

# FACTORS AFFECTING SUPERVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN SCHOOLS

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**Abstract:** There are complaints in ECD centers on continued neglect as far as ECD teaching is concerned and that there seems to be little or no supervision at all. Although a policy is in place, there is poor implementation due to lack of uniform curriculum and standardization. The study sought to establish factors affecting supervision of Early Childhood Education curriculum in schools. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in Nandi Hills Division of Nandi East Sub County. Nandi East Sub County has a total of 155 ECD centers and 8317 children in ECD centers. The target population of this study comprised of 155 ECD centers in Nandi East district (105 Public ECD centers and 50 private ECD centers). The 32 teachers and 32 head teachers and 20 field officers totaling 84 respondents formed the study sample size and answered the questionnaire. Questionnaire and the interview schedule and document analysis was the main instruments of data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study established that the supervision of the ECDE curriculum is affected by factors such as availability of finances, infrastructure, locality of ECD centers, strategic objectives, support from the management, dispersion of the ECD centers, local leaders; and sponsor involvement among others. The study recommended that there was need to improve the monitoring and evaluation process through enhanced initiatives to include supports to prepare the Child for school and equally importantly, supports to prepare the school for the child.

**Keywords:** Factors, Supervision, Early Childhood Education, Curriculum.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The demand for Early Childhood Development (ECD) services has increased considerably the world over. In Kenya the demand and increased interests in Early Childhood development programmes has been as a result of changing socio-economic conditions of the population (KESSP, 2005). Children at the pre-school stage almost entirely depend on their teachers to guide them in their learning activities.

Implementation of curriculum change depends on the knowledge, supervision skills and attitudes fostered during initial training (Hawes, 1979). According to the Ministry of Education (2000) report, the number of children enrolled in the ECD centers has risen by 32 per cent in the past eight years. Similarly, the number of ECD centers increased from 16,329 in 1990 to 23,977 in 1998 with a corresponding increase in the teaching force. So, while there were only 6,213 pre-school teachers in 1990, to date the number stands at 37,752, out of whom 16,000 are trained (KESSP, 2007).

Currently, the efficiency and effective supervision of ECDE in Kenya is hindered by several factors. Some of these include: gender disparity, high pupil teacher ratio, untrained teachers, lack of adequate knowledge and skills for providing rich and stimulating learning experiences to the children, and lack of an organized curriculum and other support materials for use. In addition to these, classrooms have insufficient learning and play materials; as a result, rote learning and talk-and-chalk teaching methods are greatly utilized (MOE, 2009). This indicates that supervision of early childhood education has not been investigated adequately. From this prevailing backdrop, therefore, it is important to establish factors

affecting supervision of early childhood education curriculum programmes in Nandi East District so as to strengthen the provision and supervision of early childhood education curriculum programmes in Nandi East District.

### **Statement of the problem:**

According to UNICEF report (2007), there are complaints in ECD centers on continued neglect as far as ECD teaching is concerned and that there seems to be little or no supervision at all. Although a policy is in place, there is poor implementation due to lack of uniform curriculum and standardization. This makes academic standards for the children to drop and reveal glaring lack of benchmarks to clearly define learning outcomes at ECD centers and lack of quality assessment. The fact that there are no known published researches on the effects of inadequate supervision of ECD centers, creates a gap that this study endeavored to examine. The Kenya Education Sector Strategic Plan (KESSP, 2005), shows that there is inadequate management and supervision mechanism in implementation of ECD curriculum. In addition, the supervision factor is a major determinant in ECD performance. The study therefore sought to investigate the factors affecting supervision of early childhood education curriculum in Nandi East district.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Implementation involves putting into practice an espoused idea or concept. Otunga (1993:118) posits that, once a programme has been implemented, it is important that it is supervised. In Kenya the work of curriculum supervision is the duty of Quality Assurance Officers, previously referred to as Inspectors of Schools, and DICECE officers at the local level and head teachers at the school level. In order to close the gap between the written and taught curriculum, the expectation is that teachers assume a role in the development of the curriculum (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 2007). Wiggins and McTighe (2007) state that a teacher must specifically assume the role of a: curriculum designer, critical friend reviewer, field tester, and troubleshooter.

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2007) list the following moral principles that make a good school: consistent efforts on behalf of compassion, wholeness, connectedness, inclusion, justice, peace, and freedom. These can lead to trusting relationships among members of the school community. Leadership and learning is conducted through the use of these moral principles in a way that supervisors and teachers experience the benefits as opposed to only being handed down as a directive. Therefore, the ongoing process of pursuing goals and objectives within a learning community succeed when a democracy exists that embraces diversity such that all actors have a voice, can work through conflict, and have the wherewithal to reach a consensus for the betterment of the school and all its members (Lakoff, 2007).

Teacher's participation in curriculum implementation involves employing their dexterity in assembling and arranging teaching resources. The NACECE curriculum emphasizes the use of locally available materials, which basically depends on the teacher's creativity to source the materials and use them appropriately in teaching ECD activities. The teacher's centrality to change process necessitates well designed and well implemented teacher training programmes. Verspoorn (1989:92) emphasizes that successful educational change is built on effective training. A well designated and effectively implemented programme is a key element in the successful implementation and institutionalization of change programmes. On the whole teachers' impact on the curriculum depends largely on the teacher education.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design:**

Descriptive survey research design was used. A survey involves careful and complete observation of a social unit; it lays emphasis on the full analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their interrelations (Kothari, 2004). Therefore this type of design was applicable to the study on the effects of inadequate supervision and implementation of curriculum in early childhood development centers in Nandi Hills Division of Nandi East District.

### **Study Area:**

The study was conducted in Nandi Hills Division of Nandi East Subcounty. Nandi East Sub County has a total of 155 ECD centers and 8317 children in ECD centers (District Education Office- Nandi East, 2 June 2007). The study selected 47 ECD centers out of 155 to participate in the study. No study on supervision and implementation of ECD curriculum has been conducted in the district.

**Target population:**

The sub county has an enrolment of 8317 children in ECD centers and 340 teachers and head teachers. Hence the teacher learner ratio is 1.27. (Source: District education office Nandi East, 2 June 2007 statistics). The target population of this study comprised of 155 ECD centers in Nandi East district (105 Public ECD centers and 50 private ECD centers). This is shown in table 1 below

**Table 1: Target Population**

Target	Frequency
ECD centers	155
Teachers and head teachers	340
Field officers	20

Source: Survey Data, 2010

**Sample Size:**

This study used stratified sampling for 155 schools, which comprised of 105 public centers and 50 private centers. The 32 teachers and 32 head teachers and 20 field officers totaling 84 respondents formed the study sample size and answered the questionnaire. Kerlinger (1992) recommends a sample size of not less than ten percent of accessible population as a suitable one to be used in social science research.

**Table 2: Sample size**

Classification	Target Population	Selected Sampled	Sample size
ECD centers	155	47	-
Teacher and head teacher	340	64	64
Field officers	20	20	20
<b>Total</b>			<b>84</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010.

**Data collection instruments:**

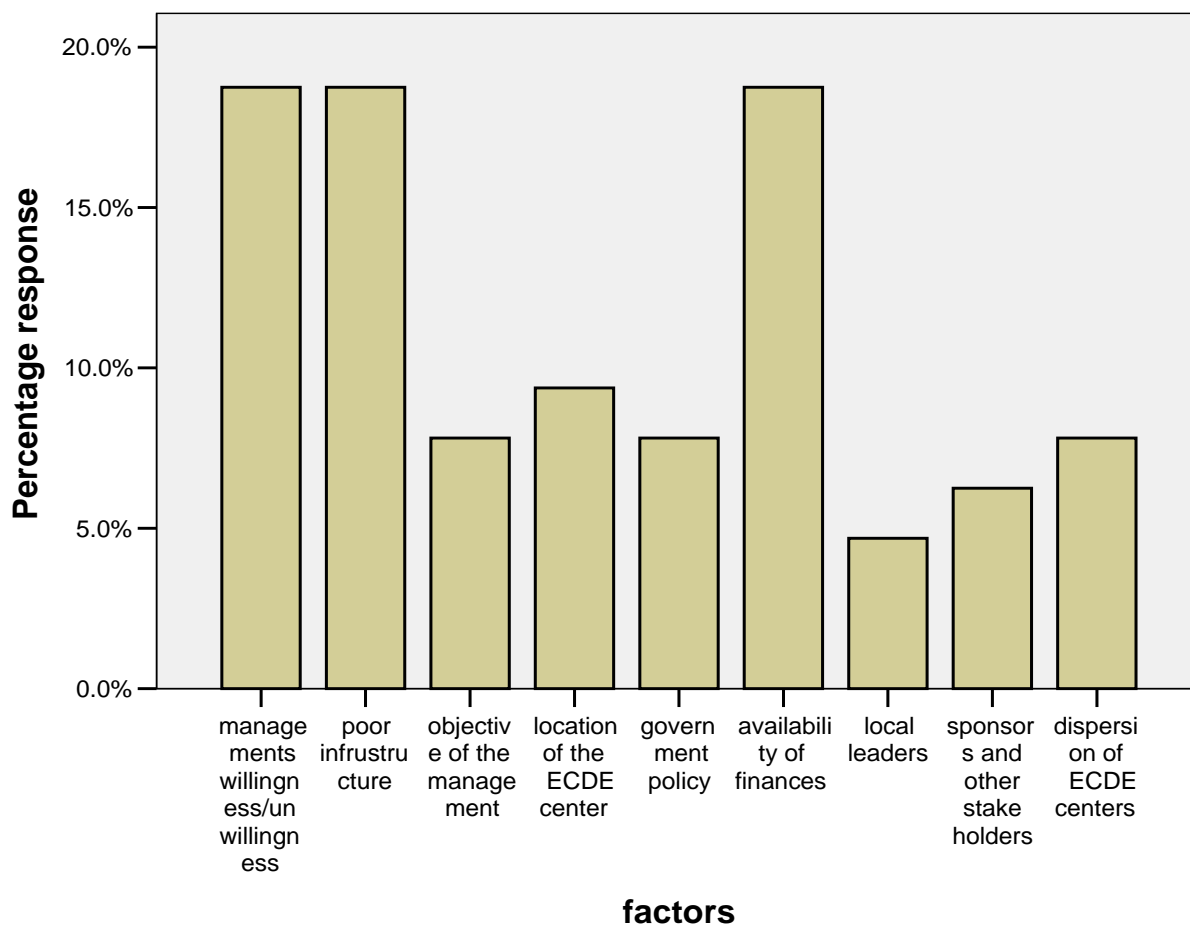
Questionnaire and the interview schedule and document analysis was the main instruments of data collection. The questionnaire was made up of structured and unstructured questions and was administered to the respondents who were sampled. The purpose of structured questions was to get information that would facilitate data analysis and classification in a specific way, while unstructured questions sought an in-depth response. All the questions in the questionnaire were related to the objectives of the study. The interviews were employed to collect data from field officers to enable the researcher to get more information and further rational responses. This technique was appropriate to obtain relevant facts and information in greater depth. Critical examination of records containing information on supervision of ECD centers was conducted.

**Data analysis:**

The data collected for the purpose of the study was adopted and coded for completeness and accuracy of information at the end of every field data collection day and before storage. Data capturing was done using Excel software. The data from the completed questionnaires was cleaned, re-coded and entered into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 to derive both the descriptive and inferential statistics relevant for this study. Frequency distributions were used to present summarized data whereas linear regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between the research variables.

**4. FINDINGS****Factors Affecting Supervision of ECDE Curriculum in ECD Schools**

The questionnaire responses regarding the respondents' views on the factors that affect effective supervision of the ECDE curriculum in schools are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Factors Affecting Supervision of ECDE Curriculum in ECD Schools**

As shown in the Figure 1, most respondents indicated that the following factors affected the effective supervision of ECDE: management's unwillingness, poor infrastructure, availability of finances, (18.75% respectively), location of the ECDE center (9.38%), government policy (7.81%), dispersion of ECDE centers (7.81%) and the objective of the management (7.81%). On the contrary, some respondents felt factors such as sponsors and other stakeholders (6.25%) as well as influence of local leaders (4.69%) had negligible effects regarding effective supervision of ECDE curriculum in schools.

**H<sub>01</sub>: The stated factors have no significant influence on supervision of ECDE centers:**

It was established that the management (F value= 3.155,  $p < 0.05$ ), infrastructure (F value= 2.355,  $p < 0.05$ ), managerial objectives (F value= 2.955,  $p < 0.05$ ), location of ECDE centers (F value= 3.655,  $p < 0.05$ ), finances (F value= 3.854,  $p < 0.05$ ), local leadership (F value= 3.273,  $p < 0.05$ ) and dispersion of ECDE center (F value= 3.568,  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly influenced supervision of ECDE centers in the division. The null hypothesis was thus rejected.

This implies that if the management willingness or unwillingness affects supervision. Therefore, a willing management will embrace supervision wholesomely; hence advances the quality of ECDE programmes. On the contrary, an unwilling management will not be receptive to supervision; this will in turn compromise the quality of ECDE programmes. Good infrastructure enhances quality learning on the other hand, poor infrastructure compromises quality, so does managerial objectives, dispersion of ECDE centers, location of centers and availability of finances.

All ECDE centers had schemes of work, records of work, progress records and academic registers. 85% (39) of the ECDC centers' teachers did not have lesson plans. Although these professional documents were available, a majority lacked depth and detail. The records of work had comments such as 'done' or 'covered'. In other cases, the comments columns were ticked. The lesson notes had not been endorsed by the head teachers and lacked an outline.

Eighty five percent of the field officers respondents in the interview indicated that the ECD teachers clearly portrayed an understanding of the ECDE curriculum despite the difficulties they experienced while implementing the ECD curriculum. They cited challenges such as: shortage of teaching materials, poor teacher-pupil ratios and private ownership of ECD schools resulting in employment of untrained teachers. The field officers were also of the opinion that the once termly supervisions were inadequate. It was also established that there were disparities in remuneration of private and public school teachers.

In addition, INSET training of ECDE teachers especially on emergent issues was inadequate. The field officers also identified the challenges faced by handicapped children, neglected children, children living in slums, nomadic children, children of refugees and children of displaced families. They construed that all these categories of children did not have their needs assessed and therefore programmes to cater for them had not been developed. They cited that their numbers were increasing and it was clear that the existing programmes did not adequately cater for them.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the researcher concluded. The supervision of the ECDE curriculum is affected by factors such as availability of finances, infrastructure, locality of ECD centers, strategic objectives, support from the management, dispersion of the ECD centers, local leaders; and sponsor involvement among others. The study recommended that there was need to improve the monitoring and evaluation process through enhanced initiatives to include supports to prepare the Child for school and equally importantly, supports to prepare the school for the child.

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