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Influence of Teacher Recruitment on Quality Early Childhood Development and Education in Nyamira-North Sub-County, Nyamira County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to establish the influence of teacher recruitment on quality of Early Childhood Development and Education. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study targeted 97 ECDE Centres. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 49 ECDE Centres and 147 ECDE teachers. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 49 headteachers and one Sub-County Director was selected. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview guide. Piloting was done in Borabu Sub County whereby 30 ECDE teachers, 10 headteachers of ECDE Centres and one subcounty Director ECDE was involved. Expert judgement was sought to ensure content and face validity. Reliability of the instruments was estimated by use of Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficient and obtained as 0.87 and 0.79 for headteachers questionnaire and teachers' questionnaires respectively. The hypothesis was tested at alpha $\alpha = 0.05$ using the Chi square model and simple linear regression. Data was analyzed by aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25.0. Qualitative data analysis from the interviews was categorized according to the themes based on research hypothesis. Descriptive statistics was presented using means, standard deviation, percentages and frequencies. The findings of the study revealed that the decentralized government function of recruitment has significant influence on the quality of ECDE in Nyamira South Subcounty of Nyamira County, Kenya. Recruitment of ECDE teachers significantly influenced quality of ECDE at 5 % significance level with chi square value $\chi^2 = 42.954$ and $P < 0.05$. Similarly, simple linear regression revealed that recruitment of ECDE teachers significantly influenced quality of ECDE at 5% with 61.4% variation. The study concluded that there was statistically significant influence of decentralized functions of recruitment. The study recommended that Nyamira county government should establish bills through the county assembly to ensure there is sufficient ECDE teachers to improve transition rate, participation rate and competence achievement among ECDE learners.

Keywords: Recruitment, Decentralization, Quality, Early Childhood Development and Education, Competence, Transition rate.

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INTRODUCTION

The word "recruitment" is used in the context of employment. It has been utilized in a variety of work-related contexts. According to Heineman & Judge (2005) defined recruitment as the process of obtaining, deploying, and maintaining a workforce of sufficient size and capacity to produce favorable effects on the efficiency of the organization. Through postings, transfers, and the placement of institutional administrators involves the process of allocating teachers' tasks in locations where their services are needed. Recruitment is a critical ingredient of quality in ECDE. Quality in ECDE in this context refers to fitness for use implying fitness for laying adequate preparation for further studies.

In Kenya, quality of ECDE offered in decentralized government systems has puzzled many scholars like Piper, Merseth and Ngaruiya (2018) who carried out a study in seven counties and the participating Counties were; Laikipia, Nairobi, Siaya, Uasin Gishu, Embu, Marsabit and Mombasa. The study concluded that the delegation offers nations a special chance to enhance superior and fairness of ECDE provisions. Findings indicate necessity of devolution to raise financial resources for ECDE in order to guarantee that governmental schemes of building a successful and well-coordinated ECDE system. In 2016 and 2017, the study also reported that the decentralized governments temporarily appointed instructors, which led to a significant variation in the qualifications of the teachers and the pay compensated. This circumstance may cause teacher turnover owing to cross-county handovers to look for better compensation which may lead to inadequate teachers in the Counties that pay low salaries to ECDE teachers. The condition that may compromise quality ECDE services.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the Influence of Teacher Recruitment on Quality Early Childhood Development and Education in Nyamira-North Sub-County, Nyamira County, Kenya.

Research Objective

To determine the influence of teacher recruitment on quality Early Childhood Development and Education in public Centres in Nyamira-North Sub-County, Nyamira County.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ significant level

H_0 : There is no statistical significant influence of teacher recruitment on quality Early Childhood Development and Education in public Centres in Nyamira-North Sub-County, Nyamira County.

The decision for rejecting or accepting null hypothesis was based on the reference to a p-value computed from Chi square analysis. Null hypothesis was to be rejected if p-value was less than $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance; and accept null hypothesis if p-value equals or greater than $\alpha = 0.05$.

Literature Review

Recruitment largely is used in the context of employment. It has been utilized in a variety of work-related contexts. According to Heineman & Judge (2005) defined recruitment as the process of obtaining, deploying, and maintaining a workforce of sufficient size and capacity to produce favorable effects on the efficiency of the organization. Through postings, transfers, and the placement of institutional administrators involves the process of allocating teachers' tasks in locations where their services are needed.

In Norway, quality ECEC is determined by staff– child ratio as alluded by Løkken, Bjørnstad, Broekhuizen & Moser (2018), an investigation on how structural elements together with interaction elements of quality relate in Norwegian ECEC for preschoolers. 206 kindergarten classes were sampled to gathered data between 2013 and 2015. According to a two-way MANOVA, the teacher-to-learner ratio and interaction quality varied based on the various content dimensions, and organizational structures with small, stable groups were linked to better interaction quality. It was curious to establish the influence of decentralized function of teacher recruitment on quality ECDE in Kenyan context.

In Tanzania, teacher recruitment is an important element to enable quality ECDE as pointed out by Mabagala and Begi (2020), a study that examined the effects of various demographic variables, including gender, education level, and school type, on how satisfied parents were with the quality level of pre-primary education. The theory of ecological systems served as the study's foundation. The study was carried out using a descriptive survey research design with a sample size of 772 parents in pre-primary schools who were between the ages of 5 and 6. A questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale was used to collect the data required. The study concluded that parents were dissatisfied with the number of children in class which may lead to ineffective teacher performance in terms of lesson delivery which may hinder achievement of competencies thus compromise the quality of ECDE. The current study employed a smaller sample size and more robust data analysis techniques to establish how recruitment predict quality of ECDE.

In Kenya, teacher recruitment has continued to affect quality ECDE as reported by scholars like Abuom, Gudo and Nyatuka (2018), a study on the status of quality ECDE teaching and learning in public preschools in four counties. These Counties include Kisumu, Siaya, Homabay and Migori. The study was influenced by Howe and Stephen's (1990) Theory of Goals, Context, and Agency which states that quality is viewed through the lenses of effectiveness in achieving predetermined goals, relevance to human and environmental needs and conditions, pursuit of excellence and improvement of the human condition. Twelve representatives from the four counties and 27 sub county administrators were chosen using the census method. Information on the teacher to learner ratios was gathered using document analysis. To analyze qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed. The results showed that a high teacher-to-learner ratio at this level was detrimental to the quality of instruction. It was advised that the counties hire more teachers in order to raise the teacher to learner ratio to the desired levels set by international ideals which has been 1:20 since 1999. The current study sought to investigate whether Nyamira – North sub county has employed enough teachers to promote quality ECDE.

Similarly, a study conducted by Ratemo (2016) on the standard of instruction in public and private pre-primary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Pre-primary schools in Nairobi City County comprised quality care and education among children. 280 head teachers and teachers in pre-primary schools were the intended target population. A sample size of 28 was randomly chosen. Descriptive survey was considered as the research design. A questionnaire for pre-primary teachers and interview schedules for head teachers were among the research tools used to collect data. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data. Respondents were chosen using stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques to generate rich data that was inferred to all the private and public pre-primary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. According to the study by Ratemo (2016), staffing has an impact on educational quality. Comparing poorly staffed schools and pre-schools with adequate staffing, poor performance was found in the Centre with poorly staffed. The current study sought to determine the influence of decentralized recruitment on provision of quality ECDE in public ECDE Centres.

Quality ECDE can be promoted by ensuring and maintaining the appropriate teacher-pupil ratio as reported by Murithi (2016), a case study on Integration of the National Goals of Education in Early Childhood Development and Education in Kalundu Zone Kitui County, Kenya. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The intended respondents consisted of 158 respondents, including 130 early childhood educators and 28 head teachers. To choose the respondents, simple random sampling and purposeful sampling were both used. The sample size was 66 respondents, including 52 early childhood educators and 14 head teachers. The data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively by the researcher. According to the study's findings, more teaching and learning resources would result in more successful ECDE. Besides, the study pointed out that teacher – pupil ratio is an important aspect to provide quality ECDE. The current study used slightly a larger sample size and seek to investigate decentralized teacher recruitment on provision of quality ECDE.

Quality of ECDE has been compromised by inadequate teachers in ECDE Centres as reported by Abuom (2019), a Comparative Study of Early Childhood Development and Education Implementation in Homa Bay, Kisumu, Migori, and Siaya Counties in Kenya. Descriptive survey research design was considered. The theory of goals, context, and agency from Hawes and Stephens (1990) and the socio-cultural and zone of proximal development theories from Vygotsky were adopted. The research study considered 27 sub county administrators and three officials in charge of ECDE from each of the four counties that made up the target population. The 27 sub county administrators and all 12 county officials were chosen using the census method. The findings showed that the counties' ECDE records were improperly maintained. In 2016, there were 33 to 101 students per class. Although the teacher to learner ratio was relatively higher, it was discovered that teachers had a good level of training but quality was compromised by higher teacher to learner ratio. The study reported that there were inadequate teaching materials and few teachers in ECDE sector. The current study sought to investigate the influence of recruitment of ECDE teachers on quality ECDE in Nyamira – North subcounty, Kenya.

Additionally, staffing has been a challenge that need to be given a priority in order to realize quality ECDE in the counties. A study was conducted by Mtana and Mange (2020) on the determinants that affect how early childhood education (ECE) is administered in Kilifi South Sub County. Descriptive study design was employed. All of the head teachers manning the 60 public ECE Centers in Kilifi South Sub County and the county education director ECE of education made up the intended target population. 61 participants made up the study's sample size. The research study considered semi-structured questionnaires and an interview guide to be used in the study. The study revealed a strong correlation between staffing and the efficient management of ECE in Kilifi County. The current study sought to determine the influence of teacher recruitment on quality ECDE in Nyamira-North sub county, Nyamira county, Kenya.

Teacher recruitment with better pay promotes classroom performance as alluded by Gichuki (2015), a study on the effects of management on preschoolers' performance in Embu West, Embu County. The study adopted descriptive survey design where 11 headteachers 11 Early Childhood Development Education teachers and 160 children participated as the main respondents. The study pointed out that Early Childhood Development Education teachers view their position as a temporary stopgap measure to buy them time to look for better employment elsewhere. The study recommended that the public Early Childhood Development Education Centres employer to improve the salary of the teachers. The consideration of job as temporal has quality implication and hence proper scrutiny into the existing conditions to establish the status. The current study sought to examine if Nyamira-North sub county, Nyamira county, Kenya is likely to face similar shortcomings that was found in Embu County, Kenya.

Research Design

The study used descriptive survey research design to determine the effectiveness of ECDE for students in pre-primary schools. The descriptive design of the study was chosen because it allowed the researcher to gather comprehensive data on the population under study. The design made it possible for the researcher to use a large sample size, and it was effective for generalizing the findings.

Population and sample

The study population consisted of 97 headteachers of public ECDE Centres, 292 ECDE teachers in entire ECDE Centres in Nyamira-North sub county and one Sub County Director ECDE making a total of 390, according to Nyamira North Sub-County office 2021. The ECDE Centres selected was 50% of 97 which was 49. The researcher adopted simple random sampling technique to select the ECDE Centres. Three ECDE teachers were selected from the 49 centers to form a sample size of 147. The headteachers from the Centres that were purposively selected form a sample size of 49. The Sub County Director of ECDE was a respondent of the study.

Data Analysis

The researcher double-checked the data collected to ensure that the questionnaires were correctly filled. The

items were analyzed by the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26.0. Inferential statistics used to test hypothesis was Chi square model and verbatim was considered based on research objective to guide qualitative data analysis were discussed.

Results and Discussion

The study sought to establish the influence of decentralized teacher recruitment on quality Early Childhood Development and Education in public Centres in Nyamira-North Sub-County, Nyamira County. The researcher summarized the descriptive statistic on the opinions of teachers and Headteachers. The study established the opinion of ECDE teachers and that of the headteachers on whether the decentralized function of recruitment of Early Childhood teachers have influence on quality ECDE. The responses are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Opinion on Recruitment of ECDE teachers and quality ECDE

Statements	Teachers			Headteachers		
	N	Mean	Std.Dev	N	Mean	Std.Dev
County government teachers are recruited on merit which has promoted the provision of quality ECDE.	147	3.65	1.24	49	3.65	1.11
County government teachers are knowledgeable on preparing professional documents which has contributed to quality ECDE	147	4.16	3.36	49	3.96	0.68
County government teachers are able to improve learners' smooth transition rate which has improved quality ECDE.	147	4.10	0.70	49	3.90	0.80
County government teachers are qualified to equip learners to achieve competencies that has greatly improved quality ECDE.	147	4.05	0.70	49	3.73	0.76
County government teachers do not look for transfers for better pay which has improved quality ECDE.	147	3.55	1.12	49	3.48	1.20
County government teachers are adequate to improve learners' participation which has improved quality ECDE	147	3.23	1.14	49	3.06	1.27
County government teachers are motivated to provide quality ECDE	147	1.86	0.95	49	2.22	1.25
Mean		3.51			3.43	

The Table 14 shows that, ECDE teachers and the headteachers agreed that the county government teachers are recruited on merit which has promoted the provision of quality ECDE (Mean=3.65, Mean = 3.65 respectively). The respondents agreed that the county government teachers are knowledgeable on preparing professional documents which has contributed to quality ECDE (Mean=4.16, Mean = 3.96 respectively). The respondents agreed that the county government teachers are able to improve learners' smooth transition rate which has improved quality ECDE (Mean=4.10, Mean = 3.90 respectively). The respondents agreed that the county government teachers are qualified to equip learners to achieve competencies that has greatly improved quality ECDE (Mean=4.05, Mean = 3.73 respectively). The respondents agreed that the county government teachers do not look for transfers for better pay which has improved quality ECDE (Mean=3.55, Mean = 3.48 respectively). The respondents were undecided that the county government teachers are adequate to improve learners' participation which has improved quality ECDE (Mean=3.23, Mean = 3.06 respectively). The respondents disagreed that the County government teachers are motivated to provide quality ECDE (Mean=1.86, Mean = 2.22 respectively).

The researcher established that for the entire construct on the decentralized function of recruitment, both teachers and the Headteachers felt that the county government had input toward quality ECDE. The findings of the study reveal the essential and critical role of recruitment of ECDE teachers towards the quality of education in ECDE centers. The general observation from the items in the recruitment of ECDE teachers construct was that teachers were recruited on merit hence they were trained on the roles of ECDE teachers. The findings of the study concur with Ratemo (2016) who concluded that school staffing has an impact on educational quality and schools that are poorly staffed record poor performance

The researcher sought to collaborate the descriptive statistics with chi square analysis to determine whether there is association between ECDE Teachers Recruitment and quality of ECDE. The mean score values obtained for the questions seeking for the quality of ECDE and recruitment of ECDE teachers was recoded into categorical variable and the cross tabulation computed to estimate the association. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.954 ^a	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	45.131	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.443	1	.011
N of Valid Cases	147		

The Table 2 shows the chi square statistics used to examine the association between the recoded categorical variables; quality of ECDE and the recruitment of ECDE teachers by the county government of the Nyamira County. There is significant association at 5 % significance level between the variable quality of ECDE and the recruitment of ECDE teachers by the county government by the teachers' respondents ($\chi^2 = 42.954$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.00$). hence the null hypothesis that stated; there was no statistical significant influence of decentralized function of recruitment on the quality ECDE in Nyamira-North sub county, Nyamira County, Kenya was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that there was statistically significant influence of decentralized function of recruitment on the quality ECDE in Nyamira-North sub county, Nyamira County, Kenya.

To further verify the descriptive statistics, the researcher tested the first objective of the study that stated that there is no statistical significant influence of decentralized teacher recruitment on quality Early Childhood Development and Education in public Centres in Nyamira-North Sub-County, Nyamira County. The researcher sought to establish whether the decentralized government function of recruitment influenced quality ECDE from the ECDE teacher's responses. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression at 0.05 significance level. The model summary for decentralized government function of recruitment regressed against quality ECDE is illustrated in Table 3

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-Square	Std error of the estimate
1	0.784 ^a	0.614	0.606	0.60773

Predictor (constant). Decentralized Function of Recruitment of ECDE teachers

From Table 3, R was obtained as 0.784 implying that there was high correlation between recruitment of ECDE teachers and the Quality of education offered to the ECDE learners. A beyond 0.5 in the model indicates that there is high level of correlation between the two variables. R square is the coefficient of determination of the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable of decentralized function of recruitment which is 0.614. This implies that 61.4% of variation of quality ECDE is explained by decentralized function of recruitment. The Estimates Model of Coefficients are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Estimates Model of Coefficients

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std error	Beta	T	Sig
1 (Constant)	1.048	0.326		3.213	0.002
Decentralized Function of Recruitment	0.864	0.102	0.784	8.462	0.000

Dependent Variable: Quality ECDE.

The general form of the equation from the above coefficient table to predict is:

$$Y = a + bx$$

Where,

Y = Quality ECDE

X = Decentralized Function of Recruitment

1.048 = is the constant

0.864 = unstandardized coefficient B

$$Y = 1.048 + 0.864X$$

This shows how much quality ECDE varies with the recruitment. In this case the unstandardized coefficient B for the recruitment is 0.864. This implies that an increase in one unit of decentralized function of recruitment leads to 0.864 increase in the quality ECDE. This similarly means 10% increase in decentralized function of recruitment leads to 8.64% increase in quality ECDE.

The P- value was 0.00 which is less than 0.05 while the t value was 8.462 greater than 2.00. Since the P- value is < 0.05 and t is > 2.00 , the null hypotheses was rejected at 95% level of confidence ($\alpha = 0.05$). The researcher concluded that there was statistically significant influence of decentralized function of recruitment on the quality ECDE in Nyamira-North sub county, Nyamira County, Kenya.

The researcher concluded that there was statistically significant influence of decentralized function of recruitment on the quality ECDE in Nyamira-North sub county, Nyamira County, Kenya. The findings collaborate with Abuom (2019) a Comparative Study of Implementation of Early Childhood Development and

Education in Homa Bay, Kisumu, Migori and Siaya Counties in Kenya. The study established that teachers had good training but there was higher teacher - learner ratio and inadequate teaching and learning materials which compromised quality care and education in Early Childhood Development and Education Centres.

Further the study is collaborated with a study conducted by Mabagala and Begi (2020) in Tanzania which asserts that, parents were dissatisfied with the number of children in class which may lead to ineffective teacher performance in terms of lesson delivery which may hinder achievement of competencies thus compromise the quality of care and education in the ECDE sector. This shows that for quality care and education to be realized the county government need to recruit more teachers to cater the ECDE Centres' population.

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

The researcher sought to know the view of sub county director if the county government has recruited enough Early Childhood Development Education teachers in Nyamira-North Sub-County on provision of quality in terms of high participation rate, attendance and achievement of competences.

Excerpt 1

Researcher: The researcher sought to know if the county government had recruited enough Early Childhood Development Education teachers in Nyamira-North Sub-County. The Sub County Director had to say;

Respondent 1: *The county government has made remarkable progress in recruiting ECDE teachers in pre-primary Centres. However, the county government has not achieved the recommended child-teacher ratio. Most ECDE Centres have three teachers who are employed on contract terms but some ECDE centres do not have adequate teachers. Teachers are handling the children in the various centres as the county devise ways of recruiting enough teachers to cater for child-teacher ratio.*

Researcher: The researcher sought to know if the number of teachers recruited in the Sub-County affect the quality ECDE in terms of; participation rate, transition rate and competences achievement. The Sub County Director had to say;

Respondent 1: *There are limited resources to employ adequate ECDE teachers a situation that can demotivate ECDE teachers to ensure children are achieving relevant competences, attendance and participation rate may be affected. The county government is ensuring to recruit more ECDE teachers so that they will promote quality ECDE in the Centres.*

From the interview above, the study findings concur with the study conducted by Abuom, Gudo and Nyatuka (2018), a study on the status of quality of ECDE teaching and learning in public preschools in four counties. These Counties include Kisumu, Siaya, Homabay and Migori. the study found the high teacher to learner ratio at this level was compromising the quality of instruction. It was advised that the counties hire more teachers in order to raise the teacher to learner ratio to the desired levels set by international standards which has been 1:20 since 1999.

Conclusion

The study concluded that there was an influence of the decentralized function of recruitment on quality ECDE. This could be attributed by recruitment done to all pre-primary schools and continued support of ECDE teachers. Moreover, the break from earlier system of recruitment and payment of ECDE teachers by the parents before decentralized government. Decentralized government helped the ECDE teachers to have a stable jobs and job security to enhance quality services.

Recommendations

The recommendation was made based on the study findings and conclusions that Nyamira county government should consider having motivational system through scheme of service for all ECDE teachers who are currently working under the county government.

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