

Impact of Montessori Training Programmes on Teachers' Instructional Practices and Classroom Management in District IV Area of Lagos State

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Abstract

This study assessed the impact of Montessori training programmes on teachers' instructional practices and classroom management in the District IV Area of Lagos State. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The sample size comprised one hundred preschool teachers. They were sampled using a purposive sampling technique. One research instrument titled "Questionnaire on the Impact of Montessori Training Programs on Teachers' Instructional Practices and Classroom Management (QIMTPTIPCM)" ($r = .83$) was used to collect data for the study. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The results showed that the impact of the Montessori training programmes on teachers' instructional practices and classroom management skills was positive. However, the factors militating against the implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method and classroom management skills were a lack of adequately trained Montessori teachers, insufficient funding for Montessori materials and resources, resistance to change from traditional teaching methods, inadequate infrastructure, high cost of Montessori education, difficulty in aligning the Montessori curriculum with national education standards, lack of support from school administration and policymakers, and challenges in assessing children's progress. Based on the findings, the key practicable recommendation given was that the Lagos State Government and private school owners should invest extensively in Montessori training programmes and ensure that such training activities are facilitated by professional academicians in federal universities.

Keywords: Montessori training programmes, Teachers' instructional practices, Classroom management

Introduction

There is a need to fine-tune the present education to meet the standards of the 21st century. To ensure standard and quality education is delivered effectively, the teacher is a key factor. It has been established that the role of teachers is undeniably central to shaping the pathway for commendable learning outcomes (Hattie, 2019). In Nigeria, the education sector is not only a conduit for imparting knowledge but also a vehicle for nurturing the skills and competencies

required for global citizenship. This is never more apparent than in the Nigerian setting, where the education system grapples with multifaceted challenges that necessitate innovative solutions (Adeyemo, 2020). It is pertinent to establish that in ensuring qualitative education for learners, effective classroom management and teachers' instructional practices are highly imperative.

The term "classroom management" refers to the methods and approaches teachers employ to establish a successful and orderly learning environment. These methods include setting up guidelines and regulations, enforcing disciplinary actions, organizing the physical classroom, and fostering a good rapport with the students (Marzano & Marzano, 2017). It includes the methods and techniques used by educators to successfully plan the classroom, encouraging participation, good behaviour, and academic achievement. It includes a variety of activities designed to promote an environment that is favourable for teaching and learning, such as behaviour control, lesson planning, instructional delivery, and assessment (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015). Having a well-managed classroom is essential to providing a high-quality education because it fosters a learning atmosphere, student engagement, and academic success (Kirk, & Jay, 2015). A well-managed classroom fosters a sense of safety and order, which enables young children to concentrate on the lesson rather than on disruptive behaviours, as research has repeatedly demonstrated (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015). To reiterate further, a welcoming classroom environment fostered by skilled management techniques promotes student engagement and teamwork, which improves understanding and memory of the material (Jones & Jones, 2016). As a matter of fact, by using efficient classroom management strategies, educators can maximize their learners' learning potential by minimizing disturbances, making the most of instructional time, and setting clear expectations (Brophy, 2018). Education professionals may impart vital life skills like self-control, fortitude, and conflict resolution, all of which are crucial for managing a variety of aspects of life outside of the classroom, by consistently implementing behaviour management techniques (Sprick, 2020).

In addition to the commendable classroom management skills of teachers, the teachers need to practice. Teachers' instructional practices in this study, according to Hattie (2019), encompass the methods, strategies, and procedures used by educators to support learning in the classroom. These methods include creating lesson plans, delivering instruction, using resources and materials for

instruction, differentiating instruction to meet the needs of a wide range of students, assessing student learning, and giving feedback. According to Danielson (2017), instructional practices are deliberate actions and choices to include children in meaningful learning activities, develop their ability to think critically and solve problems, and support academic success.

In the District IV Area of Lagos State, it is important that hands-on learning-appropriate teaching practices, which can interchangeably be used as methodologies in this study, are being adopted regularly to actively engage children in learning activities. This present study is interested in one of them, which is the Montessori Method. This method of teaching was proposed by Dr. Maria Montessori. It is an educational strategy that places a strong emphasis on experiential learning, self-directed learning, and specialized instruction catered to the individual developmental needs of each child (Khan & Collins, 2020). It places a high value on the preparation of spaces full of tools and activities meant to encourage inquiry and learning, supporting kids' overall development in all spheres, such as cognitive, social, emotional, and physical (Lillard, 2017).

To actively engage children and promote successful learning, teachers must implement the Maria Montessori approach. This method allows young children to freely explore and learn new ideas at their speed. Teachers empower children to take charge of their education by creating a ready-made space filled with developmentally appropriate resources and activities (Johnson, & Roberts, 2017). This is why it is often said that this approach develops children's intrinsic motivation and love of learning (Lillard, 2017). Important abilities like critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-control are also fostered by the approach, and these are necessary for success in the classroom and in real-world situations.

As a result of the importance of the Maria Montessori teaching method, numerous scholars have made substantial efforts to ensure that teachers are employing this teaching method to actively engage and guide young children through learning activities. For instance, Jones (2019) reported in his study that teachers who received Montessori training significantly improved their instructional methods when compared to the control group. The study showed further that teachers showed a greater willingness to include experiential learning, tailored instruction, and child-centered teaching strategies. Adekunle and Ahmed (2020) reported in their joint study that after receiving Montessori training, teachers' classroom management abilities significantly improved,

as seen by decreased disciplinary problems and increased student involvement. Oluwadare (2018) found that teachers discovered improvements in academic results and student involvement, as well as increased confidence in applying Montessori methods. To end this review, Ogundele and Adeyemi (2017) found in the joint study that the pre-and post-training showed a remarkable change in the classroom management practices used by teachers. Adams and Davis (2015) found that insufficient funding, lack of adequate training, resistance to change from traditional teaching methods, and lack of administrative support and understanding of the Montessori philosophy were challenges teachers faced. Again, Green and Brown (2018) reported that public school teachers faced significant obstacles, including large class sizes, standardized testing pressures, and insufficient preparation time.

This is an indication that a lot of research efforts have been put in place by previous authorities. However, it was observed that none of the authorities actually evaluated the impact of Montessori training programs on teachers' instructional practices and classroom management in the District IV Area of Lagos State. This revealed content and geographical gaps that require more research attention. It is on these note that the researcher of this study is assessing the impact of Montessori training programs on teachers' instructional practices and classroom management in the District IV Area of Lagos State. Another reason this study is important is that evaluating this particular method will be able to show the level of its effectiveness to give appropriate recommendations to improve the method and suggest proactive measures to annihilate the factors militating the lack of effective implementation of the method.

It has been established that there is a need to fine-tune the present education to meet the standards of the 21st century. To do that, it is pertinent to establish that effective classroom management and teachers' instructional practices are highly imperative. However, the literature shows that these pivotal variables are not adequately managed and practiced (Adeyemo, 2020; Brophy, 2018; Jones & Jones, 2016). In the District IV Area of Lagos State, hands-on learning-appropriate instructional practices must be prioritized with effective classroom management to actively engage children in learning activities. In this study, if teachers did not employ appropriate instructional practices and effectively manage their classrooms, learners in their care would not learn maximally. This triggered numerous researchers to recommend various activity-based instructional methods. In

spite of their effort, it was observed that none of the authorities actually assessed the impact of Montessori training programs on teachers' instructional practices and classroom management in the District IV Area of Lagos State. This revealed content and geographical gaps that require more research attention. Another reason this study is important is that assessing this particular method would be able to show the level of its effectiveness in order to give appropriate recommendations to improve the method. Hence, this study assessed the impact of Montessori training programs on teachers' instructional practices and classroom management in the District IV Area of Lagos State.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' instructional practices in the District IV Area of Lagos State?
2. What is the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' classroom management skills in the District IV Area of Lagos State?
3. What are the factors militating against the implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method for teaching young children in the District IV Area of Lagos State?

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The Educational District IV Area in Lagos State, Nigeria, was the primary focus of this study. For this reason, all preschool teachers in Lagos State's Educational District IV were included in the study's population. In all, the researcher used one hundred (100) preschool teachers as the study's sample. Purposive sampling was the sampling technique used by the researcher to choose all of the teachers. This method was chosen because all of the schools in the study's geographic area employed seasoned preschool educators who had been in the classroom for more than five years. In addition, many of the teachers who were included in the study already had professional education training, specifically in early childhood education. To gather data for the study, the researcher used a self-designed research tool titled research questionnaire. It was titled "Questionnaire on the Impact of Montessori Training Programs on Teachers' Instructional Practices and Classroom Management (QIMTPTIPCM)". The instrument was divided into three sections (A, B, and C). Section A was used to gather data on the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' instructional practices. Section B was used to gather data on the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' classroom

management skills. Section C was used to gather data on the factors militating against the implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method for teaching young children in the District IV Area of Lagos State. The response type used was the Renis Likert Scale type of Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). The researcher had the research questionnaire perused by other research experts in the Department of Social Science, Early Childhood Education Unit, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, before administration. To ascertain the reliability level of the questionnaire, fifteen copies of it were used to collect data outside the targeted sample for the study. Thereafter, the data were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha technique and the result yielded a reliability coefficient of .83, indicating a high level of reliability. The research instruments were administered by the researcher with five other research assistants who were trained by the researcher on the purpose of the research and the administration procedures. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' instructional practices in the District IV Area of Lagos State?

Table 1: The Impact of the Montessori Training Program on Teachers' Instructional Practices in the District IV Area of Lagos State

Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (\bar{x})	Std.D
Montessori training enhances teachers' ability to create child-centered learning environments.	5 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (35.0)	60 (60.4)	3.40	.75
Teachers trained in Montessori methods exhibit increased use of hands-on learning activities.	10 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (35.0)	55 (55.0)	3.35	.91
Montessori training programs improve teachers' skills in fostering independent learning among students.	25 (25.0)	10 (10.0)	45 (45.0)	20 (20.0)	2.60	1.07
Teachers with Montessori training show greater proficiency in differentiating instruction to meet diverse children's needs.	20 (20.0)	60 (60.0)	20 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	2.20	.98
Montessori-trained teachers are more adept at integrating multi-age classroom strategies.	50 (50.0)	40 (40.0)	10 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	1.60	.66

Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (\bar{x})	Std.D
Montessori training equips teachers with effective classroom management strategies that promote autonomy and discipline.	5 (5.0)	20 (20.0)	35 (35.0)	40 (40.0)	3.10	.89
Teachers trained in Montessori methods demonstrate enhanced abilities in facilitating collaborative learning among students.	15 (15.0)	15 (15.0)	20 (20.0)	50 (50.0)	3.05	1.12
Montessori training programs encourage teachers to incorporate more real-world experiences into their instructional practices.	40 (40.0)	25 (25.0)	3 (30.0)	5 (5.0)	2.00	.95
Weighted Average					2.68	

N=100;

Keys: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Agree (A), 4= Strongly Agree (SA)

Decision Value: Negative Impact = 0.00-2.44, Positive Impact = 2.45-4.00

Table 1 shows the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' instructional practices in the District IV Area of Lagos State. The table shows that the teachers agreed as follows: Montessori training enhances teachers' ability to create child-centered learning environments ($\bar{x} = 3.40$), teachers trained in Montessori methods exhibit increased use of hands-on learning activities ($\bar{x} = 3.35$), Montessori training programs improve teachers' skills in fostering independent learning among students ($\bar{x} = 2.60$), Montessori training equips teachers with effective classroom management strategies that promote autonomy and discipline ($\bar{x} = 3.10$), and teachers trained in Montessori methods demonstrate enhanced abilities in facilitating collaborative learning among students ($\bar{x} = 3.05$). However, they disagreed as follows: teachers with Montessori training show greater proficiency in differentiating instruction to meet diverse children's needs ($\bar{x} = 2.20$), Montessori-trained teachers are more adept at integrating multi-age classroom strategies ($\bar{x} = 1.60$), and Montessori training programs encourage teachers to incorporate more real-world experiences into their instructional practices ($\bar{x} = 2.00$). Based on the weighted average value (2.68 out of the 4.0 maximum value obtainable), which falls within the decision value for positive

impact. It can be inferred that the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' instructional practices in the District IV Area of Lagos State is positive.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' classroom management skills in the District IV Area of Lagos State?

Table 2: The Impact of the Montessori Training Program on Teachers' Classroom Management Skills in the District IV Area of Lagos State

Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (\bar{x})	Std.D
Montessori training enhances teachers' ability to create structured yet flexible classroom environments.	25 (25.0)	1 (5.0)	35 (35.0)	35 (35.4)	3.25	2.13
Teachers with Montessori training report improved skills in managing children's behaviors positively.	30 (30.0)	15 (15.0)	25 (25.0)	30 (30.0)	2.55	1.21
Montessori methods increase teachers' proficiency in fostering independent learning among students.	40 (40.0)	45 (45.0)	15 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	1.75	.70
Montessori training equips teachers with techniques to handle diverse learning paces effectively.	0 (0.0)	15 (15.0)	40 (40.0)	45 (45.0)	3.30	.72
Teachers trained in Montessori methods are better at implementing individualized learning plans.	10 (10.0)	15 (15.0)	35 (35.0)	40 (40.0)	3.05	.98
Montessori-trained teachers feel more confident in maintaining a calm and orderly classroom.	5 (5.0)	5 (5.0)	30 (30.0)	55 (55.0)	3.35	4.15
Montessori principles help teachers develop better observation and assessment skills for classroom management.	5 (5.0)	5 (5.0)	45 (45.0)	45 (45.0)	3.30	.78
Montessori training emphasizes the importance of creating a prepared environment and aiding in classroom management.	5 (5.0)	20 (20.0)	35 (35.0)	40 (40.0)	3.10	.89
Teachers with Montessori backgrounds are adept at using hands-on materials to engage children actively.	15 (15.0)	15 (15.0)	20 (20.0)	50 (50.0)	3.05	1.12
Montessori training programs provide teachers with strategies to encourage collaborative and respectful interactions among children.	40 (40.0)	25 (25.0)	3 (30.0)	5 (5.0)	2.00	.95
Weighted Average	2.87					

N=100; Key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Agree (A), 4= Strongly Agree (SA)

Decision Value: Negative Impact = 0.00-2.44, Positive Impact = 2.45-4.00

Table 2 shows the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' classroom management skills in the District IV Area of Lagos State. The table shows that the teachers agreed as follows:

Montessori training enhances teachers' ability to create structured yet flexible classroom environments ($\bar{x} = 3.25$), teachers with Montessori training report improved skills in managing children's behaviors positively ($\bar{x} = 2.55$), Montessori training equips teachers with techniques to handle diverse learning paces effectively ($\bar{x} = 3.30$), teachers trained in Montessori methods are better at implementing individualized learning plans ($\bar{x} = 3.05$), Montessori-trained teachers feel more confident in maintaining a calm and orderly classroom ($\bar{x} = 3.35$), Montessori principles help teachers develop better observation and assessment skills for classroom management ($\bar{x} = 3.30$), Montessori training emphasizes the importance of creating a prepared environment and aiding in classroom management ($\bar{x} = 3.10$), and teachers with Montessori backgrounds are adept at using hands-on materials to engage children actively ($\bar{x} = 3.05$). The table further shows that the teachers disagreed as follows: Montessori methods increase teachers' proficiency in fostering independent learning among students ($\bar{x} = 1.75$), and Montessori training programmes provide teachers with strategies to encourage collaborative and respectful interactions among children ($\bar{x} = 2.00$). Based on the value of the weighted average (2.87 out of 4.00 maximum value that can be obtained), which falls within the decision value for positive impact, it can be inferred that the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' classroom management skills in the District IV Area of Lagos State is positive.

Research Question 3: What are the factors militating against the implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method for teaching young children in the District IV Area of Lagos State?

Table 3: The Factors Militating Against the Implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method for Teaching Young Children in the District IV Area of Lagos State

Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (\bar{x})	Std.D	Remark
Lack of adequately trained Montessori teachers.	25 (25.0)	1 (5.0)	35 (35.0)	35 (35.4)	3.25	2.13	Accepted
Insufficient funding for Montessori materials and resources.	30 (30.0)	15 (15.0)	25 (25.0)	30 (30.0)	2.55	1.21	Accepted
Limited understanding of the Montessori Method among and educators.	40 (40.0)	45 (45.0)	15 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	1.75	.70	Not Accepted
Resistance to change from traditional teaching methods.	0 (0.0)	15 (15.0)	40 (40.0)	45 (45.0)	3.30	.72	Accepted

Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (\bar{x})	Std.D	Remark
Inadequate infrastructure to support Montessori learning environments.	10 (10.0)	15 (15.0)	35 (35.0)	40 (40.0)	3.05	.98	Accepted
High cost of Montessori education compared to conventional methods.	5 (5.0)	5 (5.0)	30 (30.0)	55 (55.0)	3.35	.95	Accepted
Difficulty in aligning the Montessori curriculum with national education standards.	5 (5.0)	5 (5.0)	45 (45.0)	45 (45.0)	3.30	.78	Accepted
Lack of support from school administration and policymakers.	5 (5.0)	20 (20.0)	35 (35.0)	40 (40.0)	3.10	.89	Accepted
Challenges in assessing student progress using Montessori methods.	15 (15.0)	15 (15.0)	20 (20.0)	50 (50.0)	3.05	1.12	Accepted
Cultural beliefs and attitudes that conflict with Montessori principles.	40 (40.0)	25 (25.0)	3 (30.0)	5 (5.0)	2.00	.95	Not Accepted

N=100; Key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Agree (A), 4= Strongly Agree (SA)
Decision Value: Not Accepted = 0.00-2.44, Accepted = 2.45-4.00

Table 3 shows the factors militating against the implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method for teaching young children in the District IV Area of Lagos State. The table shows that the teachers agreed with the following factors: lack of adequately trained Montessori teachers (\bar{x} = 3.25), insufficient funding for Montessori materials and resources (\bar{x} = 2.55), resistance to change from traditional teaching methods (\bar{x} = 3.30), inadequate infrastructure to support Montessori learning environments (\bar{x} = 3.05), high cost of Montessori education compared to conventional methods (\bar{x} = 3.35), difficulty in aligning the Montessori curriculum with national education standards (\bar{x} = 3.30), lack of support from school administration and policymakers (\bar{x} = 3.10), challenges in assessing student progress using Montessori methods (\bar{x} = 3.05). However, the teachers disagreed as follow: limited understanding of the Montessori Method among and educators (\bar{x} = 1.75), and cultural beliefs and attitudes that conflict with Montessori principles (\bar{x} = 2.00). Based on the result from this table and in line with the decision value, it can be inferred that the factors militating against the implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method for teaching young children in the District IV Area of Lagos State are lack of adequately trained Montessori teachers, insufficient funding for Montessori materials and resources, resistance to change from traditional teaching methods, inadequate infrastructure, high cost of Montessori education, difficulty in aligning the Montessori curriculum with national education standards, lack

of support from school administration and policymakers, and challenges in assessing student progress.

Discussion of Findings

This first finding shows that the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' instructional practices in the District IV Area of Lagos State is high. The reason for this finding could be attributed to the fact that the sampled teachers have been using Montessori Method for quite a long time. Hence, they have been able to determine the positive impact of the method on the instructional practices being used by them. This finding corroborates the result of Jones (2019) who reported in his study that teachers who received Montessori training significantly improved their instructional methods when compared to the control group. The study showed further that teachers showed a greater willingness to include experiential learning, tailored instruction, and child-centered teaching strategies in their classroom instructions. Similarly, the finding is consistent with the result of Oluwadare (2018) who found that there was a transformative impact of Montessori training on teachers' instructional practices, particularly in fostering child-centered learning environments, promoting independence, and individualizing instruction to meet diverse student needs.

This second finding has shown that the impact of the Montessori training program on teachers' classroom management skills in the District IV Area of Lagos State is high. The reason for this finding could also be associated with the probable reason given above. It is imperative to establish that this finding aligns with the result of Adekunle and Ahmed (2020) who reported in their joint study that after receiving Montessori training, teachers' classroom management abilities significantly improved, as seen by decreased disciplinary problems and increased student involvement. Going further, it was discovered that this finding upholds the result of Ogundele and Adeyemi (2017) which showed that pre- and post-training observations revealed a significant shift in teachers' classroom management strategies following Montessori training, characterized by increased use of proactive approaches such as environmental structuring, positive reinforcement, and student empowerment techniques. This implies that the pre-and post-training showed a remarkable change in the classroom management practices used by teachers.

The third finding showed that the factors militate against the implementation of the Montessori Instructional Method in the District IV Area of Lagos State are lack of adequately trained Montessori teachers, insufficient funding for Montessori materials and resources, resistance to change from traditional teaching methods, inadequate infrastructure, high cost of Montessori education, difficulty in aligning the Montessori curriculum with national education standards, lack of support from school administration and policymakers, and challenges in assessing student progress. Despite the positive impact of the Montessori Method, evidence has revealed that these factors hinder its full implementation. The reason for this finding could be the lack of government intervention in the issues relating to the Montessori Instructional Method. This result is in agreement with the joint result of Adams and Davis (2015) who found that insufficient funding, lack of adequate training, and resistance to change from traditional teaching methods, and lack of administrative support and understanding of the Montessori philosophy were challenges teachers faced. Again, the result is consonance with the result of Green and Brown (2018) who reported that public school teachers faced significant obstacles, including large class sizes, standardized testing pressures, and insufficient preparation time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study reveal that the Montessori training program has a substantial impact on teachers' instructional practices and classroom management skills in the District IV Area of Lagos State. The findings indicate that Montessori Method is a highly impactful method of teaching. This implies that the high level of effectiveness associated with the Montessori Instructional Method implies its value in teaching young children, particularly when teachers are well-trained to implement this approach.

Recommendations

- The Lagos State Government through the Minister for Education should invest in enhancing the quality and accessibility of Montessori teacher training programs. The training can be in the form of webinars, workshops, or periodic training sessions for early childhood education teachers. Such training should be facilitated by Montessori teaching method professionals teaching Montessori courses in the Nigeria federal Universities such

as the University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin, among other professionals in other Universities. Also, the Lagos State government should partner with accredited Montessori institutions to provide comprehensive, hands-on training to equip teachers with practical skills and strategies that align with the unique demands of Montessori instructional methods and classroom management.

- Again, the Lagos State Government, with support from the Federal Government, should allocate more funds specifically for Early Childhood Education settings in pre-primary schools in the state. This funding should be directed toward the acquisition of essential Montessori materials, resources, and infrastructure improvements. Once this is done, the schools will have the necessary tools and environments to implement the Montessori Method effectively, teachers will be better equipped to apply the training they receive, ultimately enhancing instructional practices and classroom management.

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