

Influence of Continued Teacher Professional Development by the County Government on the Implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

Dr. Edward Otieno Obuya (PhD)

Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies,

School of Education, University of Kabianga, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

Quality education is anchored on how skilled and motivated teachers are to improve their professional knowledge and skill throughout their careers to ensure effective curriculum development. There has been growing thirst and continuous demand for teachers to enhance their professional knowledge and skills on pedagogy through continued teacher professional development strategies. However, demands for continued teacher professional development are a worldwide issue. There is growing need therefore of teachers professional development beyond their initial training. The thrust of this study therefore was to assess the influence of continued teacher development on the implementation of early childhood education curriculum. The study employed explanatory sequential mixed methods design. From a target population, 236 head teachers, 313 ECDE teachers and 56 County ECDE officers were randomly sampled yielding 588 participants. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedules. Quantitative data for the first phase were analyzed with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive and inferential statistic Qualitative data during the second phase were analyzed thematically. Mixed results were obtained indicating that head teachers and ECDE teachers held contrary views regarding teacher's recruitment and deployment. While the head teachers' results indicated that there was a significant and positive correlation ($p=.001, < .05$), the ECDE teachers revealed a non-statistically correlation ($p=.456, > .05$), between professional development of teachers and curriculum implementation. The conclusion reached was that there was inadequate teacher professional development and the understaffing was negatively influencing curriculum implementation. It was recommended that national and county government should put in place a harmonized teacher professional development policy and employ adequate teachers to effectively implement the curriculum.

Keywords: Continued professional development, Pedagogy Pre-school teachers, Curriculum implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Globally, Early Childhood Education is the bedrock and foundation of all learning within the existence pattern of children within the formative ages. This reality has been emphasized by a number of authors of Early Childhood Development & Education including Heinrich Pestalozzi, John Dewey and Johann Froebel

among others. This can only be achieved if there is quality of education in the formative years of a child development.

The realization of quality education is generally based on the quality of teaching as manifested by the continuous professional development opportunities teachers are exposed to by the management.

Quality education is determined by a combination of enablers such as the effectiveness of learning, the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental advantages. The quality imparted varies per institutional level depending on the internal school characteristics, such as, relevant aims and goals, good use of time and available support materials which are deployed equitably within a school environment that is supportive to learning (UNESCO, 2015). In the same breath, UNESCO (2019) further emphasizes that the appropriate skill acquisition is embodied in the required resources for quality teaching and learning to take place. The implication is that there is the need to go beyond the comfort of improving access and realize that learning is not just about quantitative gains in terms of number of children in the classroom, but also about quality. It is instructive to note that according to UNESCO (2019), the world is off track as far as the delivery of its educational commitment by 2030 is concerned. Evidently, there are inadequate trained teachers, infrastructural facilities and disparity in enrollment in the rural and urban areas and in poor and middle income countries.

According to Gopinathan (, 2016), professional development and teachers' effectiveness have a positive impact in effective curriculum implementation through increased quality learning. It is imperative therefore that the link between professional development and teachers' levels of curriculum implementation cannot be gainsaid.

A number of analyses carried out on cost and benefits of school reforms indicate that investment in professional development for teachers' performance to effectively implement curriculum offers exceptional gainful outcome to students. This argument has been supported by Asiyah et al who opined that professional development of a teacher leads to improvement of work commitment and improved classroom pedagogy.

Teachers, therefore need to be very competent in both the methodology, knowledge content and to understand the 21st century norms in order to effectively facilitate learning. This inspires the need for continuous teachers' professional development to propel effective curriculum implementation. Teachers' competencies can be improved through professional development that improves their teaching competencies to achieve desired goals.

According to (Hayes, 2010), Professional development is the strategy that most schools use to ensure teachers continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career.

Continued professional development suggests that learning takes place in three dimensions, namely formal, informal and non-formal (Fadilah, 2017). The professional development of teachers supports teachers to adapt their instructional strategies to students' levels of understanding. Study shows that teachers' professional development is closely associated with teachers' increased self-efficacy thus teacher's performance hence effective curriculum implementation (Young 2020).

Policy makers, including county governments have a responsibility to ensure that educators within their jurisdiction engage in continued professional development and apply the learning to increase the rate of curriculum implementation and learning outcome.

This study finds continued teacher professional development from the promise made by the Sustainable Development Goal -4 that countries must ensure that by 2030, all boys and girls access quality early childhood development care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education (United

Nations, 2016)

On the Kenyan front, a study by World Bank (2019) reveals that students in Kenya can only reach 52 percent of their potentiality at 18 years of age, blaming the prevailing circumstances on the quality of educational resources and time for student's engagement in the learning process. This entire process of ensuring equitable and quality education is realized is vested on the docket of a teacher. Invariably, to ensure provision of quality education, a teacher, also referred to as a curriculum implementer is the determinant of an effective and efficient curriculum implementation at all levels of education. The process of curriculum implementation entails classroom activities that the teacher undertakes to monitor students' progress and evaluate the performance. Teachers are therefore responsible for curriculum implementation. Shinali & Kamau, (2016) opined that learning is influenced by teachers, as they are the ones who execute the dissemination of the structured set of learning experiences, the provision of resources to effectively execute the curriculum plan, and the actual execution in the classroom where teacher-learner interactions takes place (Mkpa & Izuagba, 2009). This demonstrates the pivotal role played by teachers and their training in the process of curriculum implementation. To reiterate, teachers are unquestionably the most important human resources in curriculum implementation as they play important role in adopting and implementing the ideas and aspirations of the curriculum designers (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2018). This points to the fact that success of the curriculum relies entirely on teachers and their continued professional development. Therefore, appropriate recruitment of trained teachers is a primary factor to consider as it influences curriculum implementation. Arguably, teachers are considered the most crucial factor in the process of curriculum implementation as they contribute to expertise, knowledge and experience in classroom teaching (Kasau et al., 2016). This can only be realized through teacher professional development.

The impact of staffing and teacher pupil's ratio is very important in determining the level at which teachers implement curriculum. Kasau et al., 2016 states that recruiting adequate number of teachers ensures a reduction of class size. Consequently, smaller size allows adequate teacher-student interactions which permit teachers to engage individual learner leading to improved curriculum implementation and learning outcome. Research carried out in five Franco Saharan African countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Madagascar) by Kasau (2016) posit that congested classrooms lead to high teacher workload hence impedes curriculum implementation process and poor-quality learning outcome. Teacher interactions that foster positive classroom environment are important as they make the learners feel cared for and connected with the teacher and learning process (Martin et al., 2016).

In the Kenyan context the Constitution which was promulgated in 2010 created a devolved governance system involving one national and all the county governments aimed at promoting social and economic development. In its fourth schedule, the Constitution stipulates functions and powers of the two levels of government. The schedule particularly gives county governments the responsibility to provide pre-primary education and childcare services (UNESCO. (2012). *Expanding Equitable Early Childhood Education Is an Urgent Need Policy Paper*, 03 Paris France, n.d.)

The Basic Education Act No 14 of 2013 further affirms that the county government is responsible for the management of ECDE programs including teacher professional development (Shinali & Kamau, 2016; Republic of Kenya, 2013). Accordingly, county governments' working is guided by the National ECDE Policy Framework that seeks to ensure that holistic needs of the young children are met (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Devolution of ECDE including teacher management by the county government was perceived as an avenue to address the challenges that bedeviled the sector (Shinali & Kamau, 2016). Key functions of the county government in the management of ECDE sector include teacher professional development (*Republic of Kenya (2020).*). However, empirical studies carried out on ECDE teacher professional development, have found out that there is significant correlation between teachers continued professional development and

curriculum implementation (UNESCO, 2012). Despite these efforts by both the national and county governments, there exists an evidence gap regarding the not only the status of teacher continued professional development but also its effects on curriculum implementation at the Early Childhood Development and Education in HomaBay County.

Statement of the problem

The constitution of Kenya 2010 recognizes the central role played by Early Childhood Education Development programmes in the development of children later years of education including continued teacher professional development by the county government. Despite its pivotal role played by the Government of Kenya in laying educational foundation, Early Childhood Education in country continues to face a myriad of challenges including teacher professional development. Although the policies are very clear about the retooling of teachers who are already recruited by the county government, understaffing and lack of exposure to continued teacher professional development have threatened every gain that has been made towards improving the quality of early childhood education in the country (Amolo et al., 2016) Robust literature review reveals that teachers continue to face various management challenges including lack of exposure to new modern pedagogy and 21 century teaching methods. In addition, there is lack of adequate empirical evidence to examine the influence of teacher continued teacher professional development by the county governments on the implementation of early childhood education curriculum in the Kenya's context. It was on this background that this study critically examined continued teacher professional development being offered by the county government and its influence on the implementation of Early Childhood Development and Education Curriculum with reference to Homa- Bay County in Kenya.

Objectives of the study

To establish Influence of Continued Teacher Professional Development by the county Government on the implementation of Early Childhood Education curriculum in Homa Bay County, Kenya.

Hypothesis of the study

Ho1- There is no statistically significant influence of continued teacher professional development on the implementation of early childhood education curriculum in Homa-Bay county.

Significance of the study.

The study's findings are hoped to be of use by county governments especially the Department of Early Childhood Education where they might provide insights into the issues concerning teachers' continued professional development and how it influences on the implementation of curriculum. Therefore, the findings are significant and relevant to the inspectorate and may facilitate making informed decisions by the Chief Education Officer in as far as in-service training of teachers is concerned and aid in addressing understaffing. The study findings may also not only add to the knowledge base and as such, it may form a basis upon which other related studies may be anchored. The study may also serve as a point of reference in as far as future professional development plans by county governments are concerned.

Theoretical framework

The study was positioned and anchored within the framework of Herzberg's theory of Motivation, also known as two factor theory proposed by Fredrick Herzberg, an American psychologist who developed the model in 1959 He postulated that there are two factors that an organization can adjust to influence motivation in the workplace and argued that there are two sets of factors governing job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. He termed them as hygiene factor or extrinsic motivators and motivation factors or intrinsic

motivators. According to Herzberg, intrinsic motivators and extrinsic motivators tend to have inverse relationship. That is, intrinsic motivators tend to increase motivation when they are present, while extrinsic motivators tend to reduce motivation when they are absent. This is due to employee’s expectations.

According to this theory, extrinsic motivators like salaries, benefits are expected, so they would not increase motivation when they are in place, but they will cause dissatisfaction when they are missing. Intrinsic motivators like challenging work and growth potential on the other hand can be a source of additional motivation when they are available.

In relation to this study, if the management (County Government) wants to increase employees’ (teachers’) job satisfaction, they should be concerned with the nature of work itself which include teachers’ workshops and trainings. The opportunities it presents employees for gaining status, assuming responsibilities, and achieving self-realization. If on the other hand, the county government wishes to reduce job dissatisfaction, then it must focus on the job environment which includes policies, procedures, supervision, working conditions and teacher capacity building. In order to ensure a satisfied and productive workforce, the County Government must pay attention to both sets of job factors. It is imperative for the county government to realize that not providing the appropriate and expected extrinsic motivators will sow dissatisfaction and decrease motivation among employees (ECDE teachers). For example, lack of delegation of authority, vague policies and procedures and communication may lead to job dissatisfaction (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl & Maude, 2017).

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 displays a relationship between Independent Variable (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV).

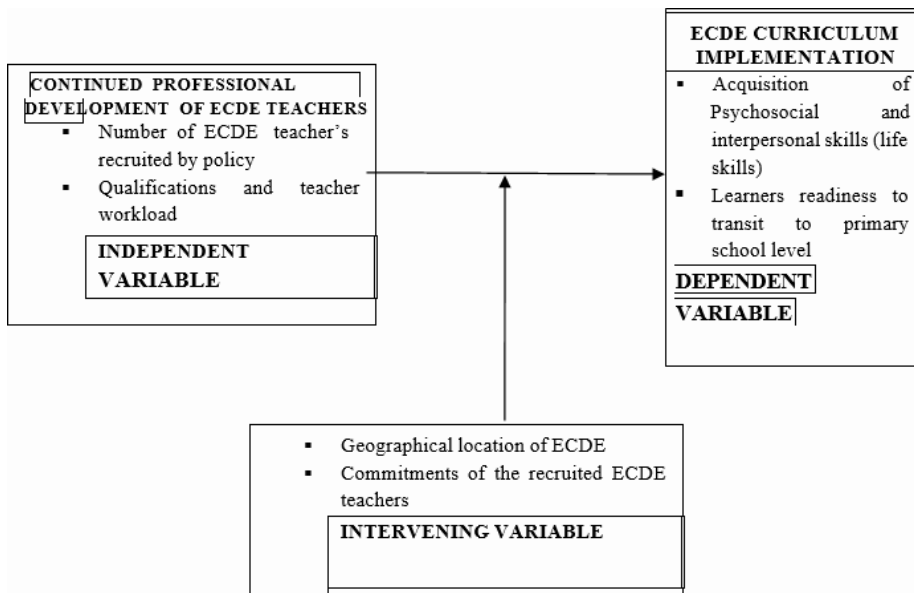


Figure 1: The conceptual Framework illustrating relationship between continued teacher professional development and implementation of ECDE teachers

Source: Modified from Orodho,2017

Adapting the Structural Functionalism model, this conceptual framework relates the interaction between continued teacher professional development (IV) and curriculum implementation (DV). The independent variable for the study comprises the number of ECDE teachers recruited by the county government policy which include; policies on ECDE continued teacher professional development, advertisements and

qualifications for recruitment as well as quality of recruited teachers in terms of academic and professional qualification. When the policies are well adhered to, quality teachers will be recruited and the quality of curriculum implementation measured in terms of ability for to acquire requisite psychosocial skills and readiness to seamlessly transit to primary school level will be achieved. These end results include; acquisition of psychosocial and interpersonal skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed an explanatory sequential design which is one of the variants of mixed method as illustrated in Figure 2. This was in accordance with Creswell, (2015) who posited that the design enables the researchers to follow a logical sequence while handling the research process to the end.

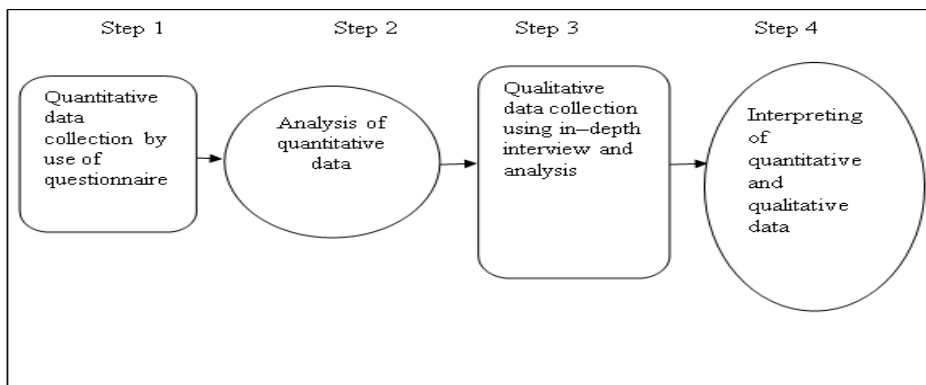


Figure 2: An illustrative process of the Explanatory sequential mixed methods design

Source: Creswell, 2018

The mixed method design in this study was deemed appropriate since the researcher's intention was to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods so as to achieve research objectives. The method also upheld the strengths of quantitative and qualitative approaches and offset their weakness as well.

In line with the explanatory sequential design stages, the quantitative data were collected using questionnaires from the entire sample during the first phase, followed by the qualitative data collection in the second phase to explain the findings in phase 1. . Therefore, phase two of the study subjected selected participants to an intensive interview session. This enabled the researcher to obtain an in-depth inquiry from the participants and gain further insight into the variables under study (Orodho, 2017) . The use of data merging and triangulation approach were appropriate for this study because the researcher' intention was to understand how continued teacher professional development influence curriculum implementation process. (Creswell, 2014).

Location and Sample selection

The study was conducted in Homa-Bay County in Kenya. The County is found in the former Nyanza Province and lies between latitude 0.30 South and longitude of 34.9 East with a population of 1.131,950 covering 3183.3 square km with an annual population growth rate of 1.6% (*Kenya – Kenya Population and Housing Census 2019*, n.d.)

The target population for the study comprised eight hundred and seventy-seven (877) public pre-schools in the eight sub-counties in Homa Bay County, Kenya. This is according to the data available at the Homa Bay County Director of ECDE office. The pre-schools were categorized into urban and rural pre-schools for the sake of easy comparison. Eighty-six (86) pre-schools are found in urban centres within Homa Bay County

whereas Seven hundred and ninety-one (791) pre-schools are within the rural areas respectively

A sample was drawn from the target population located in 877 pre-school centers comprising 2245 teachers in Homa-Bay County. (County Government Education Department, 2019; Creswell, 2015). From the target population, 236 head teachers, 313 ECDE teachers and 56 County ECDE officers were sampled yielding a sample size of 588 participants.

Research instruments

The two main data collection instruments employed were questionnaires and interview schedules as was suggested by (Hinds et al., 2015). Questionnaires were appropriate for data collection because the study was descriptive in nature and questionnaires were found to be suitable data collection instruments for descriptive studies (JA, 2009; Kothari & Garg, 2013; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Two questionnaires were developed, one for the head teachers and another one for ECDE teachers. Construction of the questionnaires was done systematically according to the research objectives to answer all the research questions by the respondents. Respondents were requested to answer each questionnaire item with assurance of confidentiality so as to provide truthful information with errors being minimized. In order to obtain the required data, a variables matrix showing the research instrument and the relevant study variables was developed. These instruments were piloted in the same county, but schools participating in the pilot not included in the main study. The pilot results assisted in determining the validity which is the extent the instrument was measuring what it purports to measure, and the reliability which was concerned about the consistency of the measuring instruments.

Data Collection procedures

After receiving a letter of approval from the Graduate School, Kenyatta University, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the Ethics and Review Committee and used the two documents to get a research permit from the National Council for Science & Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The correct protocol was followed by first obtaining permission from County Director of Education and the County Government of Homa-Bay before proceeding to collect data in the field. The researcher clarified all areas of the research instruments in order to optimize the response rate. After administering the instruments, the researcher waited for the respondents to fill in and then collected the filled in questionnaires immediately to avoid a situation where the respondents shared responses.

Data analysis

Quantitative data generated from questionnaires were analyzed with the assistance of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer software was used to compute both descriptive (means, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlations, simple and multiple regression) for the first phase of the mixed methods design. This was followed by the qualitative data analysis which was done manually using thematic and discourse analysis during the second phase. Triangulation was conducted to merge the data and form the final analytical platform for reporting the findings using a combination of tabulations, graphs and direct quotes to explain the findings (Orodho et al., 2016).

FINDINGS

Findings

The head teachers and ECDE teachers were requested to indicate their views on continued professional development of ECDE teachers and its influence on curriculum implementation. The study sought the views of head teachers and teachers on continued professional development and its influence on curriculum

implementation. They were asked to indicate their responses for various areas in relation to teachers' continued professional development on the influence of curriculum implementation in a 5-point Likert scale with (1-strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Not sure, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agree) as indicated in the Table 1.. The basis for interpretation was that any mean below 2.5 meant disapproval while above 2.5 meant approval.

Table 1: Respondents' views on Teachers continuous professional development

Continuous professional development		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Organization of seminars enhances teaching skills	LT	18 (9.2%)	14 (7.2%)	13 (6.7%)	73 (37.4%)	77 (39.5%)	3.94
	Tr	16 5.8%	10 3.6%	21 7.6%	104 37.5%	126 45.5%	4.19
Professional seminars address emerging issues in the teaching profession	LT	13 (6.7%)	12 (6.2%)	19 (9.8%)	86 (44.1%)	65 (33.3%)	3.94
	Tr	21 7.6%	17 6.1%	32 11.6%	103 37.2%	104 37.5%	3.96
Holding of workshops enhances exchange of ideas among teachers	LT	15 (7.7%)	7 (3.6%)	12 (6.2%)	80 (41.0%)	81 (41.5%)	4.08
	Tr	20 7.2%	11 4.0%	25 9.1%	96 34.7%	125 45.1%	4.13
Through workshops, teachers are able to network and share ideas on how to respond to different aspects facing learners.	LT	14 (7.2%)	8 (4.1%)	11 (5.7%)	83 (42.6%)	79 (40.5%)	4.08
	Tr	17 6.1%	9 3.2%	25 9.1%	95 34.3%	131 47.3%	4.19
Customized refresher courses enhance the level of teacher's motivation.	LT	16 (8.2%)	12 (6.2%)	17 (8.8%)	80 (41.0%)	70 (35.9%)	3.93
	Tr	17 6.1%	15 5.4	41 14.8%	106 38.3%	98 35.4%	3,98
Holding different refresher courses enhance quality of work life in the teaching profession.	LT	15 (7.7%)	9 (4.6%)	10 (5.2%)	82 (42.1%)	79 (40.5%)	4.05
	Tr	19 6.9%	13 4.7%	38 13.7%	96 34.7%	111 40.1%	4.03

Note: 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Not sure, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agree

Source: Survey data, 2021

From table 1 above, majority of the lead teachers strongly agree (39.5%) that organization of seminars enhances teaching skills. The study observed that a third (33.3%) were of the opinion that professional seminars address emerging issues in the teaching profession. 40.5% of the lead teachers opined that through workshops, teachers are able to network and share ideas on how to respond to different aspects facing learners and 40.5% were for the view that holding different refresher courses enhance quality of work life in the teaching profession.

From the ECDE teachers' opinion, 45.5% of the teachers strongly agreed that organization of seminars enhance teaching skills, 37.5% strongly agree that professional seminars address emerging issues in the teaching profession, while only 7.6% had the contrary opinion. 47.3% reported that through workshops teachers are able to network and share ideas on how to respond to different aspects facing learners. Slightly more than one-third (35.4%) strongly agree that customized refresher courses enhance the level of teachers' motivation. Teachers agreed that seminars, workshops and professional trainings were informing and refreshing. The events brought the ECDE teachers together and gave them a chance to share notes across the county and sometimes with people outside the county or profession and this has positive influence on curriculum implementation.

From the descriptive analysis, it was evident that teachers who were given opportunities to attend professional development training improved greatly in their pedagogy. This is consistent with studies carried out elsewhere including Pienaar & Lombard, (2010) which concur that there are better learning outcomes when learners are taught by teachers who continuously attend development programmes.

Relationship between Continued Teacher Professional Development and Implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum

The study sought to investigate the relationship between continued teacher professional development and implementation of early childhood education curriculum in Homabay County. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to establish the magnitude and direction of the relationships between continued teacher professional development and implementation of early childhood education curriculum. The mean response across a set of items of Likert-type scale responses in the measures of both continued teacher professional development and implementation of early childhood education were computed to create approximately continuous variables, within an open interval of 1 to 5 as determined to be suitable for the use of parametric data by (Johnson & Creech, (1983) and Sullivan & Artino Jr, (2013). This was done after reversing all the negatively worded statements. High scale ratings implied high perceived continued teacher professional development and high implementation of early childhood education, and vice-versa. The significance value was set at 0.05; hence, a p-value less than 0.05 would lead to the conclusion that the correlation is statistically significant. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlations between Continued Teacher Professional Development and Implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum

		Teacher Professional Development	ECDE Curriculum Implementation
Teacher Professional Development	Pearson Correlation	1	.601**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	313	313
ECDE Curriculum Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.601**	1

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	313	313

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It is evident from Table 2 that continued teacher professional development is directly correlated with implementation of early childhood education curriculum. A fairly strong direct relationship was established between the continued teacher professional development and implementation of early childhood education curriculum. This was signified by a significant positive correlation coefficient (n=313, r=.601, p=.000), with high levels of continued teacher professional development associated with higher levels of implementation of early childhood education curriculum.

Further, regression analysis was used to establish the influence of continued teacher professional development on implementation of early childhood education curriculum.

Hypothesis Testing on the influence of continued teacher professional development on Curriculum Implementation

H₀1: Continued teacher professional development has no statistically significant influence on implementation of early childhood education curriculum

The study investigated whether continued teacher professional development has any influence on implementation of early childhood education curriculum, the null hypothesis that “*continued teacher professional development has no statistically significant influence on implementation of early childhood education curriculum in Homabay County*” was tested. The null hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis with the investigated null hypothesis being, H₀: β₃ = 0 and the corresponding alternative hypothesis, H₁: β₃ ≠ 0. If the null hypothesis is true, then from E(Y) = β₀ + β₃X the population mean of Y is β₀ for every X value, which indicates that X (continued teacher professional development) has no effect on Y (implementation of early childhood education curriculum) and the alternative being that continued teacher professional development is associated to implementation of early childhood education curriculum. The significance level was set at 0.05, such that if the p-value was less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis would be rejected and conclusion reached that continued teacher professional development has statistically significant influence on implementation of early childhood education. Table 3 shows the coefficients values of the regression model.

Table 3: Coefficients-influence of continued teacher professional development on implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.062	.069	29.718	.000	1.925	2.198
	Teacher Professional Development	.353	.027	.601	13.247	.000	.301

a. Dependent Variable: ECDE Curriculum Implementation

$$Y = \alpha + \beta x_3 + \varepsilon$$

It is evident that the slope coefficient for continued teacher professional development was positive .353, suggesting that the level of implementation of early childhood education improves by .353 units, which is

95% within CI (.301 .406), for each one-unit improvement in continued teacher professional development by government of Homa Bay County. Similarly, an improvement on continued teacher professional development by one standard deviation would result into a positive implementation of early childhood education in the county by .601 standard deviations.

It is evident that there is a significant p-value ($t= 13.247$; $p <.001$) of the explanatory variable, continued teacher professional development, signifying that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that $\beta_3 = 0$. Hence, the null hypothesis that “*continued teacher professional development has no statistically significant influence on implementation of early childhood education curriculum in Homabay County*” was rejected. The Hypothesis that there is a significant influence of continued teacher professional development on implementation of early childhood education curriculum in Homabay County is therefore supported. Consequently, it was concluded that there is statistically significant positive influence of continued teacher professional development on implementation of early childhood education curriculum. The fitted line regression model was: Implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum = 2.062 + .353 (score of continued teacher professional development).

However, to establish whether continued teacher professional development influence was truly a significant predictor to implementation of early childhood education curriculum in Homabay County, regression Analysis of Variance was conducted, as suggested by (Creswell, 2015; Stevens, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) among others.

Table 4: Model Summary on Influence of Continued Teacher Professional Development on Implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.601 ^a	.361	.359	.46699
a. Predictors: (Constant), Teacher Professional Development				

The model summary reveal that continued teacher professional development accounted for 35.9% (coefficient Adjusted $R^2=.359$) of the variation of early childhood education curriculum implementation. This finding suggests that variation in the level of continued teacher professional development explained 35.9% of the variability in the implementation of early childhood education curriculum in the county of Homa Bay.

Findings from qualitative data from teachers interviewed revealed that although teachers’ professional development training is very fundamental in teacher pedagogical improvement, only a few teachers have attended such training.

For effective curriculum implementation, teacher in-service training should be given priority. One lead teacher had this to say: (LT- 08).

I had an opportunity to attend an in-service workshop on competency-based curriculum. The workshop really improved my teaching methods and the way I handle weak learners. How I wish the county government could organize trainings on termly basis. We could be far with curriculum implementation and quality of learning outcome.

The implication of the excerpt from lead teacher LT-08 is that although teacher professional training is very significant in curriculum implementation little is being done to expose ECDE teachers to such training and that only a few teachers have attended such in-service training.

Equally, qualitative data from one of the interviewed teachers revealed that teachers have limited opportunities in terms of professional development most of those who attend seminars and workshops are self-sponsored but the impact of such in-service trainings on curriculum implementation are enormous. The Teacher had this to say: TR -9.

I have only attended one in-service training organized by the county government; the rest other two trainings have been my own initiative and self-sponsorship. The impact of such trainings has been fantastic in the process of curriculum implementation. It has greatly changed my pedagogical approach through exchange of ideas from my peers.

The excerpt from teacher TR -9 reveals that there is very little in-service training being organized by the county government although the teacher appreciates the role teacher professional development plays in curriculum implementation.

Both quantitative and quantitative findings revealed that the county government has not taken seriously the issue of teacher professional development. In most cases not even a single in-service training is being organized in one academic year despite the role played by teacher professional development in curriculum implementation and improvement of quality education.

Refresher courses are a welcome distraction to the busy life of an ECDE teacher and often rejuvenate them to come back and do more in terms of improving the content retention of the learners in the wake of curriculum implementation.

Teachers should be enabled to access growth opportunities before we expect them to effectively meet learning needs. This is a step that is likely to bolster the implementation of curriculum. This may include other forums such as workshops, bench-marking and seminars are pedagogical cornerstones necessary to propel curriculum implementation and quality learning outcome. To support this finding, results from several studies Smith & Gillespie, (2007); Yoon et al., (2014) show that when teachers have more professional in-service trainings, there is an effective rate of curriculum implementation.

Varied but mutually supporting Professional development opportunities can positively affect teachers' work. Desimone, (2011) claims that "a professional development activity is more likely to be effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills if it forms a coherent part of a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development. Her dimensions of coherence include professional in-service training which must build on what teachers already know and content aligned with curriculum implementation. According to Desimone (2011), teachers struggle with curriculum implementation because of limited opportunities for professional development.

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis reveal that, even though professional development training play significant role in curriculum development, the county government does very little in organizing ECDE teacher in-service training. It is therefore imperative that the county government organizes such in-service trainings to improve ECDE curriculum implementation in the county.

Learning is a lifelong process and therefore teachers must always be refreshed on the curriculum requirements to enable them be ahead of their delivery expectations at all times. Similarly, many studies have also emphasized the role being played by in-service training in improving teacher performance. For example, Samupwa, (2008a) when emphasizing the impact of teacher-in-service training declares that through in-training, behavior and performance changes positively. Equally, (Meece et al., 2009; Pintrich, 2002) opined that in-service training contribute significantly in improving curriculum implementation process. However, the findings of this study are not in agreement with findings of (Mutune & Orodho,

(2014) study in Mbeere Sub-County which concluded that continued teacher professional development led to high teacher turnover among secondary school teachers. This is contrary to this study finding which places significant roles teacher professional development play in improvement of curriculum implementation in the early childhood development education.

This finding corroborates with the findings that effective training enables staff to acquire new skills, perform tasks differently acquire new knowledge, and even become better than before. (Nzuve & Njeru, 2013)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that due to contradictory results from the head teachers and ECDE teachers regarding continued teacher professional development and adherence to policy guidelines, the true position on the ground is that the county government is making spirited efforts to offer professional development workshops for ECDE teachers to enhance curriculum implementation and delivery even though the workshops are very minimal. The problem was that the teachers on the ground were inadequate and overloaded since they handled over-enrolled classes with limited physical and infrastructural catalyze and these sorrow states influence effective curriculum implementation.

It is therefore imperative that the county government of Homa Bay does not offer enough training and workshops for the ECDE teachers despite the availability of such avenues for professional development. Therefore, insufficient teacher professional development coupled with understaffing of ECDE teachers in Homa Bay County negatively influence implementation of early childhood education curriculum. A related finding is that the county government has not put in place a clear policy on provision of enablers to the teachers. It is imperative that each county government is having its own yardstick without any synchronization with the national government.

This paper therefore concludes that county government as is the case with Homabay County is not strategically nurturing the learners with appropriate, knowledge, skills and attitudes in the context of the prevailing insufficient teacher professional development and absence of provision of enablers of curriculum implementation. This quest for quality education is in tandem with the SDG-Goal 4 which promises that by 2030, ensure that all boys and girls have access to quality early childhood development and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education (*Republic of Kenya (2020)*).

Recommendations

1. The study recommends that regular workshops should be organized for the ECDE teachers by the county government on curriculum implementation and mechanisms are put in place to ensure that all ECDE teachers attend such workshops.
2. Based on the findings that there are few organized in-service trainings for the pre-school teachers, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the County Government should partner together in enhancing teacher professional development trainings that target ECDE teachers especially on Competence-Based Curriculum.

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