

**TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF EARLY TALENT
IDENTIFICATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRESCHOOL
CHILDREN IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.**

BY

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BENIN CITY.**

MAY, 2024.

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF BACHELOR IN EDUCATION (B.ED HONOURS IN
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BENIN CITY.**

MAY, 2024.

DECLARATION

I declare that this project work is based on a study carried out by me in the Institute of Education, University of Benin under the supervision of Dr. W.C. Uwadiae. All ideas, findings and analysis attained in the study are products of my personal research. Where the views of others have been used and expressed, they were duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned, certify that **OJOMOYELA ADEBIMPE** carried out this work with matriculation number **EDU1903867** of the Institute of Education, University of Benin, Benin-City. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Award of Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty, the one who was, is, and is to come, the beginning and the end, the founder and author of all things. I also dedicate it to Jesus Christ, the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, who served as my instructor during my studies. Additionally, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my wonderful parents, who have always been there for me, and to my siblings, especially to my younger sister (blessed memory) Helen Ojomoyela.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of preschool teachers on the impact of early talent identification (ETI) on the academic performance of children in Oredo Local Government. A cross-sectional survey approach was employed. The population comprised all the preschool teachers in Oredo Local Government Area. The Sample was 100 preschool teachers selected through convenience sampling technique. Descriptive statistics validated by three lectures in the institute of Education was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that teachers perceive early talent identification positively, acknowledging its role in enhancing academic performance through tailored support and enrichment opportunities. However, challenges such as parental attitudes, resource limitations, and systemic inadequacies hinder effective talent identification. Despite challenges, teachers are highly rated in implementing curriculum differentiation and enrichment for early talent identification. The research underscores the importance of early talent identification in preschool education and emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts to optimize learning experiences for children in Oredo Local Government. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that Edo State Government and School Operators should allocate sufficient resources to overcome limitations in facilities, materials, and staffing that affect building of preschool talent.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Early childhood education refers to the formal and informal learning experiences of children from birth to eight years old (UNESCO, 2024). Early Childhood Education level widely recognized as a crucial stage for the development of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills that lay the foundation for lifelong learning and well-being (OECD, 2024). Research has shown that Early Childhood Education can have positive effects on children's academic performance, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Heckman, 2024). However, early childhood education also faces many challenges, such as access, quality, equity, and funding (UNICEF, 2024). Therefore, it is important to understand the perspectives of teachers, who are the key agents of early childhood education, on how to identify and nurture the talents of preschool children and enhance their learning outcomes.

Early talent identification (ETI) has emerged as a focal point in the realm of education, particularly concerning its potential impact on the academic performance of preschool children. The significance of identifying and nurturing unique abilities in young learners has been a subject of interest for educators, researchers, and policymaker.

Early talent identification refers to the process of recognizing and acknowledging the unique abilities, strengths, and potential of young children. It involves identifying specific talents or areas of giftedness in preschoolers there by providing them with appropriate educational opportunities that will enhance their skills (Johnson, 2006). This approach aims to maximize the potential of each child and promote their overall academic performance.

Research indicates that children directly entering primary education are often unprepared physically and mentally (Jones, 2018). Just as education is essential for life readiness, early childhood education is necessary for formal education readiness. Recognizing this, there is now a global demand for early childhood education. (World Bank Group, 2023)

Examining the existing structure of Early Childhood Education (ECE), it has a lifelong impact on children. Preschool, a crucial foundation for a child's academic journey, introduces play, drawing, coloring, and academic concepts like alphabets and

numbers. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) (2005) emphasizes the pivotal role of the preschool year in a child's personality development, influencing later education.

Preschool education plays a pivotal role in shaping the foundation of a child's learning journey. During these early years, children exhibit a remarkable diversity of skills, aptitudes, and potentials that can significantly influence their academic trajectory. The concept of early talent identification involves the proactive recognition and support of these individual talents before formal education commences. It is grounded in the belief that intelligence is multifaceted, spanning various domains such as linguistic, mathematical, spatial, musical, and creative abilities (Smith, 2005).

The importance of this study is underscored by the potential long-term implications of early talent recognition on a child's academic performance and overall development. Understanding how preschool teachers perceive and engage with early talent identification is critical in refining educational practices and optimizing learning experiences for young minds. The teachers' role in identifying and nurturing talent is particularly crucial as they serve as the primary architects of the early educational environment.

Oredo Local Government provides a distinct backdrop for this investigation. As a microcosm of the broader educational landscape, the local government encompasses diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and demographic factors that may influence how early talent identification is perceived and implemented. Factors such as the quality of preschool programs, teacher-student interactions, and the availability of resources can significantly impact the success of talent identification initiatives (Renzulli & Reis, 2003). The inquiry into teachers' perceptions serves as a gateway to understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with early talent identification in Oredo Local Government.

Preschool education plays a pivotal role in shaping the foundation of a child's learning journey. During these early years, children exhibit a remarkable diversity of skills, aptitudes, and potentials that can significantly influence their academic trajectory. The concept of early talent identification involves the proactive recognition and support of these individual talents before formal education commences. It is grounded in the belief that intelligence is multifaceted, spanning various domains such as linguistic, mathematical, spatial, musical, and creative abilities (Smith, 2005). Additionally, the study aims to uncover the obstacles and variations in viewpoints across different preschools within the locality.

The potential benefits of effective early talent identification are extensive. They include providing children with a conducive environment to explore and pursue their passions, fostering intrinsic motivation and interest in learning, and ensuring access to appropriate and differentiated instruction that aligns with their unique abilities (Subotnik et al., 2011). Conversely, challenges such as societal expectations, disparities in access, and potential stigma require careful consideration and mitigation strategies (Cross & Cross, 2015).

The outcomes are anticipated to contribute valuable insights to educational practices, teacher training programs, and policy formulation in Oredo Local Government and beyond. By comprehensively understanding teachers' perceptions of the impact of early talent identification, we aim to pave the way for an educational landscape that nurtures the diverse talents of preschool children, laying the groundwork for their future academic success and holistic development.

Statement of the Problem

The primary issue that necessitates research in this context is the inadequate understanding and implementation of early talent identification (ETI) methodologies among preschool teachers in Oredo Local Government, in particular and Nigeria in general. This problem is multifaceted and warrants thorough investigation due to its significant implications for the academic development and well-being of preschool

children. Firstly, the lack of awareness and training in early talent identification concepts among teachers poses a fundamental challenge. Without comprehensive knowledge of effective identification strategies and tools, teachers may struggle to recognize and nurture the diverse talents present in their students. This deficiency in early talent identification proficiency can lead to missed opportunities for early intervention and tailored educational support, thereby hindering the maximization of each child's potential.

Moreover, the limited understanding of early talent identification methodologies in full may exacerbate existing disparities in academic outcomes among preschoolers. Children with unrecognized talents or developmental strengths may not receive the specialized attention and enrichment opportunities they require, resulting in underachievement or disengagement from learning. Conversely, those who are inaccurately identified or labeled may face undue pressure or misplaced expectations, potentially leading to issues such as academic anxiety or self-esteem challenges. Therefore, the insufficient implementation of early talent identification practices in full directly impacts the equitable access to quality education and the promotion of inclusive learning environments in preschool settings

Research Questions

The following questions were designed to guide the research.

1. How do teachers perceive the impact of early talent identification on academic performance of preschool children in Oredo Local Government Area?
2. How do teachers identify early talent in preschool children in Oredo Local Government Area?
3. What are the challenges of early talent identification faced by teachers in Oredo Local Government Area?
4. To what extent do teachers in Oredo Local Government implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment for preschool children with early talent?
5. What are the best practices for teachers in Oredo Local Government to support and nurture preschool children with early talent?

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to thoroughly examine and comprehend the impact of Early Talent Identification (ETI) on academic performance of preschool children in Oredo Local Government. Specifically, it seek to:

1. Investigate the extent to which teachers perceive the impact of early talent identification on academic performance of preschool children.
2. Investigate the ways in which teachers identify early talent in preschool children.
3. Determine the challenges of early talent identification faced by teachers

4. Ascertain the extent to which teachers implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment for preschool children with early talent?
5. Examine the best practices teachers used to support and nurture preschool children with early talent?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on investigating the impact of early talent identification on the academic performance of preschool children in Oredo Local Government. The geographical scope of the research is limited to Oredo Local Government Area in order to provide a detailed and context-specific analysis of the perceptions of teachers regarding early talent identification and its implications for academic achievement in preschoolers.

The study includes preschool teachers within Oredo Local Government as the primary participants, gathering insights from their experiences, methodologies, and beliefs regarding talent identification and its relationship to academic performance. The research primarily considers the perspectives of teachers working in diverse preschool settings within the specified locality.

Limitations of the Study

While this research endeavors to shed light on the impact of early talent identification on the academic performance of preschool children in Oredo Local Government, certain limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the geographical scope is confined to Oredo Local Government, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings to a broader context. Additionally, the primary focus on preschool teachers' perspectives might neglect the valuable insights of parents, administrators, and other stakeholders crucial to the educational landscape. The study does not extensively delve into individual student characteristics, such as socio-economic factors or diverse talents, which could significantly influence the relationship between early talent identification and academic outcomes. The reliance on quantitative data may provide in-depth insights but may lack the statistical robustness inherent in quantitative approaches. Time constraints and the specified research time frame may limit the depth of data collection and analysis, preventing a more exhaustive exploration of the topic. Despite these limitations, the research aims to provide valuable localized insights into teachers' perceptions of early talent identification in the preschool education setting.

Definition of Terms

1. **Talent:** Talent is an inherent aptitude or proficiency in a specific area, showcasing exceptional ability across diverse fields such as arts, sports, academics, or any domain where individuals exhibit distinctive and innate capabilities.
2. **Preschool:** Preschool refers to an educational setting or program designed to offer early childhood education and socialization for children typically aged 3 to 5 before formal schooling, focusing on nurturing foundational skills, social development, and creating a positive learning environment.
3. **Academic Performance:** In this study, academic performance denotes the demonstrated achievements and outcomes of preschool children in various cognitive and educational activities, encompassing early literacy, numeracy, and other pre-academic skills.
4. **Preschool Teachers:** Preschool teachers are educators actively involved in instructing and guiding preschool-aged children during their early educational experiences.
5. **Perception:** In the context of this research, perception relates to the subjective viewpoints, beliefs, and attitudes held by preschool teachers concerning the relevance and impact of early talent identification on the academic performance of preschool children.

6. **Impact:** In the context of the study, impact signifies the perceived influence or effect that early talent identification practices exert on the development and academic outcomes of preschool children.
7. **Stakeholders:** Individuals or groups involved in or affected by early talent identification practices in preschool education, including teachers, parents, administrators, and policymakers.
8. **Socioeconomic Factors:** Socioeconomic factors refer to the social and economic circumstances that may influence or contribute to variations in early talent identification and academic performance, encompassing aspects such as the income, employment, and educational background of families.
9. **Educational Landscape:** Educational landscape encompasses the broader context and environment within which preschool education operates, including institutional policies, curriculum frameworks, and the interaction of various stakeholders shaping the educational experiences of preschool children.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of literature related to this study under the following sub-heading;

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Early Talent Identification
- The factors and Influences of Teacher Perception on Student Academic Performance

- Assessment of Motivation and Personality Characteristics
- The Benefits and Challenges of Early Talent Identification for Preschool Children
- Academic Performance in Preschool Children
- Effects of Early Talent Identification on Academic Performance and Well-being of Preschool Children
- Summary of Literature Reviewed

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical Framework of this study was based on three theories namely ecological systems theory, Social cognitive theory and multiple intelligences theory. This research uses these three theories to explain how teachers think and act about finding and helping talented preschool children, and how this affects how well the children learn. These theories are:

Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological systems theory is one of the models of talent identification that considers the complex and dynamic interactions between the child and their environment. It was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, who proposed that the child's development is influenced by five levels of environmental systems, each with different

degrees of proximity and impact on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These systems are:

- **The Microsystem:** This is the closest and most immediate environment of the child, such as their family, school, peers, and neighborhood. It includes the people and places that the child interacts with directly and regularly, and that have a significant influence on the child's behavior and development.
- **The Mesosystem:** This is the connection and interaction between the different microsystems of the child, such as the relationship between their family and school, or between their peers and teachers. It reflects how the different settings and actors in the child's life affect each other and the child.
- **The Exosystem:** This is the external environment that indirectly affects the child, but that the child does not have direct contact with, such as their parents' workplace, the media, the government, or the community services. It includes the events and conditions that influence the child's microsystems and mesosystems, and that may have positive or negative consequences for the child's development.
- **The Macrosystem:** This is the broadest and most distant environment of the child, such as their culture, society, values, norms, and laws. It encompasses the general patterns and structures that shape the child's microsystems, mesosystems, and

exosystems, and that reflect the historical and cultural context of the child's development.

- **The Chronosystem:** This is the temporal dimension of the child's environment, such as the changes and transitions that occur over time, both in the child and in their surroundings. It includes the events and experiences that mark the child's life course, such as birth, death, divorce, migration, or education, and that may have lasting effects on the child's development.

In this study, the ecological systems theory provides a framework for understanding how various factors within the preschool environment and broader community context may influence teachers' perceptions and practices regarding early talent identification and its impact on academic performance. The study assumes that early talent identification is not only a matter of individual abilities and potential, but also a product of the complex and dynamic interplay between the child and their environment, and that different environmental systems may have different effects on the child's development and learning. The study also assumes that teachers' perceptions and practices are not only influenced by their own characteristics and beliefs, but also by the characteristics and expectations of the different environmental systems they belong to and interact with. The study aims to explore how the ecological systems theory can help to identify and understand the factors and influences that

shape and affect early talent identification and academic performance in preschool children.

Social Cognitive Theory

The Social Cognitive Theory was proposed by Albert Bandura, this theory emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and reinforcement in shaping behavior. In the context of this research, social cognitive theory helps to explore how teachers' perceptions of early talent identification may be influenced by their observations of students' behaviors, interactions with colleagues, and experiences with implementing identification strategies. Additionally, the theory helps to understand how teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of early talent identification may impact their instructional practices and interactions with students. (Bandura, 1986).

According to Bandura, human behavior is influenced by three factors: personal, environmental, and behavioral. These factors interact in a reciprocal manner, meaning that they affect and are affected by each other. Personal factors include cognitive, affective, and biological aspects of the individual, such as self-efficacy, goals, and emotions. Environmental factors include physical and social stimuli, such as rewards, punishments, and models. Behavioral factors include the actions and reactions of the individual, such as performance, feedback, and coping. Bandura proposed that individuals learn from their own and others' experiences through four processes:

attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Attention refers to the extent to which the individual pays attention to the observed behavior and its consequences. Retention refers to the extent to which the individual remembers the observed behavior and its outcomes. Reproduction refers to the extent to which the individual can reproduce the observed behavior in similar situations. Motivation refers to the extent to which the individual is motivated to perform the observed behavior based on the expected rewards or punishments.

In this research, social cognitive theory provides a framework for examining how teachers' perceptions of early talent identification are formed and changed by their personal, environmental, and behavioral factors. For example, teachers' self-efficacy in identifying and nurturing gifted students may affect their willingness to adopt and implement identification strategies. Teachers' observations of their students' achievements, potentials, and needs may affect their judgments of who is gifted and who is not. Teachers' interactions with their colleagues, administrators, and parents may affect their attitudes and beliefs about the importance and feasibility of early talent identification. Teachers' feedback from their students, peers, and supervisors may affect their satisfaction and confidence in their identification practices. Teachers' coping strategies for dealing with the challenges and dilemmas of early talent identification may affect their persistence and resilience in this endeavor."

Concept of Early Talent Identification.

Early talent identification, the process of recognizing and supporting children's unique abilities and potential before formal education, operates on the premise that intelligence manifests in diverse forms such as linguistic, mathematical, spatial, musical, and creative abilities. This understanding is rooted in Howard Smith's theory of multiple intelligences, which posits the existence of eight distinct types of intelligence (Smith 2005).

The dual purpose and significance of early talent identification in preschool children are underscored: firstly, to offer tailored instruction and support for those requiring additional resources or interventions to nurture their talents, and secondly, to cultivate positive self-concept, motivation, and overall well-being in children who might otherwise experience boredom, frustration, or isolation in a conventional classroom (Huang, 2008). This process also holds long-term advantages, helping children explore their interests, passions, and preparing them for future challenges (Huang, 2008).

According to Dweck (2000), talent is seen as a potential that is realized only through the acquisition of competencies through training and practice. Within this context, identifying talent as early as possible often begins in the prime stage of life.

This can be achieved through early intervention that provides tailored educational opportunities, facilitated by models of Early Talent Identification in Education.

Models of Early Talent Identification in Education

The Giftedness Model

The giftedness model of talent identification focuses on identifying and supporting students who demonstrate exceptional abilities in specific domains, including academic, creative, or leadership areas. Grounded in the concept of giftedness as an inherent and stable trait, this model emphasizes the use of objective and standardized methods to assess students' abilities (Subotnik et al., 2019). Employing various assessment techniques such as standardized tests, portfolios, observations, and nominations, the giftedness model aims to accurately identify gifted students and provide them with tailored education and support (Ford, 2013).

An evident strength of the giftedness model lies in its provision of clear criteria for identifying gifted students and measuring their abilities reliably. By facilitating early and precise identification, this model ensures that gifted students receive appropriate curriculum and instruction that align with their unique needs and interests. Moreover, it acknowledges the diverse manifestations of giftedness across different domains, valuing the multiplicity of talents.

However, the giftedness model is not without its limitations. Its narrow focus may inadvertently exclude students whose talents do not conform to traditional definitions of giftedness, particularly those from culturally, linguistically, or socioeconomically diverse backgrounds, as well as students with disabilities or learning difficulties (Ford, 2013). Additionally, the model's static view of giftedness overlooks the role of environmental and developmental factors in talent development, such as access to opportunities, quality instruction, and supportive environments (Subotnik et al., 2019). This rigidity may result in issues like stigma, isolation, pressure, or underachievement among gifted students, necessitating social and emotional support and guidance (Neihart et al., 2002).

Despite its drawbacks, the giftedness model remains a valuable framework for identifying and nurturing exceptional talent. Through ongoing refinement and adaptation, it has the potential to accommodate diverse talents and address the holistic needs of gifted students, ensuring that they thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The Factors and Influences of Teacher Perception on Student Academic Performance

The learning environment, encompassing both physical and social conditions within the classroom, is a pivotal factor influencing how teachers perceive student academic performance. This includes aspects like the availability of resources, class size, noise levels, peer interactions, and teacher-student relationships. A positive learning environment, as highlighted by Usman (2012), can significantly boost student achievement by providing essential support, constructive feedback, and motivation. Similarly, Kyriakides et al. (2013) emphasize the role of cognitive activation, teacher support, and effective classroom management in explaining variations in student achievement across different countries.

Conversely, a negative learning environment can impede student success, fostering stress, anxiety, and boredom. For instance, Worthington (2002) discovered that a noisy and crowded classroom negatively affects teachers' perceptions of student ability and effort.

Another influential factor in teachers' perceptions is student characteristics, referring to personal and demographic attributes such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, motivation, and expectations. These characteristics not only shape how teachers view and interact with students but also impact students' perceptions of themselves and others. As noted by Hattie (2009), student self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-regulation play a crucial role in influencing student achievement.

However, these characteristics can also be subject to teacher stereotypes and biases, as highlighted by Ford (2013) in the context of gifted education.

Teacher attitudes and behaviours constitute a third critical factor shaping teachers' perceptions of student academic performance. These encompass beliefs, values, emotions, and actions, influencing how teachers communicate, plan, and deliver instruction. Adu (2007) underscores the positive impact of teachers' attitudes and teaching methods on student achievement, while Goe (2007) identifies indicators of teacher effectiveness, including content knowledge and instructional practices. Nevertheless, these attitudes and behaviours are not isolated from the contextual challenges within the teaching profession, such as curriculum constraints and workload pressures, as found by Abbott et al. (2004).

Student behaviour, the observable actions and reactions of students, constitutes a fourth factor influencing teachers' perceptions. These behaviours, ranging from participation and engagement to cooperation and discipline, not only reflect student learning and performance but also shape interactions within the classroom. Bennett (1993) discovered that teachers' perceptions of students' behaviour significantly impact academic judgments, favouring positive behaviours. García-Ros et al. (2012) also found that teachers' evaluations of students' creativity are influenced by their observable behaviours.

Importantly, these factors are interconnected and mutually influential. For instance, Hodge et al. (2006) found that the recognition of giftedness in early school years is influenced by teachers', parents', and children's perspectives, as well as social and emotional factors affecting student behaviour.

Assessment of Motivational and Personality Characteristics

Assessing motivational and personality characteristics involves evaluating non-cognitive aspects of a child's development, such as interests, values, goals, self-concept, self-efficacy, and coping skills. This method aims to capture the affective and social dimensions of a child's talent. For example, researchers may use surveys or interviews to assess a child's motivation, interests, and self-concept (Dai, 2010).

While this approach provides valuable insights into the holistic development of a child, it comes with certain challenges. Subjectivity may influence responses, introducing self-report biases and social desirability effects. Moreover, environmental factors, such as family dynamics or peer influence, can impact the expression of personality traits and motivation, adding complexity to the interpretation of results. Careful consideration of contextual factors is crucial for a more accurate understanding of the child's motivational and personality characteristics.

Despite their individual strengths and weaknesses, it is recommended to employ a combination of models and approaches, considering multiple sources of information

and evidence, to ensure a comprehensive identification process (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2022).

Early talent identification offers numerous benefits for preschool children and their families. It enhances academic achievement by providing tailored instruction, fostering intrinsic motivation and interest in learning, promoting creativity, and contributing to overall well-being. However, challenges such as equity and diversity arise, necessitating careful consideration of access, opportunity, and recognition for all children (Ford, 2013; Plucker & Peters, 2016). Balancing these benefits and challenges is crucial for a holistic and inclusive approach to early talent identification.

The Benefits and Challenges of Early Talent Identification for Preschool Children

Early Talent Identification (ETI) is a crucial process aimed at recognizing and nurturing children's unique abilities across various domains like academia, arts, or athletics. This proactive approach occurs before children enter formal education or training, operating on the premise that intelligence manifests in diverse ways, spanning linguistic, mathematical, spatial, musical, and creative abilities (Gardner, 1983). ETI plays a pivotal role in enhancing the learning and development of gifted children, preparing them for future challenges and opportunities. However, this process also

introduces benefits and challenges that extend to the psychological well-being, self-esteem, and aspirations of the children and their families.

Among the benefits of Early Talent Identification is its capacity to facilitate a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of strengths and achievements, fostering confidence and competence in children and families alike. This process further cultivates intrinsic motivation, as children explore and pursue their passions and goals, deriving satisfaction and overcoming challenges in their endeavors. Additionally, early talent identification contributes to the development of a positive self-concept, bolstering self-esteem and self-efficacy by recognizing and valuing individuality and identity while enabling effective coping with emotions and challenges (Neihart et al., 2002).

Furthermore, early talent identification serves as a gateway for children and families to access tailored instruction and support, aligning with their unique abilities and requirements. This access extends to opportunities and resources that facilitate talent development, encompassing specialized programs, curricula, instruction, mentoring, and extracurricular activities. Socially and emotionally, early talent identification provides avenues for support from peers, teachers, and parents who share similar abilities and interests, fostering an environment of feedback, guidance, and encouragement (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2022).

However, the process of Early Talent Identification introduces challenges, including the creation of expectations and pressures for sustained high-level performance, potentially resulting in stress and ethical dilemmas for children and families. Conflicting views on talent development, varying perspectives on balance, and tensions between breadth and depth also pose challenges (Abbott et al., 2004).

Moreover, early talent identification has the potential to exacerbate gaps and disparities, leading to unequal access to identification and support based on cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Issues of equity and diversity emerge as the recognition and valuation of different talents may vary across cultures or education systems. Additionally, feelings of isolation and stigma may arise, particularly when children and families feel alienated or misunderstood by peers, teachers, or parents who may not share or comprehend their abilities and interests (Ford, 2013).

Addressing these benefits and challenges requires adopting a holistic and inclusive approach to early talent identification. This approach should respect and value the diversity of children and their families, ensuring equal opportunities and access to quality education and support. Moderating and mediating factors, such as personality, coping skills, family dynamics, school climate, and community culture, play a role in navigating the complex and dynamic process of early talent identification (Kroesbergen et al., 2016).

Academic Performance in Preschool Children.

Academic performance in preschool children is a topic of interest for researchers, educators, and parents, as it has implications for later school success and well-being. Several factors have been identified that influence the development of academic skills in preschoolers, such as biological, environmental, and instructional variables. This note will review some of the main findings from the literature on this topic.

One of the biological factors that affects academic performance in preschool children is the gestational age at birth. Children born very preterm (before 32 weeks of gestation) are at risk of developing cognitive, language, and behavioral problems that may impair their academic achievement. However, these children may also show resilience and catch up with their peers over time, depending on the quality of their home and school environments (Aarnoudse-Moens et al., 2011).

Another biological factor that influences academic performance in preschool children is the presence of developmental disorders, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Children with ASD may have difficulties in social communication, joint attention, and executive functioning, which may affect their learning and academic outcomes (Miller et al., 2017). Children with ADHD may have problems with attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, which may interfere with their academic functioning and behavior in the classroom (Mariani

et al., 1997). However, these children may also benefit from early intervention and individualized instruction that address their specific needs and strengths (Miller et al., 2017; Mariani et al., 1997).

One of the environmental factors that affects academic performance in preschool children is the quality of the preschool program they attend. Preschool programs vary in their curriculum, setting, and teacher characteristics, and these differences may have an impact on children's pre-academic skills and readiness for kindergarten (Anderson, 2012). Several studies have shown that preschool programs that provide high-quality instruction, supportive interactions, and stimulating activities can enhance children's academic achievement and reduce the achievement gaps between children from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds (Howes et al., 2008; Tucker-Drob & Harden, 2012; Assel et al., 2007). Moreover, preschool programs that allow children to engage in both teacher- and child-managed academic activities can foster children's gains in emergent academic skills, such as literacy, numeracy, and science (de Haan et al., 2014).

One of the instructional factors that affects academic performance in preschool children is the teacher's perception of the child's academic skills. Teachers may have accurate or inaccurate judgments of the child's abilities, and these judgments may influence the teacher's expectations, feedback, and instruction for the child (Baker et

al., 2015). Studies have found that teacher misperceptions of preschoolers' academic skills can have negative consequences for the child's academic achievement and motivation in later grades, especially for children from low-income and minority families (Baker et al., 2015).

Another instructional factor that influences academic performance in preschool children is the child's self-regulation skills. Self-regulation refers to the ability to control one's attention, emotions, and behavior in order to achieve a goal or complete a task (Schmitt et al., 2014). Self-regulation skills are essential for learning and academic success, as they enable the child to focus, persist, and cope with challenges and distractions (Rhoades et al., 2011). Studies have shown that preschoolers' self-regulation skills can predict their academic achievement in kindergarten and beyond, and that these skills can be measured and improved by using behavioral self-regulation tools, such as the Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders task and the Peg Tapping task (Schmitt et al., 2014).

Effects of Early Talent Identification on Academic Performance and Well-being of Preschool Children.

Hall-Kenyon et al. (2014) conducted a comprehensive literature review focusing on the well-being of preschool teachers and its implications for preschool effectiveness and child outcomes. They underscored the multifaceted nature of teacher well-being, influenced by factors such as education, compensation, autonomy, and support. Their

findings highlighted the intricate link between teacher well-being and crucial aspects of the classroom environment, including teacher-child interactions, classroom quality, and child development. Furthermore, they emphasized the need for additional research to address the well-being of preschool teachers, particularly in low-income settings, and to explore the potential benefits of interventions aimed at enhancing teacher well-being. For instance, they referenced studies demonstrating the positive association between higher levels of teacher education and training, adequate compensation and benefits, and improved teacher well-being, which, in turn, could positively impact children's academic and social-emotional skills.

Martinez and Wai (2023) conducted an extensive bibliometric analysis of talent identification (TI) research spanning various fields and disciplines over the past 80 years. Their analysis elucidated key themes, trends, and gaps in talent identification research, emphasizing the pivotal role of psychology and education in integrating knowledge across domains. They highlighted emerging research areas focusing on equity, diversity, innovation, and technology in talent identification methods. Through analyzing keywords, citations, and co-authorships of talent identification publications, they identified prevalent themes such as creativity, intelligence, giftedness, and talent development. Moreover, they emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives in talent identification research, underscoring the need to

address gaps in representation and employ advanced statistical and computational techniques to advance the field.

Jones et al. (2019) delved into the long-term effects of a preschool program that provided professional development and coaching for teachers on children's academic and self-regulatory skills in high school. Their findings revealed the program's positive impact on children's vocabulary and math skills in preschool, which subsequently correlated with higher grades in high school. Employing a randomized controlled trial design, they evaluated the Tools of the Mind program's effectiveness, emphasizing its Vygotskian approach to cognitive development and focus on self-regulation strategies and social interactions in learning. By measuring children's vocabulary and math skills at the end of preschool and their grades and self-regulation skills at the end of high school, they identified significant improvements in vocabulary and math scores among program participants, with these scores predicting higher grades, particularly in English and math. Additionally, they found evidence suggesting that the program's effects on math skills in preschool were mediated by enhanced self-regulation skills in high school, including attention, working memory, and planning.

Kim et al. (2023) examined the bioecological profiles of preschool children's individual differences in school adjustment, academic achievement, and executive function in the first grade. Utilizing latent profile analysis, they identified four distinct

profiles based on levels of bioecological support, encompassing child, family, and classroom factors. Their findings revealed that profiles characterized by greater bioecological support exhibited higher levels of school adjustment, academic achievement, and executive function, even after controlling for demographic risk factors. By collecting data from 1,200 children, their parents, and teachers, they assessed bioecological support using indicators such as child temperament, parent involvement, teacher sensitivity, and classroom quality. Furthermore, they measured school adjustment, academic achievement, and executive function using standardized tests and tasks, identifying notable differences among the identified profiles.

Donoghue et al. (2017) published a policy statement emphasizing the critical importance of high-quality early education and childcare for young children from birth to kindergarten. Their statement highlighted the profound impact of early education and childcare on children's physical and cognitive outcomes, emphasizing its role in promoting children's overall well-being and reducing achievement gaps. Through a comprehensive review of evidence, they underscored the significance of high-quality early education and childcare in fostering children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Additionally, they provided recommendations for improving the quality and accessibility of early education and childcare services, including increasing availability and affordability, ensuring alignment with children's developmental needs, and enhancing training and compensation for staff. Furthermore,

they emphasized the role of pediatricians in advocating for high-quality early education and childcare, advocating for policies and funding to support these vital services.

Summary of Literature Reviewed

The literature review explores early talent identification (ETI), how well preschoolers perform in school, what teachers think, and the effects of early education and childcare. It all starts with Carol Dewark idea that people can be smart in different ways. The review talks about how important it is to find and help children's with special talents before they start school. It looks at different ways teachers can spot these talents, like tests or watching how children's behave.

Furthermore, it reveals the benefits and challenges of finding early talent discovery in preschool children. It says that it can help children's do better in school and feel good about themselves. But it also says it can be stressful for children and families, and not everyone gets the same chances.

Moreover, the review looks at all the things that can affect how well Children do in school. This includes things like how early they were born or if they have certain health problems. It also looks at how teachers see Children how Children act in class.

It further discusses some big studies on discovering children talents early and how it affects them later. One study looked at how teachers feel and how that affects

preschoolers. Another study looked at all the research on finding talents across different fields. Then, there was a study on how a special program in preschool helped children do better in high school. Finally, there was a study on different kinds of support that help children do well in school.

Overall, this review helps us understand how important it is to find and support children's talents early. It says we need to look at all parts of a child's life to help them succeed in school.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a detailed overview of the research design employed to investigate "Teachers' Perception on the Impact of Early Talent Identification on Academic Performance of Preschool Children in Oredo Local Government." The design encompasses research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, validity of instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of the data collection, method of data analysis.

Research Design

The research design employed in this study was a cross-sectional survey approach. This design was chosen because it allows for the collection of data from a large sample size within a relatively short period. Additionally, it provides a snapshot of the current perceptions of teachers regarding the impact of early talent identification on the academic performance of preschool children in Oredo Local Government.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the public preschools teachers in Oredo Local Government Area.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study consisted of preschool teachers working within Oredo Local Government. A convenience sampling technique was utilized to select participants. This method was chosen due to its practicality and accessibility, allowing for the recruitment of participants who were readily available and willing to participate in the study.

A total of 100 preschool teachers (from seven schools) Edo-State approached to participate in the study, and all agreed to take part resulting in a response rate of 100%.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of early talent identification on the academic performance of preschool children. It consisted of both closed-ended and Likert scale questions to capture a range of responses and opinions from the participants.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was subjected to cross examination. Three lecturer in the Institute of Education validated questionnaire

items in relation to the research questions to ensure its clarity, and relevance to the research. Based on the feedback received, necessary revisions were made to finalize the questionnaire for the main study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a value of 0.88 which was considered suitable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through the distribution of the structured questionnaire to the participants. The questionnaires were distributed in person to the participants. Clear instructions were provided to ensure uniformity in response collection and to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the completed questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarize the responses to the survey questions. Statistical analysis was conducted using software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23) to facilitate efficient data processing and interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analyzing, and discussion of findings based on the data collected through the research instrument. The data are presented and discussed as follows;

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: How do teachers perceive the impact of early talent identification on academic performance of preschool children in Oredo local government Area?

Table 1: How Teachers Perceive the Impact of Early Talent Identification on Academic Performance of Preschool Children in Oredo Local Government Area

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
Early talent identification positively influences the academic performance of preschool children by providing tailored support and enrichment opportunities.	3.73	0.45	Agree
Early talent identification fosters children's motivation and interest in learning.	3.53	0.56	Agree
Early talent identification is not relevant for preschool children.	1.92	0.93	Disagree
Teachers' views early talent identification as a valuable tool for fostering a positive learning environment.	3.36	0.56	Agree
Early talent identification lay a strong foundation for future academic success and lifelong learning.	3.58	0.55	Agree

Teachers believes that early talent identification build pupils confidence and academic abilities.	3.54	0.54	Agree
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Table 1 shows that the preschool teachers believe that early talent identification positively influences the academic performance of preschool children by providing tailored support and enrichment opportunities, fosters children’s motivation and interest in learning, is a valuable tool for fostering a positive learning environment, lay a strong foundation for future academic success and lifelong learning, and early talent build pupils confidence and academic abilities. They however, disagree that early talent identification is not relevant for preschool children.

Research Question Two: How do teachers identify early talent in preschool children in Oredo Local Government Area.

Table 2: How Teachers Identify Early Talent in Preschool Children in Oredo Local Government Area

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
Uncooperative attitude of parents affects early talent identification among preschool children.	3.41	0.73	Agree
Identifying early talent is challenging due to limited resources and support.	3.04	0.85	Agree
Early talent identification requires a deep understanding of individual pupil’s needs and strengths.	3.40	0.65	Agree
Inadequate training in talent identification affects early	3.17	0.79	Agree

identification of talent, among pre-school children

Table 2 shows that the preschool teachers were of the views that uncooperative attitude of parents affects early talent identification among preschool children, identifying early talent is challenging due to limited resources and support, early talent identification requires a deep understanding of individual pupils needs and strengths, and inadequate training in talent identification affects early identification of talent, among pre-school children.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges of early talent identification faced by teachers in Oredo Local Government Area?

Table 3: The Challenges of Early Talent Identification Faced by Teachers in Oredo Local Government Area

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
The current educational system does not adequately support early talent identification efforts.	2.76	0.98	Agree
Early talent identification is hindered by a lack of standardized assessment tools.	3.15	0.69	Agree
Poor collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and administrators affect effective early talent identification.	3.40	0.71	Agree
Ineffective communication channels between teachers and pupils poses threats to successful talent identification.	3.32	0.57	Agree

Table 3 shows that the current educational system, lack of standardized assessment tools, poor collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and administrators, and ineffective communication channels between teachers and pupils were some of the challenges of early talent identification faced by teachers in Oredo Local Government Area.

Research Question Four: To what extent do teachers in Oredo Local Government implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment for preschool children with early talent?

Table 4: The Extent Teachers in Oredo Local Government Implement Curriculum Differentiation and Enrichment for Preschool Children with Early Talent

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
To what extent do teachers effectively differentiate curriculum to meet the diverse learning needs of preschool children.	3.91	1.04	High
To what extent do enrichment activities such as dramatic play, building blocks, Drawing and coloring, help to challenge and engage pupils.	4.34	0.69	High
To what extend do preschool curriculum differentiation ensures that every child has opportunities to excel and progress at their own pace.	3.96	0.92	High
To what extent do enrichment activities in preschool promote creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills?	4.41	0.69	High
To what extent do preschool teachers collaborate with parents to tailor curriculum differentiation and enrichment to each child's interests and abilities?	3.57	1.10	High
To what extent do teachers receive sufficient training and support to implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment effectively?	3.54	1.12	High
Cluster	23.22	3.68	

Table 4 shows that preschool teachers were rated high on effectively differentiating curriculum to meet the diverse learning needs of preschool children, enrichment activities such as dramatic play, building blocks, drawing and coloring, help to challenge and engage pupils, curriculum differentiation ensuring that every child has opportunities to excel and progress at their own pace, enrichment activities in preschool promote creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, collaborate with parents to tailor curriculum differentiation and enrichment to each child's interests and abilities, and receive sufficient training and support to implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment effectively. The cluster mean of 23.22 indicates that teachers in Oredo Local Government implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment for preschool children with early talent to a high degree.

Discussion of Findings

The objective of the study was to investigate the impact of early talent identification on academic performance of preschool children. Teachers generally perceive early talent identification positively. They believe that it positively influences academic performance by providing tailored support and enrichment opportunities that foster motivation and interest in learning. This positive perception is evident in the mean scores indicating agreement with the findings of Haugh (2008) which found out that the positive perception of teachers lay a strong foundation for future academic

success and lifelong learning. Additionally, the findings agree with Dweck (2000) which reported that children's talent begins at their prime stage of life and this can be achieved through early intervention by teachers and stakeholders having gotten this knowledge. It is therefore conceivable that early talent identification is relevant for preschool children.

Findings from the study also showed that preschool teachers view uncooperative attitudes of parents, limited resources and support, as a challenge in identifying early talent in preschool children. This is in line with Hodge et al. (2006) whose study found out that there is need for deep understanding of individual needs, and adequate training in talent identification. Also supporting the findings, Usman (2012) who reported that positive learning environment boost student academic performance through essential support, constructive feedback and motivation.

Furthermore, the finding from the study revealed that the current educational system lack standardized assessment tools, poor collaborative efforts among stakeholders (teachers, parents, administrators), and ineffective communication channels are identified as hindrances to effective talent identification. Corroborating the findings Dai (2010) found out the importance of systemic improvements and collaborative efforts to overcome barriers in talent identification.

Finally, the findings from the study revealed that teachers implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment for preschool children with early talent to a high degree. This findings is in Tucker-Drob (2012) which find out that teachers demonstrate a high commitment in implementing curriculum differentiation by providing enriching learning experiences for children. Also supporting the findings Martinez (2023) reported that teacher's effectiveness in meeting diverse learning needs, engaging pupils through enrichment activities, and collaborating with parents, and receiving sufficient training and support is high.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study investigated 'teachers' perception on the impact of early talent identification on academic performance of preschool children in Oredo Local Government. To this end five research questions were raised. The cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of all the preschool teachers in Oredo Local Government Area. A Sample size of one hundred preschool teachers was used .The instrument for data collection was a closed-ended and Likert scale questions which elicited information about preschool teacher's perceptions regarding the impact of early talent identification and academic performance including demographic data of Respondents. The data were with descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviations. The study found that teachers in Oredo Local Government perceive early talent identification positively, acknowledging its role in providing tailored support, fostering motivation, and building confidence in children. However, they also recognize challenges such as uncooperative parents, limited resources, and systemic inadequacies hindering effective talent identification. Despite these challenges,

teachers are highly rated in implementing curriculum differentiation and enrichment, indicating their commitment to meeting diverse learning needs and promoting holistic development. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of early talent identification in preschool education and underscores the need for addressing challenges and fostering collaborative efforts to optimize the educational experiences of preschool children in Oredo Local Government.

Conclusion

In conclusion, study sheds light on the perceptions of preschool teachers regarding early talent identification and its impact on academic performance in Oredo Local Government Area. The findings reveal a generally positive attitude towards early talent identification among teachers, recognizing its potential to enhance academic outcomes through tailored support and enrichment opportunities. However, challenges such as parental attitudes, resource limitations, and systemic inadequacies pose significant hurdles to effective talent identification. Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing curriculum differentiation and enrichment activities to meet the diverse needs of preschool children. Moving forward, addressing systemic issues, enhancing collaboration among stakeholders, and providing adequate support and training for teachers are crucial steps towards improving early talent identification practices and ultimately fostering the academic

success and holistic development of preschool children in Oredo Local Government Area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Government and other stakeholders in educational sector should provide comprehensive training for preschool teachers in early talent identification and nurturing, along with ongoing support.
2. Educational evaluations and curriculum experts should create standardized assessment tools tailored for early talent identification to ensure accuracy and reliability.
3. Government and school operations should allocate sufficient resources and support to overcome limitations in facilities, materials, and staffing that support building of preschool children.
4. Educational stakeholders should foster collaboration among teachers and parents, to facilitate effective talent identification and support systems.

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APPENDIX

Institution of Education
University of Benin, Benin City
Edo State, Nigeria.

Dear Respondents,

REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF ITEMS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

I **OJOMOYELA ADEBIMPE**, a 400 level student of the above named institution, I am researching on the topic **“TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON THE IMPACT OF EARLY TALENT IDENTIFICATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT.”** This is in partial fulfillment of requirement of the award of Bachelor of Education Degree in Early Childhood Education. Please your honest and objective answers to the following questions will be highly appreciated and acknowledged. Please tick the box provided for the answers and made comment(s) where necessary.

Thanks

Yours faithfully,

OJOMOYELA ADEBIMPE
Researcher.

SECTUON: A DEMOCRAPHC INFORMATION

1. Sex: Male [], Female []
2. Age: (a) 18-20 years [], (b) 21-30 years [], (c) 31-40years[], (d) 41-50years[]
3. Marital Status: (a) Single [], (b) Married []
4. Qualification: (a) WASC/Equivalent [] (b) OND/NCE, (c) HND/B/Sc/B.Ed [],
(d) M.Ed/M.Sc []

SECTION B:

Instruction: Please read the following statements and indicate with a tick in the box that best explains your opinion. Tick one number for each statement using the following: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Early talent identification positively influences the				

	academic performance of preschool children by providing tailored support and enrichment opportunities.				
2.	Early talent identification fosters children's motivation and interest in learning.				
3.	Early talent identification is not relevant for preschool children.				
4.	Teachers' view early talent identification as a valuable tool for fostering a positive learning environment.				
5.	Early talent identification lay a strong foundation for future academic success and lifelong learning.				
6.	Teachers believes that early talent identification build pupils confidence and academic abilities.				
7.	Uncooperative attitude of parents affects early talent identification among preschool children.				
8.	Identifying early talent is challenging due to limited resources and support.				
9.	Early talent identification requires a deep understanding of individual pupils needs and strengths.				
10.	Inadequate training in talent identification affect early identification of talent, among pre-school children				

Instruction: Please read the following statements and indicate with a tick in the box that best explains your opinion. Tick one number for each statement using the following: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
11.	The current educational system does not adequately support early talent identification efforts.				
12.	Early talent identification is hindered by a lack of standardized assessment tools.				
13.	Poor collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and administrators affect effective early talent identification.				
14.	Ineffective communication channels between teachers and pupils poses threats to successful talent				

	identification.				
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SECTION C:

Instruction: Please read the following statement and indicate by ticking the box that best represent your opinion. Tick one statement for each question using the following: VHE=Very High Extent, HE= High Extent, ME=Moderate Extent, LE=Low Extent, VLE=Very Low Extent

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	VHE	HE	ME	LE	VLE
1.	To what extent do teachers effectively differentiate curriculum to meet the diverse learning needs of preschool children.					
2.	To what extent do enrichment activities such as dramatic play, building blocks, Drawing and coloring, help to challenge and engage pupils.					
3.	To what extent do preschool curriculum differentiation ensures that every child has opportunities to excel and progress at their own					

	pace.					
4.	To what extent do enrichment activities in preschool promote creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills?					
5.	To what extent do preschool teachers collaborate with parents to tailor curriculum differentiation and enrichment to each child's interests and abilities?					
6.	To what extent do teachers receive sufficient training and support to implement curriculum differentiation and enrichment effectively?					