ASSESSMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRADUATES ON ATTAINMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION OBJECTIVES IN NORTH-CENTRAL GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA

BY

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(MED/EDU/2127/2011-2012)

DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS DEGREE IN EDUCATION (HOME ECONOMICS)

MAY, 2016

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DECLARATION

I, Rhoda Elisha BAKA hereby declare that the work in this Dissertation titled: "**ASSESSMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRADUATES ON THE ATTAINMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION OBJECTIVES IN NORTH-CENTRAL GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA**" has been carried out by me, in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The information derived from literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and list of references provided. This dissertations work has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree at this or any other institution.

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Rhoda Elisha BAKA Date

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CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation titled "ASSESSMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRADUATES ON ATTAINMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION OBJECTIVES IN NORTH-CENTRAL GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA," submitted by Rhoda Elisha, BAKA meets the regulations governing the award of masters Degree in Education (M.Ed) in Home Economics Education, in the department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literacy presentation.

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Prof. K. Bala Dean, Postgraduate Studies	Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, my late Father Elisha Baka and my late brothers Zakar and Dauda Elisha.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINATION OF TERMS

Early Childhood Education: Education that is provided for children between the age of three (3) to five (5) or six (6) years prior to their entry into the primary school.

Early Childhood Education Graduates: These are teachers who underwent training in Early Childhood Education on how to handle and teach children between the ages of three to 3-6 prior to their entry into the primary school years who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school.

Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Graduates: A teacher who graduated from a College of Education and obtained a Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NCE	Nigeria Certificate in Education
NPE	National Policy on Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care Education
NCCE	National Commission for Colleges of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
UBE	Universal Basic Education
EFA	Education For All
NUC	National Universities Commission
WASC	West African School Certificate
NTI	National Teachers Institute
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
GCE	General Certificate in Examination
UME	Universities Matriculation Examination
AU	African Union
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
COE	College of Education
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
NBPTS	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ECEICSTS	Early Childhood Education influenced children smooth transition to school
ECEPCPS	Early Childhood Education preparing child for primary school
ECEIACC	Early Childhood Education influenced adequate care for children
ECEIECNSC	Early Childhood Education influenced enquiry and creativity among school children
ECEISNSC	Early Childhood Education influence social norms in nursery school children
ECEITSNSC	Early Childhood Education influenced team spirit among nursery school children
ECEIHHNSC	Early Childhood Education influenced health habits among nursery school children

ABSTRACT

This research work titled Assessment of Early Childhood Education Graduates on Attainment of Pre-primary Education Objectives in North-central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The main objective of this study was to assess the Early Childhood Education graduates on attainment of pre-primary education objectives. The study had seven specific objectives, among other was to determine the extent at which Early Childhood Education graduates prepare children for smooth transition from home to school. In line with the objectives, seven research questions and seven null hypotheses were raised. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The total population of the study was 801 parents of early school children. Three hundred and fifty (350) parents were used for the study. Self designed four rating scale structured questionnaire was administered to parents for data collection. Face to face method was employed for data collection. Table of frequencies and percentage was used to analyze the respondents' bio-data. An index 2.5 weighted mean score was used an benchmark for answering research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. The study revealed among others that, Early Childhood Education graduates prepared children for smooth transition from home to school. The researcher concluded that method of evaluation strategy adopted by Early Childhood Education graduate teachers in inculcating good health habit to the nursery school children was not properly checked by the school. Based on the findings and conclusion it was recommended among other that, parents of children enrolled in Early Childhood

Education should send their children to schools with graduates of early childhood education and teachers who want to teach at this level should obtain a minimum of NCE, degree certificate in Early Childhood Education.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

When the issue of the present Nigerian Educational system is raised today, the first sets of thought that come to mind are: the decline in academic standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractice, mass promotion syndrome and the like. These call for an in-depth study and analysis aimed at tutoring each and every stakeholder in the education system on how their actions and inactions have individually and collectively contributed to the collapsing state of education in Nigeria. In any case, knowledge and skill acquisition, which education is all about, are very vital. In a time of scarce public resources, the care and education of young children will continue to fall to the bottom of the priority list until there is a public understanding about the economics of rising to the next generation. High-quality Early Childhood Education is too vital to be brushed aside as social service expenditure or as too expensive to consider in tight budgetary times. Modern societies show serious concern for the education of their young ones for obvious reasons.

Early Childhood Education is the type of education given to children before primary school level of education. The programme is aimed at meeting the need for physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional and social development of children before they enroll into Primary Education (Mishra, 2007). It comprises of all the essential support a young child needs to thrive in life as well as in the society. The

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) (2000) defined pre-primary education as comprising of programmes that offer structured and purposeful learning activities in a school or a center to children aged between three (3) to six (6). Most brain development happens before a child reaches primary school age where the brain cells preliterate, synapses crackle and the pattern of lifetime is established. At this stage children develop their abilities to think, speak, learn and reason and lay the foundation for values and social behaviours as adults, (Mishra, 2007). The type of teaching, training and stimulation a child receives at this stage determine to a great extent what a child can attained later in life as individual and in the society.

Pre-primary education is defined as the initial stage of organized instruction, designed primarily to introduce very young children to a school-type environment, that is, to provide a bridge between home and school-based instruction, designed to meet the educational and developmental needs of children at least three to five years of age, and have staff that are adequately trained (i.e qualified) to provide an educational programme for them.

Nearly all the pre-primary education in the country, however, is provided by private proprietors. Some of these establishments go by the names 'Day Care Centers' or 'playgroups' and take care of the children while their parents are at work or go for other engagements but most of them are nursery schools for providing Early Childhood Education. With the possible exception of the few nursery schools established by some universities, colleges of education, companies and a few

individuals, teacher quality is generally low. It is only few of the nursery schools especially those owned by educational institutions, private companies and wealthy individuals that can afford to engage the services of university graduate degree holders and the holders of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) qualifications. Most others employ a few N.C.E. teachers (if any at all), who are usually underpaid, while others employ mainly Grade Two teachers and secondary school leavers with the School Certificate or General Certificate in Education (Ordinary Level) qualification.

The nursery schools that engage the services of qualified teachers, especially those owned by private individuals usually charge high fees while those that charge relatively low fees usually employ unqualified teachers. Employing unqualified teachers who receive low pay is a strategy used by many proprietors to make their services affordable to a great majority of parents and at the same time maintain a satisfactory profit margin.

As stated in the National Policy on Education (2014) document, the purpose of pre-primary education includes among others:

a. providing a smooth transition from the home to the school;
b. preparing the child for the primary level of education;
c. providing adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work;
d. Inculcating in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, and the local environment, playing with toys, artistic and musical activities, etc.
e. Developing the spirit of enquiry and creativity in children

f. Developing in the children the sense of team spirit
g. Teaching the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms, etc. through play, and
h. Inculcating social norms.

The document lists a number of measures to be taken by government to ensure the achievement of the objectives of pre-primary education. They include:

a. Encouraging private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education;
b. Making provision in Teacher Training institutions for production of specialist teachers in pre-primary education;
c. Ensuring that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother-tongue or the language of the local community;
d. Ensuring that the main method of teaching in pre-primary institutions will be through play;

The importance of teachers therefore cannot be overemphasized because the bulk of the work of implementing any curriculum lies on the teacher. This is why it is paramount to ensure and assess the quality and quantity of teachers that are produced through NCE who are saddled with such responsibilities. The Nigerian Government realizing this fact stated in section 8 sub section 70 of the National Policy on Education (2008) that NCE shall be the minimum qualification for teachers thus by implication, NCE shall be the minimum qualification for teachers in pre-primary school. The pre-primary level of education is the foundation of the entire structure and the success or failure of the whole educational system even

though only fourteen (14) percent of money allocated for public Education is put in these early years of education (Michael, 2000).

Early Childhood Education Programme Annual Assessment Report 2012-2013 also saw the need to implement the new disposition tool distributed by the assessment council in various ECE programmes which will give them more data to look into professionalism and student growth. Evidence shows the benefits of ECE in the fields of education, labour market outcome and reduced anti-social behaviours such as participation in crime. Zuzovsky (2003) reveals that in many countries Early Childhood Education needs to be reformed. Some of these reforms call for professionalization of teachers, improvement of the teachers selection process, up-grading the disciplinary preparation of teachers, up-grading the level of pre- primary teachers to graduate, opening second degree programme in early childhood education, promotion aligned with standards, as announced by different Teachers' Unions such as, the National Task Force for the Advancement of Education, the Committee of the Commission for Higher Education (Ariav et al., Report, 2006).

Early Childhood Education Graduates are teachers who underwent training in Early Childhood Education on how to handle and teach children between the ages of three to 3-6 prior to their entry into the primary school years who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school.

The structure of provision for children under six is a mixture of public and private provision. This Spotlight focuses on publicly-funded provision. This includes almost all five-year olds and half of four-year olds who are enrolled in

infant classes in pre-primary school and some targeted interventions for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes the importance of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria and as a result it was given prominence in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) as one of the programmes in the Nigerian educational system especially in Colleges of Education. Mahuta (2007) also stated that the aim of ECE is to foster the proper development of the children, identify and address their problems, harness their potentials, mould their character, enhance their learning, equip them for life, so that their actions are channeled towards positive, personal, communal and global development in all ramifications of life. It is in line with the above that the research becomes interested in the study of Early Childhood Education with particular reference to the assessment of Early Childhood Education Graduates on Attainment of Pre-primary Education Objectives in North-central Geo-political Zone, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In recent times, attention is given to the importance of Early Childhood Education.

Early childhood education promotes self confidence and self control among children at early years of life. The realization of the objectives of the programme depends on experience and skills of teachers in Early Childhood Education. This therefore means that there is a correlation between Early Childhood Education, teaching qualification and quality practice in teaching and learning.

Despite the importance of early childhood education, the researcher observed that in Nigeria, there is a gap between the quality and the quantity of teachers and the practice of Early Childhood Education. This seemingly wide gap has continued to evoke fear and inhibitions on the minds of parents and educationists over the consequences of lack of teachers' quality and practice on the child.

In addition, the researcher's interaction with some parents of early school children shows that, the much efforts put by the teachers of early childhood education to achieve the basic objective of pre-primary education which targets at the physical, cognitive, psychological and social development of children before they enter primary education, yet the early school children are not displaying and manifesting the expected learning outcome as they enroll into primary education. This means that, the stated objectives by National Policy on Education (2014) are not being attained.

The parents also observed that, most teachers of early childhood education are not trained graduates that can professionally handle these children. The researcher feels that, the inability of the early school children to exhibit the expected learning outcome might be as a result of allowing non-graduates of Early Childhood Education to teach the children. Furthermore, parents of the children in Early Childhood Education are complaining that, the objectives of Early Childhood Education of child ability to display spirit of enquiry, creativity, environment, art, music, display of social norms and learning the rudiments of numbers letters, colours, shapes and forms are not achieved. It is in line with the above that the

researcher becomes interested in assessing the Early Childhood Education graduates on Attainment of Pre-primary Education Objectives in North-central Geo-political Zone, Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study was to assess the Early Childhood Education Graduates on Attainment of Pre-primary Education Objectives in North-central Geo-political Zone, Nigeria. Hence, the specific objectives were to:

1. determine the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on preparing children for smooth transition from home to school in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.
2. assess the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on preparing children for primary school level of education in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.
3. establish the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on providing adequate care for children while parents are at work in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.
4. investigate the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on developing spirit of enquiry and creativity in the children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.
5. determine the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting social norms in nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.
6. establish the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting sense of team spirit among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.
7. determine the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting good health habits among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

1.4.1 Research Questions

The following research questions have been formulated based on the specific objectives to guide the study;

1. What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on preparing children for smooth transition from home to school in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on preparing children for primary school level of education in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?
3. What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on providing adequate care for children while parents are at work in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?
4. What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on developing spirit of enquiry and creativity in the children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?
5. What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting social norms in nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?
6. What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting sense of team spirit among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?
7. What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting good health habits among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

1.5 Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the course of this study.

HO_1: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on smooth transition of children from home to school in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria

HO_2 There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on children preparation for primary school level of education in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

HO_3 There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on care for children while parents are at work in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

HO_4 There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on developing spirit of enquiry and creativity among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

HO_5 There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting social norms among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

HO_6 There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting sense of team spirit among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

HO_7 There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting good health habits among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will be significant in the following ways:

The findings of this study will be of significant benefit to policy makers in state and federal ministries of education, National Commission for Colleges of Education, school administrators/proprietors, students and researchers.

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the Federal and State Ministries of Education because it will provide them with information that will be vital in policy formulation and implementation of curriculum for Early Childhood Education.

Through this study, the National Commission for Colleges of Education will have vita information that will be useful to improve the implementation of curriculum for Early Childhood Education in both federal and state Colleges of Education.

Furthermore, the results of the study will enable school administrators and school proprietors to employ qualified ECE to handle Children in Early Childhood Education programmes in their institutions or schools.

In addition, the findings of this study will be beneficial to students and researchers as it will provide them with information on Early Childhood Education and useful recommendation for further studies.

This study has become necessary as the outcome could be a guide to school and educational administrators as it will provide them with information that will serve as a guide or basis to identify the extent, status, distribution and use of teaching staff in all the nursery schools in North-Central states of Nigeria.

In addition, the findings of the study would provide information to educational managers on the needs to provide necessary equipments and facilities needed to promote Early Childhood Education in the country.

Finally, the study will be useful to other researchers by providing useful literature reviews and recommendations that would facilitate their study. It will also provide guidance to ECE researchers in selecting, administering and interpreting the results of assessment of young children. It is also expected to be an eye opener to National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) the level of professionalism and the teacher's commitment through ECE programme towards achieving the objectives stated in the National policy.

1.7 Basic Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. quality of the Early Childhood Education teachers in the smooth transition of children from home to the school is a strong factor.
2. the training given in the Colleges of Education is relevant in preparing the child for the primary level of education.
3. teachers provide adequate care for the children while their parents are at work.
4. teachers encourage children to develop spirit of enquiry and creativity in the Nursery school.
5. teachers impact social norms in the nursery school.
6. Teachers motivate children to develop the sense of team sprit.
7. teachers help in inculcating good habits in the children especially health habits.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on assessing the Early Childhood Education graduates on their Attainment of Pre-primary Education Objectives in North-central Geo-political Zone, Nigeria. The study was the six states in North Central states. The states are (Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa and Federal Capital Territory. The study was delimited to the three states with Early Childhood Education graduates centers (Plateau, Nasarawa and the FCT). The respondents comprised of parents of early school children. The reason for the selection was because parents are responsible for evaluating the teachers of Early Childhood Education programme.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on review of related literature under the following sub-headings:

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.2. Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Concept of Early Childhood Education programme

2.3 History of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

2.4 The need for Early Childhood Education

2.5 National policy on pre-primary education

2.6 Policy Implementation

2.7 Teachers' role in improving Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

2.8 Educational qualification and job performance of ECE teachers

2.9 Developmental challenges faced by teachers

2.10. Problems of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

2.11 Children at the early childhood stage

2.12 Empirical studies

2.13 Summary of the literature reviewed

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was built on the theory called Socio-cultural Theory and the Social Learning Theory by Bandura, (1995). The Social Learning theorists shared many assumptions with behaviorists particularly the belief

that people are shaped in fundamental ways by their environment through learning processes. However, they add to these learning processes observational learning. They believe learners learn by observing others and therefore that other people (the social environment) are particularly important as an influence on behaviour. The choice of these theories was based on consideration that the theories are concern with learning processes. The bottom line for the choice of this theory was the considered social learning and early education as very fundamental for challenges of their learners.

These theories are related to this work because this work is aimed at assessing the Early Childhood Education graduates on their Attainment of Pre-primary Education Objectives in North-central Geo-political Zone, Nigeria. It is believed that in early childhood education, teachers motivate the attitudes of the learner in positive directions; they guide, counsel, educate and encourage participation in the child that is the learner. These theories are related to this study as they allow children to learn by observing others.

Bandura (1995) was the major motivator behind Social Learning Theory. One of the main things that he was concerned with was how cognitive factors influenced development, but he confined his approach to the behavioural tradition. Bandura called his theory a Social Cognitive Theory. Like other behaviourists, Bandura believed that cognitive development alone cannot explain changes in behaviour in the child and he believes that learning processes are primarily responsible for children's development. However, he felt quite strongly that the

cognitive ability of the child affects learning processes. This, he feels, is especially true of the more complex types of learning.

One thing that Bandura found in his early studies is that children do not always immediately show the learned behaviour. Bandura (1995) showed a group of children models who were rewarded for displaying new aggressive behaviours towards an inflated clown. A second group of children were shown the same aggressive behaviours, but this time the behaviours were punished. When the children were later given the chance to play with the clown, those who had seen the behaviour rewarded showed many of the model's aggressive behaviours, whereas the ones who had seen the behaviours punished did not. However, when these same children were later offered rewards for displaying these aggressive behaviours they did so without difficulty. Bandursa interpreted this as suggesting that all the children had learned the behaviours but various punishments had inhibited the responses of some of the children. This distinction between acquisition and performance has been of great interest to researchers studying the potential effects on children (and adults) of viewing violence on television.

In order to learn the behaviour of another, the person must first pay attention to what the other person (called a model) is doing. They must then encode and form a memory of the behaviour the model performs. At a later time, this memory must be translated back into behaviour so that the observer may imitate it. In order to imitate the behaviour effectively the observer may need to practice it. Whether or not the observer actually makes use of the behaviour they have learned depends on

whether they are motivated to do so. The observer's motivation may be affected by several factors, principally, whether they believe that reinforcement is available if they imitate. Their beliefs may be influenced by the consequences of their past behaviour (as in behaviourism) but also by the observed consequences of the model's behaviour. If the model is observed to be reinforced for their actions, then imitation becomes more likely, assuming that the observer values reinforcement that the model was observed to get. Conversely, if the model is observed to be punished then imitation becomes less likely (these processes are called vicarious reinforcement and punishment). A number of factors besides reinforcement and punishment influence whether a particular person is likely to be selected as a model and imitated. Models are more likely to be imitated if the observer perceives them to be similar to themselves. Imitation is also more likely when the model has high status and is attractive.

Secondly, the Socio-cultural Theory, one of the pioneers of Socio-cultural Theory was Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), whose writings in the 1920s and 1930s emphasized how children's interaction with adults (Teachers) contributes to the development of skills. According to Vygotsky, sensitive adults are aware of a child's readiness for new challenges, and they structure appropriate activities to help the child develop new skills. Adults act as mentors and teachers, leading the child into the zone of proximal development.

Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist, was convinced that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. According to him culture

was a determinant factor of individual's development. Humans are the only species to have cultures, and every human child develops in the context of a culture. Therefore, human cognitive development is affected to a larger or lesser extent by the culture in which individuals are enmeshed, including family environments. According to Vygotsky, culture seems to make two kinds of contributions to children's intellectual development. Children acquire much of the content of their thinking (cognition) from it and, secondly, they acquire the processes or means of their thinking from it. In short, culture teaches children both what to think and how to think. In this way, children are very likely to model their behaviour on the observed behaviour of their parents, teachers, and peer group. Learning is therefore dependent on social interaction.

One of the notable aspects of learning that Vygotsky highlighted was that a child learns better with the help of an adult. He did not assign much importance to the stages of development of a child (like Piaget did), but was more interested in the potentials for cognitive development. This, he believed, is limited to a certain time span which he called the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD). At any given time in a child's development, he/she will be more susceptible to certain new knowledge. Obviously, if new knowledge is not forthcoming then the child would have probably reached the highest point of his/her knowledge. In order for the child to increase his knowledge, then an adult (teacher) would have to scaffold a child to new heights of knowledge in a particular domain.

Studying children presents many challenges. Young children cannot easily put their understanding into words, and their attention span is limited, also human development involves change, so scientists and researchers must study how behaviour and thinking change over time and find creative ways of discovering how to derive conclusions about childhood growth. It is based on the above theory that this study was based to assess the role of quality teachers in attaining and implementing the objectives of ECE in North-Central Zone of Nigeria

2.2. Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Early Childhood Education Programme

For the sake of clarity and easy understanding of this study it is of great importance to define and conceptually give a clarification on the major key word in the topic of discussion. According to the National Child Welfare Policy of 1989, a child is anybody in Nigeria below the age of 18 years. This appears to agree with the United Nations age definition of a child. As you may be aware, the Nigerian law also regards anybody below the age of 18 years as a child (minor). In other words, anybody below the age of 18 in Nigeria cannot vote or be voted for (FGN Constitution, 1999). Mallum (2008) defined a child as anybody that is within the period from birth to 18 years. There are three major ways of classifying childhood: These are the early childhood, the middle childhood and the later childhood. The early childhood period is generally referred to as the period from birth till about the age of five or six years Mc combs (2010). In other words, it is the period before the

official primary school age in Nigeria. It means that early childhood does not go beyond the pre-school age or what is popularly called Nursery School in Nigeria.

Maduewesi (2006) referred to Early Childhood Education as the education offered to children who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school. He further maintained that it is a semi-formal education arrangement, usually outside the home whereby young children from the age of about 3 years are exposed through various activities of learning in a group setting through mental, social and physical learning suited to their developmental stages, until the mandatory age of government approved formal schooling. FGN (2004) refers to Early Childhood Education (pre-primary education) as an education given in an educational institution to children aged 3 to 5 prior to their enrollment in the primary school.

According to Nakpodia (2003), Early Childhood Education can be seen and defined as the foundation of the child's education which forms an integral part of the child's early education which may be formal or informal which is also given in an educational institution to children aged between 1 to 5+ prior to enrolment into the primary school. Early Childhood Education provides for the physical, motor, health, nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and social development of the pre-school child. Early Childhood Education as defined by Johnson (2011) is the education meant for children between the ages of 3 to 6 years. The National Policy on Education (2004) sees Early Childhood Education as the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five years plus prior to their

enrolment into the primary school. That is to say that Early Childhood Education is a special kind of education provided in an institution for children, prior to their enrolment into the primary school. Early Childhood Education, in the context of formal education can be said to be "a formalized educational process to which children between the ages of one through five plus are subjected to in designated pre-school institutions" (Mezieob, 2006). It also refers to a programme, all aimed at the physical, cognitive and social development of children before they enter primary school (Mishra, 2007).

There are different names for the various establishments that take care of children at this stage. Such names as given by Kolawole (1989) and Maduewesi (1999) included:

1. **Daycare or playgroup**: For children below the age of three. There are many of them in urban centers in Nigeria. Working mothers use them as safe places to keep their children.
2. **Crèche:** For children below three years. This establishment is usually located where the mother is working. They are usually available within the campuses of tertiary institutions, hospitals, markets or big factories.
3. **Nursery School:** This is also known as pre-primary school establishment. This is usually for children between three and five years in Nigeria. The Nursery schools are common in urban centers as well as small towns in Nigeria. They are owned mainly by private individuals, NGOs, groups and institutions.

4. **The Kindergarten:** This normally refers to the school for children between five and six years. That is, children who are about to enter the primary school. This implies that Fsuch children must have completed their nursery school education. However in Nigeria, people tend to take the kindergarten and the nursery schools to mean the same thing. Only a few schools actually separate them while many do not even operate the kindergarten. This is why many children proceed to the primary school at the age of five after completing their nursery education.

2.3 History of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

Early Childhood Education in the form of nursery school or pre-primary education as it is known today in Nigeria is largely a post-colonial development. The semblances of it during the colonial era were the kindergarten and infant classes, which consisted of groups of children considered not yet ready for primary education. As grouping for instruction in schools was not age-based during that period, some children aged six or even more, could be found in some of the infant classes. With the phasing out of infant classes, some parents began to feel the need for nursery schools. The demand for nursery education was, however, very low until recent times. A study of the provision for nursery education in Lagos, by Makinwa (1981), for instance, shows that only 7.7% out of the 948 parents sent their children to either a nursery school or a group care centre. A similar study by Orebanjo (1981) showed that half of the working mothers in Ile-Ife which by then was a semi-urban

settlement, preferred keeping their children with members of the extended family for child care to sending them to Day-care Centers or Nursery Schools (Orebanjo,1981).

The results of these studies would imply that parents did not value pre-school education by that period. This was not so, however, as Nigerian educational administrators, policy makers and the then military government of Nigeria had realized the need for it in the country and gave it official recognition in the National Policy on Education in 1977, childhood education educational institutions were located in various places and campuses of universities and colleges, premises of some big factories or companies and other business organizations, churches, mosque premises (Maduwase, 2006).

2.4 The Need for Early Childhood Education

The need for Early Childhood Education is an emergent issue, which led the Federal Government to recognize pre-primary and primary and launched the Universal Primary Education (UBE) Scheme. The need arose in the first place as a preparatory ground for entry into the primary school and the need to relieve working mothers of custodial care of their infants. The Federal Government went further in the National Policy on Education (1981) to identify the importance of Early Childhood Education for children between ages 3 to 5 years plus to include:

a. Effecting a smooth transition from home to school.
b. Preparing the child for primary school.
c. Inculcating social norms.
d. Teaching co-operation and team spirit.

e. Teaching through musical activities, toys, encouraging creativity and enquiry in the child.

The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes the importance of education in our economic development and social transformation process; hence it has given priority to Early Childhood Education by inculcating its purpose in the National Policy on Education (2004) as follows:

1. effect a smooth transition from the home to the school,
2. prepare the child for the primary level of education,
3. provide adequate care and supervision of the children while their parents are at work (on the farms, in the markets, offices, etc),
4. inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys, etc
5. inculcate social norms
6. develop a sense of co-operation and team spirit,
7. learn good habits, especially health habits, and
8. teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms, etc.

The provision of toys and ample space for play provides for early implementation of Early Childhood Education through physical, psychological, intellectual and emotional development. In the light of the foregoing argument, the re-thinking model resurfaces to address the gap between Teacher Education and practice. That is, to what extent has the National Policy on Education been able to bridge the gap between goals of Teacher Education, practice and preparing the child

for future learning? “Give me a dozen of healthy infants, well-formed and my special work is to bring them up and I will guarantee to take anyone at random and train him to become any type of specialist” (Watson, 1924). This dictum emphasizes the importance of Early Childhood Education. This is because, early years of (zero to six years) are crucial for development of the brain and individual and any support given at this stage help promote development physically, psychologically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. If children experience love and are protected during infancy the young child has a strong base to explore the world therefore children learn to love when they are loved (Johnson, 2011).

The quality of teaching and care given at this stage determine to a large extent the level a child can attain later in life, therefore this period requires people who are knowledgeable such as specialist teachers, care givers that posses academic professional qualification to be able to handle these children effectively (Santruck, 2012). Gutman (2008) stated that a child can learn acquisition of a variety of new responses, concept development, sex role, cultural norms and socialization skills. Okoye (2002) agreed with Freud (1890) that Early Childhood Education provides an important variable, which influences the adult personality that will emerge, later in life.

UNESCO has a mandate to support member states in achieving all Education for All (EFA) goals and lead and co-ordinate the EFA movement for sustainable development. Requested the Director General to convene the world conference on early childhood and education from 22-24 September, 2010 in Moscow. To re-

affirm the importance of EFA goals in the EFA and other development agenda, to identify policy gaps in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and develop concrete strategies for addressing them in the run up to 2015 and beyond to provide a global platform for policy dialogue to provide a global platform and to promote exchange of good practices in ECE policy for sustainable development and implementation. A progress was made towards the EFA Goal 1 in ECE as a social, human and economic development imperative. We adopt a broad and holistic concept of ECE as the provision of care, education aged zero to six or seven years of age. ECE is therefore a right of an indispensable foundation for lifelong learning. Its proven benefits are manifold and include health, good nutrition, improved emotional efficiency and gender equity, greater employability and learning, and better quality of life for sustainable development. The evidence of the benefits of ECE and its capacity to pay itself back was recently reviewed in the EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, (2006).

2.5 The National Policy on Pre-Primary Education

In the current *National Policy on Education* (1998) Early Childhood Education is labeled as pre-primary education and is defined as the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to their entering the primary school. As stated in the policy document, the purpose of pre-primary education includes, among others:

a. providing a smooth transition from the home to the school;
b. preparing the child for the primary level of education;

c. providing adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work;
d. inculcating in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, and the local environment, playing with toys, artistic and musical activities, etc.
e. teaching the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes forms, etc. through play, and
f. inculcating social norms.

The document lists a number of measures to be taken by government to ensure the achievement of the objectives of pre-primary education. They include:

a. Encouraging private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education;
b. Making provision in Teacher Training institutions for the production of specialist teachers in pre-primary education;
c. Ensuring that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother-tongue or the language of the local community;
d. Ensuring that the main method of teaching in pre-primary institutions will be through play;
e. Regulating and controlling the operation of pre-primary education, ensuring adequate training of staff and provision of essential equipments.

In addition to these measures, appropriate levels of government (state and local) are required to establish and enforce educational laws that will ensure that established pre-primary schools are well-run, pre-primary teachers well qualified, and other

appropriate academic infrastructure provided. Ministries of Education are expected to ensure maintenance of high standards.

2.6 Policy Implementation

The official recognition given to Pre-primary Education in the *National Policy on Education* (1977) combined with a number of factors give rise to an unprecedented expansion in the provision of Child-care and Pre-primary Education institution or nursery schools in the country. Nearly all the Pre-primary education in the country, however, is provided by private proprietors. Some of these establishments go by the names 'Day-care Centers' or Playgroups' and take care of the children while their parents are at work or go for other engagements but most of them are nursery schools for providing Early Childhood Education. Variations in provision make the registration of these institutions somehow difficult for Ministry of Education officials. Very few of the establishments operate as child-care units only, others operate as both child-care units and nursery schools. What is in vogue now is for these establishments to operate as nursery schools for two years or a bit more and subsequently apply for license to operate as both nursery and primary schools. Most of them accept children aged two into their nursery sections who later transit to the primary sections of the same establishments at the age of five or even less.

The number of children in these institutions varies widely from one or two in the newly established ones to over three hundred (300) in the older ones. However, owing to the high demand for Pre-primary Education by parents, it does not take a

long time for newly established pre-primary institutions to grow and develop. A study of one of such institutions in Ile-Ife by this researcher revealed that it started as a nursery school with only two children in 1995. In 1996 the number increased to five and in 1997, when it was approved to operate as a nursery school, it had 54 children and six teachers. The institution sought and was granted approval to operate as a nursery and primary school in 1999 with a total of 105 children and 12 teaching and non-teaching staff. By the end of the school year in 2004 the number of children had increased to 280 with 24 teachers and eight non-teaching staff.

Nowadays, nursery schools are located in various places and buildings – campuses of some universities and colleges, premises of some industrial and business organizations, church premises, residential buildings some part or the whole of which are hired for use as nursery schools only or both nursery and primary schools, and so on, while some are set up mainly in some towns as full-fledged nursery and primary schools with their own building and premises. The physical structures vary widely in terms of quality and aesthetics from one establishment to another. So do the facilities and equipments.

With the possible exception of the few nursery schools established by some universities, colleges of education, companies and a few rich individuals, teacher quality is generally low. It is only a few of the nursery schools especially those owned by educational institutions, private companies and wealthy individuals that can afford to engage the services of university graduate degree holders and the holders of Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) qualifications. Most others

employ a few N.C.E. teachers, who are usually underpaid, while others employ mainly Grade Two teachers and secondary school leavers with the School Certificate or General Certificate in Education (Ordinary Level) qualification. The nursery schools that engage the services of qualified teachers, especially those owned by private individuals usually charge high fees while those that charge relatively low fees usually employ unqualified teachers. Employing unqualified teachers who receive low pay is a strategy used by many proprietors to make their services affordable to a great majority of parents and at the same time maintain a satisfactory profit margin.

Although the *National Policy on Education* prescribes that the child in the pre-primary institution should be involved in active learning, the document detailing guidelines on provision and management of pre-primary education is silent on the curriculum contents of such an institution (Federal Ministry of Education, 1987). In the absence of such guidelines and copies of the curriculum for Pre-primary Education, proprietors and teachers resort to curricular of their choice. The curriculum of a typical nursery school owned by most private individuals includes; alphabets, numbers, nursery rhymes, colouring and story time and, in some cases, rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. The emphasis of most of our Nigerian nursery schools is on the intellectual development of the children. Much more time is devoted to the learning of alphabets and memorization of facts, information, poems and some short passages from various books in English language than to recreational and social activities.

Emphasis is laid on children's intellectual development. This is because the yardstick for assessing the quality or effectiveness of nursery schools by parents seems to be the age at which the children attending them are able to count, recognize the alphabet, read and, in particular, recite memorized information, poems, verses and passages. The younger the age at which children attending a particular school can do these, the higher the quality of the school is adjudged to be by members of the public, and the more patronage it is likely to receive from parents if the fees charged are not excessive. In the attempt to show how effective their nursery schools are, the proprietors of some combined nursery and primary schools admit children at the age of two and allow them to transit to the primary section of such schools at the age of five or even four, both of which are below the official school-going age. This transition to primary education below the official entry age often receives a nod from those parents who wish to show how fast their children can progress through the educational system, and how intelligent they are.

2.7 Teachers' Role in Improving Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

The teacher is strategically located in the nation's educational system. He translates the schemes, aims and objectives of the nation's educational goals into positive behavioural changes in the classroom (Bosah, 2005). For the teacher to be effective, he must be empowered and have access to modern technologies. The teacher must be trained and supervised in the classroom to ensure successful classroom teaching (Izuchi, 2006). Some of the roles of the teacher in improving Early Childcare Education include:

a. Diversify learning experiences through multiple language development.
b. Adequate provision for Inclusive Education of the physically challenged and the normal group within the ages of three years to five plus.
c. Progressive education and teaching that provokes critical thinking and imaginative classroom practices through teacher teaching and stories.
d. The curriculum that embraces reflective teaching and learning without discrimination.
e. Provide equity and social justice in teaching and learning without discrimination.
f. Development of moral values through teaching love, respect and tolerance for others' views.
g. Recognize gender role differences in early childhood experience and adjust these differences in the classroom for effective learning.

Quality expectations of the teacher includes but not limited to the issues raised in the National Policy on Education (1981) on Teacher Education. The teacher has performed poorly due to some mitigating problems already in the system; these problems include poor condition of service at the Teacher Training Colleges, poor curriculum design and implementation, and quality of students who enroll in the programme. The end justifies the means. These problems have made the job of a teacher difficult because the school environment is no longer conducive for teaching and learning (Bosah, 2005). Evaluation of these problems shows that

there is need to reposition the Nigerian teacher for efficiency through the implementation of the goals of Teacher Education.

There is the need for teachers to be competent in all ramifications since the quality of the teachers has a direct bearing on the quality of learning (Ajiegbo, 2008). The quality of the teacher can be improved through a Teacher Education Programme. The programme must include theoretical, practical knowledge and acquisition of pedagogical skills necessary for effective teaching and learning (Thompson, 2008). Isyaku (2001) described a viable teacher as one that aims at turning out teachers who are intellectually, socially and professionally competent; the emphasis is on training quality teachers in the Colleges of Education. The National Policy on Education (2004) re-echoed this need and made the government to become more proactive regarding Pre-primary Education. It also made provisions for Early Childhood Education by stating that government shall set and monitor minimum standards for Early Childhood Centers in the country. Lawal (2003) argued that adequate training is the best way for teachers to move forward in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. He quoted Fafunwain Akinyemi(2000) who said,

"If the African teacher is to cope adequately with the monumental task that lies ahead of him, he has to be well trained for his job. He must be willing to enter into the spirit of new era age, willing to share new information and skills with his fellow teachers, seek for more knowledge on his own initiative and above all, be flexible to experiment and not be afraid of failure. The new teacher envisaged must have flexibility built into his total professional and academic make-up, and keep abreast of new techniques, skills and research in the field. Effective teacher

education programme are prerequisite for reliant education system. They lead to increased confidence in both teacher and student as they coordinate learning effectively and professionally, and rectify problems inherent in the teacher education.

Early Childhood Education requires well trained teachers who specialize in Early Childhood Education. They need to understand their roles in the implementation stage of the programme. The success of the programme depends to a large extent on the level of qualification, dedication and general attitude of the teachers to their work. Qualified teachers are needed and must be qualified to teach. The government has taken positive steps to improve, obtain and sustain functional Teacher Education to address the imbalance of teachers in the Early Childhood Education programmes. The effort of the government includes improved funding, establishment of more Teacher Education institutions and control of programmes through National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National University Commission (NUC).

2.8 Educational Qualification and Job Performance of ECE Teachers

Appropriate curricular activities at this level include the development of literacy and numeracy, social norms and values first of the local community and then of the country as a whole. The foundation for sound education should be laid through play, social norms, health and physical education, moral and religious education, the teaching of local crafts, and team work (Julian, 2008). Until the last decade of the twentieth century, pre-primary and primary school teachers in Nigeria were produced by Teacher Training Colleges, Nigeria's National Policy on

Education in Section 9, sub-section 61, makes reference to standards in teacher education as an ultimate expectation. It is expected that only candidates whose Minimum qualification is WASC or its equivalent will be admitted into the Teacher Training Colleges, and that the NCE will ultimately become the basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession.

Lassa (1998) observed that the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) is a sub-degree but highly qualitative professional in teacher education, obtained after a three-year full-time programme in Colleges of Education. It is therefore a higher quality and specialized teacher's certificate than the Teachers 'Grade two certificate that it is expected to replace. The establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in 1989 as a supervisory body for teacher education in Nigeria saw the beginning of consistent and deliberate thrust towards actualizing the policy on the NCE qualification becoming the minimum certificate for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria (Uzodinma, 2003).

Allport (2000) reported that conducive work environment attenuated with good condition of service, opportunity for training and development, provision of adequate retirement benefit and inter-personal relations had significantly influenced workers productivity. Therefore working environment of an organization tends to foster workers efficiency and effectiveness at workplace. Odanye (2004) also reported that those favourable work place environments were related to workers job satisfaction regardless of workers background characteristic or organizational demographics. Teachers in any school setting, who receive a great deal of parental

and organizational support, are more satisfied than teachers who do not. Professionalism and academic training are the two distinctive words; both of them are necessary pre-requisites for job effectiveness.

In addition to the expansion of full-time programmes for the production of pre-primary, primary and junior secondary school teachers who will be holders of the NCE, several part-time programmes have been started whether in Colleges of Education as sandwich courses, or through distance learning organized by the National Teachers Institute (NTI) aimed at transforming serving Grade Two teachers into NCE holders. Indeed, between 1990 and 1996, the National Teachers' Institute was able to up-grade 24,817 serving Grade II teachers to the NCE level.

The National Primary Education Commission personnel audit in 1996 showed that only about 39% of all teachers in primary schools in Nigeria possess the NCE and higher qualification. However, it projected that with about 31,563 Grade II teachers who enrolled in 1997 in the Distance Learning NCE programme and another 25,596 who enrolled in the sandwich programmes of the various Colleges of Education, it is expected that by the year 1998, the proportion of qualified teachers holding the NCE and above, who are serving in our pre-primary and primary school sectors would be somewhere around 78% of those in service. Lassa (1998) concluded that in spite of this promising enhancement of teacher quality in Nigeria, there are indications of a faulty implementation of the policy thrust towards the replacement of the Teachers Grade II Certificate with the NCE as the basic qualification.

The Summit on Population in Developing Countries held at New Delhi, India in December 1993 re-iterated the relevance of qualitative teacher production to the quest for improved basic education for all. According to the Federal Ministry of Education report (FME & YD, 1994) Cripso and Nicol (2006) and Rowan and Ball (2005) discovered that nearly all issues, whether related to goals, learning achievements, organization of programmes or performance of the educational systems are related to the role of teachers. These include their behaviour, performance, remuneration, incentives and skills and how they are used by the system. Therefore, teacher production should be based on a sound philosophy, and on such rationale that should guarantee the acquisition of necessary knowledge components and professional skills which will enable teachers to educate the pupils (Harris, 1992). This expectation is very critical, not only to the quality of teacher education, but equally to the very survival of the various disciplines in the curriculum of education.

According to Lassa (1998), the philosophy for teacher production in Nigeria is anchored on five objectives of Teacher Education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. These are to:

a. produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system:
b. encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
c. help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives:

d. provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world:

e. Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Lassa (1998) stressed that these national objectives could be reduced into three major attributes to be achieved in the making of an effective teacher. These are the:

- ✓ possession of a body of knowledge and understanding;
- ✓ possession of professional skills and techniques;
- ✓ Possession of positive personal qualities.

These three attributes are inter-related and possessing one is more often than not enhanced by the possession of the others. Teachers are the pivot for the implementation of any educational policy. For language teachers to be effective, they should be adequate in numbers, well motivated, qualified and competent, both professionally and academically in the skills of language learning and teaching and have opportunities for various forms of relevant in-service training (Emenanjo, 1996). In Nigeria, there is the perennial problem of teachers without the right mix, as pointed out above, for all school subjects. The task of developing Nigeria into a modem independent nation with national and international obligations has made the language problem a crucial issue.

Adekunle (1976) and Olagoke (1979) observed that the diversity and multiplicity of mutually unintelligible languages in a single country have made it impossible or rather difficult to establish an effective and efficient network of

communication throughout the country. Three of the indigenous languages of Nigeria–Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, are usually referred to as the country's main languages. In spite of the wide-spread use of indigenous Nigerian languages, none has yet emerged as the country's dominant language. This is because there is no single language that is spoken and understood by an overwhelming majority of Nigerians. English language therefore fills a huge communication gap.

Poor students' performance in English language in such public examinations as SSCE, GCE, and UME raises questions about teacher quality and the effectiveness of teachers. For years, states relied on certification to ensure teacher preparation and quality, despite the lack of compelling evidence justifying the selection of the certification requirements. Research indicated also that teachers who major in the subject-area taught have a more positive impact on students' achievement than teachers majoring in an out-of- field discipline, including those in education (Goidhaber & Brewer, 1999). According to Izumi and Evers (2002), school reform is a topic on many people's minds today as a thing of necessity in our Nigerian system.

2.9 Developmental Challenges Faced by Teachers

The shortage of trained teachers and competent professionals to teach and cater for children especially those of pre-school age has also been acknowledged by the African Union (AU) in its Second Decade of Education for Africa Action Plan. As a result, the main focus of the AU is that of tackling the shortage of teachers by ensuring supply of teachers to under-served geographical areas and subject

disciplines by 2008. If all children are to complete a good quality pre-primary and primary education by 2015, countries should achieve full enrolment of the target age group in grade 1 by 2009. For this reason, concerted effort should be put in place to provide both adequate classroom space and teachers. The African Union Second Decade of Education for Africa Action Plan also hopes to enhance teacher's competences by updating and continuous professional improvement of serving teachers through the mobilization of national institutions and development partners for appropriate in-service training packages.

Another area of focus of the Second Decade of Education for Africa Action Plan is that of providing effective school leadership through generalized training for head-teachers and supervisors to develop the right kind of teachers. It is necessary to examine the core responsibilities of ECE, which is the support for children's survival, growth, development and learning. This entails the development of teacher's capabilities in the area of health care, nutrition and hygiene, and the ability to support children as they develop cognitively, socially, physically and emotionally. School leadership training should be an imperative for teachers and school managers given the growing complexities in the management of human beings.

National governments should take the initiative of creating and maintaining organizational structures that reward individuals and team competences as well as build confidence, self-esteem and good morals among teachers because children look upon teachers as models to be emulated (Santrock, 2011). Since ECE

encompasses different types of programmes beginning from parenting at home to society's support for children's development, its provision could be in the form of centre-based child care or formalized pre-school system. Whatever the form, ECE has won a universal acceptance with many countries launching their national versions. Unfortunately, the real impetus for expansion and development of ECE are usually left in the hands of the private sectors whose main objective is usually profit maximization. Without an effective coordination and direct involvement of the national government, the current situation in Africa will be open to several forms of second rate provision of ECE. Currently, many of the private providers are simply taking advantage of an expanding market especially in the urban areas without paying attention to teacher/staff training (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007).

Meeting the teacher challenge in Africa will also involve creating teacher professional development programmes. This involves career planning to ensure regular additional theory and pedagogical skills. It also entails formal exchanges of experiences gained from pre-planned workshops, seminars, conferences, mentoring programmes and staff exchanges, among others. These efforts can be complemented by the informal acquisition of knowledge through the reading of relevant publications, documentaries, and other teaching and learning support programmes (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). At the school level, professional development for ECE involves skills and abilities to initiate innovative ideas in the area of providing affordable and reliable child care. When working mothers resume their office work after maternity leave, they should be confident to put their children in the hands of

competent professionals that are capable of adding value to the lives of their children.

Better conditions of service have implications for retaining good teachers and care givers in pre-schools, just like in other levels of education. Working conditions should be encouraging enough for teachers to be dedicated to teaching. Otherwise, many teachers will be involved in taking multiple jobs outside the school system, while some others might indulge in other activities that distract them from their job of teaching. Consequently, products from such a pre-school system will become *half baked* and unsuitable for formal schooling. The need to drive for staff retention is also crucial especially when huge resources have been committed to teacher training. A joint report of UNESCO and ILO on the application of the recommendation concerning teaching personnel suggests immediate actions by all stake holders on areas requiring prompt attention (ILO/UNESCO, 2006).

2.10 Problems of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

A lot of problems have invaded our educational system as a whole and early child care education in particular. The consequences of these problems have drawn the attention of scholars, educationists and critiques alike to view these as an obstacle to the achievement of educational goals in general and the goals of early child-care education in particular in curbing social ills in Nigeria. Early Childhood Education is facing a lot of problems which according to Maduewesi (2001), Nakpodia (2003) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) (2006) includes;

i. There is the problem of non-implementation of policy statements; that relates to early child-care education as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) and the National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development (2007). This is because looking at the National Policy on Education (2004) one will notice the extent to which government has committed itself as to the measures it will take to achieve the stated objectives of the early child-care education. Regrettably however, nine years after the last revision of the policy has been made, most, if not all, the measures and the proposals are still mere paper-work and formalities. This means that there is a discrepancy between policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria especially with regards to the Early Child care Education programme.

ii. There is lack of manpower; this is seen in the lack of enough and qualified personnel in the field of child-care education. Similarly, the care-givers too despite the fact that they are not enough, are not trained professionally in the theory and practice of care giving. The care givers are just appointed or employed to look after the kids without having the idea or knowledge of care giving. It was also observed by Nakpodia (2003) that most if not all the care givers lack initiative and knowledge on how to teach and how to use toys in the process of teaching and learning.

iii. There is language problem; The policy on Pre-primary Education or Early Child-care Education stated that the medium of instruction at the ECE level of education should be the mother-tongue or language of the immediate

environment, while orthography and textbooks of Nigerian languages will be produced and provided to aid the process of teaching and learning, but ironically, in most if not all ECE centers, the medium of instruction is the English language. The use of English language to the neglect of the mother-tongue as a medium of instruction alienates the child from his culture which the policy is meant to protect.

iv. Another problem facing ECE is lack of provision of enough and qualitative play and learning facilities; ECE as an educational level has been recognized by the NPE and is integrated into the existing public primary schools. The bone of contention here is that most of these primary schools where the ECE centers are attached is not equipped with sufficient play and learning equipments and facilities. It is also worthy to note here that ECE recognized and emphasized play and the use of play materials to help the children to develop their in-born skills and abilities through explorations.

v. There is the problem of accessibility; Most children who are supposed to be part of the ECE programme do not benefit from the programme because of the high cost of school fees and other levies charged by the privately owned ECE centers. Most of these ECE centers are located in the urban centers thereby denying the rural child the opportunity to attend these centers. In rare situations when the public sector provides ECE centers, the number of kids is very large with a teacher to kid ratio of 1:50 which makes teaching and learning very difficult for the children.

vi. There is the problem of finance; this is because the financial input to the educational sector in general and the ECE programme in particular has been very negligible. As documented by Maduewesi (2005), ECE is recognized by the government in the National Policy on Education which declares that financing education is the collective responsibilities of all the tiers of government but the fact remains undisputable that there is no standard financial provision for ECE. On policy, ECE is only allocated 5% of the fund allocated to UBE but most ECE centers are not given imprest or running cost, this has resulted in parents being charged one form of levy or the other in order to keep the centers in operation.

vii. According to the report on children and women rights in Nigeria, the formulation and implementation of educational policies and programmes in Nigeria are becoming increasingly politicized at all levels of government. This is obvious in the appointment of individuals to superintend over the provision of basic education where merit is slaughtered on the altar of political patronage. The distribution of educational infrastructure and materials, the nomination of teachers to attend capacity building trainings as well as the engagement and disengagement of education personnel are being politicized.

viii. Lack of legislation; government has not yet developed a legislation to back up the provision of the National Policy on Integrated ECE.

ix. Last but not the least, other problems include: The high fees charged in the schools, nson-availability of pre-school establishments in many of the rural areas, illiteracy and ignorance of some parents.

2.11 Children at the Early Childhood Stage

According to Santrock (2011), at the beginning of the early childhood developmental period, a child's understanding of the world of people and objects is bound by what he can see, hear, feel, and manipulate physically. His growth and development have to be monitored, and adequate nutrition has to be ensured through dietary supervision and supplemental vitamins, fluoride, and iron if needed.

2.11.1 Physical Development at the Early Childhood Stage

Nelson (2011) defined Physical Development as the ability of the children to control their muscles, body co-ordination, the ability to stand, run and sit. It can also be seen as the ability to grow in height, weight. According to Novella (2009) Physical Development refers to changes in the body and it involves changes in bone thickness, size, weight, gross motor, fine motor, vision, hearing, and perception. Physical Development provides children with the abilities they require to explore and interact with the world around them. Santrock (2011) stated that the brain and the head grow more rapidly than any part of the body. One shift of the brain activation in middle and late childhood is from diffuse, larger areas to more focal, smaller areas, especially in cognitive control. The size, shape, sense, organs undergo changes.

Berger (2000) described some of the major physical advances that occur in children during the pre-school years as follows:

1. Children continue to gain weight and height, but much more slowly than they do during first two years.
2. The end of the pre-school period marks the loss of baby teeth and emergence of permanent teeth in most.
3. Brain development is also in high gear. By the time a child reaches the ages of three, the brain will have already reached approximately 75 percent of the weight it will be in adulthood.

Evans (2000) stated that girls are slightly smaller and lighter than boys during these years. Both boys and girls slim down as the trunk of the bodies lengthen. By the end of pre-school, most children lose their top heavy look. Body fat declines slowly but steadily during the pre-school years. Girls have more fatty tissue than boys, boys have more masculine tissue. Burn (2009) stated that growth vary individually; much of the variation is due to heredity, but environment experiences are involved to some extent, ethnic origin and nutrition are important contributors to growth.

The chubby, pot-bellied infant who tripled his birth weight in the first year of life slows his rate of growth significantly. The active child sheds his baby fat and straightens his posture. His physical strength, skills, and co-ordination all improve dramatically. The cautious and tentative walker becomes the reckless runner, climber, and jumper. As a fearless and tireless explorer and experimenter, the

children are vulnerable to injury, but appropriate adult supervision can provide an environment that balances safety with the freedom to take controlled risks (Santrock, 2011). The range of physical abilities among young children during this age period is considerable. Some are endowed with natural grace and agility; others demonstrate less "fine-tuning" in their physical prowess, yet they "get the job done." Good family oral health practices, regular dental visits, access to fluoridated water, and healthy nutrition and snacking practices can help prevent early childhood caries and other dental decay.

2.12 Cognitive Development at the Early Childhood Stage

Cognitive Development according to Learner (2002) is the way children reason (think), develop language, solve problems and gain knowledge. Identify colours, knowing the difference between one and many, and knowing how things are similar. Raul (2008) defined Cognitive Development as the ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, and to overcome obstacles by thought. The children at pre-school age understand little about the world, trying to develop their ideas where they live. In this stage their ideas are still simple and they are not very good at thinking out. They have difficulty in understanding events that are taking place which they cannot see. thier fantasized thought bears little resemblance to reality. They have difficulty in negotiating and mental calculation. (Mallum and Hagai 2004), Stated that children at this stage ask too much questions as a result of curiosity.

According to Tinanoff and O'Sulvan (1997), young children learn through play. If the toddler experienced the security of a nurturing and reliable source of protection and attachment during infancy, he/she now has a strong base from which to explores the world. The self-centered focus of the young child is related less to a sense of selfishness than to a cognitive inability to see things from the perspective of others. Young children live largely in a world of magic in which they often have difficulty differentiating what is real from what is make-believe. Some have imaginary friends. Many engage in elaborate fantasy play. Learning to identify the boundaries between fantasy and reality and developing an elementary ability to think logically are among the more important developmental tasks of this age period.

Children at this stage need access to a variety of tools and experiences. They need opportunities to learn through trial and error as well as through planned effort. Their seemingly endless string of repetitive questions can test the limits of the most patient parent. These queries, however, must be acknowledged and responded to in a manner that not only provides answers but also validates and reinforces the child's burgeoning curiosity (Holford, 2008).

2.14 Matching Curricular Offering with Levels of Mental Development

In teaching, if the teacher's work is to bear fruit, teachers must be concerned with what they teach and whom they teacher. This is because knowledge has various levels of obstruction, which can be grasped by the child whose mental development is in keeping with the level of knowledge given them. Stones (1980) opined that

teachers should be concerned with the entering behaviour which the child has to work at hand. This entering behaviour is the foundation upon which knowledge must be built. Stone further added that since any knowledge has various levels of obstruction, a teacher should concern himself with the child's level of mental development and gear his/her teaching to suit that developmental stage. He further opined that the fostering of cognitive scheme based on the understanding of the logical connection things is a very important part of the teaching. Teachers need to programme their activities and ensure that children are adequately reinforced to maintain their levels of intelligence of their work so that they can provide feedback. Teachers do a good job of teaching when they can think of the subject in terms of relevance to the student and the society at large in which the student is a part.

2.15 Social and Emotional Development at the Early Childhood Stage

Lerne (2002) defined Socio-Emotional Development as the expression of feelings about self, others, feelings of trust, fear, confidence, pride, friendship and humours are all of socio-emotional development and things while learning to relate with others. Carso (2007) described socio-emotional development as the emergence of a child's experience, understanding and regulation of emotions from birth through late adolescence. At this stage Socio-emotional development is very important as it relates to children's capacities to form relationship, both trusting relationship with adult and with peers relate to the speed of learning in early childhood years. In education, the ability to cooperate in a class is a powerful precursor for early achievement. Planta (2006) opines that a socio-emotional development predicts

more positive achievement. Izard (2009) classifies emotion as either positive or negative. Positive emotion includes enthusiasm, joy and love while negative emotion include anxiety, anger, guilt and sadness and are influenced by biological foundation and experience. In order to experience self-consciousness such as pride, shame, embarrassment and guilt, children must be aware of themselves as distinct from others. Self-conscious emotions do not appear to develop until self-awareness appears around 18 years of age. At early years, emotions such as pride and guilt become more common. They are mostly influenced by parents, teachers and peer response to children's behaviour. Children at this stage increasingly understand that certain situations are likely to evoke particular emotions, facial expression indicates specific emotion, that emotion affects others, understanding of young children's emotion is linked to their pro-social behavior. Huges (2010) stated that during this stage they are also learning about the cause and consequences of feelings. Wyatt, (2007) also said that by the age of five most children can accurately identify emotions that are provided by challenges, circumstances and describe strategies they might call on to cope with every day stress. Cole (2009) and Halford (2008) stated that children at this stage develop an emerging scene of themselves as individuals who live in families as well as within larger social systems. Building on the secure and trusting relationships established in the first year of life, and venturing beyond the parallel play of toddlers, the maturing young child makes friends and meets new people.

The culture of the family and that of the community provide a framework within which the socialization process unfolds. The increasingly self-aware young child grapple with such complex issues as gender roles, peer and/or sibling competition, co-operation, and the difference between right and wrong. The temperamental differences that were manifested in the feeding, sleeping, and self-regulatory behaviours of the infant are transformed into the varied styles of coping and adaptation demonstrated by the young child. Some young children appear to think before they act; others are impetuous. Some children are slow to warm up while others are friendly and outgoing. Some accept limits and rules more easily than others (Tinnaoff and O'Sulvan, 1997).

The range of "normal" behaviour is broad and highly dependent on the match between the child's potentiality and the care-givers 'styles. Aggression, acting out, excessive risk taking and anti-social behaviours may appear at this time. Care-givers need to respond with a variety of interventions that set constructive limits and help children achieve self-discipline. Ultimately, healthy social and emotional development depends on how children view themselves and the extent to which they feel valued by others (Santrock, 2011). Heisinki (2006) noted that due to lack of effective early stimulation and children who are 'highly strung' student may show weakness in some of the areas of study. If such a situation arises, teachers need to have a full grasp of the situation to remediate the child. While those that are highly strung need sympathetic treatment from the teacher to help them acquire confidence.

2.16 The Motor Skills of Early Childhood

At early years of age, children have the ability to pick up tiniest object between their thumb and fore-fingers for some time. They can build sparingly high block towers, each block placed with infused concentration but often not in a completely straight line, when they try to position a place in a hole, they often try to force the piece or part vigorously. By age 5, children fine motor coordination has improved further: hand, arm and fingers entirely move together under the command of the eye. By the age of 6 and 7 years they can hammer, paste, tie shoe lace and fasten their clothes. Children at this stage prefer pencil than crayon and reverse of letters is less command. Children can use their hands independently with more ease and precision.

2.17 Developmental Task of Children at the Early Childhood Stage

According to presentations by Harvigust and Dinkenmeyers as cited by National Teachers Institute (2000), the developmental tasks of children at the early childhood stage include:

i. Children at the early childhood stage are forming concept of social and physical reality like: mother, father, teacher and children etc. The teacher can help the children at this stage to achieve this by exposing them to as many objects and experiences and should also be patient in answering their questions.

ii. Children at the early childhood stage learn to relate to parents siblings and other people by imitating other people, obeying instructions and by trial and error.

iii. Children at this stage learn the use of language and communication skills. The teacher should help children to acquire and use language fluently at this stage.

iv. The child at the early childhood stage learns gender differences and sex appropriate roles.

v. Children at this stage learn to distinguish between right and wrong. The teacher can help the children to achieve this by highlighting stories where decision based on conscience are not worthy.

2.18 Children's transition to school

International research on starting school suggests that moving from pre-school to school can be challenging if not traumatic for some children and especially for children with less optional circumstances, for children with special educational needs or from dysfunctional families.

When children move from pre-school to a student in school they experience a change of identity from being a child in pre-school to student in school, which means they are expected to behave in a certain way, and understand the classroom rules, learn the languages of the classroom and to "read" the teacher. When children enter school they meet a larger physical environment, in pre-school the child belongs to eldest group children, and suddenly he/she is the youngest and is forced

to relate to older children. In school the social environment is much more complex, there are a greater number of children compared with the number of children in pre-school, and with that there will be much more competition. In school there are fewer adults, which means less individual attention and interaction with adults than previously. In school they have less autonomy and they are often forced to discipline their own movement. There is a shift in the new academic demand they now meet, unfamiliar challenges. (Docket & Perry,2007. Fabian, 2007, Merry, 2007).

Brostrom (2003) showed that for smooth transition from home to school pre-primary teachers should carry out a home visit before a child starts school so they can get more information about the child. In the same manner for preparing them for primary school teachers with the children need to visit the school before school start, he further explained that learning proper starts at seven years. At that stage the child is expected to be able to read and write and as well do simple arithmetic. Ojuedria (2007) stated that children effectively learn the importance of good health, personal hygiene, well planned daily routines through watching, discussion and through role modeling by teachers and parents or other adults. Diane (2007) observed that to take care of children there should be adequate space (indoors and outdoors) for them to move, play and run freely for the children to develop naturally. She also stated that children's team spirit is built by giving group tasks to children to achieve by playing happily together, sharing resources. The children also need to be showered with verbal and physical expression of love for them to develop stable, mental, emotional and psychological development and growth. Aluede (2007) posits that children

model teachers, other vocational, social, recreational and moral in a person to person or face to face encounter.

2.19 Empirical Studies

The following are some of the research studies carried out similar to this study:

Egbochukwu (2002) carried out a study on Effects of Staff Motivation on the Realization of the Objectives of Public Primary Education in Anambra State. The study had five research questions and five null hypotheses. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study; four rating scale structured questionnaires and observation were the instruments used for the study. Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using chi-square. The researcher found that dedicated services, the type that can guarantee the realisation of the objectives of public primary education can be rendered by teachers if they are sure that their take-home pay can support their needs (materially).

The current research work is related to the above research work of Egbochukwu's in the sense that, both research work sought to determine the objectives of school settings. However the researcher did not state the population of the study and sample used, the current researcher bridged the gap.

Anene (2006) carried out a research work titled "Evaluation of NTI Certificate on the Realization of the Objectives of Teacher Education in Nigeria". The study has five research questions and five null hypotheses were. The population comprised of 600 NTI teachers, sample size was 108 selected randomly. A

combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used for the study. An in-depth interview and questionnaire was used for data collection. The statistical tool used for the analysis of the data was Chi-square. The researcher found that teachers with NTI certificate have to some extent assisted in realizing the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria. This research work provides the current researcher will literature used for the study. However interview is considered for the study of this nature, hence the current study employed questionnaire.

Similarly, Mustapha (2008) conducted a study on Impact of Teachers' Variables on the Achievement of the Objectives of Science Education in Sokoto state, Nigeria. The study had six objectives and six research questions. Descriptive survey research design method was used for the study. The researcher targeted 128 secondary school teachers. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents which were analyzed using simple percentages and hypotheses with t-test statistic at 0.05. The findings showed that teachers teaching style, experience and teacher's interest among others were key factors in achieving the objectives of science education. The researcher's recommendation was that students need to be exposed to laboratory and other modern aspects of learning such as quiz, field trip and that teacher should be motivated to put in their best in their work. The current research work is related to Mustapha's research work and helpful as it drew the attention of the researcher to the importance of teacher's 'variables as a key factor to the achievement of the objectives of science education. However, the population of the study was not mentioned.

Helsinki (2008) conducted a research work titled academic and professional qualification on the achievement of the objectives of post-primary education. The study determined professional qualification on the achievement of the objectives of post-primary education. Five specific objectives and five null hypotheses were raised in line with the main objectives. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Sample sizes of 85 out of 640 populations were used for the study. Four rating structured questionnaire was the instruments for data collection. The data collected were subjected to analysis using percentage and frequencies. The findings revealed among others that success of any educational system depended on the teacher's qualification, administrative machinery established for its implementation. The researcher concluded that the competent teacher was the one who knows and applied the principles, rudiments, methods and techniques of teaching in teaching and learning process. The study strongly motivated the current research study in that it shed more light on the importance of teacher's effectiveness, qualification in the attainment of the objectives of post-primary education. Helsinki used a very small sample size for the study compared with the population of the study in this research work. However, the simple percentage used for this study seems to be improper for this research work.

Muhammed (2008) conducted a research to find out the roles of teachers in attaining the objectives of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria. The study was conducted with four research questions and four null hypotheses. A survey approach was used through self- administered questionnaires to 200 sampled respondents, out

of the 200 questionnaires administered and distributed one hundred and sixty four (164) questionnaires were retrieved. The analysis was done using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the null hypotheses.

The researcher found out that teacher involvement, professional care, emotional care and support had a very big influence in achieving the objectives of Early Childhood Education, particularly the academic performance of the child. More so, it was observed that the extent of teacher qualification and educational attainment had a significant influence on the achievement of the objectives of Early Childhood Education. This implies that the extent or level of the teacher educational attainment and exposure determines the performance of the children. On the whole, teacher involvement was very essential in Early Childhood Education and this helps to broaden the child's horizon, enhance social relationships, and promote a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

The present study is related to the Mohammed's research which was carried out to find the role of teachers in achieving the objectives of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria; however it differs from it in some cases. Four research questions and four null hypotheses were formulated for the past research; the data were analyzed using analysis of variance to test the null hypotheses. In the present study, seven research questions and seven null hypotheses were formulated for the study. The study used mean score to analyze the research questions. The past researcher concluded that teachers have influence on success of children learning and the society at large.

Another study was carried out by Auta (2010) on the Assessment of the impact of school facilities on the realisation of teaching and learning objective in Nigerian Air force Secondary Schools. The main objective of the study was to examine the impact of school facilities on the realisation of teaching and learning objective in Nigerian Air force Secondary Schools. Research questions were raised in line with the objectives but research hypothesis were not stated. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Two hundred and fifty three respondents were used for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents and data collected were analyzed using chi-square. The research revealed that school facilities were by far the biggest resources in realizing the objectives of teaching and learning in the Nigerian Airforce Secondary Schools. It was also found out that effective use of these resources can bring about improvement in the performance of students. The current research is related to Auta's study as both studies are concerned with the realisation of objective. The study added to the literature for the current study, but the researcher did not state where 253 samples were drawn.

Adeniyi (2011) conducted a research on the impact of professional diploma on the Achievement of Teacher's Education Objectives in Nigerian Colleges of Education. The objectives of the study among others were to investigate whether PGDE has helped in achieving the objectives of teacher education, also to investigate whether PGDE programme has equipped teachers with intellectual and professional skills adequate for achieving teacher's education objectives in Nigeria. Five research questions and five null hypotheses were raised in line with the main

objective. The population covered the academic staff with Post Graduate Diploma in Education, (PGDE) in eighty three (83) both State and Federal Colleges of Education.

The research instrument used was questionnaire for teachers with PGDE. Data collected were analyzed using analysis of variance and analysis of co-variance ANOVA. The findings reported revealed that, teachers with PGDE had greatly helped in achieving the objectives of teacher education in Nigerian Colleges of Education. The researcher recommended among others that, there is a need for teachers without teaching qualification to possess professional training needed in teaching for quality service delivery.

The present study is related to past work because both are on achievement of objectives. The work strongly motivated the current work in that it showed importance of teachers in achieving the objectives of education. However the researcher did not test any null hypothesis if not a better result would have emerged.

Audu, (2011) conducted a research on Impact of Teacher's Quality on Attaining the objectives of Public Primary Education in Nigeria. Six research questions and six null hypotheses were formulated for the study. Two hundred and twenty (220) teachers were used to collect data while survey research design was used for the study. Observation and inputs from other stakeholders were also used to obtain data. The sample size of 10 out of the 31 schools were selected for the study, stratified random sampling method was used in the selection of the school, Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to get result.

The study found out among others that teachers produced from the C.O.Es should be able to teach at both the primary and junior secondary levels. It was also discovered that teacher production should be appropriate both in quality and quantity for the Basic Education scheme. The current study is similar with that of Audu because it the two studies emphasized on the quality of teachers on students academic achievement, as a result the study assisted in the area of literature review. However, the sample size of the study was inadequate for generalization.

2.20 Summary of the Literature Reviewed

Attempts have been made to highlight and analyze the opinion of different scholars under the major sub-topics used. The review of literature identified that Early Childhood Education is an educational programme of young children from birth through age six or seven. It is a period when the brain develops and a time that moral foundation, self-confidence develops which provides foundation for later living in life and the society at large. The programme aimed at the physical, psychological, social and cognitive development of children and that any care a child receives during that period determines to a large extent the development and the achievement a child can attain later in life. It was also revealed that there is the correlation between teaching, quantity, qualification practice in teaching and learning, it found out that quality of teachers no doubt influences and determines the quality of learners over time and it was also found out that pre-primary education is the foundation of the entire structure and the success or failure of the whole system of education. Early education therefore provides an important variable which

influences the adult later in life. The study also revealed that Early Childhood Education is faced with problems such as problem of non-implementation of policy, lack of manpower, accessibility, and lack of legislation among others. It was also revealed that in Nigeria much premium is placed on children passing examination and not taking into consideration child's development, knowledge, individual characteristics of children, values of our society, psychological development of the children of which the teachings do not reflect current knowledge of human learning and fails to produce students who possess the kind of higher order thinking and problem-solving abilities that will be needed in the 21stcentury. It was also found out that for children to learn something new, children must become aware, explore, inquire use and apply learning process. Finally empirical studies related to the study were reviewed to guide the researcher.

Having gone through the empirical studies, it was established that the past research studies dwelled on achieving some of the objectives of pre-primary education which include, smooth transition of early child from the home to school, preparation of early child for the primary level of education and adequate care and supervision of children while their parents are work place. The past researchers did not cover the development of spirit of enquiry and creativity via the exploration of nature, art, music and playing with toys, learning of good health habit and rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes and forms. All these are also expected of the early children to learn from ECE graduates. The researcher wanted to examine

whether or not these objectives are being attained. This is the gap the present research study filled.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter presented the designed methodology used for this research under the following sub-headings:

3.1 Research Design

3.2 Population for the Study

3.3 Sample size and Sampling Procedure

3.4 Instruments for Data Collection

3.4.1 Validation of the Instruments

3.4.2 Pilot Study

3.4.3 Reliability of the Instruments

3.5 Procedure for Data Collection

3.6 Procedure for Data Analysis.

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was used for the conduct of this study using survey research design method. Survey research was defined by Nwosu (1991) as a blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be extracted and analyzed. Descriptive research design is considered appropriate because it provides modalities for gathering information from where a sample of the population was used to represent the whole target population and the findings from the sample were used to make generalizations on the target population. According to Asika (2001) and Abiola (2007), survey method is a very useful means of obtaining

data which will be derived from questionnaire. Also, survey method is suitable for research where the population is scattered over a wide area. This design was adopted because it allowed for the collection of information, peoples opinion and attitudes about a phenomenon, object or an event at a particular time and place.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population of this study is 598 parents in the entire parents of the early school children in the North-Central regions of Nigeria. There are 85 early childhood education centers in North-central zone with 598 parents. Table 3.1 showed the break down according to states.

Table 3.1 Population of the study:

S/No	Names of States	No of Schools	No of Parents
1	Plateau	38	229
2	FCT Abuja	29	193
3	Nasarawa	18	203
4	Kogi	13	176
	Total	98	801

4 Source: Association of Nursery School (ANS), 2014.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

From the total number of parents in all the Early Childhood Education centers in the North-Central regions of Nigeria, the researcher selected a sample size of three hundred and fifty (350) parents to serve as sample population for the study. The selection of this sample population is in line with

report of Douglass, (2006) who opined that, sample size has to be enough, to enable a researcher detect the smallest effect or relationship between variables. In order to obtain schools for the expected sample size, random sampling

technique was used. The researcher wrote all the names of the schools in the region on a paper and assigned numbers. The numbers were mixed up in the small box before selection was done to avoid being biased. Thirty six odd numbers were picked from the box to form the schools where the sample for the study was selected. Random sampling was equally employed in the selection of teachers and parents. Table 3.2 presents the sample selection.

Table 3.2 Sample Size for the study:

S/No	Name of State	No of Sampled Schools	No of Sampled Parents
1	FCT Abuja	12	110
2	Nasarawa	11	93
3	Plateau	13	147
4	Kogi	13	101
	Total	49	451

Source: Association of Nursery School (ANS), 2014

3.4 Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument used in the collection of data for this study is questionnaire. The questionnaire was tagged "Assessment of Early Childhood Education Graduates on Attainment of Pre-primary Education Objectives Opinion Questionnaire". The questionnaire was designed to obtain responses from parents in the sampled Early Childhood Education Centers in the North-Central regions of Nigeria.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Sections 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' sought for the demographic information of respondents in terms of their Age, Gender, School location, Qualification and Rank. Section 'B' consisted of 42 questionnaire items structured based on the research questions of the study to solicit the respondent's responses. The items contained in the second section were all

close-ended designed using the four point rating scale of strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed.

SA =4, A =3, D =2 and SD = 1.

3.4.1 Validity of Instrument

In order to establish the validity of the instrument, consultations were made with three lecturers from vocational and technical education, two from measure and evaluation and one from statistics not below the rank of senior lecturer from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The corrections, comments, and suggestions made by the experts were effected before the final copy was produced.

3.4.2 Pilot study

Pilot study was conducted in Kano state. The reason for choosing Kano state was that respondents have similar characteristics with those in the area of the study. The main purpose of pilot study was to test the adequacy and the suitability of the instrument in measuring what it is supposed to measure, and to ascertain any difficulty that the rrespondents may encounter when answering the question of the main study. For the purpose of this, fifty (50) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the parents of the children in ten (10) pre-primary schools within Kano state.

3.4.3 Reliability of the Instruments

Data collected were coded in Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The coded data were used to calculate reliability using Cronbach Alpha techniques. The result of the data gave reliability co-efficient value of 0.82. Tracy (2006)

testified that, for a scale to be considered reliable, it should have an alpha value of 0.50 to 1. With this level of reliability index, the instrument was considered capable data for the study.

3.5 Procedure for Data Collection

Letter of introduction was obtained from the office of Head of Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for permission to administer the questionnaire in their respective schools. Six people were co-opted into the study as research assistants. Face to face delivery method was employed in the administration and collection of the instruments. This method was preferred, because it afforded the researcher and her assistants, higher percentage return of properly completed questionnaires. In each of the state, one week was used. The exercise lasted for four weeks.

3.6 Procedure for Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of data. The bio-data of the respondents were analyzed with the use of simple frequency and percentage table. Weighted Mean was used to test the research questions earlier stated in chapter one of this study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test ss all the null hypotheses at p =0.05 (5%) level of significance. Mean score that is more than 2.5 signified influences and mean score that is less than 2.5 signified lack of influence for the research question. For null hypotheses , the decision to reject or accept was based on r-critical and r-calculated, when the r-critical value is greater than the r-calculated value at 0.05 level of significance, the

null hypotheses, the decision to reject or accept was based on r-critical and r-calculated, when the r-critical is greater than the r-calculated value at o.5 level of significance the null hypotheses was considered acceptable and when r-critical value is less than the r-calculated the null hypotheses was rejected.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter the analyses and results of the data collected for the study were presented. The data analyses were based on the personal-data of the respondents, the research questions and the null hypotheses. A total number of three hundred and fifty (350) copies of questionnaires were properly completed and used for the study. Table of frequency and percentages were used to analyze personal data of the respondents. Weighted mean was used to answer the research questions. In answering the research questions, a score of 2.5 and above was set as the benchmark for agreed. In the test of null hypotheses, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship (PPMCR) was used to test all null hypotheses and all were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Section four of the chapter presents summary of major findings.

4.1 Analysis of Personal-Data of the Respondents

Table 4.1 Analysis of Respondents by their States

S/N	Name of State	No of Parents	Percentage (%)
1	Plateau	147	42
2	FCT Abuja	110	41
3	Nasarawa	93	27
	Total	350	100

Source: Field work 2015

Analyses of personal-data of the respondents based on their states are as presented in Table 4.1, 42% (147) parents of early school children were from Plateau State. FCT Abuja had 41% (110) parents, Nasarawa had 27% (93) parents of early school children. From the analysis, Plateau state had the highest number of

respondents, followed by FCT Abuja and then Nasarawa state. This means that, among the selected states in North-central for the study, plateau state had the highest ECE schools.

Table 4.2 Analysis of Respondents by their Gender

S/N	Gender	No of Parents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	126	36
2	Female	224	64
	Total	350	100

Source: Field work 2015

Analysis of respondents based on sex was as presented in Table 4.1.2 From the Table, male parents of the early school children were found to be 36% (126) while their female counterparts were 64 (224). From the analysis, female parents of early school children were more than the male respondents.

4.2 Answers to Research Questions

Answers to the seven research questions were as shown using means, while the analysis of each of the seven research questions was as presented in Table 4.3 to 4.9.

Research Question one: What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on preparing children for smooth transition from home to school in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics on influence of Early Childhood Education graduates prepare children for smooth transition from home to school

Total score	Total Agree	Disagree	Mean agree	Std. Dev.	Remark	Decision
8400	5460	2940	2.6	0.43	2.6 > 2.5	*ECEICSTS

***** Early Childhood Education influenced children smooth transition to school
(Source: Field work 2015

The descriptive statistics used to determine research question one revealed the score of 5460 for respondents who opined that ECE has influence of children

transition from home to school. Those that disagree scored 2940 points with mean score of 2.6 and 1.4 respectively. From the analysis the calculated value was greater than the benchmark for agree (2.6>2.5), hence it was concluded that ECE graduate has influence on school children for smooth transition.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on preparing child for primary school level of education in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics on influence of ECE on preparedness of child for primary school level of education

Total score	Total Agree	Disagree	Mean agree	Std. Dev.	Remark	Decision
8811	6300	2511	2.9	0.56	2.9 > 2.5	*ECEPCPS

* Early Childhood Education preparing child for primary school
Source: Field work 2015

Analysis of data used to determine research question two revealed that score of 6300 (2.9) for respondents who maintained that ECE has influence on children preparedness to primary schools. Those that had contrary opinion scored 2511 (1.1) with standard deviation value of 0.56. From the Table, the calculated value of 2.9 was found to be greater than 2.5 index score for agree, hence it was concluded that ECE graduate teachers fully prepared children for primary school level of education.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on providing adequate care for children while parents are at work in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics on influence of ECE on adequate child care while parents are at work

Total score	Total Agree	Disagree	Mean agree	Std. Dev.	Remark	Decision
9021	5670	3351	2.5	0.48	2.5= 2.5	*ECEIACC

* Early Childhood Education influenced adequate care for children
Source: Field work 2015

From the result in the Table, respondents who opined that ECE provide adequate care for children while parents are at work scored 5670 with mean score of 2.5. Those that had divergent opinion had 3351 with mean score of 1.5. From the analysis the weighted mean score for agree was equal to the benchmark, hence it was concluded that ECE provides adequate day care for children when the parents are at work.

Research Question Four*:* What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on developing spirit of enquiry and creativity in the children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics on influence of ECE on Nursery School children spirit of enquiry and creativity

Total score	Total		Mean agree	Std. Dev.	Remark	Decision
	Agree	Disagree				
8812	6090	2722	2.8	0.65	2.8> 2.5	*ECEIECNSC

* Early Childhood Education influenced enquiry and creativity among school children *Source:* Field work 2015

From the Table, respondents who opined that ECE develops in nursery school children the spirit of enquiry and creativity scored 6090 representing weighted mean score of 2.8. Those that disagree with the statement had 2722 (1.2) with standard deviation value of 0.56. From the analysis, the calculated value was greater than the benchmark for agree (2.8>2.5), hence the researcher concluded that ECE develop to Nursery school children the spirit of enquiry and creativity.

Research Question Five*:* What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting social norms in nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics on influence of ECE on social norms of Nursery school children

Total score	Total Agree	Disagree	Mean agree	Std. Dev.	Remark	Decision
8982	5832	3150	2.6	0.73	2.6> 2.5	*ECEECSN

Early Childhood Education influence social norms in nursery school children
Source: Field work 2015

The result of data in the Table revealed score of 5832 for those who opined that ECE has influence on social norms of Nursery school children, those that had opposite view score 3150 representing 2.6 and 1.4 respectively. From the result, it was concluded that ECE has influence on social norms of Nursery school children in the north central geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Research Question Six: What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting the sense of team spirit among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics on influence of ECE on team spirit of Nursery school children

Total score	Total Agree	Disagree	Mean agree	Std. Dev.	Remark	Decision
8400	5880	2520	2.8	0.59	2.8> 2.5	*ECEITSNSC

Early Childhood Education influence social norms in nursery school children
Source: Field work 2015

The analysis of data used to answer research question six presented in Table 4.8 revealed the scored 5880 (2.8) for respondents who opined that ECE has influence on team spirit of Nursery school children. Those that disagree had 2520 points representing 1.2 weighted mean with standard deviation of 0.59. From the analysis, calculated mean value of 2.8 was greater than 2.5 index score for agreed.

The result therefore, shows that ECE has influence on team spirit of nursery school children to in the study area.

Research Question Seven: What is the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting good health habits among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics on influence of ECE on health habit of Nursery school children

Total score	Total Agree	Disagree	Mean agree	Std. Dev.	Remark	Decision
8600	5550	3050	2.6	0.61	2.6> 2.5	*ECEIHHNSC

Early Childhood Education influenced health habits among nursery school children
Source: Field work 2015

The result of data used to determine research question seven shows the score of 5550 with mean score of 2.6 for respondents who agreed that ECE has influence on the health habit of the Nursery school Children. Those that disagree scored 3050 (1.4). From the analysis, the calculated value for agree was greater than the benchmark (2.6>2.5), hence it was concluded that ECE influenced the health habits of nursery school children in North central geo-political zone.

4.3 Test of Null Hypotheses

Results of the analysis of data used to test the null hypotheses were as presented in Table 4.10 to 4.16

HO_1: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on smooth transition of children from home to school in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria

Table 4.10: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship of influence of ECE on smooth transition of children from home to school

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Corr R	Critical Index R	df	Sig (2 tailed)
ECE Graduate Teachers	350	2.82	0.67	0.302	0.195	698	0.000
Transition of children from home to school	350	2.67	0.79				

The outcome of the Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) statistics in Table 4.10 revealed the calculated value of 0.302 against 0.195 for the r-critical. The calculated alpha level is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The correlation Coefficient index r level was higher than the r-critical (0.302>0.195) at 5% level of significance. The analysis therefore revealed that ECE graduates have influence on Nursery choool children smooth transition from home to school. The null hypothesis was therefore not retained.

HO_2: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood graduates on child preparation for primary school level of education in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4.11: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship of influence of ECE on Nursery school children preparation for primary school

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Corr Index R	Critical R	Df	Sig (2 tailed)
ECE Graduate Teachers	350	2.82	0.67	0.287	0.195	698	0.001
Nursery school children preparation for primary school	350	2.74	0.66				

Source: Field work 2014

The analysis of influence of ECE graduates on Nursery school children preparation for primary school revealed that calculate r value of 0.287 against the r-critical value of 0.195 at 0.05 levels of significance. From the analysis, the calculated value was greater than the critical value (0.287>0.195). This implied that, there ECE graduate have significant influence on children preparation for primary school education. The null hypothesis was not retained.

HO_3: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on care for children while parents are at work in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4.12: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship of influence of ECE on children care while parents are at work

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Corr R	Critical Index R	Df	Sig (2 tailed)
ECE Graduate Teachers	350	2.82	0.67	0.295	0.195	698	0.002
Children care while parents are at work school	350	2.62	0.66				

Source: Field work 2014

Pearson Product Correlation Analysis used to determine the null hypothesis three revealed the mean score of 2.82 against 2.63 for the independent and depended variables. The Standard deviation stood at 0.67 and 0.66 respectively. The calculated r-cal value was greater than the R-critical (0.295>0.195), this can also applicable to P<0.05. Based on the outcome of the analysis, it was concluded ECE graduates have significant influence on caring of Nursery school children while parents are at work

HO_4: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on developing spirit of enquiry and creativity among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4.13: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship of influence of ECE on spirit of enquiry and creativity among nursery school children

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Corr R	Critical Index R	Df	Sig (2 tailed)
ECE Graduate Teachers	350	2.82	0.67	0.321	0.195	698	0.000
Nursery school children spirit of enquiry and creativity	350	2.92	0.81				

Source: Field work 2014

Table 4.13 used to test the influence of variables in null hypothesis in revealed the r-calculated value of 0.321 against 0.195 for the Table value at 0.05 levels of significance. The result of the analysis therefore revealed that ECE graduates

have significant influence on spirit of enquiry and creativity among Nursery school children, based on this, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

HO_5: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting social norms among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4.14: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship of influence of ECE on social norms among nursery school children

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Corr R	Critical Index R	df	Sig (2 tailed)
ECE Graduate Teachers	350	2.82	0.67	0.209	0.195	698	0.001
Social norms among nursery school children	350	2.77	0.63				

Source: Field work 2014

Analysis of data used to determine null hypothesis five revealed the mean score of 2.82 and 2.77 with standard deviation of 0.67 and 0.63 for ECE graduates and children social norms respectively. The r-cal value was greater than the r-critical (0.209>0.195), this is also seen in the P<0.05. The analysis therefore revealed that, there was significant ECE graduates have significant influence on social norms to the nursery school children. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

HO_6: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting the sense of team spirit among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4.15: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship of influence of ECE on sense of team spirit among nursery school children

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Corr R	Critical Index R	Df	Sig (2 tailed)
ECE Graduate Teachers	350	2.82	0.67	0.202	0.195	698	0.002
Sense of team spirit among nursery school children	350	2.55	0.49				

Source: Field work 2014

Result of test of null hypothesis six presented in the Table revealed the mean score of 2.82 and 2.55 with standard deviation of 0.67 and 0.49 for ECE graduates and team spirit among nursery school children respectively. The calculated r-value was greater than the r-crit (0.202>0.195), this is also seen in the P<0.05. The analysis therefore revealed that, there was significant ECE graduates have significant influence on Sense of team spirit among nursery school children. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

HO_7: There is no significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on promoting good health habits among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4.16: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Relationship of influence of ECE on sense of team spirit among nursery school children

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Corr Index R	Critical R	df	Sig (2 tailed)
ECE Graduate Teachers	350	2.82	0.67	0.261	0.195	698	0.002
Health habits of Nursery school children	350	2.75	0.71				

Source: Field work 2014

Result of test of null hypothesis seven presented in the Table revealed the mean score of 2.82 with mean score of 0.67 for ECE graduates against 2.75 and 0.71 for health habit of Nursery school children. The calculated value was 0.261was found to be greater than the critical r-critical value of 0.195 at 0.05 levels of significance. The analysis therefore revealed that ECE graduates have influence on health habits of Nursery school children. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

4.4 Summary of Major Findings

The following are the summary of major findings of this study. The findings were based on the comments and assessment of parents of early school children. The parent commented that;

1 Early Childhood Education graduates have significant influence on smooth transition of children from home to school in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria (P=0.000)

2 Early Childhood Education graduates have influence on Nursery school children preparation for primary school level of education in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria (P=0.001)

3 there is significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on care for children while parents are at work in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria (P<0.05)

4 Early Childhood Education graduates have influence on the spirit of enquiry and creativity among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria (P=0.000).

5 Early Childhood Education graduates have influence on social norms nursery in North-Central Geo-political Zone develops (P<0.05)

6 there is significant influence of Early Childhood Education graduates promotes sense of team spirit among nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria (P=0.000).

7 ECE graduates have influence on Health habits of Nursery school children in north central geo-political zone in Nigeria (P<0.05)

4.5 Discussion of the Major Findings

The test of null hypothesis one revealed that Early Childhood Education has significant influence on smooth transition of children from home to school. This finding is in line the previous study of Brostrom (2003) who reported that for

smooth transition from home to school, children experienced a change of identity from being a child at home and a child at school.

The result showed that Early Childhood Education graduates fully prepared children for primary school level of education through teaching the children the rudiments of English for example "A-Z" and the rudiments of mathematics for example numbers 1-100. ECE graduates teachers also taught the children writing skills in preparation for primary schools, realization of their change of identity from being a child in pre-school to pupil in primary school, realization of shapes and colors in pre-primary school, and to cope with greater number of children and relate with the older children in the school. This was in line with Docket & Perry (2007) who reported that there was a shift in the academic demands of children who needed to know the rudiments of mathematics, English language, writing skills and visitation of the school before the school started to be able to meet the new unfamiliar challenges. It also agrees with the findings of Ojuederie (2007) who said that learning properly starts at the age of seven (7) years old. At that stage of transition from pre-primary to primary school a child is expected to be able to read and write as well as to do simple arithmetic of addition and subtraction.

Furthermore, the research shows that ECE education graduates provided adequate care for early school children while their parents were at work. The ECE graduates cleaned up the early school children after defecation spend their time and money to take care of the children under their care. They also looked after the children whose parents could not pick them up immediately after the school was

closed. They took appropriate steps to care for the children when they felt sick and often arrived early and stayed late in the school and they limited unhealthy choice of snacks and sugary drinks among early school children. This study agrees with Awake (2004) who asserted that for children's health, intellect, personality, character and emotional stability developments to take place children need to be showed with verbal and physical inspiration of love and care for them to enjoy stable mental and emotional growth. Similarly, Onyesi (2000) rightly observed that for teachers to take proper care of children there was need for adequate space for indoors and outdoors for children to play and run freely and develop naturally.

Early Childhood Education graduates helped the early school children to develop spirit of enquiry and creativity. The ECE teachers cultivated intellectual and excitement learning that exposed the nursery school children and make them explored. The children were allowed to ask questions freely in the classroom. The ECE teachers answered questions from the children always regardless of how stupid the questions were. Indoor materials such as puppets, building blocks, doctor's kits were fully equipped to arouse the children's curiosity. Children were taken outside the classroom to explore places such as library, flower garden and sculpture garden to encourage sprit of enquiry. And the ECE teachers ask questions that were uncertain which arouse the spirit of enquiry such as, where did the star go in the day time. This finding was in line with Bowe, (2009) which suggested that to enhance the spirit of enquiry and creativity, the teacher should attend to, assess, interact with school children through playing with toys, music, allowing children to ask questions

freely and to interface in all the five domains; the adaptive, cognitive, communication, physical and social emotional domains.

This finding is in line with Dunlop (2007) who observed that as children age their habits solidify and become much more difficult to change hence need to be built at early stage preferably, by giving group tasks to accomplish, to build their team spirit, skills and relationship.

Wagner (2003) who observed that children effectively learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned daily routine, through watching teachers and others, through positive role and modeling.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is presented under the following sup-headings:

5.1 Summary

5.2 Conclusion

5.3 Recommendations

5.4 Limitations of the study

5.5 Suggestion for further studies

5.1 Summary

This study assessed the influence of Early Childhood Education graduates on attainment of pre-primary education objectives in North-Central Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. The study had seven specific objectives, seven research questions and seven null hypotheses. Descriptive design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 801 parents of Early Childhood Education children. Four hundred and fifty one parents were used for the study. Four rating scale structured questionnaire was adopted for data collection. Three hundred and fifty (350) copies of questionnaire were properly completed and subjected to statistical analysis. A benchmark of weighted mean score of 2.5 was used for agree while score less than 2.5 was used for disagree. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed in testing the seven null hypotheses at significance level of 0.05. The study revealed that:-

1. Early Childhood Education helps to promote smooth transition of children from home to school in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

2. through Early Childhood Education, Nursery school children were adequately prepared for the challenges of primary school level of education in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

3. Early Childhood Education has influence on upbringing and caring of children when the parents are at working places in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

4. Early Childhood Education promotes the spirit of enquiry and creativity of Nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

5. Nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone develop social norms through Early Childhood Education.

6. Early Childhood Education influenced the sense of team spirit of Nursery school children in North-Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

7. Health habits of Nursery school children improved as a result of ECE graduates in the north central geo-political zone in Nigeria.

8. Early childhood education graduates should be employed for teaching early childhood education programme, this will help to enhance successfully transition from pre-primary to primary education

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the major findings of this study, it can be concluded that;

Early Childhood Education is very crucial terms of a child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. Growth of mental and physical abilities progress at an astounding rate and a very high proportion of learning take place. At Early Childhood Education, children learning capabilities continue for the rest of their lives but not at the intensity that is demonstrated in the preschool years. It therefore follows that Early Childhood Education help the intellectual, social and emotional development and this lays the foundation for children later school success

5.3 Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Parents should endeavour to send their children to Early Childhood Education at good time. This will help to facilitates smooth transition of children from home to school.
2. Schools should consider employing trained teachers in Early Childhood Education programme that will equip the children with knowledge and skills needed to cope with their future educational endeavour.
3. Qualified and experience nannies in the upbringing and caring of children should be employed by Early Childhood Education. This will help to reduce psychological effect of parental absence among the children.
4. The classes of ECE graduate schools should challenging and brain provoking. This will help to promote the spirit of enquiry and creativity among the children.
5. Societal norms and ethics should incorporate into the curriculum of Early Childhood Education. This will help to embed in children the respect to culture and norms of the society.
6. Importance of unity and togetherness should be added into children curriculum. These will assist in developing in children the sense of team spirit while in school.

7. Importance of personal hygiene should be introduced into the curriculum of children in Early Childhood Education. This will help in developing good health habits among the school children.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Studies

The researcher suggested the flowing areas for further studies.

1. Influence of Early Childhood Education on children performance in primary education in North-Central Geo-political zone in Nigeria.
2. Influence of Early Childhood Education on attitude of children towards primary school education in North-Central Geo-political zone in Nigeria.
3. Effects of Early Childhood Education on communication skills and academic achievement of primary school children in North-Central Geo-political zone in Nigeria

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APPENDIX I

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Department of Vocational and Technical Education
Faculty of Education,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student with the above department in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. I am currently undertaking a research work titled "Assessment of Early Childhood Education (ECE) Graduates on the Attainment of the Objectives of Pre-Primary Education in North-Central Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria".

Kindly assist in responding to this questionnaire as honest as possible. I can assure you that the information supplied will be strictly handled with utmost confidentiality. It is purely an academic exercise required of every graduating student. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Rhoda Elisha BAKA

QUESTIONAIRE ITEMS

Section A.

Section A: Respondents' Bio-data (Please tick (✓) an appropriate column)

1. State: (a) Plateau [ ] (b) FCT [ ] (c) Nasarawa [ ]
2. Name of School of the school your child/ward attends:

   _____

3. Gender: (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]
4. What is your age? (a) 19-25 years [ ] (b) 26-32 years [ ] (c) 33-39 years [ ] (d) 40-46 years (e) 50 years and above [ ]
5. For how long have you been working? (a) 5 Years [ ] (b) 6-10 years [ ] (c) 11-15 years [ ] (d) 20 years and above [ ]

SECTION B

Instruction: please indicate the appropriate response by ticking the column that best suit your opinion.

Keys:

SA-Strongly Agreed

A-Agreed

D-Disagreed

SD-strongly Disagreed.

Extent to which ECE graduates have been able to prepare children for smooth transition

S/N	Section B items	SA	A	D	SD
1	ECE Teachers help children to realize they are expected to behave in a certain way and understand class room rules				
2	ECE Teachers teach children to meet and adjust to new, unfamiliar challenges				
3	ECE Teachers communicate acceptance of children by smiling, touching, holding and encouraging children.				
4	Teachers in ECE teach children to adjust to competitive environment in schoolS				
5	ECE Teachers help children to adjust to larger physical enviroment				
6	ECE Teachers teach children to learn the language of the class room And to" read" the taecher				

Extent to which ECE graduate teachers have prepared children for primary school education

S/N	Section C items	SA	A	D	SD
7	All teachers employed at the ECE schools teach children rudiments of English e.g. (A-Z)				
8	Teachers of ECE teach children the rudiments of mathematics e.g. (numbers 1-100)				
9	ECE teachers teach children writing skills in preparation for primary schools				
10	Teachers in ECE help children to realize their change of identity from being a child in pre-school to pupil in primary school				
11	Teachers teach children shapes and colors in pre-primary school				
12	ECE Teachers teach children to cope with greater no of children and relate with the older children in the school				

Extent to which ECE graduate teachers can provide adequate care for children while their parents are at work

S/N	Section D items	SA	A	D	SD
13	Teachers clean up children after toileting				
14	Most of the ECE teachers can spend their time and money to take care of children under their care.				
15	All teachers employed at the nursery schools are mandated to look after children whose parents cannot pick them up immediately after the school closes				
16	ECE teachers take appropriate steps to care for children when they are ill or when they have an accident				
17	In providing adequate care for children, teachers often arrive early and stay late in the school				
18	Teachers limit unhealthy choice of snacks and sugary drinks in school				

Extent to which ECE teachers can develop spirit of enquiry and creativity in the nursery school children

S/N	Section E Items	SA	A	D	SD
19	ECE teachers cultivate intellectual curiosity and excitement learning that expose nursery school children				

	make them to explore				
20	Children are allowed to ask questions freely in the class				
21	ECE teachers answer questions from the children always no matter how stupid they may seem to be				
22	Indoor materials such as puppets, building blocks, doctor's kits are fully equipped to arouse the children's curiosity.				
23	Children are taken out side classroom to explore places such as library, flower garden and sculpture garden to encourage sprit of enquiry.				
24	ECE teachers ask questions that are uncertain which arouse sprit of enquiry such as, where did the star go in the day time.				

Extent to which ECE teachers have impacted social norms in the nursery school children

S/N	Section F Items	SA	A	D	SD
25	Teachers teach their children to respect elders both in school and at home.				
26	ECE teachers teach children rules and regulations of the school and the society at large				
27	Teachers teach children to obey members of the society				
28	ECE teachers teach children eating etiquette of the society such as sit while eating.				
29	ECE Teachers teach children art and craft that reflect culture of the society				
30	Teachers teach children songs and stories that teaches social norms of the society				

Impact of ECE graduate teachers in developing sense of team spirit in the nursery school children

S/N	Section G Items	SA	A	D	SA
31	Teachers ask children to play games such as foot ball to encourage team work				
32	Teachers give children group tasks to accomplish to build their skills and relationship.				

33	ECE teachers give children group assignment in the class to encourage team work				
34	ECE teachers organize programme with other nursery students such as quiz to encourage team work				
35	Teachers in ECE set group target to children to build team spirit in them				
36	Teachers teach children Role play to develop sense of team spirit in the children				

Section H: Extent to which ECE graduates teachers have been able to inculcate good health habits in the nursery school children

S/N	Section H Items	SA	A	D	SD
37	ECE teacher teach children to bath at least twice a day				
38	ECE teachers teach the children to comb their hair after bath				
39	Teachers teach children not to pick things from the ground and put them in the mouth				
40	Teachers teach children to brush their teeth every morning				
41	ECE teachers teach children to always wash hands before and after eating				
42	ECE teachers teach children to always appear in clean uniform				

RELIABILITY

VARIABLES = VAR00001

SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALLP

MODEL = ALPHA.

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	40	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	40	100.0

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.82	25