



Professional development programs influencing management of early childhood development centers in kakamega east sub-county, Kenya

Christopher Omusula¹, Modester Imbuka²

^{1,2} Mount Kenya University, Kenya

Abstract

Institutional management is perceived as a crucial factor in improvement and effectiveness of achievements. Good performance of organizations depends on the quality of the trained personnel. In Early Childhood Education centres, achievements are based on the adequacy of trained management staff. In Kakamega East Sub-county, majority of ECDE centres are perceived as mismanaged by those in charge. Through Professional Development programs, continuous improvements in institutions' management can be realized. This study sought to analyze the extent to which Professional Development programs have influenced the management of resources in ECDE centres in Kakamega East Sub County. It was guided by the Richard Gardner theory and adopted a mixed methods approach to survey and randomly sample 78 ECDE teachers, purposively select 12 ECDE managers and 1 Curriculum Support Officer from a targeted a population of 78 ECDE centres, 256 ECDE teachers and 78 ECDE managers. Piloting of the instruments was done using test-re test strategy to yield .89 Cronbach's alpha value. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and recorded verbatim while quantitative data was analyzed by use of Pearson Correlation Coefficients. The results of the survey established that there was a significant 58% positive relationship between professional development Programs and Management of Resources in ECDE centres implying that a positive change of 58% in professional development Programs could positively initiate a substantial improvement in management of resources in ECDE centres. The researcher recommended that more resources should be committed in continuous professional development programmes to keep ECDE managers abreast on current and emerging strategies in management of educational institutions.

Keywords: professional development programs; early childhood development centers

1. Introduction

Early Childhood Development centers as part of school organizations continue to undergo transformations in response to the challenges posted by increased competition, globalization and rapid change in Information Communication Technology (Hammer and Champy, 2013) ^[12]. Educational leadership and management are perceived to be very crucial factors in improvement and effectiveness of learners' achievements (Mugasia, 2012) ^[14]. Notably, performance of any organization is dependent on the quality of its management staff. Further, studies have revealed that, effective management can help the institutions to rise to the challenge of curricular change, transform teaching and learning conditions whilst ineffective management can block improvement and stifle development initiatives (Gudo, Ibrahim and Muthini, 2004) ^[17].

Further it has also been observed that achievement levels are higher in ECDE centers where managers undertake and lead reform processes; act as catalysts of improvement; cultivate the centers' vision; and make use of learners data to support instructional practices and provide assistance to struggling learners (Crow, Lumby and Pashiardis, 2008) ^[4]. Any prudent management team must include their assistants. ECDE managers are required to be identified with different tasks and different roles. They act as teachers, leaders and team members. These are individuals who lead, manage, innovate, motivate, develop, communicate, listen, co-ordinate and evaluate implementation of learning programs. These managers should possess a great deal of knowledge and understanding on how and what learning

institutions are all about. More importantly, their professional development needs ought to be addressed for the smooth running of the learning institutions (Blandford, 2016) ^[3]. In light of this, a global focus on leadership development has begun to evolve and many countries have come to realize the importance of investing in school leadership support systems. Governments, donor agencies and international organizations involved in development are increasingly putting emphasis on Professional Development (PD) as key to sustainable development in general and in reaching the Education for All goals in particular (World Bank, 2008). The scope of the concept of Professional Development can be gauged through the explanation offered by eminent scholars like Fink, (2015) ^[7]; Guskey, (2010) ^[11] considered Professional Development to be encompassing all the in-service processes and activities inside or outside of a school provided to teachers for developing their knowledge, skills and learning about a positive change in behavior. Professional Development is also described as a process embracing all activities that enhance professional career growth (Teclé, 2016) ^[21]. Professional Development leads to the improvement of learners' performance as well as the professional advancement of individuals (Darling-Hammond, *et al.*, 2007) ^[6]. Professional Development was said to have been coined by Richard Gardner, who was in charge of professional development for the building professions at York University in the mid-1970s (Richard Gardner, 1976). However, reports indicate that despite the current reforms, Africa still face serious

development challenges in human development notably in Early Childhood Development Education centers.

This notwithstanding, economies that are increasingly “knowledge driven” needs workers with extensive knowledge, developed skills, with increasing creativity and flexibility of an entrepreneur. In Kenya, studies indicate that inadequate competencies of pre-primary teachers about Professional Development programs are a challenge to acquisition and use of learning materials (Nicholson, Harris-John, & Schimmel, 2005). Thus, there was need for empirical data on the current status of Professional Development among ECDE managers to guide institutional management in Kakamega East sub-County and Kenya as a whole.

2. Statement of the Problem

The Kenya government underscore the significance of effective management of Early Childhood Development Education resources with an aim of realizing the sustainable Development Goals as well as the Kenya’s Vision 2030. The bottom line was that the Kenya government was under obligation to provide quality education to its citizens at all levels. It was widely recognized that one of the key factors determining management of ECDE resources was the nature and quality of management present. The rapidly changing socio-economic and political environment continue to pose major challenges to institutions management. Notably, the increased demand for education in early years of children against the limited resource was a major challenge to education management.

In Kenya, the Ministry of Education (MoE) was the major provider of PD programs for school managers. However, it was observed that, the effectiveness of PD activities engaged in by ECDE managers and their specific contribution resource management was not empirically known. Most reports show that ECDE managers are not competent to effectively manage educational resources and this culture was negatively affecting the quality of education in most ECDE centers in Kakamega East Sub-County. It was therefore important to note that, if the ECDE managers’ level of competence in management was not enhanced, then Kakamega East and Kenya might not realize the goals as set by Vision 2030 as well as the SDGs. This need necessitated evolution of frameworks to build capacity for ECDE management teams. The current study intend to fill the gap by analyzing the extent to which Professional Development programs have influenced the management of resources in Early Childhood Development Education centers in Kakamega East Sub County

3. Literature Review

Professional Development (PD) was said to have been coined by Richard Gardner, who was in charge of professional development for the building professions at York University in the mid-1970s (OECD, 2012). It was chosen because it did not differentiate between learning from courses, and learning 'on the job'. The term is now common to many professions (Murphy & Hallinger, 2009)^[15]. PD embraces the idea that individuals aim for continuous improvement in their professional skills and knowledge, beyond the basic training initially required to carry out the job. In teaching, such development used to be called ‘in-service training’, or INSET, with the emphasis on delivery rather than the outcome. Arguably, the change in terminology signifies a shift in

emphasis away from the provider and/or employer, towards the individual. In other words, the individual was now responsible for his or her lifelong career development, under the umbrella of the school or schools that employ the teacher (Mushaandja, 2006)^[16].

Gay, (2006)^[8] carried out a study that examined an award-creating INSET scheme. This scheme offered teachers the opportunity to carry out their own research into specific subject areas. The scholars argued that this type of subject-based training was vital to stimulate the intellectual interest of a highly qualified graduate workforce. They also contend that such schemes are likely to have a positive effect on proficiency and progress within the teaching profession. However, recently this type of training has often been overshadowed by centralized training initiatives, aimed at whole school improvement, linked to Government policy. Souls by and Swain made a connection between this, teacher workload difficulties, and the need for subject-based professional development activities. Gray, (2005)^[9] report that whilst it might be expedient for schools and governments to tailor professional development according to their perceived short-term needs, it may not be a sustainable position. PD should be seen as a long-term investment in developing teachers' skills and professionalism.

Despite positive implications for school improvement, a study by (Dadey and Harber, (2011)^[5] in a study from South Africa found that, subject-based professional development opportunities for many teachers were being severely curtailed. McBeath and Galton discovered that, on average; teachers were spending three days’ a year on training for national initiatives, with one day a year allocated to all other initiatives. The report quoted the concerns of several teachers about the teaching requirements of the National Curriculum, suggesting that teachers were finding it increasingly difficult to challenge the existing orthodoxies of subject teaching within current institutional structures.

In Kenya, the Education Act of 1968 Cap 211 of the Laws of Kenya under the Ministry of Education state the need for authority to inspect programs being undertaken in any learning institution. There are Curriculum Support officers (CSO) with the mandate to enhance education effectiveness and efficiency by working in collaboration with institution managers. Moreover, officers training is usually done through INSET courses organized from time to time (Kafu, 2011)^[13].

sessional paper no 1 of 2005 acknowledges the fact that there has been little INSET with the results that few teachers have had opportunities to participate in INSET activities (GoK, 2002). Efforts to strengthen PD in Kenya included the establishment of an INSET section in the MOE in 1999 and identification for INSETs for primary teachers was one of the 23 investment programs in Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) 2005-2012 (MoE, 2006)^[11]. This was done because it was found necessary to coordinate in-service program provided by the MoE itself through donor support and implemented projects, NGOs and religious organizations so as to ensure proper utilization of resources and avoidance of duplication in teacher capacity development for effectiveness (MoE, 2005)^[11]. some of the PD programmes introduced to build capacity for teachers in Kenya include TUSOME and PRIEDE.

TUSOME means “let us read” in Swahili. It was a flagship partnership program launched in 2015 between USAID and the Government of Kenya’s Ministry of Education. Tusome program

has been implemented in more than 22,600 public schools, 5,027 private schools and 1500 alternative basic education institution in urban slums of Kenya. The goal for Tusome was to improve the illiteracy outcomes of 7.4 million pupils by 2019. Tusome focus on enhancing teacher's capacity to effectively deliver classroom instructions; improving school access to appropriate books and other learning materials and enhancing instructional support and supervision and enhance collaboration with other literacy actors (Bizzel, 2011) [2].

on the other hand, Primary Education Development (PRIEDE) project (2005-2019) was a MoE project with two objectives; to improve early grade mathematics competencies among learners; strengthen management systems at school and national levels. A joint mission comprising senior educational officials and World Bank carried out an inspection of the effectiveness of the Early Grade Mathematics in public primary schools throughout the country. This was to provide teachers with constructive physical features aimed at improving their classroom management and instructional technique. Though 40,000 teachers benefited from new methodologies of EGM instruction through improved in-service training and regular pedagogical supervision and support, less emphasis was put on Professional Development where the overall percentage pass was meager. since then, there has been no

much efforts to review the success of PD programmes against the teacher capacity building.

4. Materials and Methods

this research adopted a mixed methods approach to survey and randomly sample 78 ECDE teachers, purposively select 12 ECDE managers and 1 Curriculum Support Officer from a targeted a population of 78 ECDE centres, 256 ECDE teachers and 78 ECDE managers. Piloting of the instruments was done using test-re test strategy to yield .89 Cronbach's alpha value. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and recorded verbatim while quantitative data was analyzed by use of Pearson Correlation Coefficients.

5. Results and Discussions

The objective of this study was to determine the extent to which PD have influenced the Management of Resources in Early Childhood Development Education Centers in Kakamega East Sub-County. The teachers were asked to choose by ticking the items on the questionnaire to express their level of agreements and disagreements. The results of this survey were recorded in Table 1

Table 1: The Extent to Which PD Have Influenced the Management of Resources in Early Childhood Development Education Centers in Kakamega East Sub-County

PD programs have:	SA	A	UND	SD	D	Total
provided ECDE managers with skills to manage personnel in the institutions professionally	9 7.14%	17 26.2%	20 33.3%	5 2.4%	19 31%	70
provided ECDE managers with skills to prudently manage physical facilities in the centres	19 31%	17 26.2%	20 33.3%	5 2.4%	9 7.14%	70
provided ECDE managers with skills to manage institutional finances prudently	20 33.3%	19 31%	5 2.4%	9 7.14%	17 26.2%	70
provided ECDE managers with skills to prudently manage equipments for the learners in the centers	5 2.4%	9 7.14%	17 26.2%	20 33.3%	19 31%	70
provided ECDE managers with skills to procure instructional materials in good time	19 31%	9 7.14%	17 26.2%	20 33.3%	5 2.4%	70
provided ECDE managers with skills to effectively implement curriculum in the centres	19 31%	20 33.3%	17 26.2%	9 7.14%	5 2.4%	70

Key: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree

From the Table 1 above, the results on the teachers response on the scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, strongly disagree on the extent to which PD programs have influenced the Management of Resources in Early Childhood Development Education Centers in Kakamega East Sub-County showed that 26 (37.1%) teachers either strongly agreed or just agreed that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to manage personnel in the institutions professionally. 24 (34.3%) did not generally agree. another 36 (51.4%) teachers either strongly agreed or just agreed that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to prudently manage physical facilities in the centers. 14 (20%) did not agree. a majority 39(55.71%) teachers either strongly agreed or just agreed that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to manage institutional finances prudently 26 (37.1%) did not consent to this item. a minority 14 (20%) teachers either strongly agreed or just agreed that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to prudently manage equipments for the learners in the centers. the majority 39

(55.71%) did not agree with this suggestion. a minority 28 (40%) teachers either strongly agreed or just agreed that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to procure instructional materials in good time. another minority 25(35.7%) did not agree with this construct. this meant that the majority of the teachers were neutral on the suggestion that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to procure instructional materials. A majority 39 (55.71%) teachers either strongly agreed or just agreed that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to effectively implement curriculum in the centers. While a few 14 (20%) teachers neither strongly agreed nor just disagreed that PD programs provided ECDE managers with skills to effectively implement curriculum in the centers. A Pearson correlation test was done to test the extent to which PD programs have influenced the Management of Resources in Early Childhood Development Education Centers in Kakamega East Sub-County and the results were recorded in Table 2

Table 2: The extent to which PD programs have influenced the Management of Resources in Early Childhood Development Education Centers in Kakamega East Sub-County

		PD Programs	Management of Resources
PD programs	Pearson Correlation	1	.28**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.01
	N	70	70
Management of Resources	Pearson Correlation	.28**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.01	
	N	70	70

Results from the table showed that there was a significant relationship between PD Programs and Management of Resources at r value of .58 and p value of .01. An r value of .58 meant that there is a 58% positive relationship between PD Programs and Management of Resources. This meant that a positive change in PD Programs positively initiates changes in management of resources in ECDE centers. The p value of 0.01 indicates that there was a positive significant statistical relationship between PD Programs and management of resources.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the survey established that there was a significant 28% positive relationship between professional development Programs and Management of Resources in ECDE centres implying that a positive change of 28% in professional development Programs could positively initiate a substantial improvement in management of resources in ECDE centers. The researcher recommended that more resources should be committed in continuous professional development programmes to keep ECDE managers abreast on current and emerging strategies in management of educational institutions.

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