



## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TEACHERS DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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### **Abstract:**

Early childhood is the foundation of primary education and beyond, it is with this concern that proper implementation of the ECDE curriculum has to take place through provision of adequate and necessary support to pre-school teachers. This study investigated the administrative support that was provided to schools during the implementation of early childhood development education curriculum in Baringo North Sub County, Kenya. This study was guided by Gross et al theory on curriculum implementation which asserts that for any successful implementation, suitable conditions must be fulfilled such as administrative support. The study used descriptive research design. The study used selected schools in Baringo North Sub County, which had 120 pre-schools, 160 pre-school teachers, 120 head teachers and 5 DICECE officers. Results showed that head teachers played a major role in the implementation in purchasing some of the required resources, through initiating the parents to support the teachers though it was found that they were not adequate at the time of the study. The head teachers and DICECE officer claimed that they never received adequate support from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to assist in the implementation of the ECDE curriculum. The paper recommends that for effective implementation of the curriculum, top administrative support should be provided to teachers to enhance effective curriculum implementation.

**Keywords:** curriculum implementation, administrative support, early childhood education

### **1. Introduction**

Early child hood is the time between the zero and nine years of age (Grotewell & Burton 2008). Early Childhood is defined as the period from birth to 8 years old (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2010). In school terms, early childhood education incorporates the group settings for children through nursery

school (pre-unit), to grade three (Republic of Kenya, 2017). The early life experience of an individual has great impact on his or her holistic development. Education is a lifelong process (Nduku, 2016). The way teachers of early childhood education handle each stage has a lot of implication to the subsequent stages in relation to the implementation of the early childhood development and education curriculum. ECDE across the world and Kenya in particular has been recognised 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. Currently, ECDE is under the county governments (RoK, 2013) as indicated in the Basic Education Act 2013.

Implementation of early childhood education development curriculum may only be effective if adequate and appropriate facilities, materials, equipment, teaching and learning activities are provided. Allocation of these conditions is necessary for achieving the curriculum goals in pre-school situation. Therefore, effective teaching and learning in science in early childhood development and education (ECDE) centres cannot achieve the expected outcomes without availability of adequate and appropriate conditions (Milimu & Indoshi, 2008). The quality of infrastructure and learning environmental conditions has strong bearing to academic performance among students. Learning infrastructure include the building, furniture, equipment, classroom, library or laboratory that contribute to a positive learning environment and quality education for both schools and students (Ajayi, Haastrup & Osalusi, 2010).

Lack of appropriate conditions for implementation of ECDE curriculum can result in teachers developing a negative attitude towards the subject. This may in turn have a negative impact on children's learning and interest in science. Given the crucial role that ECDE plays in the future development of scientists and technologists, it was important to assess the conditions for the implementation of ECDE curriculum in pre-schools. School administration members (head of school board of management, county governments, head teachers and parents' representatives) have the responsibility of ensuring that teachers are provided with necessary support for curriculum implementation.

Developed countries support to education curriculum implementation is low. For instance, a study by Chirozva (2008) on Early Childhood Care and Education in Africa observed that less than one percent of children in sub-Saharan Africa attend formal care and education programmes. Ntumi (2016) study in Ghana study revealed that pre-school teachers are faced with a lot of challenges in implementing the early childhood curriculum. Inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of inadequate in-service training for pre-school teachers, lack of parental involvement, inadequate pre-school teachers knowledge in the early childhood curriculum serves as impediment for successful implementation of the early childhood curriculum. A study conducted by Onyango (2015) established that several factors affected proper implementation of ECDE curriculum in ECDE centers like; lack of essential teaching and learning materials in some centers such as ECDE syllabus and teachers guide, inadequate provision of teaching and learning material. The gist of the matter is that challenges of implementing

early childhood curriculum are experienced in majority of countries in sub Saharan Africa. This paper tackles the administrative support that is provided to ensure effective curriculum implementation in Baringo County, Kenya.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Early childhood forms the foundation of education of the child in Kenya and the need to develop children holistically. The relevance and quality of curriculum implementation has been a concern to all stakeholders. Research in Kenya indicates that poor background in pre-school is a major setback in achieving 100% transition rate from ECDE to upper primary in Kenyan public schools. With the passage of new Education Act 2013, the responsibilities of management of public pre-school centres were taken by county governments (RoK, 2013). The county government in collaboration with primary school heads together with the parents' management representatives are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that necessary support is provided to ensure effective implementation of early childhood education curriculum. However, inadequate study exists to fully explain how administration support helps teachers to implement curriculum in public ECDE centres in Baringo County, a focus of this paper.

### **2.1 Purpose of the Paper**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the administrative support areas that teachers in public pre-school centres receive for the purpose of improving curriculum implementation in schools.

### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This paper is informed by Fullan and Miles (1991) change theory to try to explain how administrative support influence ECDE curriculum implementation in Baringo North Sub County public pre-schools. Fullan and Miles (1991) categorises various factors influencing curriculum implementation in schools into three: characteristics of the innovation, characteristics of the implementing situation or unit and macro factors. According to Fullan and Miles, change is a journey which may be faced by opposition during its course. They indicate the for effective curriculum implementation in schools, changes have to be introduced to those responsible for ensuring the activity succeeds. This therefore requires that those charged with the responsibility of curriculum implementation, they have to provide relevant direction and support to teachers in classroom. This paper specifically focuses on the implementation phase of Fullan and Miles change theory which focuses on the actual implementation of the curriculum. The implementation process is concerned with the nature and extent of actual change, as well as the support provided by those concerned (here in this paper school administration) for the change objectives to be achieved.

### **2.3 Literature Review**

Educational administration is a social process which is involved in the arrangement of the human and material resources in programmes for education and using the resources carefully to achieve educational objectives. The basic function of school administration is one of implementing educational programmes and the other related functions, according to RoK (2013) these are: obtaining and developing staff example indicating the staff needs of the school's ensuring that staff are properly deployed and motivated collaborating with education officials on matters of discipline and promotion; determining in a large measure the organizational climate and working relationships; motivate teachers by appreciating their good work; providing necessary resources to help teachers carry out their duties; delegate some duties to teachers and supervise them. Delegation improves the teachers' morale and helps them identify with the school and give guidance and counselling to the teachers on how to handle emerging issues.

Management of affairs is one of the areas which were considered in the support of ECDE curriculum implementation. This comprised of central administrators, in this case, the head teachers and DICECE officers. The administration is in the best position to clarify the situations which have ambiguity in the minds of the teachers. Administration has the authority to avail materials and training programmes. It has the mandate to give solutions to arising difficulties. According to Mbiti (1974), administrators who give support to teachers contribute to teacher mastery and classroom outcomes. It also makes teachers to change their traditional instructional practices and master the new practices needed for implementation of a new program.

Taba (1962) posits that teachers don't take charge seriously unless central administrations demonstrate thorough actions pertaining to their roles. It's the administration to ensure that proper communication takes place because the central administration acts as a motivator in every district by finding ways to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation process. The role of the head teacher at school level is to guide the staff towards classroom practices that enables learners to obtain an education that is useful for life. He organizes in-service courses for teachers, provide teaching and learning resources, motivate and encourage teachers to expand their time at innovative efforts explaining, clarifying the objectives of the innovation of teachers' needs and problems, arranging joint meeting and arranging informal meetings for discussion among teachers Fullan (1991). Kamunge Commission (1988) observed that headteachers are very important persons when it comes to the support of the implementation of ECDE curriculum. Head teachers are central to management of educational implementation of the total curriculum. Education managers are required to give support to the teachers during implementation stage. In the Kamunge Report (1988) he also gave a report that the role of the headteachers are to inspect and supervise curriculum in the schools. The report stated that: it should be recognized, however, that important supervision and guidance in any school is that given by the head of the school.

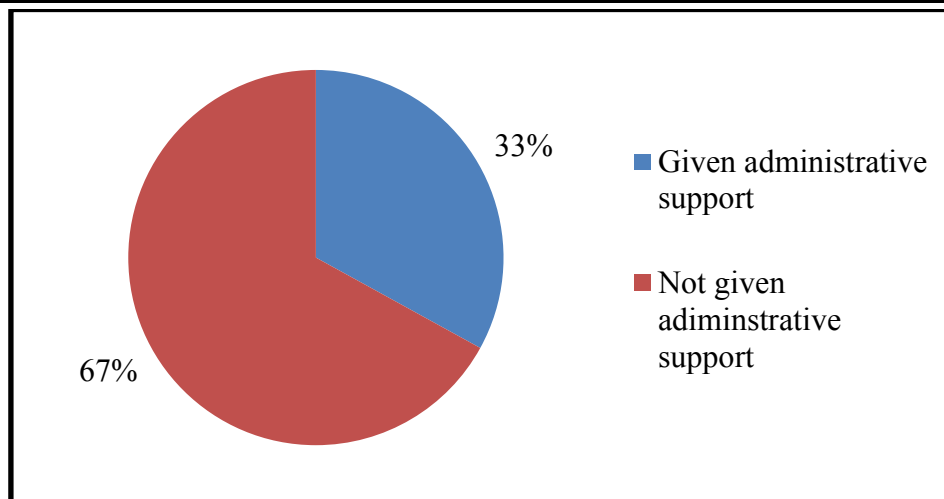
The report recognized that the important supervision and guidance in any school is given by the head of instruction in the school, who in this case is the head teacher. The head teachers should have dialogue with the teachers on various changes in order to identify and solve problems that are likely to occur as a result of an innovation. Implementation involves putting into practice an espoused idea, concept, or programme. In Kenya the work of curriculum supervision is the duty of DICECE officers. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) believed that implementation is the instructors' legitimate role in curriculum development. Their reference to the curriculum and the teacher is that after a consensus is reached as to what will go into the curriculum of educational system; the next important step is to avail the curriculum package. This process is curriculum implementation in which various personnel are involved, but perhaps the one whose role is most important in seeing that the programmes are implemented successfully is the teacher. The teacher organizes the learning environment for the benefit of the pupils who must experience the curriculum in place.

### **2.5 Materials and Methods**

Descriptive research design was used in this study. It was efficient in collecting large amounts of information at a particular time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions, identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationship that exists between specific events (Orodho, 2005). The study was conducted in Baringo North Sub County of Baringo County, Kenya. The target population for this study included pre-school teachers, head teachers, DICECE officers of Baringo North Sub County. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics; frequencies and percentage.

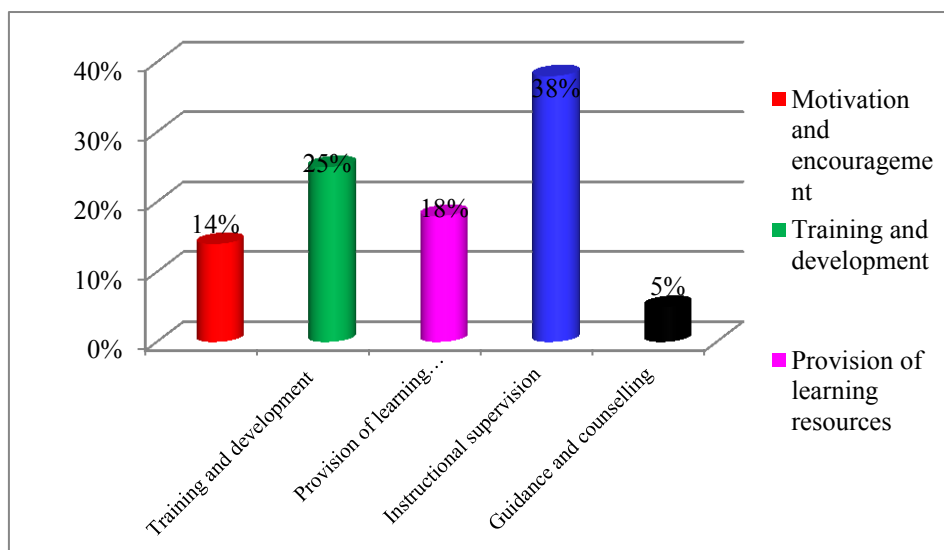
### **3. Results**

Administrative support is very vital in implementing any curriculum. The administrations in question were the head teachers and DICECE personnel. They are consulted whenever a crisis arise and also give guidance which helped in curriculum implementation process. Question item number 8 sought from the teacher's questionnaire whether teachers were given adequate administrative support. Majority of the respondents 67% indicated that they were not supported adequately whereas 33% indicated that they were given administrative support. It concurred with the report given by head teachers during the interview schedule as indicated on item number 8 that they were not provided with the procedure to be followed on the implementation of ECDE curriculum. Also they reported that there was no much assistance given in case of provision of resource, seminars, workshops, but rather routine visits were done by DICECE officers though rarely done. This was cited by the DICECE officers during the interview schedule item number 6 that they preferred induction for all teachers, which was done once a year. This implied that teachers of ECDE were not given adequate administrative support. The findings are as shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1:** Administrative Support in implementing the ECDE curriculum

The study further sought to establish the kind of administrative support received. The findings are as shown in the graph below.



**Figure 4.4:** Kinds of administrative support

It is revealed from the graph that 38% of the teachers reported that they received instructional supervision from the administration while 25% of them reported that they were supported through training and development by the administration. It is also shown that 18% of the teachers were provided with learning resources whereas 14% were motivated and encouraged. Further, 5% of the respondents stated that they received guidance and counselling from the administration. This implied that teachers teaching pre-schools in public ECDE centres did not receive enough support from the administration.

During the interview schedule with the head teachers, the head teachers, item number 8 (ii) the researcher sought to find out the nature of administrative support given to pre-school teachers, it was established that they were not given adequate

support in implementing the ECDE curriculum. During the interview schedule with the headteachers, item number 11, the researcher sought to find out whether the schools received any assistance from the DICECE officers. It was reported that DICECE Officers had not given them assistance apart from the normal routine visits to the schools which they said it was rarely done. They also reported that the officers had not directed them on the major parts they could play in regard to the assistance ECDE teachers should be given. They further reported that they used their professional knowledge and experiences they acquired before. Item number 12 of the headteachers interview schedule on how often the DICECE officers came to their schools for assessments. They reported that they came once a year or none unless for routine assessments. They claimed that lack of assessment in the public ECDE centres led to low motivation and guidance for ECDE teachers in implementing the curriculum.

This implied that assessments were not done regularly, hence making it a factor influencing the implementation of the ECDE curriculum. Item number 3 and 13 respectively of head teachers' interview schedule sought to find out the number of pre-school teachers and classes that were there in public ECDE centres. They reported that majority of the centres had one or two teachers and majority of the pre-schools had one or two classes, a few had three. During the interview the researcher further sought to find out whether teachers taught all the stages in one class as asked in question item number 14. It was reported that most of the pre-school teachers taught all the stages in one class but there were some few schools that had three stages in their specific classes to imply that not all the pre-school teachers implemented the curriculum as required by the current ECDE syllabus where by Day care (level I) pre-primary one (level II) and pre-primary two (level III) needed to be handled according to their stages of cognitive development. It implied that teachers of the ECDE in public ECDE centres had problems in inadequacy of facilities that could boost the implementation. Most of the ECDE centres are not within the school's compound making it hard to supervise.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The ECDE teachers required a lot of support from the head teachers and M.O.E. through DICECE office. All educational authorities and administrators during the stage of implementation of ECDE curriculum were highly required for its success. Implementation of the curriculum requires assessment methods which should be adopted to realize the achievement of the objectives set in the curriculum. Usually curriculum implementation involves close contacts with teachers, pupils, parents and administration. There should be adequate communication in all groups starting from a central point example K.I.E which facilitates curriculum development in Kenya. From the findings, head teachers played a major role in the implementation in purchasing some of the required resources, through initiating the parents to support the teachers though it was found that they were not adequate at the time of the study. The head teachers and DICECE officer claimed that they never received adequate support from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to assist in the implementation of

the ECDE curriculum. The head teachers claimed that they were not given the direction on how to supervise the curriculum because no circular was released from the Ministry on the same. They also claimed that there was inadequate support because the ECDE had not been included in the education system therefore could not benefit from the free primary education. The DICECE officer noted that they were unable to provide learning aids and other materials because of lack of funds. The role of the DICECE office was to make sure that curriculum implementation among other roles were affected. They were supposed to check on how the syllabus was covered, physical facilities, teaching, cleanliness in the ECDE centres, provision of books, and teaching aids to boost the implementation.

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