduction

Every society requires adequate human and material resources to improve its social organization, preserve the culture, enhance economic development and reform the political structures. It cannot be over stressed that education is strong pillar in the development of all human society. It is through education that ignorance, illiteracy even poverty is eliminated by proper acquisition of skills for productivity and leadership. The value placed on education by any nation explains the achievement level in the lives of the people and the nation at large. To record great educational success, the place of teachers particularly, those working with children cannot be underscored. Teachers remain the most important factor determining the success rate of any educational system, childhood education inclusive.

Early childhood education is at the base of educational system and therefore constitutes the bedrock of the nation's new technological and scientific education. The need for enhancing quality service delivery of early childhood educators however cannot be under estimated. A teacher who is not constantly expanding and deepening his knowledge and skills cannot deliver adequately. Quality education is a multi-dimensional concept involving various inputs, process and outcomes. Olorunsola (2014) stressed that among the indices or inputs for quality education is the teaching force, which must be qualitatively adequate in terms of professional preparedness, pedagogically skilled and self-motivated. Hence, the need for enhancing quality service delivery of childhood educators so as to encourage total commitment to continuous self-improvement on the job with a view of promoting quality in education programmes.

Self-concept being viewed as self-perception or an impression one has about one self represents a significant pre-condition for the professional improvement of teachers, the advancement of teaching as a profession as well as development of positive self-image in learners (Mishra & Yadav, 2012). Many educators and social scientists believe that self-concept is very important, if not the single most important personality variable for the prediction of academic achievement. George, Olayiwola, Adewole and Osabuohien (2013) stated that self-concept plays important role in individual's behaviour and performance. For teachers, their self-concept and the value they place on the teaching profession as well as the imparting knowledge are likely to influence their

service delivery within and outside the classroom settings. In other words, teachers' self-concept can influence the way they teach and the way they perceive their students' learning abilities.

Roche and Marsh (2000); Lee and Tsai (2010); Devos, Dupriez and Paquay(2012) have emphasised the importance of teachers' competence, beliefs (often referred to as self-efficacy or self-concept), which may influence teacher-related psychological variables. Hence, it is important for teacher education programmes to ensure pre-service teachers develop positive self-concept, not only as a major goal in itself, but also as an important mediating factor that can have a positive impact on other desirable outcomes in teaching contexts (Roche & Marsh, 2000).

Teachers' perception of themselves and of their teaching can affect the quality of their service delivery. Their teaching is further regulated by these perceptions of teaching that develop as the interplay between perceptions and teaching practices (Wang, 2012). Generally, it is recognised that teachers' genuine professional development has to begin with a change in their perception and beliefs about teaching and learning (Wang, 2012). In this modern era, quality teacher service delivery has been given increased importance across different nations, as effective teachers are able to enhance the performance of their learners (Lowrie & Jorgensen, 2015).

Quality service delivery does not depend only on the teachers. Other environmental factors such as inadequate facilities and equipment, overcrowded classroom, excess workload and unhealthy relationship with colleagues and administrators can affect the quality of service delivery of teachers. In addition, the influence of these factors on individual teacher perhaps differs. The disparity is also affected by numerous independent demographic variables, such as, gender, age, teaching experience, level of education and marital status among others. It is fundamental to explore and comprehend the factors influencing teachers and how the demographic independent variables affect the teacher as well. One way to achieve this is by analysing the teacher self-concept and relating it to the demographic variables. These analyses could provide vital information and could help in enhancing teachers' quality service delivery.

In the past, researchers have worked in the areas related to self-concepts and service delivery of teachers. Ogunyale, Salami, Gbadegesin and Jolayemi (2012) studied the relationship between self-concept and teachers' professional roles in South western Nigeria. More so, Adewale (2016) worked on teachers' self-concept and teacher effectiveness as perceived by teachers of English and secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. Similarly, Oyewole (2017) worked on

teachers' self-concept and self-esteem in pedagogical communication as determinants of academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo State. The works of these researchers centered on self-concept of teachers of other levels of education rather than early childhood educators.

Oyewumi (2012) also worked on the relationship between teacher's gender, years of teaching experience as well as education level and their teaching activities in secondary schools in Nigeria with a view to stress the prominent position that demographical variables occupy in the teaching and learning in school. Previous researchers worked in the areas similar to this present study, however, none of these works actually focus on self-concept of early childhood educators and quality of their service delivery.

A very close assessment indicates that there is a gap in the existing literature on self-concept of early childhood educators and quality of their service delivery. The consequence is the gross negligence of this important issue in Nigerian primary schools. It is observed that the pupils who are recipients of early childhood education are not really receiving the best service delivery from the handlers of this level of education. It is against this background that this study sets out to investigate the relationship between self-concepts and quality of service delivery among early childhood educators in Ifelodun Local Government Area, Osun State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with the aim of finding out the relationship between self-concept and quality of service delivery of early childhood educators. All teachers of both public and private primary schools in Ifelodun Local Government Area, Osun State constitute the population of the study. Ten public primary schools and ten private primary schools were randomly selected to participate in this study. Also, ten teachers were equally randomly selected from each of these schools to give a total number of 200 teachers. These selected teachers served as the respondents to the research instrument. A self-designed and validated instrument titled "Self-concept and Quality of Service Delivery Questionnaire (SQSDQ)" with a reliability co-efficient of 0.68 was employed to elicit information from the respondents. The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency count and percentage were used to analyze the demographic data while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), independent

sample t-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses formulated in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between self-concept and quality of service delivery among early childhood educators in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Osun State

Table 1: Table showing the relationship between self-concept and quality of service delivery among early childhood educators in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Osun State

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	r	Sig.	Remark
Self-concept	23.11	5.18	200	.423	.000	Significant
Service delivery	30.35	8.02				

Table 1 shows the relationship between self-concept and quality of service delivery among early childhood educators in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Osun State. There was significant relationship between self-concept and quality of service delivery among early childhood educators in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Osun State ($r = .423$; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on gender

Table 2: Table showing the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	91	27.37	6.46	-.674	198	.501	Not Significant
Female	109	28.02	6.96				

Table 2 shows the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on gender. There was no significant

difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on gender ($t = -.674$; $df = 198$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender does not have any significant influence on the of service delivery of early childhood educators.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on experience

Table 3: Table showing the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on experience

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Experienced Educator	77	31.89	8.33	-3.52	198	.001	Significant
Inexperienced educator	123	27.90	6.88				

Table 3 shows the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on experience. There was significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on experience ($t = -3.52$; $df = 198$; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. The delivery of quality service by experienced early childhood educators was better than that of the inexperienced early childhood educators.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on marital status

Table 4: Table showing the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on marital status

Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Married	84	27.43	6.43	-.529	198	.597	Not Significant
Single	116	27.94	6.96				

Table 4 shows the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on marital status. There was no significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on marital status ($t = -.529$; $df = 198$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on academic qualification

Table 5: Table showing the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on academic qualification

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	726.128 ^a	2	363.064	5.921	.003
Intercept	27964.214	1	27964.214	456.063	.000
Qualification	726.128	2	363.064	5.921	.003
Error	12079.372	197	61.317		
Total	197030.000	200			
Corrected Total	12805.500	199			

Table 5 shows the difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on academic qualification. There was significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on academic qualification ($F_{(2, 197)} = 5.921$; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. This implies that academic qualification has significant influence on quality service delivery by early childhood educators. Table 6 revealed the sources of the difference in the quality service delivery by early childhood educators.

Table 6: Summary of estimated marginal means with the Groups

Monthly Income	Mean
NCE/OND and below	29.30
HND/BSc/B.Ed	33.21
Postgraduate	38.35

Table 6 revealed that the significant difference exposed by table 5 is as a result of the significant difference among the following academic qualifications of the early childhood educators. i)NCE/OND and below ii) HND/B.Sc/B.ED iii) Postgraduate. This implies that the early childhood educators with postgraduate certificates (Mean = 38.35) exhibited delivery of quality service than early childhood educators with other qualification.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between self-concept and quality of service delivery among early childhood educators in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Osun State. This implies that for early childhood educators to deliver quality service at any childhood education programme, good self-concept is a key personality trait that must be exhibited. Because of the peculiarity of learners in this programme, it is important for every adult working with children to comport themselves appropriately as well as help children to develop positive self-image. One important way a child learns of his self-worth is through his interactions with his caregiver or teachers. More so, the way he perceives himself will definitely reflect in his present and future outcomes. For great outcomes to be achieved, teachers also have great role to play. In view of this, result of this study corroborates the assertion of Stearns (2017) that there is a positive relationship between self-concept and productivity at work place. In other words, good self-concept of workers yields high productivity.

Another finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on gender. This indicates that being a male or female has no influence on the level and quality of service delivery at work place especially in early childhood settings. Although, the male teachers often tend to rate themselves higher above the female on self-concept while female tend to rate themselves higher when it comes to caring for children. The tenderness of women and their role at home makes their claim appear

almost true. However, finding of this study supported Muthuri and Arasa (2017) who disclosed that gender did not account for any difference in the quality of service delivery.

Result of the study also showed that there was significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on years of experience. This means that the practical experience acquired over the years has strong influence on the quality of service delivery. It is logical to perceive staff with longer active years of serving children and their families to be able deliver qualitatively in handling issues related to children's education and the job better than a beginner on the job. This finding validates the submission of Melnick and Meister (2008) who posited that experienced teachers often do their jobs better than inexperience teachers.

The outcome of the study further revealed that there was no significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on marital status. This shows that being married or single has nothing to do with the quality of service delivery. This finding is in support of the submission of *Odanga, Aloba, and Raburu* (2015) that the delivery of quality service is not a function of employee's marital status. On the other hand, however, Kong (2009) posited that employees who are single are more likely to deliver quality service because they are free from the distraction of marital issues unlike the married employees.

The finding of the study further revealed that there was significant difference in the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators based on academic qualification. It implies that the higher the qualification attained by early childhood educators, the better the quality of service delivery the render. This may be justified by the exposure to advance content knowledge and training on how to handle children. This finding substantiates the review of Manning, Garvis, Fleming and Wong (2017) that there is a significant association between having lead teachers with higher qualifications and the overall structural and process quality within ECEC settings. In other words, employees with higher qualification are more likely to deliver high quality service than employees with lower educational qualification. On the other hand, however, the outcome of this study negated the finding of Donnelly (2018) who discovered that educational qualification did not influence the quality of service delivery.

Conclusion

It was established in this study that a positive self-concept significantly influences quality of service delivery of early childhood educators. Also, there was no significant difference between the quality of

service delivery among early childhood educators based on gender and marital status. However, years of experience and academic qualification significantly influence the quality of service delivery of early childhood educators.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

- 1) Workshop should be organised for early childhood educators on how to build their self-concept.
- 2) Early childhood educators should see teaching of children as a prestigious profession.
- 3) Early childhood educators should be encouraged to acquire more profession trainings and/or higher degrees that will further boost their self-concept as professionals as well as delivery of quality service.

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