

The Influence of Financial Resources on the integration of the National Goals of Education

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Abstract

Financial Resources refer to the money availed to a school for spending in form of cash. Finances in the preschool institutions are sourced from parents in form of fees, donors, well wishers, NGOs, FBOs, and CBOs to name but a few. The general aim of this study was to examine the influence of financial resources on the integration of the national goals of education in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE). The study employed a Descriptive survey research design. The N=158 including 28 head teachers and 130 preschool teachers. The n=66 including 14 head teachers and 52 preschool teachers. The head teachers were interviewed following the guide with the following questions as in the interview guide: What is the influence the influence of financial resource on the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood development and education? The head teachers interviewed indicated that the current state of standards for publicly funded preschools programmes vary widely, particularly in the areas of teacher qualifications, per-pupil spending, and learning standards. Low standards and spending levels will most likely result in programmes that do little to enhance childrens' learning and development. The preschool teachers responded to questions in the questionnaires. (a) Closed questions required the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed on the statements on a scale of 5-1. (b) The open question required the respondents to state on their opinion how financial resources influenced the integration of the National Goals of Education in Early Childhood Development and Education. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data obtained. 38% the of respondents on average indicated that the financial resources which influenced the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood development and education include school levies, inadequate government funding, insufficient supply of different resources, financing of preschool teachers' salaries, unpaid school levies and ineffective community programmes. This was followed by 30% who strongly agreed with the statements in the questionnaires. The study established that financial resources influence effective implementation of ECDE programmes in preschools. A unit increase in the financial resources would lead to an increase in effective early childhood development and education by a factor of 0.4683. This study recommends that ECDE programmes centers should receive adequate funding to maintain effective running and management of the centers including putting up adequate infrastructures, remunerating teachers and supporting their professional development and promoting conducive learner friendly environment to facilitate quality content delivery.

Introduction

Early Childhood Development and Education refers to the education catering for children aged 3-6 years. Early childhood is a critical period to lay the foundation for success in education and beyond and thus early childhood care and education should be at the center of Education for All and broader development goals, EFA Global Monitoring Report, (2012). The experiences during this period are known to enhance or inhibit realization of one's potentials in life (Mutinda, 2012). The way a child is nurtured spiritually, morally, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically creates a long life learning process (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2004). Therefore children who are nurtured well can live and create better societies for themselves and for all.

Heywood (2009) affirms this by stating that the first five years of a child's life are of immense importance to his or her subsequent development. It is also the period when children are able to learn and acquire certain skills, concepts, knowledge and attitudes very quickly with minimal effort and it is the fastest period of growth and development in all aspects.

United Nations Educational Science and Cultural Organization (2010c) reports that Africa's diverse countries vary dramatically in size, economic structure, level of development and the type of education system. However, the continent faces similar challenges while trying to address the problems of providing basic education. More than 46 million children are not in school in Africa. This represents more than 40% of the world's out of school children. In 2009, it was estimated that children make up 38% of South Africa's population. Due to labour migration and care arrangements involving extended families, it is often the case that children live separately from their parents (Plessis & Conley, 2011).

Wylie and Thompson (2008) note that the development of Early Childhood Education policies in New Zealand has been underpinned by the government's vision that all children have the opportunity to participate in high-quality ECE. Funding and regulatory policies seek to balance a range of ECE-related goals and other government goals, while facilitating diversity in the ECE sector to allow them to continue to meet needs of parents. A new ECE funding system was implemented in April 2005. The overall goal of the funding system is to make high-quality ECE more accessible and affordable to families by funding on the basis of costs and supporting improvements in quality. The structure of funding rates is based on the structure of various ECE services (Manford, 2011).

Many young children are at risk because their health, nurture and educational needs cannot be provided for adequately from resources available within the community. In the absence of effective state intervention, the provision of Early Childhood Development and Education services to communities has been left to non-governmental agencies, efforts of parents and church based organization (Aidoo, 2008).

The Kenyan government has come up with the Sessional Paper No. 1 (2005) of the Ministry of Education which acknowledges the attainment of EFA goals by 2015 as a major commitment of the National Rainbow Coalition government in line with the right to education for all Kenyans. The objective of ECDE is to provide education geared towards development of the child's exploration

skills, creativity, discovery and self expression (KICD, 2008). For this objective to be achieved, the learning environment must be suitable and conducive with the necessary learning materials.

Financial constraints can lead to ineffective integration of the national goals of education in early childhood education (Mbiti, 2007). At macro level, Kenya has suffered from the heavy debt burden following its pursuit on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund fiscal policies such as the Structural Adjustment Programs. It is reported that these debt-servicing programs are partly responsible for significant reduction in government funding for subsidized education, health care and school related expenses. The result has been that families bear more responsibilities in implementation of early childhood education programmes (Kilbride & Kilbride, 2010).

According to Bruce (2007), financial resources are very important for any innovation to succeed and for the educational objectives, goals and aims to be met. The generalization of educational innovation is accompanied by the need for new resources, which should be available for sufficiently long time in order that the innovation becomes part of the daily life of educational establishments (Kabiru & Njenga, 2009). Sufficient coherence should be maintained between the supply of different resources, building equipments, and finances for the salaries for ECE teachers. Mostly, the parents and the community provide funds for the ECE centers as they build classrooms, give support grant and pay the ECE teachers (GOK, 2006).

According to UNESCO (2009), the responsibility of promoting children's education lies with the state. Social organizations such as charitable, faith-based, community-based and other Non-governmental Organizations play an important role in financing ECE, (Myers 2011). With adequate finances, implementation of ECE Curriculum is made possible as teachers are motivated, school facilities and necessary materials are bought to enhance learning thus realizing the national goals of education.

A repeat by UNESCO (2012), places the responsibility of ensuring children's education on the state. However in many developing countries, Kenya included, poor financial assistance is given to ECDE. This has led to poor remuneration of teachers, poor infrastructures and inadequate teaching and learning materials in ECDE centres. The poor allocation of finances to ECDE does not only affect the quality of education provided but also access to ECDE. Kivuva (2012) notes that teacher's competency is not only affected by the terms and conditions of service but also the availability of teaching and learning materials. He also notes that some pre-school teachers were not satisfied with their work because they are either not regularly paid or they are underpaid. Such stressed teachers are likely to be harsh to the learners making them drop out of the ECDE centers or perform dismally. Wawire (2013), on her study notes that lack of teachers at this level of academic ladder is reason enough for poor access to education and poor quality services in the subsector.

Methodology

Ogula (2005) describes a research design as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. Additionally, a study design is the plan of action the researcher adopts for answering the research questions and it sets up the framework for study or is the blueprint of the researcher (Kerlinger, 1973). This study employed a descriptive survey

research design. Descriptive survey research designs are used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2003). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) on the other hand give the purpose of descriptive research as determining and reporting the way things are. Descriptive survey research is intended to produce statistical information on aspects of education that interests policy makers and educators. The study suited within the provisions of descriptive survey research design because the researcher collected data and reported the way things were given by respondents without manipulating any variables.

Target Population

According to Ogula (2005), population refers to any group of institutions, people or objects that have common characteristics. The target population for this study constituted of 28 head teachers, and 130 pre-school teachers in Kalundu Zone. Therefore, the target population was 158 in total, from which the researcher carried out the sampling to get the 14 head teachers, and 52 pre-school teachers that were involved in the study.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Sampling is a procedure, process or technique of choosing a sub-group from a population to participate in the study Ogula (2005). It is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected. Simple random sampling and Purposive sampling were used to select the respondents. In a descriptive research, a sample size of 10-50% is acceptable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The researcher applied the sampling error formula (Creswell, 2011 pp. 609-612) to get a sample size of 66 respondents. These comprised of 14 head teachers and 52 pre-school teachers. This formed a sample size of 41.8% of the target population because the larger the sample, the better the representative of the mean and standard deviation of the target population.

Table: Representation of the Sampling Matrix

Population Description	Target Population	Sample Size%	Sample Size
Head teachers	28	50%	14
Pre-school teachers	130	40%	52
Total	158	41.8%	66

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection tools for this study were questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires were filled in by the pre-school teachers. They had open and closed questions for the respondents to record their answers. The interview guides were used for the head teachers. The researcher followed a script of questions to elicit answers from the head teachers.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used for the purpose of collecting primary quantitative data. Additionally, the questionnaires will be used for the following reasons: a) It has potential in reaching out to a large number of respondents within a short time, b) It is able to give the respondents adequate time to respond to the items, c) It offers a sense of anonymity to the respondent and d) It is an objective method hence no bias resulting from the personal characteristics - as in an interview (Owens, 2002). The questionnaires were divided into the main areas of investigation except the first part which captures the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Other sections were organized according to the major research objectives.

Interviews

An interview is one way of investigating a group's attitudes and opinions. The interview guides contained items covering all the objectives of the study. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to obtain data on head teachers' views and opinions. The interview enabled these head teachers to express themselves freely on the subject matter. Semi-structured interviews can produce valid and rich information because of their flexibility and the room for probing further. The researcher also had the opportunity to read the facial communication from the head teachers as they engage in the interview.

Pilot Study

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a pilot study with a sample of a tenth of the total sample with homogenous characteristics is appropriate for the pilot study. Pilot testing is an important step in research process because it reveals vague questions and unclear instructions in the instruments. It also captures important comments and suggestions from the respondents that enable the researcher to improve on the efficiency of research instrument. Pilot study was carried out in the neighboring Kitui West Sub-County.

Validity of the Research Instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of test scores entailed by use of tests. The validity of instrument is the extent to which it does measure what it is supposed to measure. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the variables of the study. The research instrument was validated in terms of content and face validity. The content related technique measured the degree to which the questions items reflected the specific areas covered.

Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure characteristics of interest over time. It is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. If a researcher administers a test to a subject twice and gets the same score on the

second administration as the first test, then there is reliability of the instrument (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The researcher measured the reliability of the questionnaire to determine its consistency in testing what they are intended to measure. The test re-test technique was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments. This involved administering the same test twice to the same group of respondents who had been identified for this purpose.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researcher obtained all the necessary documents, including an introduction letter from the University and a research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Audience with the sampled respondents in the region was also sought to clarify the purpose of the study. Upon getting clearance, the researcher in person distributed the questionnaires to the sampled respondents and conducted interviews to the head teachers. Use of questionnaires was expected to ease the process of data collection as all the selected respondents were reached in time. During the distribution of the instruments, the purpose of the research was explained to get rid of suspicion and fear among respondents.

Data Analysis

On receipt of the completed questionnaires, the collected data was checked for errors in responses, omissions, exaggerations and biases. The researcher used both the quantitative and the qualitative analysis of the data obtained from the study. Content analysis technique was used to analyze qualitative data collected using interview schedules and reported in narrative form along with quantitative presentation. The researcher used summary tables to describe the qualitative data. The answers/responses given in the interviews were categorized into their particular types and the numbers of each type were counted up. In this way the researcher converted qualitative data into quantitative data or nominal data Creswell, (2011). The qualitative data was used to reinforce the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to describe the data and for this reason Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used. Analysis of Variance was used to test the level of significance of the variables on the dependent variable at 95% confidence level. In addition, the study conducted a multiple regression analysis.

The regression equation was: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \epsilon$

Whereby **Y** = Early Childhood Development Education;

X1= Financial Resources;

X2= Teaching and Learning Resources;

X3= Socio-Economic Factors;

X4 = Teacher-Child Ratio

β_1 , β_2 , β_3 and β_4 are coefficients of determination

ϵ is the error term.

Ethical Issues

Research in education is governed by various ethics. According to APA (2010), these experiments involve human beings which may expose them to stressful or unpleasant experiences. This may affect the subjects to risks or negatively affect the lives of the research participants. To deal with this problem, the researcher explained to the respondents about the research and that the study was for academic purposes only.

Informed Consent

The participants had informed consent to make the choice to participate in the study or not. Each subject had a right to decline or discontinue participating in the research at any time and at will. This gave the respondents confidence to take part.

Anonymity

Subjects had a right to conceal information about themselves that they felt would be sensitive and private. To safeguard the privacy of subjects the researcher did not use their names but only the relevant demographic information as well as random code numbers in the case of interviews.

Confidentiality

The participants were guaranteed that there will be protection of information given and that the data collected will be treated with total confidentiality. To ensure this, the researcher listed the data using number codes rather than names. The researcher also destroyed the used questionnaires as soon as the study was completed.

Data Protection

The researcher explained and assured the participants that the information given in the study would be used for academic purposes only. The participants' data was not exposed to any other subject in the study or shared with other respondents. Each participant's information was handled with care and privacy to conceal it from reaching any unauthorized population.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, interpretations and discussions following the objectives of the research. The general objective of this study was to investigate the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood development and education in Kenya. The study sought; (a) to examine the influence of financial resources on the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood education (b) to establish whether there is a significant statistical relationship between the teaching and learning resources and the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood development and education (c) to identify the effects of socio-economic factors on the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood development and education and (d) to investigate the influence of teacher-child ratio on the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood development and education.

Questionnaire Return Rate

The study targeted a sample size of 66 respondents comprising of 14 head teachers and 52 pre-school teachers. All the 14 head teachers were interviewed giving a 100% response rate. 50 copies out of the 52 questionnaires distributed were returned which was 96.153% of the total questionnaires expected. The responses from the interviews and questionnaires were used to analyze the data and write the report for this study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a rate of 70% and over is excellent. Based on this assertion, the response rate was excellent.

Respondents' Demographic Information

The respondents' demographic information included the respondent's gender, age bracket, working experience and professional qualification.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The first demographic data to be collected was the gender of the respondents. The results were as shown in Table 4.1.

Table: Respondents' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	10	20.0
Female	40	80.0
Total	50	100

The table above reveals that majority, (80%) of the respondents interviewed were female teachers, while 20% were male teachers. This shows that there are more female pre-school teachers in Kalundu zone than the male teachers.

Age Distribution of Respondents

The respondents were also required to indicate their age as part of demographic information. The results were as presented in the table of age below.

Table: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percent
Below 20	4	8.0
21- 30	10	20.0
31- 40	12	24.0
Over 41	24	48.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 4.2 shows that, majority (48%) of the respondents were over 41 years followed by (24%) aged 31 – 40, and (20%) were those aged between 21-30. The least of the respondents were those aged below 20 years (8%).

4.3.4 Working Experience of the Respondents

The teachers were requested to indicate their working experience. The responses were as presented in Table 4.3.

Table: Respondents' Working Experience

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3years	8	16.0
3 – 5	4	8.0
6 – 8	10	20.0
9 -12	24	48.0
Above 12 years	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

Table above shows that majority (48%) of the respondents had worked for 9 -12 years as pre-school teachers. However the working experience was not a factor in this study.

Academic Qualification of Respondents

The researcher sought to investigate the academic qualification for respondents. The results were as presented in the table below.

Table: Respondent's Academic Level

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate in ECD	7	14.0
P1 certificate	25	50.0
Diploma in ECD	16	32.0
Degree in ECD	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 4.4 shows that majority (50%) of the respondents had P1 certificate as their highest level of professional qualification while the least (4%) had degree in ECDE. This shows that all the teachers were qualified to effectively integrate the national goals of education in ECE.

Financial Resource and Integration of the National Goals of Education

The first objective for this study was to examine the influence of financial resources on the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood education in Kalundu Zone, Kitui County. To achieve this objective the respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree on each of the statements on a scale of 5-1 scale where {5-- Strongly Agree} {4-- Agree} {3-- Neutral} {2-- Disagree} {1-- Strongly Disagree}. The responses were as presented in Table 4.5.

Table: Financial Resources

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
Lack of school levies	12(24%)	22(44%)	4(8%)	10(20%)	4(8%)
Inadequate government funding	18(36%)	20(40%)	6(12%)	3(6%)	3(6%)
Insufficient supply of different resources e.g. building equipments	20(40%)	14(28%)	5(10%)	5(10%)	6(12%)
Financing of preschool teachers salaries	16(32%)	26(52%)	3(6%)	2(4%)	3(6%)
Underpaid school	22(44%)	12(24%)	7(14%)	4(8%)	5(10%)
Ineffective community funding programs	6(12%)	20(40%)	8(16%)	6(12%)	10(20%)
Mean Total	15(30%)	19(38%)	6(12%)	5(10%)	5(10%)

Table 4.5 shows that majority (38%) of respondents on average indicated that the financial resources which influenced the integration of the national goals of education in early childhood education include; schools levies, inadequate government funding, insufficient supply of different resources, financing of preschool teachers' salaries, unpaid school levies and ineffective community programmes. This was followed by 30% who strongly agreed with the statements in Table 4.5.

These findings are in line with the findings of Mbiti (2007) who observed that financial constraints can lead to ineffective integration of the national goals of education in early childhood education. At macro level, Kenya has suffered from the heavy debt burden following its pursuit on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund fiscal policies such as the Structural Adjustment Programs. It is reported that these debt-servicing programs are partly responsible for significant reduction in government funding for subsidized education, health care and school related expenses. The result has been that families bear more responsibilities in implementation of early childhood education programmes (Kilbride & Kilbride, 2010). According to UNESCO (2009), the responsibility of promoting children's education lies with the state. Social organizations such as charitable, faith-based, community-based and other Non-governmental Organizations play an important role in

financing ECE, (Myers 2011). With adequate finances, implementation of ECE Curriculum is made possible as teachers are motivated, school facilities and necessary materials are bought to enhance learning thus realizing the national goals of education.

Recommendations

The study established that a unit increase in financial resources would lead to increase in effective early childhood development and education by a factor of 0.683. The study also established that majority of the respondents strongly agreed on the statement that insufficient supply of different resources e.g. building equipments and ineffective community funding programs respectively. The head teachers interviewed indicated that the current state of standards for publicly funded preschool programs vary widely, particularly in the areas of teacher qualifications, per-pupil spending, and learning standards. Low standards and spending levels will most likely result in programs that do little to enhance children's learning and development.

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