

# Am I a Kindergarten Teacher? Examining the Role of School Context factors and Professional Development in the Central Region of Ghana

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**Abstract:** -The study examines the Role of School Contextual factors and Professional Development of Kindergarten teachers in the Mankessim Municipality of Ghana's Central Region. The pragmatist paradigm of knowledge acquisition guided the study, with the use of a concurrent mixed method design with identical samples for quantitative and qualitative data. The study's target population included all Kindergarten teachers in the Central Region of Ghana. As a result, the census sampling procedure was used to select 182 kindergarten teachers for the study. The main instrument for this study was a four-point Likert-type scale questionnaire with both closed and open-ended items. The closed-ended items were scored on a scale of 1-4 with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The quantitative data was analysed using means and standard deviation while the qualitative data were analysed thematically. After data was analysed and interpreted, the following conclusions were made: Contextual factors typically have an impact on how kindergarten teacher develops their professional identity. Secondly, Head teachers' leadership styles, the experiences of kindergarten teachers, and parents and society's perceptions of early childhood were the contextual factors that had the highest means and the greatest impact on kindergarten teachers' professional identities. Professional identity development for kindergarten teachers is impacted by opportunities for professional development like pursuing higher education, in-service training, and other opportunities.

**Keywords:** kindergarten, contextual factors, professional development

## I. Introduction

Teacher professional identity has been explored as a concept, a connection of interlocking variables, through which the teacher can be understood and appreciated as a professional as well as a social and cultural being. Teacher identity is not a fixed or coherent set of traits but something that is complex, often contradictory and subject to change across time and space (Morgan, 2004). According to Moloney (2010), qualifications are critical in shaping professional identity, including self-esteem, self-belief, job satisfaction, and belongingness. For instance, kindergarten teachers in Ireland believe they are often viewed as babysitters rather than educators (Moloney, 2010). This metaphor threatens and challenges their professional identity resulting in feelings of vulnerability and insecurity which has huge implications for the way the curriculum is implemented. Forde, McMahon, McPhee and Patrick (2006) refer to affective components of professional identity such as self-esteem, self-belief, professional self-confidence, job satisfaction and motivation. They posit that professional identity is a highly personalised construct that rests in part on feelings and attitudes about the job people do. Yidana and Lawal (2015) after reviewing the literature on teacher professional identity point to the fact that, an ideal professional teacher, irrespective of the subject he or she handles should demonstrate and practice all aspects of professional knowledge, values, skills and reflection. These are the broad indicators of teachers' professional identity and capacity.

Mansaray (2011) pointed out that government policies in Africa on educational reforms do not position the teacher as the locus of change and that little evidence of empirical studies is directed at teacher identity and professionalism as core determinants of how teachers perform their roles. He indicates that the approach to early grade and in-school teacher preparation seems heavily focused on equipping teachers with the so-called 'knowledge base' in their subjects, and the appropriate techniques and strategies for communicating this knowledge to learners. Consequently, there are indications that teachers in Africa have either lost, or have not developed, the distinctive identity that is improving their professional work as well as their social standing. The foregoing suggests that teacher education curricula do not focus on developing the identity of the teacher. Previous attempts to give some attention to developing teachers' personal and professional identities in Ghana has been the Student Internship Programme (SIP) put in place by some teacher education universities, however this has been fraught with challenges. For instance, the teaching practice model designed for colleges of education in Ghana that required periodic conferences between link tutors from the colleges, interns and their mentors during the one year internship programme has not been effective. Some of these challenges are ineffective mentoring processes and a lack of model of progress that identifies competencies and standards against which both student teachers can measure and review their progress.

Ghana has come up with strategies and policies on Kindergarten Education to help improve the quality of education at the early grade level. In Ghana, the programme to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in 2012 recognised the role of the teacher in quality education as it explicitly states that ‘regardless of limited resources and inadequate infrastructure, the right teacher can transform the kindergarten class and learning outcomes of the early learners in his/her care. The right teacher is one who understands the specific needs of kindergarten learners, knowledgeable in the use of age-appropriate interactive pedagogies and assessment practices to achieve learning objectives. Teacher quality is therefore crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of education in general and students’ learning outcomes in particular (Goyal & Pandey, 2011). More importantly, the current pre-tertiary curriculum reform in Ghana saw an overhaul of the kindergarten curriculum with a huge departure from the subject-based curriculum to a more thematic and activity-oriented curriculum. The implementation of such a curriculum requires a teacher who is well-equipped, competent, versatile, and can clearly define his professional identity.

It is against this backdrop that a robust teacher education reform was initiated in Ghana in 2019. This saw the development of a National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework and National Teachers Standards which influenced the Development of a new Bachelor Education curriculum for all teacher education institutions. The curriculum has an internship model dubbed Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) with a model of progress beginning from year one through to year four. It is anticipated that student teachers who go through this curriculum have enough internship experience that would enable them examine and review their perceptions and attitudes constantly. It is expected that these opportunities will enable them clearly define their professional identities before entering the world of work.

Every teacher irrespective of his or her area of specialisation should have a professional identity that distinguishes him or her from other subject teachers or teachers in other disciplines by virtue of their training. This also goes for kindergarten teachers who are found teaching children at the most critical period of their lives. It seems most of the studies on teachers’ professional identity focused most on subject teachers at higher levels. There is limited research in Ghana on kindergarten teachers’ professional identity and how the experiences they go through during practice define their identity. The study was thus conducted to firstly, explore school context factors affecting kindergarten teachers’ professional identity and secondly examine the role of professional development in kindergarten teachers’ identity formation in the Central Region of Ghana in the Central Region of Ghana.

### **Research Questions**

To carry out this study, the following research questions were examined;

1. What contextual factors affect kindergarten teachers’ professional identity?
2. What role does professional development play in kindergarten teachers’ identity formation?

### **Contextual Factors Affecting Kindergarten Teachers’ Professional Identity**

Research has indicated that teachers’ contextual factors may influence the shaping of teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Smagorinsky, Moore, Cook, Jackson & Fry, 2004). According to Kelchtermans (2009) a teacher’s professional identity is perceived and shaped by the interaction between person and context. Contextual factors include the school environment, the nature of the learner population, the impact of colleagues and of school administrators, and teachers’ own experiences as learners in schools. Furthermore, the emotion brought to the context and that generated by the context will affect this identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Being aware of the context and the effects it has in the dynamic process of shaping one’s identity seems crucial for teachers to develop their potential identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Even though teachers usually have no control over these factors, they may be able to negotiate their identities when being exposed to these contexts as far as they can recognize the possible situations they can encounter as teachers and the potential identities they can develop.

Factors such as the working environment, the influence of colleagues and the impact of school administrators can all be influential in shaping teachers’ identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Furthermore, with the ongoing reforms in early childhood education, the recent emphasis on accountability, standards and assessment, among other shifts in policies surrounding the profession requires teachers to reconstruct their identities in stressful situations. Jónsdóttir (2012) suggests that, in order to meet various and even opposing demands, teachers may create multiple identities that could cause them conflict. Therefore, as it is pertinent to know the contextual factors, it is also important to be conscious of one’s own experiences and emotions brought to the context and those generated by the context that may affect the formation of one’s identity (Flores & Day, 2006). Researchers suggest that this has great implications for professional development and teacher education as it can provide students and teachers opportunities to reflect on the internal and external factors shaping their identity and the tensions that may arise between them.

Flores and Day (2006) noted that teachers who work in collaborative school cultures develop and express positive attitudes towards teaching and implementation of the curriculum. Teachers' images about themselves and their perceptions of their identities can also be influenced by the way they are perceived or stereotyped in professional contexts, especially when they are members of minority cultural groups (Milner & Hoy, 2003). When a group of people are stereotyped, they may have to bear or tolerate extra emotional and cognitive burdens that could undermine their work and impact their self-images. For instance, the kindergarten or early grade level, especially in Ghana is considered a place for people who are not smart, elderly people who are nearing retirement and for women. As a result, most teachers who have gone through early childhood training sometimes refuse postings or taking appointments at such levels because they may be mocked by their colleagues.

### **The Role of Professional Development in Kindergarten Teachers' Identity Formation**

Defined broadly and inclusively, Professional Development may be understood as activities or relationships intended to support and develop teachers' instructional practice (Noonan, 2018). Professional Development activities vary widely in design, and may be in-district or out-of-district workshops, upgrading courses, formal or informal mentoring relationships, teacher inquiry groups, or peer observations (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). These are seen by a broad cross-section of stakeholders-teachers, principals, policymakers-as essential for instructional and personal improvement (Borko, Elliott, & Uchiyama, 2002)

The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) sees Professional development for early childhood as a "facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the teachers' acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice. The key components of professional development include: (a) the characteristics and contexts of the learners (i.e., the "who" of professional development, including the characteristics and contexts of the learners and the children and families they serve); (b) content (i.e., the "what" of professional development; what professionals should know and be able to do; generally defined by professional competencies, standards, and credentials); and (c) the organization and facilitation of learning experiences (i.e., the "how" of professional development; the approaches, models, or methods used to support self-directed, experientially-oriented learning that is highly relevant to practice)."

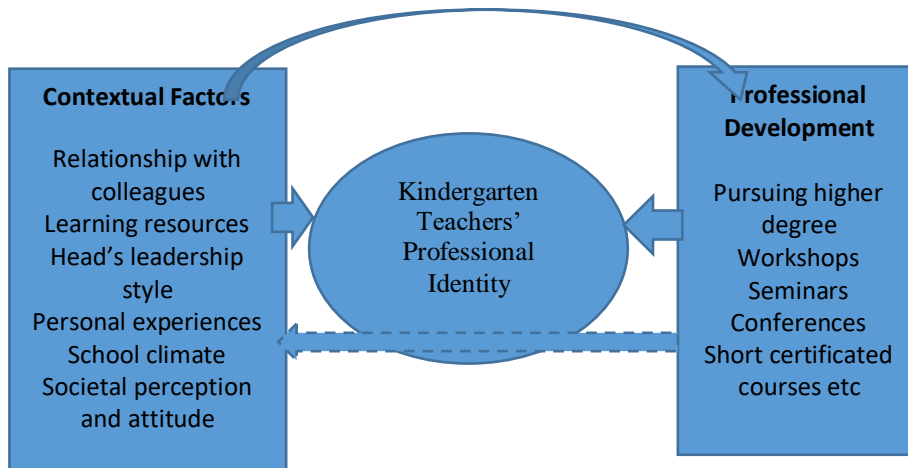
Professional Development covers pre-service training at all levels. The purpose of Professional Development is to increase the knowledge and skills of Early Childhood practitioners and professionals (Jensen, Iannone, Mantovani, Bove, Struczyk, & Wyslowska, 2015b). Professional Development can take different forms, e.g. training, workshops or collaborative group work between educators. Technological innovations can be used to improve accessibility of and content of Professional Development interventions, and finally, coaching or mentoring has also become a popular, however rather expensive, type of Professional Development (Powell et al., 2013). Thus, Professional Development applies to a widespread range of activities such as formal coursework, consultation, coaching, and reflective supervision.

While conceptions of teacher identity vary depending on theoretical views and perspectives, researchers agree that identity formation and teacher development are associated in important ways. Teacher identity formation is important in influencing teachers' decision-making, professional lives, motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and career decisions. When considering the increasing teacher attrition rates in the United States (an estimated 30-50% of new teachers leave the field within their first five years, Ingersoll, 2003; Quality Counts, 2000), it is easy to understand the critical role teacher identity plays in recruitment, preparation, and retention of the teaching workforce, as well as the need to study teacher identity and the factors that contribute to its successful and less successful development.

An examination of literature about teacher identity indicates that teacher' perceptions of their own identities as professional educators have been shown to influence their development as well as their ability to deal with situations in and outside of their classroom and school environments (Beijaard et al., 2000). Indeed, knowledge of teachers' professional identity perceptions may help them cope with educational challenges and changes. Recognizing and addressing these perceptions may also help teacher education professionals, classroom teachers, and school administrators accommodate and attend to career-related tensions. Moore and Hoffman (1988) found that a teacher's self-perception of their professional identity, if seen in a positive light, can override dissatisfaction with poor working conditions. Flores and Day (2006) cited research that implies tension in the first few years of teaching as professionals work to make a place for themselves in the education world.

In a study, Flores and Day (2006) followed 14 new teachers, mostly situated in an elementary setting for two years as their professional identities were shaped and reshaped. Their findings indicated that personally situated identities were strongly integrated at the beginning of their careers, but seemed to destabilize as they progressed through the study. The climate of each school structure caused the teachers to be less creative and more routine as time passed. Flores and Day ascertained that workplace influence (positive or negative-perceptions of school culture and leadership) played a key role in (re)shaping teachers'

understanding of teaching, in facilitating or hindering their professional learning and development, and in (re)constructing their professional identities. Based on the foregoing understanding this conceptual framework was developed;



## II. Methods and Procedures

### Research Design

The study was underpinned by the pragmatist paradigm of knowledge acquisition. Pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods in research (Feilzer, 2010). The fundamental premise for the combination of qualitative and quantitative is that it helped the researchers to better understand the research problems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). On the strength of this the concurrent mixed method design using identical samples for both qualitative and quantitative components of the study was adopted. The design was useful since it helped to confirm, cross-validate, and corroborate study findings. Concurrently gathering both forms of data at the same time, helped to compare both forms of data to search for congruent findings and how the themes identified in the qualitative data collection compare with the statistical results in the quantitative analysis, (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

All Kindergarten teachers in the Central Region of Ghana constituted the population. The census selection was applied in selecting all respondents out of which data from 160 teachers were used for the study. The main instrument for this study was a four-point Likert-type scale questionnaire with both closed and open-ended items. The closed-ended items were scored on a scale of 1-4 with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A focused on the demographic data of respondents. Section 'B' had a set of statements which were meant to solicit data on the contextual factors influence early childhood teacher's professional identity. Section 'C' focused on the role of professional development in early childhood teacher's identity formation. The quantitative data was analysed using means and standard deviation while the qualitative data were analysed in themes. We were concerned with addressing specific research questions and analysed the data with this in mind. We coded each part of data that was relevant to or addressed something interesting about our research questions. Themes were developed from the research question and validated by a pilot study. A qualitative research data analysis software Atlas.ti 7.5.17 version, was used to aid the analysis of the qualitative data thematically. Morse and Field (1996) explain that thematic analysis involves the search for and identification of common trends that extend throughout an entire interview or set of interviews. The researchers group inscribes write-ups from respondents under their appropriate themes to answer the research questions using pseudo names to represent respondents to conceal their identity. Contextual factors as incorporated in this study was based on extent literature review.

The researchers administered questionnaires personally with the help of two trained assistants to sample Kindergarten one and two teachers for their responses. The consent of the respondents was sought after which they were given three days to fill in the questionnaires to the best of their knowledge. Distribution and collection of questionnaires took five weeks.

### Demographic Characteristics of Kindergarten Teachers

The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate that the majority of them 122 (76.3%) were females whilst the minority representing 38 (23.7%) were males. This is consistent with both global and national statistics which suggest female dominance of the early childhood education sector. With regard to the age of the kindergarten teachers, the data shows that about 85 are between 31 and 50 years who may be considered matured and with the level of energy required to manage and teach

children in their early years. With respect to their level of education, the data reveals that though all the teachers were trained, majority were professional early childhood teachers, while the rest were para-professionals (Abroampa, 2017) with degrees in Basic Education. This phenomenon also reflects the current situation where a significant number of early childhood teachers are not trained to teach at that level. This has implications for developing professional identity. It may be deduced from the data that whereas 62 of the teachers may be considered novice teachers (1-5yrs); 26 are experienced (6-10yrs) while 72 forming the majority are more experienced (11yrs and above). About 61% have been teaching for more than five years and thus may have the requisite experience required to teach early learners. The experiences gathered throughout the years may also shape their professional identity.

**Contextual factors affecting kindergarten teachers’ professional identity**

This research question sought to examine the contextual factors affecting kindergarten teachers’ professional identity.

Table 1: School Context Factors influencing early Childhood Teachers’ Professional Identity

Items	Mean	SD
How my colleagues relate with me and the experiences we share influences my professional identity as an early childhood practitioner	2.84	1.23
The nature of the learner population (class size) influences my professional identity as an early childhood teacher.	2.74	1.25
My head’s leadership style and perceptions about early childhood education influences my professional identity as a teacher.	3.70	.52
My own experiences as a teacher influence my professional identity	3.62	.62
The nature of my working environment affects my professional identity as a teacher	3.28	.99
The provision and availability of resources needed for teaching and learning influences my professional identity as a teacher.	3.23	1.10
Parents and society’s perceptions about me affects my professional identity as an early childhood practitioner	3.79	.47

Table 1 shows a description of the contextual factors affecting kindergarten teachers’ professional identity. It may be inferred from the data that though all the items representing contextual factors were rated very highly, the head teacher’s leadership styles ( $\bar{x}=3.7$ ), kindergarten teachers own experiences ( $\bar{x}=3.6$ ), parents and society’s perceptions about early childhood ( $\bar{x}=3.7$ ) were considered as the three contextual factors with the highest means. The data thus suggests that generally kindergarten teachers’ experiences and the contextual factors they interact with while in service greatly influence their professional identity as denoted by the cumulative mean of 3.31 with a standard deviation of 0.88. This implies that the scores generated by responses were not widely dispersed, the variances in response were thus not too wide since the respondents were a homogenous group and probably interacting with similar contextual factors.

From the qualitative data gathered, there were other contextual factors like nature of salary, lack of recognition, social regard and learner hygiene possessing a challenge to professional identity. The data revealed that the kindergarten teachers emphasized the low nature of their remunerations and complained that the remuneration does not commensurate the challenges and demands of teaching early learners.

For instance, KGT 15 indicated that:

*It is very shameful especially for us the male teachers to introduce one’s self as a teacher in the Kindergarten. It feels like you are a big failure, though I love the children, there is a general social perception about us which is based on gender discrimination and disrespect.*

KGT 19 also intimated that:

*It is very difficult for us to form a positive identity especially with the kind of negative social perception and regard we receive.*

Another respondent KGT 17 articulated:

*What even kills my spirit for the work is the hygiene practices of the parents of these children. Sometimes we go through a lot to ensure that children are well clean and ready to learn and play with their colleagues. How can I feel good about my job? or form a positive attitude and identity about myself?*

KGT 18 also commented:

*Though as a mother, I cope with all the needs of the children in the school, sometimes it becomes unbearable. The most annoying aspect of the whole thing is the salary. The salary is so scanty compared to the time we leave school; we cannot even sell or do some other business to complement the work we do.*

A respondent KGT 20 stated:

*It difficult for even us the females to willingly accept in public that we are KG teachers, how much more the men. I believe without any proper restructuring by government, there will be less men in the job.*

It may be deduced from the foregoing that the predominant contextual issues affecting kindergarten teachers' professional identity are low salary, the negative social regard and stereotyping. This is evident in phrases such as '*negative social perception*'; '*It is very shameful*' and '*salary is so scanty*'. This seems to validate the quantitative data which has parental and societal perception as the strongest contextual factor. According to Kelchtermans (2009) and Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) a teachers' professional identity is perceived and shaped by interaction between the person and context. The study showed that contextual factors influencing kindergarten teachers' professional identity were related to nature of working environment low remuneration, lack of recognition, social regard. Milner and Hoy (2003) also posit that teachers' images about themselves and their perceptions of their identities can be influenced by the way they are perceived or stereotyped in professional contexts, especially when they are members of minority cultural groups. In a study by Abdulai (2014) KG teachers expressed their frustration about some spurious impressions and perceptions society has about teachers teaching early learners. This was also underscored by Lemaire, Amoah, Nstifil and Bonney (2013) who reported that education officials, teachers, parents and community members believe that teaching early learners can be done by any teacher; whether the person is a professional or not. This suggests the kind of erroneous impression and low regard society has for early childhood education which may affect KG teachers' perceptions about themselves, their professional identity and how they implement the curriculum.

Even though teachers usually have no control over these factors, they may be able to negotiate their identities when being exposed to these contexts as far as they can recognize the possible situations they can encounter as teachers and the potential identities they can develop.

### **Role of professional development in kindergarten teachers' identity formation**

This research question sought to look at the role of professional development in Early Childhood teacher identity formation.

Table 2: Professional Development in Early Childhood teachers' Identity Formation

Items	Mean	SD
My professional development as a teacher is important in influencing my decision-making process about me	3.28	1.14
My perceptions as a teacher about my own identity as professional educator influences my professional development	3.09	1.15
Professional development enables me to deal with situations in and outside of their classroom and school environments	2.99	1.23
Self-perception of my professional development, if seen in a positive light, can override dissatisfaction with poor working conditions	3.20	1.14
Through in-service training, my professional identity as a teacher is significantly improved.	2.35	1.45
As a result of higher education, my professional identity as a teacher is significantly improved.	3.19	1.23
My years of experience and exposure improves my professional identity as a teacher.	3.12	1.21

Table 2 shows that generally kindergarten teachers perceived professional development as capable of influencing their professional identity, they however believe that their professional development as teachers is important in influencing their decision-making process ( $\bar{x}=3.28$ ); their self-perception of their professional development, if seen in a positive light, can override dissatisfaction with poor working conditions ( $\bar{x}=3.20$ ); and also their perception that as a result of higher education, their professional identity as teachers is significantly improved ( $\bar{x}=3.19$ ). These are the strongest professional development factors that affect their professional identity. In sum, the data generated a cumulative mean of 3.03 with a standard deviation of 1.22. It may therefore be deduced that though, the kindergarten teachers perceived professional development as capable of affecting their professional identity, their responses were widely dispersed from the mean. Responses were thus largely heterogeneous.

The qualitative data gathered showed that higher education relating to professional development was seen as a positive means to educate teachers in improving their personal professional identity. The data revealed that the teachers believed that periodic in-service training, workshops, seminars and conferences on Early Childhood Education are significant means of improving the identity formation of the teachers. For instance,

KGT 30 articulated that:

*There is always the need for improvement especially in our kind of job. There is always the introduction of new technologies and pedagogies to improve teaching and learning. These technologies bring some sanity and respect to our job. Again, through periodic in-service training, workshops, seminars, conferences and outreach programmes, we get the chance to improve. But I believe that professional experience also influences professional identity a lot.*

KGT 31 stated that:

*It's quite good to participate in periodic in-service training and workshops. It helps to be updated on issues pertaining to Early Childhood.*

KGT 32 posited that:

*It also improves the professional identity in the sense that, after a second degree, no matter how bad you feel about your profession, you would be regarded as a senior in all circles of life. I have had that experience and I believe higher education is the way forward.*

The data revealed that periodic in-service training, workshops, seminars, conferences and higher education were considered significant contributors to teacher professional identity formation. Whiles on the field of practice it is important that kindergarten teacher engage in various kind of professional development experiences to enable them consolidate themselves in their practice and review their perceptions about their practices. This has significant implications for their professional identity formation and teaching and learning in general. Phrases like '*there is always the need for improvement*' and '*It also improves the professional identity*' underscores kindergarten teachers believe that professional development opportunities influence professional identity formation.

### III. Findings and conclusion

Based on the analyses and interpretation of data, the following findings were arrived at;

- Generally contextual factors affect kindergarten teachers' professional identity formation. Specifically, head teachers' leadership styles; kindergarten teachers own experiences and parents and society's perceptions about early childhood were considered as the three contextual factors that with the highest means that mostly affected kindergarten teachers professional identity.
- Professional development opportunities such as pursuing higher education, in-service training, workshops and conferences affect kindergarten teachers' professional identity formation.

### IV. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made;

- The District Education Directorate should collaborate with head teachers of basic schools to enable them create a very conducive environment for teaching and learning by providing relevant resources, educating teaching about the relevance of Early Child Education and the demands of teaching at that level in order to deal with negative societal perception and stereotyping teaching at the kindergarten level.

- The District Education Directorate should establish a strong professional development unit to develop and organise period workshops, seminars and conferences on topical and current issues in Early Childhood Education to enable kindergarten teachers to become abreast with current trends in the discipline.

### Implications for Early Childhood Curriculum Implementation

The successful implementation of any curriculum depends very heavily on the environment or context within which the implementation takes place. No curricula is implemented in a vacuum. The various elements such as teachers with varying levels of experience and qualifications, learning resources and pupils interact in the classroom and wider school community where the kindergarten curriculum is implemented or teaching and learning takes place. These varying interactions influence the nature of experiences kindergarten teachers go through that ultimately shapes their professional identity. The more favourable the context and experiences are, the more positively kindergarten teachers' formation of professional identity will be influenced; which may have positive consequences for curriculum implementation; the opposite would therefore hold true.

The changing contexts within which curriculum implementation takes place requires constant teacher professional development. The field of Early Childhood Education is developing rapidly and thus needs Kindergarten teachers and all other professionals to upgrade and update their knowledge and competencies in order to be abreast with current trends in the discipline. The extent to which kindergarten teachers are adequately equipped through regular professional development opportunities may potentially influence practitioners outlook, expose them to happenings in other parts of the world to enable them review their perceptions and also to construct a more appealing identities of themselves. They way kindergarten teachers perceive themselves can influence how they are perceived. Their level of competency resulting from professional development experiences will affect how they define their professional identity and how the curriculum is implemented. The more capable teachers are, the more favourable they perceive themselves and the less ineffective they become in implementing the curriculum.

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