



TEACHER QUALIFICATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES IN ECDE CENTRES IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

The government policies and research theories emphasizes plenty of instructional resources that are well sourced, managed, selected and used for the purpose of quality ECDE Curriculum implementation. The purpose of this study was geared towards the analysis teacher qualification and its influence on the use of instructional resources in ECDE centres in Kericho County. The research was based on the theory of curriculum innovations. Descriptive survey design was adopted by the study. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used to select respondents. The target population was 84 head teachers and 180 pre-school teachers which led to a sample of 25 headteachers and 54 pre-school teachers selected from ECDE centres. Data was collected using questionnaires, observations and interviews. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, this included frequencies and percentages. Data was presented in the form of graphs, charts, and tables. The findings of the study revealed that the knowledge and skills of the pre-school teachers made them to be more competent in using the relevant IR. The teacher qualification did have influence in the use of IR in ECDE centres. The study recommends that teachers can use the findings to adjust and improve their teaching methodologies in the use of instructional resources.

Keywords: teacher qualifications, instructional, resources

1. Introduction

The training of teachers for ECDE is done in different ways and by different agencies. There are national and District systems of training and development. The most common training is done at two levels: Certificate and Diploma. All are offered by District centres for early childhood education (DICECE), the kindergarten headmistress association (KHA) and the Montessori. On completion of the training, participants are awarded certificates (K.N.E.C, 2007). The curriculum of ECDE centres is developed by

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the Kenya Institute of Education's National centre for early childhood education (NACECE). At the core of the ECDE curriculum is the endeavour to address the total needs of children (NACECE, 1999). The aim of ECDE is to develop the whole personality, encompassing physical, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and mental: provides a holistic education, particularly at this formative stage of the child (K.I.E, 2006). The ECDE centres are run by parents and local communities at the district levels with the help of the central government, local and external agencies. District centres for early childhood education are the most active centres for training ECDE teachers.

2. Literature Review

Teacher Certificate in ECDE. The certificate in ECDE is offered through pre-service and in-service, each having 810 contact hours. Pre-service programme is covered in one year and in three residential school terms and with one term (or 300 hours) of teaching practice in ECDE institutions. The in-service programme takes two years in residential sessions during school holidays (Otunga et al, 2011). To be admitted in this programme, one needs a minimum of D+ (Plus) in KCSE or a pass in KCPE and must have taught in ECDE for a minimum of three years and passed a proficiency test offered by Kenya National Examination Council (K.N.E.C., 2007). The curriculum at this level covers institutional methods of assessing, types of assessment at the early childhood level and institutional materials for teaching at this level. The teacher trainee should be able to analyze measurement and geographical concepts, apply practical instructional methods in teaching, develop instructional materials, and design assessment tools to evaluate children's progress in learning (K.I.E., 2002).

Diploma in ECDE. The ECDE diploma programme was launched in 1985 and it was intended to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes desired and stimulate children in preparation for primary education. The course was also meant to fill the gap between the certificate and degree course to provide an opportunity for professional upward mobility in the ECDE programme (KIE, 2006, P. 22; Mbaabu, 1996). Diploma in ECDE is a two-year programme through pre-service and in-service of 780 contact hours. Pre-service is a three residential academic school terms, with one term (or 300hrs) for teaching practice in an ECDE institution. In-service alternative involves six residential sessions during school vacation. Admission in this programme according to Otunga et al, (2011) requires DICECE, Kindergarten headmistress association or Montessori certificate, PI certificate, minimum of C (Plain) in KCSE or its equivalent. Teaching practice is mandatory and must be passed before qualifying for award of a certificate. A trainee is attached to an ECDE centre for at least three months to interact with children, teachers, parents and community. The student teacher is assessed on the preparation of schemes of work, classroom management and control and record keeping. Trainees also undertake a course in research, monitoring and evaluation. They are to design and research on a relevant topic (K.I.E., 2006).

2.1 Training ECDE teachers at University level

From 1990s, universities embarked on the programme of training teachers for this level of education. This programme is offered at Kenyatta University, Moi University and University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (Otunga et al, 2011).

2.2 Primary teacher Education

There are currently 19 public primary teacher training colleges and 68 private ones. In July 2010, a total of 7827 candidates were admitted to the 19 public primary colleges for the PI training.

Of these females were 3932, an indication that gender parity had been achieved in the admissions (Internet, 21 July, 2010). The teacher trainees in primary teacher colleges undergo a two-year pre-service course, which leads to the award of Primary Teacher Education Certificate (PTEC). The entry requirement for PTEC Course is a minimum C (Plain) in KCSE or its equivalent and must have attained at least D (Plain) in mathematics and at least C- in English. The PTE curriculum currently used was revised in 2004. The improvement was necessitated by the need to make curriculum reflect and respond to the changes in the society, as emphasized in various education forums such as the conference of college principals association held in 2004.

2.3 Diploma Teacher Education

Diploma Teacher Education Programme is a three year programme. Trainees are admitted with a minimum mean grade of C+ (Plus) and a C+ in the subjects of specialization and C (Plain) in Mathematics for those taking sciences, D+ (plus) in Mathematics for those taking humanities and C (Plain) in English for all applicants. Trainees are offered a broad-based curriculum which comprises two teaching subjects and professional and support subjects. Professional and support studies are Education, Environmental Education, Physical Education (PE), Communication Skills, Entrepreneurship, ICT, General workshops practices, Library and Information Studies, and Guidance and Counseling (Otunga et al, 2011). Currently we have two diploma teachers college namely, Kibabii DTTC for humanities and Kagumo DTTC for Science. We have also Kenya Technical Teachers' College (KTTC) offering technical education and Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) offering special education which have their own admission requirements. The Kenya government recognized the importance of technical education in moving the country to an industrialized state by the year 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). It is for this reason that the country plans to spend at least 25 million dollars with the assistance of the Netherlands Government to buy modern equipment and train teachers in 13 new polytechnics where each province is expected to have at least one polytechnic (Nganga, 2010).

2.4 Bachelor of Education Programme

The Bachelor of Education course has various strands which include B. Ed. (Arts) B. Ed. (Science), B. Ed. (Technology), B. Ed. (Guidance and Counseling), and B. Ed. (Early Childhood and Primary Education). The teacher is equipped with skills for teaching in

ECDE, Primary, Secondary, Teacher Training Colleges, Institutes and Polytechnics. The course content at this level has two major components: teaching subject content and professional areas. In addition, teaching practice is mandatory and must be passed in order to qualify for the award of the certificate (Otunga et al, 2011).

2.5 Teacher Education Programmes

Teachers in Kenya are trained through pre-service and concurrent programme, and competency-based training (Shiundu and Omulando, 1992; Daresh and Playko, 1995).

2.6 Pre-service and Concurrent Teacher Education Programme

Pre-service and concurrent teacher education programme is generally a fully institutionalized scheme of training in which student teachers participate on full-time basis with a curriculum consisting of subject area content, professional preparation, including principles and methodology of teaching, philosophy, sociology, curriculum theory, educational administration, planning, measurement, finance, history and psychology and teaching practice both micro and field practice. It is a concurrent form of education; simultaneously providing academic and professional studies. Students remain in college where they receive regular instruction for specified periods of time. This traditional approach to teacher education has been criticized for lack of effectiveness and efficiency.

2.7 Competency-Based Teacher Education

This programme is also designated as performance-based teacher education. Emphasis is on objectives and assessment. Both student teachers and their tutors aim at goal realization. It is a more precise form of training because adequate performance of a given task is highly valued as well as possession of required knowledge, skills and attitudes. The student is expected to demonstrate the specified competence to the required level and in an agreed upon manner. He/she accepts responsibility to be held accountable.

Publishing houses and other education experts are good examples of competency-based education aimed at improving teacher performance in subject areas. Kenya education staff institute (KESI) also mounts educational courses for principals, deputies and heads of department in areas of academic, human resource management, and change management. KESI has a mission of improving and maintaining quality of education by enhancing capacity of education managers through effective and efficient training, research and consultancy (KESI, 2008).

2.8 Consecutive Programme of Teacher Education

Consecutive teacher education is mainly for general-based graduates who wish to become professional teachers and they spend an additional one academic year of further professional training. Such as a trainee will acquire a Post Graduate Diploma in Education. Graduates with at least first degree of either Bachelor of Science or Arts and are already teaching as untrained and wish to become teachers have been going to

Kenyatta University, Moi University and University of Nairobi for this course. If learning has to be effective and meaningful, there is need for well selected adequate facilities and materials to support teaching and learning (Republic of Kenya, 2006). A teacher who makes effective selection and use of adequate and relevant teaching materials and facilities will be more confident and effective. The Kenya vision 2030, which is the nation's new development blue print for 2008 to 2030, recognizes education and training within the social pillar alongside the economic and political pillars that are cornerstones expected to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing middle income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). ECDE teacher development and training has been poor in Kenya since the 1960s as compared to the enrolment in terms of children. In the pre-colonial Kenya, ECDE was only preserved for both the European and Asian children (up to early 1960s). The sector drew interest due to improved basic child health, nutrition and attention to the social and intellectual development of the child. More ECDE centres were opened during the Mau Mau wars (1953-early 1960s) for the provision of many activities for the children such as custodial care to children whose mothers were involved in forced labour. In Kenya most of these centres were started attached to primary schools under poorly trained teachers. Currently DICECE trains ECDE teachers. The training of ECDE teachers in Diploma courses takes duration of two years with some teaching attachment in ECDE centres. The mode of delivery by the District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) officers is either through Pre-Service or In-service Programmes.

The quality of education of a nation could be determined by the quality of her teachers. The most important factor in improving students' achievement in mathematics is by employing seasoned qualified teachers in all schools (Abe and Adu, 2013). It is further reported that, teacher's characteristics such as certification status and degree in area of specialization are very significant and positively correlated with students learning outcomes in science and mathematics. This report was in line with the findings of Salman (2009). A teacher, according to shiundu and Omulando (1992), is the most important person in teaching who sees that educational programmes are successfully implemented by organizing and managing the learning experiences and environments. To educate others therefore, one needs to be educated and have a broad background of general cultural training that provides a broad liberal education. Working as an expert requires the acquisition of knowledge and practical abilities to work in complex situations. Teachers need the self confidence to carryout their duties in demanding unique situations and need to implement their expertise in such a way that their customers, stakeholders and colleagues trust them (Isopahkala Brunet, 2004). They need research-based, research informed knowledge and be open to acquiring and assessing local evidence (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 2003).

3. Material and Methods

The study used descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design enabled the researcher to collect original data for the purposes of describing and measuring the

characteristics of a population, which was too large to be observed directly. The survey method was appropriate because it was a self-report study, which required the collection of quantifiable information from the sample. This involved collection of both quantitative and qualitative data.

The study was conducted in Kericho Municipality Zone which is the headquarters of Kericho County. It lies on the Nairobi-Kisumu Highway, its geographical coordinates are 0° 22' 0" South, 35° 17' 0" East. The target population was 84 ECD centres in Kericho Municipality Zone of which 30 were public and 54 were private with 180 pre-school teachers (DICECE Kericho, 2013). The sample size consisted of the following respondents: 25 headteachers and 54 pre-school teachers in Kericho Municipality Zone that is 30% of the target population. Samples were picked from the ECDE centres using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. This was chosen to delimit the research and gather sufficient data within the time limit and cost. Basing on this fact, a combination of the following research instruments were used in this study for triangulation purposes: questionnaires, interview and observation. Based on the data evaluation instruments, quantitative and qualitative data analytical techniques was utilized. Data from questionnaires was analyzed in frequencies, mean and percentages using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). A descriptive statistical method was used and adopted to calculate the percentages and means.

4. Results and Discussion

Respondents were asked to react through several statements: Use of instructional resources, years taught in current station, academic level, professional level training level, and years one has taught as an ECDE teacher. There was an attempt to answer the third research question, "How does the teachers qualification influence the use of instructional resources in ECDE centres?". The response is summarized on table 1 below.

Table 1: A table showing Qualification and Use of Instructional Resources

Years taught in current station	Agree		Undecided		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
4 years and below	42	53.2	3	3.8	45	57.0
5-10years	25	31.7	0	0	25	31.6
Above 10 years	8	10.1	1	1.3	9	11.4
	Total				79	100
Academic level	F	%	F	%	F	%
Form 4	65	82.3	4	5.1	69	87.3
'A' level	10	12.7	0	0	10	12.7
	Total				79	100
Professional level	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not respondent	8	2.6	1	1.3	3	3.8
Certificate	43	54.4	1	1.3	44	55.7
Diploma	29	36.7	2	2.5	31	39.2
B.Ed	1	1.3	0	0	1	1.3

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	Total				79	100
Training level	F	%	F	%	F	%
In training	5	6.3	0	0	5	6.3
Trained	70	88.6	4	5.1	74	93.7
	Total				79	100
Teaching experience	F	%	F	%	F	%
4 years and below	10	12.7	0	0	10	12.7
5-10years	33	41.8	3	3.8	36	45.6
Above 10 years	32	40.5	1	1.3	33	41.8
	Total				79	100

A majority 42 (53.2%) of teachers who were in a new station and 25 (31.7%) of those who had stayed longer 5-10 years made use of instructional resources. Those who had stayed for more than 10 years, only 8 (10.1%) indicated that they used instructional resources. Transfers are good to get new ideas on the use of IR (Ashioya, 2012). It shows that the longer one stays in a station the less he/she values the use of instructional resources in teaching and learning (Ambogo, 2012). Further this could be due to complacency grips in as one stays in one station for long also no new challenges are faced (ibid). On the academic level of the respondents, majority 65 (82.3%) of those with form four academic level agreed that they used IR while 4 (5.1%) were undecided. Those with 'A' level, only 10 (12.7%) responded positively. It can be deduced that the academic level of education enhanced the use of IR as was observed by Ema and et al (2004).

On professionally trained teachers, those with certificate 43 (54.4%) agreed that they used IR and only 1 (1.3%) were undecided. The diploma and B.Ed holders 29 (39.7%) and 1 (1.13%) agreed to using IR and while 2 (2.5%) and none were undecided respectively. The findings are in agreement with findings of Aguolu (2002) who argued that IR may be available but the user may not be willing to lay hands on them. Five (6.3%) for those in training agreed that they used IR compared to 70 (88.6%) of the trained who confirmed the use of IR. This revealed that Centres with trained teachers had much greater impact on learners than untrained ones. Ten (12.7%) of those with 4 years and below teaching experience said they used IR, while those with 5-10years experience, 33 (41.8%) agreed and only 3 (3.8%) were undecided. Teachers with more than 10 years teaching experience, 32 (40.5%) agreed using and 1 (1.3%) was undecided.

5. Recommendations

There is need for the stakeholders to stress on the importance of high academic grades and professional qualifications for those intending to train as ECDE teachers as this would lead to better teacher preparedness, attitude and use of IR in the ECDE curriculum implementation.

6. Conclusion

In the study, the findings showed that new teachers made use of IR more than those who had stayed in one station longer. This is in agreement with Boyd et al, (2007) who observed that teachers show the greatest productivity gains during their first few years on the job, after which their performance tends to level off. The findings of the study also showed that academic and professional qualification had a lot of influence on teachers' use of instructional materials and it also showed that trained teachers used IR more than those in training. This is in agreement with Goldhaber, (2000) who stated that teacher qualifications are considered to be related to student learning have become targets of education reform. He further argued that some educational reformists perceive the main problem to be the low academic and cognitive level of those who go into the teaching profession and call for policies aimed at the impact of teachers' qualifications on student achievement at attracting more capable candidates through shorter, less regulated alternative routes. Teaching experience varied with the use of IR. The more the teaching experience the less the use of IR. This is in agreement with Ladd, (2008) who noted that, on average, teachers with more than 20 years of experience are more effective than teachers with no experience, but are not much more effective than those with 5 years of experience. The findings of the study revealed that the knowledge and skills of the pre-school teachers made them to be more competent in using the relevant IR. The teacher qualification did have influence in the use of IR in ECDE centres.

About the Author

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