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PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED INSTRUCTIONAL FACTORS ON PUPILS' COMPETENCY SKILLS IN PUBLIC PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES IN KEIYO SOUTH SUB COUNTY, KENYA

Aniter J. Kibet[1],
A. K. Sang[2],
Joel Ng'eno[3]
[1]Department of Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Education Management (CIEM), Egerton University, P.O. Box 536, Egerton-Njoro, Kenya
[2]Prof. Department of Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Education Management (CIEM), Egerton University, P.O. Box 536, Egerton-Njoro, Kenya
[3]Dr., Department of Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Education Management (CIEM), Egerton University, P.O. Box 536, Egerton-Njoro, Kenya

Abstract:
The purpose of this study was to investigate perceptions of pre-school teachers of the influence of selected instructional factors on pupils' acquisition of competency skills in public pre-school centres in Keiyo South Sub County in Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The research design used by this study was descriptive survey involving 144 pre-school teachers. A sample size of 93 pre-school teachers was selected to participate in the research using proportionate stratified random sampling method. The study utilised questionnaire to collect information from teachers. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation). It was found out that low teacher: pupil ratio was mentioned to influence acquisition of competency by pre-school learners. Pre-school pupils also found teacher workload to influence learners' acquisition of competencies. The study concludes that teacher level of training, workload and teacher pupil ratio influenced learners' acquisition of competencies in public pre-school centres. The study recommends that more classrooms to be constructed to address high number of pupils, pre-school centres need to hire support

staff and qualified pre-school teachers to address the shortage that currently exists in those schools.

Keywords: perceptions, pre-school teachers, training, workload and teacher: pupil ratio

1. Introduction

Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) globally and Kenya in particular has been recognized as a crucial programme that lays a foundation for a child's holistic and integrated education that meets the cognitive, social, moral, spiritual, emotional, physical and developmental needs (Githinji & Kanga, 2011). Early Childhood Education (ECDE) is both the formal and informal education that the child receives as she/he grows (Rotumoi & Too, 2012; Wanjiku, 2014). Informal setting of ECDE takes place at home, school, and playground in the community (Uwezo, 2014). Children investigate and experiment what they see through observation and imitation (URT, 2008). The formal setting is in form of early school arrangement such as nursery school, kindergarten and institutional homes (Wawire, 2006).

In Kenya ECDE is offered by institutions bearing various names (Bitok et al, 2014). The most commonly used terms include: Early childhood development, Children's homes, ECDE Pre-primary, Pre-school education, Pre-unit, Nursery, Baby Care, Day care centers, Baby class/infant class, Kindergarten, Home care. However, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) in collaboration with National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) has harmonized these names (Kang'ethe et al, 2015). Currently the following terms are used to refer to pre-schools: Pre-primary 1, Pre-primary 11 and Day care in place of all the above names. Pre-primary 1 refers to learning for children 4 years of age; Pre-primary 11 refers to learning for children 5 years of age. Day Care refers to care for children 3 years and below (Kenya Institute of Education, 2008; RoK, 2015). In 2006, the Kenya government adopted a policy on Early Childhood Development (RoK, 2015). The policy document outlines a comprehensive framework that encompasses policies for early childhood services and programs for children from conception to age eight years. In addition, it outlines an ECD policy system and provides a frame of reference in the provision of services for infants and children (RoK, 2015). Further, it provides a basis to strengthen, develop, and review policies related to health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, and social services. According to the policy document, the Republic of Kenya sector policies are central in providing standards and guidelines for ensuring provision

of quality services for all children in their earliest years (Kang'ethe, Wakahiu & Karanja, 2015).

The ECD Policy Framework came into being in 2006, and provides a coordination mechanism, explicitly defining the role of parents, communities, various Government ministries and departments, development partners and other stakeholders, in the provision of ECD services (Wangui, 2011). A service standard guideline was developed as a separate document aimed at operationalising the ECD policy framework (K.I.E., 2008). Developers of the ECD policy framework recognized the critical role of investing in young children as a strategy to for poverty reduction, universal school enrolment, reduction of child mortality and morbidity, maternal mortality and creation of gender equality (Kang'ethe et al, 2015).

To achieve this, the policy framework emphasizes child survival, growth and development (RoK, 2015). This is also in line with the African Union (AU) declaration to strengthen and support families in their responsibility as primary caregivers of their children to ensure their survival, growth and development (Kang'ethe et al, 2015). The policy implementation outputs included: trained and sensitized education officers; teachers and sensitized parents; teachers in public ECD centers employed by government; ECD reception classes in primary schools; feeding programs; safety and protection programs in ECD centres; appropriate teacher child ratio in ECD classes; water and sanitation provided among other services as described in the service standards guidelines. The main objective of pre-primary school is to ensure the total development of a child physical, spiritual, social and mental is brought about through an informal mode of interaction with the parents and community taking a leading role (RoK, 2013). Issues including health, nutrition, care and education are the major focus in pre-primary education (Republic of Kenya, 2013; United Nations, 2015).

The general objectives of Early Childhood Development and Education in Kenya should: provide education geared towards development of the child's mental capabilities and physical growth; enable the child enjoy living and learning through play; develop the child's self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence, enable the child to develop understanding and appreciation of his/her culture and environment and foster the child's exploration skills, creativity, self-expression and discovery. The objectives will also identify children with special needs and align them with existing services; enable the child build good habits and acquire acceptable values and behaviours for effective living as an individual and a member of a group; foster the spiritual and moral growth of the child; improve the status of the child's health, care and nutritional needs, and link him/her with health services such as immunization, health check-ups and growth and monitoring; enrich the child's experiences to enable

him/her to cope better with primary school life and develop the child's aesthetic and artistic skills (RoK, 2013). This papers looks at how the objectives of ECDE are attained in pre-schools in Kenya by enhancing competency skills relating to numeracy, reading and writing.

Obunga (2016) quoting Uwezo Report (2014) found out that Kenyan pupils reading competency across counties has a small percentage of the standard three pupils who have acquired basic reading skills (Uwezo, 2014). According to the report, 2.8% of standard three pupils could not even identify letter sounds, 15.7% were able to read letters only, 28.5% could not read beyond single words, 25.8% could not read paragraphs and only 27.5% could read and understand a standard two level story. Furthermore, information from Keiyo South Sub County Education report (2016) report shows that the number of pupils who are not able to read, write and count is significant higher. For instance, out of 65 pupils from Kamosong primary school, only 40 of them were able to read and write (25 were unable to read), 20 were able to write (45 being unable to write) and only 22 pupils were able to count (43 were unable to count). This situation was found to be similar in majority of pre-school centres in the entire sub county to name a few; Kamelil, Lelboinet, Cherota, Kamwago among others. From the studies reviewed, it is clear that competency skills that involve numeracy, literacy and reading cannot be achieved without competent and qualified teachers, lessening teacher workload and responsibilities in pre-school. This situation in Keiyo South Sub County motivated the researcher to determine the perceptions of pre-school teachers on how selected instructional factors influence acquisition of competency skills by learners in pre-school centres in Keiyo South Sub County,

2. Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study:

1. To assess pre-school teachers' perceptions of the influence of pupil: teacher ratio on pupil's competency skills, in Keiyo South Sub County.
2. To determine pre-school teachers perceptions on the influence of teacher workload on pupils competency skills, in Keiyo South Sub County.

3. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study illustrates the relationship between independent (teacher perceptions on the influence of selected instructional factors) and dependent variables (learners competency skills) as given in Figure 1.

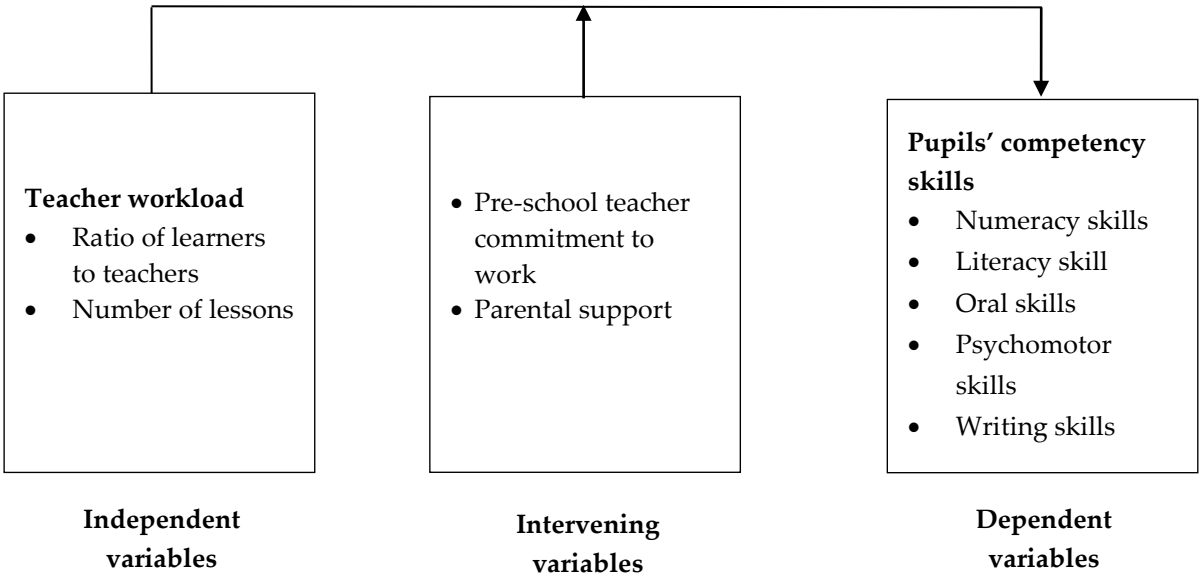

Figure 1: Pre-school teachers' perceptions of the influence of selected instructional factors

The selected instructional are teacher workload; pupil: teacher ratio and teacher workload (independent variables) may influence pupils' acquisition of competency skills measured by numeracy, reading, and writing skills (dependent variable) either positively or negatively. The intervening variables were integrated in the study to minimize its effects on the findings of the study.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Influence of Pupil: Teacher Ratio on Pupils Competency Skills

The available studies provide mixed evidence on the influence of class size on pupils' acquisition of competency skills in schools. Different scholars have conducted studies on the impact of different class sizes on pupils' acquisition of numeracy, reading and writing skills. In United States, O'Sullivan (2006) established that large early grade classes interfere with the capacity of teachers to teach and children to learn. Teaching 75–100+ children in pre-school is not an effective way to instil the key skills and competencies that are critical for later learning and success (Cameron, 2005). Overcrowding is combined with little or no access to the learning materials which are critical for the development of basic skills and competencies. The introduction of shifts (to address large class sizes) in some places has resulted in even fewer contact hours (Abadzi, 2006). Teachers usually complain that they are overstretched. This could influence the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills although this had not been appropriately verified in Keiyo South Sub County.

Teaching in overcrowded classrooms creates an enormous challenge in producing productive learning classroom environments where effective teaching and assessment strategies are crucial (Marais, 2016). Teachers cannot practise a variety of methods, such as higher order questioning and active learning approaches. In fact, teachers are effectively confined to the 'chalk and talk' instructional method (Opoku-Asare et al, 2014). Marais (2016) found out that some schools in the Eastern Cape have more than 130 learners squeezed into one classroom and teachers are obliged to present lessons with their backs pressed up against the blackboard.

Marais (2016) argued that the effects of overcrowded classrooms are far-reaching for teachers and learners. Many parents base their decision on whether to send their children to a particular school on the prospective number of learners in the child's classroom (Mustafa, Mahmoud, Assaf, Al-Hamadi & Abdulhamid, 2014). All teacher training institutions ought to ascertain whether they offer appropriate teacher training programmes that will enable student teachers to deal with the numerous demands associated with the teaching profession, among others, teaching in overcrowded classrooms. Samarawickrema and Stacey (2007) investigated factors related to the use of learning management system in a large multi-campus urban university in Australia. They adopted case study method and purposive sampling to select 22 participants used web-based methods to teach both on- and off- campus students for the study. The findings of the research found that increased workload coupled with teaching with technology was critical to the participants of the study. Factors reported to contribute to increased workload were course maintenance and constant upgrades, student emails, the learning of new skills and the continuous search of sustainable strategies.

Similarly, Neyland (2011) conducted both quantitative and qualitative research on factors influencing the integration of online learning in high schools in Sydney. The study involved 26 computer coordinators. In an interview, one computer coordinator in a schools stated that increased workload of teachers was alarming: Asking them to take on board yet another task in an already overcrowded curriculum and extremely busy work day is pushing many teachers to the limit and in some cases beyond. Marais (2016) explored learners-teachers' challenges when teaching in overcrowded classrooms. An exploratory research design and qualitative research approach was chosen as the appropriate methodology for this project. Data was collected by means of a non-compulsory written assignment set out in student teachers' teaching practice workbooks. The theoretical frameworks used constructivist learning theory and socio-constructivist learning theory. The research revealed that numerous problems were experienced by student teachers, who were teaching in overcrowded classrooms.

Guiding principles regarding support from lecturers, significant observation and the responsible engagement of mentor teachers are suggested.

In Middle East, Mustafa et al, (2014) point out that large numbers of learners in one classroom wee an impediment to classroom management in general and classroom discipline specifically. Larger classes were noisier and more prone to pushing, crowding and hitting, to the extent that this can impact negatively on classroom discipline. One teacher cannot cope with such situations in the classroom on his/her own. Teachers lose valuable lesson time in such circumstances, because they spend most of the lesson time trying to control the learners. This shows that when classes are larger, class management becomes an issue and therefore the environment is not conducive. This situation might affect acquisition of necessary competencies by pupils.

In a different view from Mustapha and others, Chingos (2013) was convinced that learning will take place will learn more in smaller classes. There are more opportunities to receive individualised instruction from the classroom teacher, and therefore, parents prefer smaller classes. Parents believe that their children will perform much better in classes that do not have a large number of learners. Mustafa et al. (2014) established teachers who teach in overcrowded classrooms devote less time to instruction and integrated reading and writing tasks, because instruction time is often wasted by administrative tasks, such as checking attendance lists, and managing behaviour, thus leaving less time for actual instruction. Consequently, teachers are required to work more hours outside the classroom, in order to assess more classroom and homework assignments as well as tests and examination scripts. Overcrowded classrooms clearly have a negative impact on teachers and, of course, also on learners.

In Kenya, Obunga (2016) investigated the influence of teacher-pupil ratio and availability of reading materials on reading achievement levels of standard three pupils in Kenyenya Sub-County, Kisii County, Kenya. Descriptive survey and correlation research designs were used. The population for this study comprised of all primary school and all standard three primary school pupils. Majority of standard three pupils were at word level; there was a significant relationship between pupils reading achievement levels and pupil-teacher ratio, textbook-pupil ratio, story books-pupil ratio and charts-pupil ratio. The Obunga study is similar to this study since it focused on determining how pupil: teacher ratio influence competency skills in reading, writing and even numeracy. Different from this study, Obunga research was done in Kisii County ECDE classes (standard one to three) while this research was conducted in ECDE classes (pre-schools). The review of related literature shows that there exists a gap in literature on determining teachers' perceptions towards the influence of pupil: teacher ratio on pre-school pupils' acquisition of competency skills.

4.2 Influence of Teacher Workload on Pupils Competency Skills

In Germany, Kunter et al, (2013) investigated teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, professional beliefs, work-related motivation, and self-regulation as aspects of their professional competence. They used a sample of 194 German secondary school mathematics classes, multiple measures were used to assess teacher competence, instructional quality, and students' achievement and motivation. The effect of teachers' professional competence on student outcomes was estimated in a 1-year repeated-measures design. Two-level structural equation models revealed positive effects of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, enthusiasm for teaching, and self-regulatory skills on instructional quality, which in turn affected student outcomes. In contrast, teachers' general academic ability did not affect their instruction. The study domain was in mathematics limiting the generalising the results of the research to other disciplines.

A study conducted in South Africa by O'Connor and Geiger (2009) found out that pre-school teachers felt frustrated working with them, because of heavy workloads. As they first had to teach the language and vocabulary for specific content, they found it impossible to complete the syllabus for the year (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Also having learners in the class with better English abilities, educators reported having to teach on diverse language and academic levels (Du Plessis & Naude, 2003). Educators reported being required to give extra attention to learners who were not keeping up, as well as adequately challenging stronger learners, in order to ensure that all learners in their class had an equally effective education. Large numbers of ESOL learners in their classes increased the workload in all teaching areas such as marking and preparation of lessons, leaving educators feeling over-worked and resentful (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009).

Educators participating in this study were frustrated by a considerable workload and large classes with many ESOL learners per class, especially in schools other than former Model C schools. There was a discrepancy in support and resources available to ex-Model C schools and other schools. Educators called for increased resources and departmental, professional and parental support as well as practical training in teaching ESOL learners and in Xhosa language and culture (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Evans (1997) pointed out that there are significant gaps between what happens in the pre-school and what happens at the primary level on a number of dimensions. In Kenya the Commission on alignment of education to the new constitutional dispensation in 2010 noted that current policy stipulates that a primary school teacher should be able to teach all the 5 subjects in the primary school curriculum (Republic of Kenya, 2010, 2012), and this could be another challenge to learner acquisition of competency skills. In

terms of curriculum, as set out by the Ministry of Education, the Standard 1 class has a total of 5 subjects, as compared to 6 subjects in pre-school. The pre-school subjects are mathematics, language, environmental studies, physical education, music, and creative art, while in Standard 1 the subjects are English, mathematics Kiswahili, Science and Social Studies (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

Nzilano (2015) explored the competences of pre-service teachers from Tanzania's University of Dar es Salaam during practice teaching in secondary schools and teacher education colleges. The objectives of the study was to examine the ways pre-service teachers prepared for classroom teaching, and second to assess the effectiveness of pre-service teachers in managing classroom teaching and learning activities. The study involved 30 pre-service teachers and 8 educational officers from secondary schools and teacher colleges. The instruments for data collection were a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, portfolio reviews, and classroom observations. Results revealed the limited competencies among pre-service teachers in classroom teaching.

Heavy workload was also considered to be a de-motivating factor as Ngome (2002) found unmanageable pupil enrollment to contribute to the 54.56 percent rate of pre-school teacher attrition. Ndani and Kimani (2010) analysis of factors influencing pre-school education found out that some teachers were unhappy about the number of working hours. These were mainly the teachers who arrived in ECD centres very early in the morning in order to receive children dropped by parents on their way to their work places. The teachers also waited for the parents to pick up children in the evening on their way home. The reviewed empirical literature reveals mixed results on the impact of teacher workload on the acquisition of competency by pupils in school. The current study attempted to investigate teacher perceptions on the influence of workload and acquisition of competencies by pre-school children in Keiyo South Sub County, Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kenya.

5. Materials and Methods

The research design for this study was descriptive survey. Adoption of the descriptive design helped the researcher in obtaining pertinent and precise information concerning pre-school factors influencing competency skills acquisition by learners. The population involved 93 pre-school teachers who taught children aged 4-6 years (Keiyo South Sub County Education Office, 2016). A sample size of 75 pre-school teachers was selected to participate in the study. The study used questionnaire in getting responses from teachers' perception of the influence of selected school factors on pre-school children competency skills. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies,

percentages, means and standard deviations) with the help of SPSS computer package. The outputs of analysed data are presented using frequency distribution tables and graphs.

6. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study based on the three objectives that were focused in this research. Discussions are also provided through comparison for the study findings with past researches.

6.1 Influence of Pupil: Teachers Ratio on Acquisition of Competency Skills by Pupils

The first objective of the study was to determine teacher perceptions of the influence of class sizes (teacher pupil ratio on acquisition of competency skills by pre-school learners in Keiyo South Sub-County. To answer the research question, the study sought to find out teachers responses on their class sizes, classroom management and perceptions of the influence of pupil: teacher ratio on pupils' acquisition of competency skills. Through statements on a Likert scale of five: the teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed (5) or disagreed (1) on how pupil: teacher ratio influenced learners' acquisition of competency skills. The findings are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of Pupil: teacher Ratio on Acquisition of Competency Skills

Perception	SD		D		UD		A		SA		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
i. Pupil: teacher ratio influence teachers ability to teach oral skills to learners as it requires one on one interaction	2	2.7	10	13.3	2	2.7	44	58.7	17	22.7	3.8533	1.00933
ii. Pupil: teacher ratio influence teachers monitoring of pupils progress and evaluation	0	0.0	4	5.3	1	1.3	30	40.0	40	53.3	4.4133	.77273
iii. Pupil: teacher ratio influence their capacity to teach and mark all pupils work on time	0	0.0	1	1.3	2	2.7	32	42.7	40	53.3	4.4800	.62298
iv. The sizes of the classrooms influence teachers ability to access learning resources aimed at improving learners numeracy and literacy skills	1	1.3	9	12.0	1	1.3	31	41.3	33	44.0	4.1467	1.02263
v. Pupil: teacher ratio influence	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.7	23	30.7	50	66.7	4.6400	.53625

teacher ability to concentrate on weak learners												
vi. Pupil: teacher ratio influence teacher capacity to give assignments	3	4.0	4	5.3	2	2.7	32	42.7	34	45.3	4.2000	1.01342
Mean perception of teachers	1	1.3	5	6.2	2	2.2	32	42.7	36	47.6	4.2889	0.82956

The study findings in Table 1 shows that when asked this statement 'pupil: teacher ratio influence teachers' ability to teach oral skills learners as it requires one on one interaction', more than half 44 (58.7%) agreed, 17 (22.7%) strongly agreed, 10 (13.3%) disagreed, 2 (2.7%) were undecided and 2 (2.7%) strongly disagreed. This shows that most teachers (M=3.85 & SD=1.0) tend not to implement effective oral skills in teaching large classes as opposed to smaller ones. This is because teacher will need to monitor each pupil language development but due to inadequate teaching staff, pupils' deficiency in oral skills will be observed. The findings are in tandem with Akungu (2014) who established that most teachers in the Embakasi Sub County were at full lesson load capacity and unable to take more lessons with increasing annual enrolments in the schools. The consequence of high pupil: teacher ratio is that limited time will be available for teachers to monitor each learner's academic progress and will lead to learners not in position to acquire basic competency skills in writing, reading and even speaking. This underscores the need for provision of adequate staff to manage high pre-school pupils' population.

More than half 40 (53.3%) strongly agreed that pupil: teacher ratio influence teachers monitoring of pupils progress in classroom, 30 (40.0%) agreed, 4 (5.3%) disagreed while 1 (1.3%) were undecided. The result (M=4.41 & SD=0.77) implies that when classrooms are overcrowded, teachers find it difficult to monitor and check every pupil progress and this could be a challenge affecting learners when transiting to primary schools. Lack of regular checks and evaluation could affect learners understanding and interest in mathematics that is a core subject. When asked as to whether pupil: teacher ratio influenced their capacity to teach and mark all pupils work on time, 1 (1.3%) disagreed, 2 (2.7%) were undecided, 32 (42.7%) agreed and 40 (53.3%) strongly agreed with the statement. The result indicates that respondents tend to agree (M=4.14 & SD=1.02) that pupil: teacher ratio influences their ability to go through each pupil class work assignments and exercises. This makes it difficult for teachers to be able to categorise and identify weak, moderate and bright pupils to help them in identifying methods of assisting them. Some teachers are forced to carrying pupils' book at home, because the time available during class time is inadequate.

Findings also showed that 33 (44.0%) of teachers strongly agreed that classroom size influenced teacher ability to access learning resources aimed at improving numeracy and literary skills, a significant 31 (41.3%) agreed, 9 (12.0%) disagreed, 1 (1.3%) strongly disagreed while 1 (1.3%) were neutral. This shows that when classroom sizes are large, the distribution of instructional resources per pupil is low (M=4.14 & SD=1.02). This shows that overcrowding in classrooms that have inadequate instructional resources will affect learner acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills. When asked as to whether pupil: teacher ratio influenced teachers ability to concentrate on weak learners, 2 (2.7%) were undecided, 23 (30.7%) agreed and most 50 (66.7%) strongly agreed. The result suggests that most teachers (M=4.64 & SD=0.53) have limited time to help and assist weak learners to improve on their learning when the pupils' numbers is high.

On whether pupil: teacher ratio influenced teacher capacity to give assignments, 34 (45.3%) strongly agreed, 32 (42.7%) agreed, 2 (2.7%) were undecided, 4 (5.3%) disagreed and 3 (4.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The results imply that high pupil: teacher ratio inhibits teachers giving assignment and exercises to pupils as there would be inadequate time to mark or to crosscheck them (M=4.2 & SD=1.01). On average, mean perceptions of the six statement showed that 1 (1.3%) strongly disagreed, 5 (6.2%) disagreed, 2 (2.2%) were undecided, 32 (42.7%) agreed and 36 (47.6%) strongly agreed that pupil: teacher ratio has influence on pre-school children acquisition of competency skills in Keiyo South Sub County public pre-school centres. This implies that 90.3% of respondents tended to agree that high pupil: teacher ratio in classroom inhibit teacher instructional processes thereby affecting pupils' acquisition of necessary competencies. It has also been seen that overcrowding in class influence teachers' ability to monitor and evaluate pupils oral and numeracy skulls progress during school work (M=4.28 & SD=0.82). From the results, it is therefore clear that pre-school classes in Keiyo South Sub County should be manageable so that teachers will have an opportunity of close monitoring of learners' progress.

6.2 Influence of Workload on Acquisition of Competency Skills by Pupils

The second objective was to establish the perceptions that teachers had on the influence of workload on acquisition of competency skills by learners in pre-school centres in Keiyo South Sub County. The study asked teachers to indicate their perceptions of the influence of workload on pupils' acquisition of competency skills. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Influence of workload on Acquisition of Competency Skills by Learners

Perceptions of teachers	SD		D		UD		A		SA		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
i. The amount of workload for pre-school teachers influence their capacity to assist learners acquire counting skills	7	9.3	13	17.3	1	1.3	36	48.0	18	24.0	3.6000	1.28400
ii. The size of workload for pre-school teachers influence their capacity to teach oral skills well	3	4.0	10	13.3	7	9.3	34	45.3	21	28.0	3.8000	1.11501
iii. Work overload influence pre-school teachers ability to cover their weekly work thereby making it impossible for syllabus coverage	0	0.0	10	13.3	4	5.3	25	33.3	36	48.0	4.1600	1.02720
iv. The size of the workload influence pre-school teachers' capacity to frequently asses learners' progress	2	2.7	4	5.3	5	6.7	26	34.7	38	50.7	4.2533	.98767
v. The size of the workload for pre-school teachers influence their capacity to prepare professional documents on time thereby influence learners acquisition of writing and numeracy skills	0	0.0	10	13.3	2	2.7	24	32.0	39	52.0	4.2267	1.02104
vi. The size of workload for pre-school teachers influences their capability to attend to each learners individual needs	5	6.7	4	5.3	2	2.7	21	28.0	43	57.3	4.2400	1.17220
Teachers mean perception	3	3.8	9	11.3	4	4.7	28	36.9	33	43.3	4.0467	1.10119

Results from Table 2 shows that 7 (9.3%) of teachers strongly disagreed, 13 (17.3%) disagreed, 1 (1.3%) were undecided, 36 (48.0%) agreed and 18 (24.0%) strongly agreed that the amount of workload for pre-school teachers influenced their capacity to assist pupils acquire counting skills. The result implies that teacher's workload in teaching and supervising pupils influence their ability to help them improve their counting skills in class as they tended to agree (M=3.6 & SD=1.28). The findings is similar to what Kamau (2010) obtained where most teachers said that their lessons were adequate as compared to 48.1% who felt the time allocated for mathematics was not adequate. Results of the study also showed that most 34 (45.3%) of respondents agreed and 21

(28.0%) strongly agreed that the size of workload for pre-school teachers influenced their capacity to teach oral skills well. Only 3 (4.0%) strongly disagreed and 10 (13.3%) disagreed with the statement while 7 (9.3%) were undecided. From the above findings, it is clear that most 73.3% of teachers agreed that when they have heavy workload, this will decrease the time they are supposed to instruct learners on oral skills (M=3.8 & SD=1.11). This shows that pupil: teacher contact decreases when teachers have a lot of work to do.

It was also evident from the study that nearly half 36 (48.0%) of teachers strongly agreed that work overload influenced their ability to cover their weekly work thereby making it difficult to cover syllabus on time. only 10 (13.3%) disagreed, 4 (5.3%) were neutral while a significant 25 (33.3%) agreed with the statement. The result therefore shows that when teachers are burdened with work, finishing the syllabus becomes impossible and this might affect learners acquisition of necessary competencies required at pre-school level since their teachers will not have exhaustively covered them (M=4.16 & SD=1.02). Mweru (2013) opined that teachers in ECDE centres should be given time to complete mathematics syllabus whereas children should be introduced to participatory methods of learning. This would make sure that they maximize their own time to spontaneously and voluntarily internalise the taught concepts.

It was also observed from the findings that almost half 38 (50.7%) strongly agreed and 26 (34.7%) agreed that the size of the workload influenced pre-school teachers capacity to regularly assess and check pupils progress in pre-school centres in Keiyo South Sub County. However, 2 (2.7%) strongly disagreed, 4 (5.3%) disagreed and 5 (6.7%) were neutral on the statement. The result shows that teachers' regular assessment of pupils' progress could be hampered by too much work that they have to do (M=4.25 & SD=0.98). The results are in contrast to what Kamau (2010) who found out that majority of the respondents (62.1%) indicated that they gave their learners homework daily, 3.4% indicated that they gave their learners homework once in two weeks while 20.7% and 13.8% indicated they gave their learners mathematics homework once weekly and twice weekly respectively. This was because the learners' population was low and the institutions had adequate number of teaching personnel. In addition, in South Africa, Marais (2016) found out that overcrowding has a variety of disruptive consequences for learner behaviour. For example, learners cannot pay attention or participate at the required level of intensity because classmates are noisy and restive. This showed that there existed disparity between Keiyo South and Muranga South Sub county teachers' workload.

When asked as to whether the size of the workload for pre-school teachers influenced their capacity to prepare professional documents on time thereby

influencing pupils acquisition of writing and numeracy skills, more than half 39 (52.0%) strongly agreed, 24 (32.0%) agreed, 2 (2.7%) were undecided and 10 (13.3%) disagreed with the statement. The result therefore shows that majority 84.0% of teachers agreed that when they have more workload, preparation of lesson plan, lesson notes and also progress records becomes difficult thereby affecting learners' acquisition of writing and numeracy skills (M=4.22 & SD=1.02). The results is similar to what Ndani and Kimani (2015) who found out that teachers were de-motivated by failure to break for holidays, continuous admission of children up to the end of the school term and long working hours. Some teachers were unhappy about the number of working hours. In Contrast, a research in Tanzania by Nzilani (2015) found out that that the majority of teachers prepared the schemes of work which constituted activities of the whole period of teaching practice.

Moreover, results showed that most 43 (57.3%) of teachers strongly agreed while 21 (28.0%) agreed that the size of workload influenced their capability to attend to each pupil individual needs, 2 (2.7%) were undecided, 4 (5.3%) disagreed while 5 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The above findings indicate that teachers might fail to attend to each pupil in a class for a certain period due to work overload (M=4.24 & SD=1.17). In general, 3 (3.8%) and 9 (11.3%) of teachers disagreed that teachers work overload influence pre-school pupils acquisition of competency skills in writing, reading and counting. However, most 28 (36.9%) of teachers agreed and 33 (43.3%) strongly agreed that teachers workload influenced their pre-school pupils acquisition of necessary competencies in Keiyo South Sub County (M=4.01 & SD=1.10). The result from this findings shows that teacher workload influences acquisition of competency by pupils because teacher cannot be able to handle large number of children in class.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Pre-school teachers perceived that when classroom population is high, teacher classroom management becomes difficult. The teachers perceived that high pupil: teacher ratio affected learners' acquisition of required competencies in writing, reading and even counting. Based on the teachers' perceptions, classrooms should not be overcrowded to ensure that they manage, teach, evaluate and assess each pupil progress in schools. The pre-school teachers also perceived that workload affects their lesson preparation, preparation of professional documents and even teaching and learning process. This showed that when teachers are overworked, they fail to check on learners' progress, monitor their performance and even help them to develop competencies in pronunciation, writing and reading skills. In recommendations, the

study suggests that parents, school committees, government and other stakeholders to construct more classrooms and hire more teachers and support staff.

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