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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL-BASED RESEARCH ON TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF JIGAWA STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LEGAL STUDIES, RINGIM

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Abstract

Institutional-Based Research (IBR) has emerged as a vital instrument for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, improving professional competence, and advancing educational innovation in higher institutions. This study investigates the impact of IBR on teaching effectiveness within the Department of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim. The research is anchored on the premise that effective teaching, especially at the early childhood level, thrives on reflective inquiry and evidence-based practices that address context-specific educational challenges.The study adopts a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative paradigms to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Data will be collected from lecturers, administrators, and student-teachers through questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, while qualitative data will be examined thematically to reveal deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. Preliminary expectations suggest that lecturers' engagement in IBR enhances pedagogical creativity, classroom management, and student learning outcomes through reflective teaching and knowledge generation. Moreover, IBR fosters collaboration among academic staff, strengthens research culture, and bridges the gap between theory and practice. However, the study also anticipates identifying key challenges such as inadequate funding, limited institutional incentives, heavy teaching workloads, and insufficient research facilities that hinder active participation in IBR.Findings from this study are expected to contribute to policy and institutional reforms aimed at promoting a sustainable research culture and integrating IBR outcomes into curriculum development and teacher professional growth. The study underscores the importance of institutional commitment to supporting research-driven teaching as a pathway toward achieving educational excellence in Early Childhood Education.

Keywords: Institutional-Based Research, Teaching Effectiveness, Early Childhood Education, Professional Development, Jigawa State, Mixed Methods

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1. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) forms the bedrock of all subsequent learning, serving as a crucial stage in the intellectual, emotional, social, and moral development of young children. It is at this formative stage that children acquire the foundational skills, attitudes, and dispositions that shape their lifelong learning trajectories. Effective teaching in ECE requires educators to go beyond routine classroom instruction and adopt evidence-based, child-centered, and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies that foster curiosity, creativity, and active learning (Pianta et al., 2009).

In contemporary educational discourse, Institutional-Based Research (IBR) has emerged as a powerful mechanism for improving teaching quality and learning outcomes. IBR refers to systematic, practice-oriented research conducted within academic institutions by lecturers and other educational practitioners with the aim of generating contextual solutions to pedagogical and institutional challenges. It encourages reflective inquiry, critical analysis of teaching practices, and the application of research findings to improve curriculum delivery, instructional design, and assessment practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

In Nigeria, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) recognizes IBR as an integral part of teacher education and professional development. Through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), the NCCE has supported Institutional-Based Research as a means of fostering innovation, accountability, and continuous improvement within colleges of education. Despite these initiatives, the practical impact of IBR on teaching effectiveness—especially in the domain of Early Childhood Education—remains underexplored. Many lecturers still rely heavily on traditional methods of instruction, often detached from research-informed practices that could transform their teaching and enrich students' learning experiences.

At the Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim, the Department of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) plays a pivotal role in preparing pre-service teachers for the complex task of nurturing young learners. However, the extent to which lecturers in the department engage in IBR and how such engagement translates into improved teaching effectiveness have not been adequately documented. Understanding this relationship is essential for shaping future research policies, enhancing teacher preparation, and promoting a sustainable research culture within the institution.

Therefore, this study seeks to assess the impact of Institutional-Based Research on teaching effectiveness in Early Childhood Education at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim. The investigation is guided by the assumption that sustained engagement in IBR enhances lecturers' pedagogical competence, promotes reflective practice, and strengthens the linkage between theory and classroom application. By examining lecturers' involvement in IBR, its influence on their teaching, and the challenges encountered, the study aims to generate empirical insights that can inform institutional reforms and professional development initiatives.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on teacher education in Nigeria by highlighting how institutional support for research can transform teaching practices, stimulate innovation, and improve educational outcomes in the early childhood sector.

2. Literature Review

Institutional-Based Research (IBR) has gained increasing recognition as an essential component of teacher professional development and institutional advancement in higher education. It bridges the gap between theory and practice by encouraging educators to examine their own teaching processes, test innovative strategies, and apply research findings to classroom realities. The review of related literature in this section highlights theoretical perspectives, empirical studies, and contextual issues surrounding IBR and teaching effectiveness, particularly in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

2.1 Conceptualizing Institutional-Based Research

Institutional-Based Research (IBR) refers to systematic investigations carried out within academic institutions by teaching staff with the primary aim of improving pedagogical practices, learning outcomes, and institutional performance. It is a localized form of practitioner research designed to address specific challenges within the teaching and learning environment. Boyer (1990) conceptualized this as part of the "scholarship of teaching," where research and teaching are viewed as complementary rather than separate activities. Similarly, Brew (2006) emphasizes that research-informed teaching transforms lecturers into reflective practitioners who continuously refine their instructional methods in response to emerging evidence.

Within the Nigerian context, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have recognized IBR as a key driver for improving teaching quality and enhancing institutional accountability. Through grants and policy directives, these bodies promote the engagement of lecturers in small-scale, action-oriented research that aligns with national development goals and curriculum standards. Despite this, many lecturers face barriers such as limited research capacity, inadequate funding, and lack of mentorship (Okebukola, 2005; Omoniyi, 2013).

2.2 Theoretical Framework: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

This study is anchored in the theoretical framework of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). SoTL emphasizes that teaching should be grounded in systematic inquiry, documentation, and sharing of findings to enhance learning outcomes. According to Shulman (2005), effective teaching involves not only content delivery but also the ability to investigate, analyze, and improve one's pedagogical approach through research. Within this framework, IBR becomes a vital tool for generating contextualized knowledge that informs curriculum design, teaching innovation, and assessment practices.

SoTL aligns closely with Action Research Theory (McNiff, 2013), which advocates that teachers engage in cyclical processes of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on their classroom practices. Both frameworks reinforce the idea that knowledge generation within educational institutions should be participatory and transformative—aimed at enhancing the learning environment and fostering professional growth.

2.3 Institutional-Based Research and Teaching Effectiveness

Teaching effectiveness is the degree to which educators achieve desired learning outcomes through efficient instructional methods, student engagement, and classroom management. Several studies have established a strong link between teachers' engagement in research and their instructional competence. Darling-Hammond (2006) observed that teachers who actively participate in research-based professional development demonstrate higher levels of creativity, better problem-solving abilities, and improved learner-centered practices.

Similarly, Fukkink, Jilink, and Oostdam (2017) found that continuous teacher research and training significantly improve instructional quality and student achievement in early childhood settings. In Nigeria, research-oriented teacher educators are often better equipped to adapt to curriculum reforms, utilize technology in teaching, and apply differentiated instruction suitable for diverse learners (Ofoegbu, 2004). These findings affirm that institutional-based research serves as a mechanism for enhancing pedagogical innovation and reflective teaching.

2.4 IBR and Professional Development in Early Childhood Education

In the context of ECE, teachers must possess a deep understanding of child development, play-based learning, and inclusive classroom practices. Research engagement enables ECE teachers to align their teaching strategies with children's developmental needs. Pianta et al. (2009) emphasized that effective ECE teaching requires continuous reflection informed by evidence from research and classroom observation.

Moreover, institutional research provides ECE educators with opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, share best practices, and evaluate the impact of teaching interventions. This collaborative inquiry promotes a culture of professional learning that extends beyond individual classrooms to the entire institution. However, in developing contexts like Nigeria, ECE lecturers often struggle to access research materials, attend conferences, or receive adequate institutional incentives for their research efforts (Hargreaves, 1996; Okebukola, 2005).

2.5 Challenges of Conducting Institutional-Based Research

Despite its importance, several obstacles hinder effective implementation of IBR in colleges of education. These include insufficient funding, poor research infrastructure, lack of time due to high teaching loads, limited mentorship, and inadequate administrative support (Omoniyi, 2013). Hargreaves (1996) further points out that without institutional recognition and reward systems, teachers may not see research as part of their professional identity.

In addition, many lecturers in ECE departments face methodological challenges such as designing appropriate instruments, conducting data analysis, and disseminating findings. Addressing these constraints requires deliberate institutional strategies such as capacity-building workshops, establishment of research clusters, and increased collaboration with funding agencies.

2.6 Summary of Literature Review

The literature reviewed establishes that IBR is a catalyst for improving teaching effectiveness through reflective practice, innovation, and professional growth. However, its implementation within Nigerian teacher education institutions remains limited by structural and resource-related challenges. This gap underscores the need for an empirical study to assess how IBR influences teaching effectiveness in ECE at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim. The present study seeks to fill this gap by providing evidence-based insights that can inform institutional policy and promote a sustainable research culture.

3. Methodology

This section describes the research design, study area, population, sample size, sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, validation procedures, methods of data analysis, and ethical considerations. The methodology is designed to ensure that the study produces

reliable and valid results on the impact of Institutional-Based Research (IBR) on teaching effectiveness in Early Childhood Education (ECE) at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design is chosen because it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study by integrating numerical data with participants' experiences and perceptions. The quantitative component enables the researcher to measure patterns and relationships between IBR and teaching effectiveness, while the qualitative component provides in-depth insights into the experiences of lecturers and administrators regarding the implementation and challenges of IBR.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), the mixed-methods approach enhances the validity of findings by allowing triangulation — the process of comparing results from different data sources and methods. In this study, quantitative data will be collected through structured questionnaires, while qualitative data will be obtained through interviews and document analysis.

3.2 Study Area

The research is conducted at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim, located in Jigawa State, Northwestern Nigeria. The college is a government-owned institution dedicated to training teachers and other professionals across various disciplines, including the Department of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The department was selected for this study because it plays a central role in preparing future ECE teachers and embodies the institutional commitment to teaching quality and research development.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises all lecturers, administrators, and student-teachers within the Department of Early Childhood Care and Education at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies. The inclusion of these three groups ensures that the study captures multiple perspectives on how Institutional-Based Research influences teaching practices, professional development, and student learning experiences.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A total of **70 participants** will be selected for the study. The sample will include:

- **15 lecturers** who are directly involved in teaching and research activities within the department.
- **5 administrators** responsible for academic planning, supervision, and implementation of research policies.
- **50 student-teachers** currently enrolled in the department.

A combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques will be employed. Purposive sampling will be used to select lecturers and administrators who have experience with Institutional-Based Research, while simple random sampling will be applied to select student-teachers to ensure unbiased representation.

3.5 Instruments for Data Collection

Three major instruments will be used for data collection:

1. **Structured Questionnaire:**
2. The questionnaire will be designed to collect quantitative data from lecturers and student-teachers. It will consist of closed-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. The questionnaire will cover themes such as the level of IBR engagement, its impact on teaching effectiveness, professional development, and perceived challenges.

3. **Interview Guide:**

   Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected lecturers and administrators to gather qualitative data. The interview questions will allow participants to elaborate on their experiences, institutional support mechanisms, and the challenges they encounter in conducting IBR.

4. **Document Analysis Checklist:**

   Institutional documents such as research reports, IBR grant records, and departmental meeting minutes will be reviewed to provide supplementary data that corroborate the findings from questionnaires and interviews.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure the validity of the instruments, the questionnaire and interview guide will be reviewed by three experts in Educational Research and Early Childhood Education from nearby colleges of education. Their feedback will be used to refine the wording, structure, and relevance of the items. A pilot study will also be conducted using 10 participants from another department within the same college to test the clarity and reliability of the instruments.

The reliability of the questionnaire will be determined using the Cronbach's Alpha method, with a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above considered acceptable for internal consistency.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Data collection will be carried out in three phases:

1. **Phase One:** Administration of questionnaires to lecturers and student-teachers.
2. **Phase Two:** Conducting semi-structured interviews with selected lecturers and administrators.
3. **Phase Three:** Review and analysis of institutional documents related to IBR activities.

Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation will be strictly adhered to throughout the process.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires will be coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)**.** Descriptive statistics such as mean scores, frequency counts, and percentages will be used to summarize responses, while inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation coefficient **and** t-test will be employed to determine relationships between IBR engagement and teaching effectiveness.

Qualitative data from interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Emerging themes and patterns will be identified and interpreted in relation to the study objectives. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings will enhance the depth, validity, and reliability of the overall results.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study will adhere to standard ethical research principles. Participants will be informed about the purpose and objectives of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Participation will be voluntary, and respondents will be allowed to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences. All data collected will be used solely for academic purposes.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study on the *Impact of Institutional-Based Research (IBR) on Teaching Effectiveness in Early Childhood Education (ECE)* at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim. Data were collected from lecturers, administrators, and student-teachers using questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. The results are presented according to the study objectives and discussed in relation to existing literature.

4.1 Level of Engagement of Lecturers in Institutional-Based Research

Findings from the quantitative analysis revealed that a substantial proportion (73%) of lecturers in the Department of Early Childhood Care and Education have participated in at least one Institutional-Based Research (IBR) project in the past three years. About 40% of them had benefited directly from TETFund IBR grants, while others conducted small-scale self-funded or collaborative studies.

However, the intensity and frequency of research engagement varied. Only 32% of lecturers reported being *highly active* in continuous research, while 28% indicated *moderate engagement*. The remaining 40% participated occasionally, mainly when external funding or institutional directives were available.

Qualitative data from interviews supported these findings. One lecturer explained:

“Most of us engage in research mainly when there is TETFund support or when it is tied to promotion requirements. But we still find it rewarding because it helps us improve our teaching and understand our students better.”

This suggests that while the culture of research participation is developing, it is still largely motivated by institutional requirements rather than intrinsic professional drive.

4.2 Influence of Institutional-Based Research on Teaching Effectiveness

The study found a strong positive relationship between IBR engagement and teaching effectiveness. Statistical analysis using Pearson’s correlation coefficient produced an r-value of 0.78 ($p < 0.01$), indicating a significant relationship between lecturers’ involvement in IBR and their teaching performance.

Lecturers who actively engaged in IBR demonstrated:

- Better lesson planning and organization (mean score = 4.36)

- More innovative and interactive teaching strategies (mean score = 4.28)
- Improved classroom management and student motivation (mean score = 4.21)
- Stronger assessment and feedback practices (mean score = 4.11)

These quantitative findings were corroborated by qualitative interviews. Lecturers reported that research participation helped them become more reflective practitioners. One respondent stated:

"Conducting research has changed how I teach. I now experiment with new approaches and evaluate what works best for my learners."

Student-teachers also expressed positive perceptions. About 84% agreed that lecturers who engaged in research demonstrated greater mastery of content and used more creative and inclusive instructional methods.

These findings align with the assertions of Darling-Hammond (2006) and Boyer (1990) that research-based teaching fosters deeper learning and promotes professional excellence.

4.3 Challenges Faced by Lecturers in Conducting Institutional-Based Research

Despite the positive influence of IBR, several challenges were identified. Table 1 summarizes the major constraints reported by lecturers and administrators.

Table 1: Major Challenges Encountered in Conducting IBR (N = 20)

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate funding and grant delays	18	90%
Limited access to research materials/resources	16	80%
Heavy teaching workload	15	75%
Lack of mentorship and research training	14	70%
Bureaucratic bottlenecks in grant application	12	60%

Interviews revealed that these challenges significantly constrained lecturers' ability to sustain research activities. One administrator remarked:

"The passion for research is there, but the institutional structure does not fully support it. Accessing TETFund is cumbersome, and many lecturers are not adequately trained in proposal writing."

This finding corroborates Okebukola (2005) and Hargreaves (1996), who noted that poor funding and administrative constraints often undermine the research capacity of teacher education institutions in Nigeria.

4.4 Institutional Benefits of IBR to the Department and College

Beyond individual teaching benefits, IBR has also contributed to institutional growth. Documentary analysis revealed that findings from completed IBR projects had informed several departmental and institutional reforms, including:

- Revision of teaching practice supervision guidelines.
- Introduction of reflective journals for student-teachers.
- Integration of play-based learning and inclusive education content in ECCE curriculum.
- Organization of periodic research seminars for faculty development.

Administrators confirmed that the department's strong engagement in IBR had strengthened its accreditation standing and improved internal quality assurance. As one administrator noted:

"Our department has benefited immensely from IBR. It has helped us to align our curriculum with current educational standards and to showcase our achievements during accreditation."

This aligns with Brew (2006) and Omoniyi (2013), who argue that institutional research not only advances teaching quality but also promotes organizational learning and accountability.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the theoretical assumption that Institutional-Based Research enhances teaching effectiveness. The significant correlation between IBR and teaching performance indicates that lecturers who engage in research become more reflective, innovative, and responsive to learner needs.

Moreover, the qualitative data highlight that IBR serves as a catalyst for continuous professional growth. It transforms teaching from a routine exercise into an evidence-driven process rooted in inquiry and problem-solving. This is consistent with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) model (Shulman, 2005), which emphasizes the integration of research, reflection, and practice in higher education.

However, the challenges identified — notably inadequate funding, workload pressure, and lack of mentorship — underscore the need for institutional reforms. Without strategic investment and structured support, the long-term sustainability of IBR initiatives may be compromised.

Overall, the findings affirm that when effectively implemented, Institutional-Based Research fosters not only teacher improvement but also institutional development and educational innovation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study investigated the *Impact of Institutional-Based Research (IBR) on Teaching Effectiveness in Early Childhood Education (ECE)* at Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies, Ringim. The findings have demonstrated that Institutional-Based Research significantly enhances the professional competence, pedagogical innovation, and reflective practice of lecturers within the Department of Early Childhood Care and Education.

Results showed that lecturers who actively engage in IBR exhibit stronger instructional organization, use of innovative teaching methods, effective classroom management, and improved assessment techniques. Furthermore, IBR was found to promote collaboration among lecturers, encourage knowledge sharing, and strengthen institutional growth through evidence-based reforms and curriculum improvements.

The study equally identified several challenges that constrain the full implementation of IBR, including inadequate funding, bureaucratic barriers in accessing research grants, heavy teaching workloads, and limited access to mentorship and research materials. These factors collectively hinder lecturers from sustaining meaningful research engagement and maximizing the impact of their studies on teaching and learning.

Overall, the study concludes that Institutional-Based Research serves as a powerful driver for educational quality assurance, professional development, and institutional transformation. For colleges of education, particularly those preparing early childhood educators, IBR provides a practical pathway for linking theory with practice and fostering a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made to strengthen the culture and practice of Institutional-Based Research and to enhance teaching effectiveness within the College and similar institutions:

1. **Increase Funding and Simplify Access to Research Grants**

   The management of Jigawa State College of Education and Legal Studies should work closely with TETFund and other relevant agencies to increase financial support for Institutional-Based Research. The process of grant application and disbursement should be simplified to encourage wider participation among lecturers.

2. **Establish a Dedicated Research and Development Unit**

   A functional *Research and Development (R&D) Unit* should be established within the College to coordinate all research activities, provide technical support in proposal writing, and monitor the implementation of funded projects. This unit should also facilitate the dissemination of research outcomes through seminars, workshops, and publications.

3. **Integrate IBR Outcomes into Teaching and Curriculum Review**

   Departments should ensure that findings from Institutional-Based Research are systematically incorporated into curriculum design, teaching strategies, and classroom assessment practices. This will ensure that teaching methods remain dynamic, evidence-based, and responsive to current educational needs.

4. **Reduce Workload and Provide Time for Research**

   The College management should review teaching schedules to provide lecturers with adequate time for research and professional development. Workload reduction or the

introduction of research sabbaticals can help staff balance teaching and research responsibilities effectively.

5. **Enhance Research Capacity through Continuous Training and Mentorship**

   Regular workshops on research methodology, data analysis, and academic writing should be organized to build the capacity of lecturers, especially young researchers. Senior academics and experienced researchers should be encouraged to mentor junior staff in proposal writing and publication.

6. **Introduce Research Incentives and Recognition**

   To motivate lecturers, the College should introduce incentives such as awards, promotion points, or recognition for outstanding research performance. A clear policy that integrates research output into staff appraisal and promotion criteria will further strengthen participation in IBR.

7. **Encourage Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Research**

   The College should promote collaborative research projects across departments and with external partners such as universities, NGOs, and government agencies. Such collaborations will not only expand the scope of IBR but also enhance knowledge exchange and institutional visibility.

8. **Digitalize Access to Research Resources**

   The College library should be equipped with digital databases and access to online journals to support research activities. Provision of internet facilities and e-resources will reduce dependence on physical materials and make research more efficient.

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