



Original Article

Pre-school Teachers Continuous Professional Development on Service Delivery in Public Early Years Education Centres in Kapseret Sub County

Hellen Biwott¹, Dr. Julia Situma, PhD² & Dr. Moses Kapkiai, PhD¹

¹ Kisii University, P. O. Box 408 – 40200, Kisii, Kenya.

² Koitalel Samoei University, P. O. Box 5-30307, Mosoriot, Kenya

* Author for Correspondence ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0330-8559>; Email: biwoshie@gmail.com

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Quality implementation of the pre-primary education curriculum is key to ensuring that learners acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for them to advance in the next stages of education. Pre-primary teachers' qualifications and competencies have to be regularly improved to increase chances of realising early year's education goals. The purpose of this paper was to determine pre-primary teachers' continuous professional development in service delivery in Kapsaret Sub County, Kenya. A mixed method research methodology was utilised, which involves qualitative and quantitative approaches. A descriptive survey research design was used in targeting 153 preschool teachers, 87 head teachers, and 3 EYE field officers. A sample size of 111 early years education teachers, 26 head teachers, and 3 education officials was selected through stratified random and purposive sampling techniques. The research found that teacher participation in continuous professional development programmes had a significant positive relationship ($p < 0.05$) with service delivery levels in public early years education centres in Kapseret Sub County. The paper recommends that teachers should be supported to undertake in-service training programmes; teachers should have a desire to attend workshops and seminars.

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INTRODUCTION

In the early years, education performs its role in improving the learners' skills and competencies; it has to meet the minimum quality standards required by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Among the standards required is that quality instruction is a must and that provision of trained and competent human resources is essential. This requires teachers to be qualified to perform their work effectively (Melesse & Gulie, 2019). Fullan (2000) indicated that for curriculum implementation to be effectively done, teachers are the most significant. The teachers also ensure that the curriculum is implemented as they undertake their classroom learning activities. They help to build the knowledge and skills of pupils in schools. This means that the qualification and competency of research are essential to ensure the goals of early years education are attained. These competencies have to be acquired by teachers updating their skills and competencies on a regular basis (Yong et al., 2015). The teachers have to update their skills in classroom management, professional development (preparation of instructional documents), students' assessment skills, skills in pedagogy, skills in the human social dimension, and skills in professional ethics and morality (Padagas, 2019). When teachers possess these kinds of skills and competencies through undergoing regular professional development programmes, their service delivery level will improve, resulting in improved performance of their pupils in the classroom.

World over, there has been a shift in ensuring that teachers undergo professional development training. In Sweden according to the curriculum goals of early childhood teacher education, preschool teachers are expected to develop specific competencies in terms of knowledge,

skills, and attitudes in their profession (Lillvist et al., 2014). In Malaysia, Yong et al. (2015) reported that the government expected pre-primary teachers to regularly improve their professional development by undertaking in-service training and attending seminars and workshops. In the Philippines, Padagas (2019) reported that there was a need for teachers to undergo professional development in order to handle the emerging demands of the field of education. The author indicated that improvement in teacher competencies through regular training would ensure the realisation of the goals and objectives of the education system. In Ethiopia, teachers in ECDE are expected to be change-oriented and reflective to meet the conditions for quality education provision. This is seen when teachers in classrooms use various interactive approaches to assist each learner in their classroom to realise their education potential (Melesse & Gulie, 2019).

UNESCO's (2014) report showed a strong relationship between the professional development of teachers and service delivery. This is because through teachers going for professional development, it results in an improvement in classroom practices, pupils learning, and implementation of educational reforms. This means that even in Kenya, with the new competency-based curriculum being implemented, teachers are required to undergo various professional development programmes to help them execute the curriculum. This paper, therefore, looks at the linkage between teachers' professional development and service delivery levels with respect to public pre-primary schools in Kapsaret Sub County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Problem Statement

The management of pre-primary education is at the hands of county governments across the country. When the county governments came in the year 2013, they undertook the role of management of schools and also teachers. All teachers in those schools were employed by the county government on a contract basis to provide needed instructional support to learners in schools. The issue of how the teachers have undergone continuous professional development to ensure that they have the right skills to implement the new curriculum remains an issue that has not yet been adequately investigated. This may show that teachers in public Early Years Education (EYE) centres could be facing problems with regard to their adaptability to the new CBC requirements, which may affect their capacity to transfer knowledge to their children. This has affected the service delivery standards as expected and therefore this paper seeks to determine how pre-primary teachers' participation in professional development programmes influences their service delivery levels in public EYE centres in Kapsaret Sub County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aside from attaining the minimum education qualification threshold required to teach in pre-primary schools, the teachers are required to undergo professional development programmes through advancing their studies or undertaking various short-term training to keep them abreast with the changing education landscape. This therefore calls for regular teacher participation in continuous professional development programmes. Gameda and Tynjala (2015) argued that teachers' continuous professional development is of increasing interest worldwide, as it is deemed essential to manage efficiently with ongoing transformations and to increase education quality. Various research investigations have been conducted in this field across the world and are reviewed here.

In the United States of America, Brink's (2017) intention of the study was to gain an understanding and insight into secondary school teachers' opinions and use of formative assessment to improve their planning, individualised education and modification of course content to enhance learning in class. It was

mixed method research that was conducted over 2 years involving close to 1000 learners. It was discovered that when they were availed with certain information concerning formative evaluation through employee development, they became more positive towards such evaluation and their execution skills were significantly enhanced. Employee development had a great influence on teachers' comprehension and skill sets for individualising instructional methods. The researcher failed to show how formative assessment affected service delivery.

In Sweden, Andersson and Palm (2017) determined the results of the professional development programme, the content of which was centred on the William and Thompson framework. Teachers of mathematics being involved in the programme were selected randomly. After controlling for performance on the pre-test during the beginning of the year, year four classes of teachers who had been involved in the programme significantly outperformed the learners of the instructors who were in the control group after 1 year of formative assessment implementation. The dependent variable focused on students, while this study focused on teachers.

In Malaysia, Dhamotharan, Vijayan and Loh (2019) assessed EYE teachers' and operators' requirements and unease for continuing professional development for EYE teachers. A qualitative methodology approach was used in the form of a framework analysis method (thematic qualitative content analysis). A convenient sampling method was applied to select the respondents for the research. Data were collected via in-depth interviews with teachers and preschool head teachers in focus group sessions. Findings indicated that teachers indicated that training sessions were provided for the government pre-primary schools but not for the private pre-primary schools. Teachers noted that the training provided was helpful and they were motivated by the knowledge gained, which translated to their classroom practices. This study goes further to examine how the education and training that teachers acquired influenced their service delivery levels in pre-primary schools.

In Indonesia, Hapidina, Pujianti, Hartatic, Nurani and Dhieni (2020) assessed the effectiveness of lesson study as a continuous professional development (CPD). It was an action research study. The collection of data was done by

conducting interviews, doing observations and using document checklists. The respondents for the study were teachers. Findings showed that study lessons because of the alternatives to aid instructions when making enhancements to teacher performance regularly. Lesson study became a locus for changes in teachers' pedagogical skills and knowledge, specifically when executing the new curriculum (play-based one). The present study determined the various CPD programmes that teachers benefited from in improving their instructional delivery in public pre-primary schools in Kenya.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Al-Makhalid (2012) assessed knowledge and attitudes, training needs and teachers' attitudes towards in-service training programmes. The respondents involved gifted programme teachers and regular teachers. Mixed method research was used to collect data that came from semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Generally, research findings showed that the two categories of teachers had overall somewhat positive attitudes towards pupils and their learning, with higher positive attitudes recorded among gifted teachers than the regular ones. But there existed significant differences between regular and gifted programme teachers in terms of general knowledge and training requirements relating to the gifted and gifted education with high knowledge in all units for gifted programme teachers and high training needs for regular teachers in most gifted knowledge units.

In Turkey, Eret (2013) examined pre-service teacher education in relation to preparing them for teaching. The research design was a descriptive survey from which a sample of 1856 pre-service teachers from 7 colleges was chosen. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Research indicated that the education of teachers was more satisfactory in terms of preparing teachers for communication with learners and utilising instructional techniques and methods comparatively to other skills. Moreover, it was mentioned as being not much satisfactory in relation to preparing for communication with parents and other teachers at school, teaching learners who needed special education and operating under varied situations. The study centred on pre-service teachers as respondents, while this study centred on teachers already teaching in public EYE centres.

In Ethiopia, Gemedu and Tynjala (2015) determined actual and potential challenges which affected the professional development of teachers in schools. Interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from 37 respondents who were purposively sampled. It was established that the main challenges in teacher professional development were; professional development and mentoring, conceptual issues and conceptions associated with teaching, teachers' work conditions and management and leadership challenges. This study did not focus on challenges but rather on the initiatives undertaken to promote CPD and their impact on service delivery levels by teachers in Kenya schools.

In Kumasi Ghana, Boateng and Owusu (2018) assessed in-service educators' efficacy perceptions in learners' engagement. The study sample comprised 299 pre-primary teachers from public and private EYE schools. Findings indicated that teachers had high efficacy beliefs in the engagement of pupils. Further, there was no statistically significant difference in efficacy beliefs of engagement of people between trained and trained teachers. This implied that efficacy beliefs in learners' engagement between private and public-school teachers did not vary significantly. They argued that background training of teachers and their institutional placement were not necessarily significant factors in teachers' efficacy beliefs and engagement of pupils. The study was comparative in nature, while this study was conducted in public schools only.

Still, in Ghana, Wolf, Aber, Behrman and Tsinigo (2019) investigated the impact of teacher professional development programmes between public and private pre-primary schools in Accra. A cluster-randomised trial involved the participation of 240 schools with respondents being teachers, children and parents. The programmes integrated in-classroom coaching and workshops for instructors and video-linked discussion groups for parents. The average influence was established on some dimensions of teachers' professional comfort (decreased burnout in the teacher training and teacher training parents awareness situations, decreased turnover in teacher training situation), quality of classroom (improved emotional support/management of behaviour in the teacher training and parents awareness conditions, support for children articulation in the teacher training situation and

less impacts on several domains of pupils school readiness (at the teacher training siltation). The gap created by Wolf et al. is that it was a quasi-experimental study while the present study was non-experimental.

In Zimbabwe, Chinhara and Sotuku (2020) investigated the way in which stakeholders supported CPD programmes for pre-primary teachers. The research paradigm was post-positivism which resulted in the adoption of a mixed-method approach. Document analysis Interviews and questionnaires were used as research tools. Findings revealed that schools were involved in various professional development programs like; as official school-based in-service programs and informal staff development programmes. Nevertheless, the recognised CPD programs were executed at the cost of official seminars, joint researchers and exchange programs which were treasured as resourceful and more informative in aiding instructors to well conduct curriculum implementation. The present study determined the kind of CPDs that were provided to pre-primary teachers in influencing their classroom service delivery in Uasin Gishu County.

In Fagita Lekoma Woreda Ethiopia, Melesse and Gulie (2019) assessed the degree to which CPD affected quality education provision in primary schools. The respondents involved educational officials, principals of schools and teachers. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews. It was found that the CPD level of implementation in primary schools was at a moderate level. For those who benefited from CPD, it resulted in teachers getting new ideas, providing a platform for sharing experiences and having a greater potential to improve classroom performance. The present study went further to examine how CPD influenced teachers' service delivery in Kapseret Sub County to establish if there are similarities with what was happening in Ethiopia.

In Kenya Marani Sub County, Kisii County, Mokaya (2019) researched the relationship between teachers involved in professional development on pupils' participation in creative

activities. The target population consisted of 61 head teachers, 198 pre-primary teachers and 3040 pupils, from which a sample of 18 head teachers, 36 pre-primary teachers and 845 pupils were chosen. The data collection instruments comprised of a questionnaire, interview schedule and learners' creative activity observation checklist. Results showed that most teachers needed to undergo professional development in order to implement creative activities in schools. This study departed from Mokaya's research by examining how teachers' level of professional development influenced their service delivery level in schools where creative activities form a critical area of learning.

In Nyamache Sub County, Mosansa (2019) determined the influence of teachers' professional development on pupils' academic performance. Two research designs, correlation and descriptive, were adopted. The target population involved 4 curriculum support officers (CSO), 84 head teachers, 260 EYE teachers and 4200 EYE children. The sample involved 4 CSO, 25 school heads, 50 EYE teachers and 1240 EYE pupils. Findings indicated that most teachers did not go for regular professional development and training since they were hardly supervised by their superiors. The involvement of learners in this study was not appropriate as they were not in a position to ascertain the degree to which their teachers' professional development had reached. Another deviation is that the dependent variable for Mosansa was learners' academic performance, while this study was on teachers' service delivery level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design that guided this study was concurrent triangulation. This design also allowed the collection of data through the use of interview guides, questionnaires, and observation schedules. This study was conducted in Kapseret Sub County public ECDE centres. The target population for the study involved early year education teachers and head teachers of public EYE centres. The targeted population and sample size are presented in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Respondent	Target	Sample calc	Sample size	Sampling procedure
Early years education teachers	153	73.2%	112	Stratified random sampling
Headteachers	87	30.0%	26	Stratified random sampling
Total	240		138	

The research collected primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data was from published works, while primary data was from questionnaires and interviews guide. Analysis of data was performed using quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data for this study was coded, entered, and analysed in electronic software (SPSS Version 24.0). Analysis of quantitative data was made through the use of descriptive and inferential statistics to answer research questions. Qualitative data from interview schedules were analysed using thematic content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study endeavoured to find out the influence of early years education teachers' CPD and service delivery in their classrooms. Due to the dynamism associated with changing pedagogical practices in the ECDE classroom as a result of technological and curriculum changes, it is significant for teachers to pursue continuous professional development programmes to enhance their knowledge and skills in classroom instruction. At first, teachers were asked to indicate the frequency at which they participated in development programmes through statements measured on a Likert scale of five. Their responses are given in Table 2.

Table 2 result shows that close to half of 49 (45.8%) of early years education teachers agreed and 47 (43.9%) strongly agreed that they regularly attend workshops and seminars on the implementation of the new CBC curriculum. This shows that most teachers ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.79$) in the sub-county have attended the training on how to implement the competency-based curriculum in early years education. Failure to go for workshops and seminars on how to implement CBC makes it impossible for them to deliver the curriculum content in their classrooms. Close to half of 50 (46.7%) of early years education teachers strongly agreed, while 47 (43.9%) strongly agreed that the quality of the seminars and workshops that they had attended before had

improved their professional competencies. This means that most early years education teachers tended to agree ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.74$) that the seminars and workshops that they attend improve their pedagogical competencies in the early childhood education curriculum. This implies that more teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops that are beneficial to their professional growth and development. When on whether they are pursuing an in-service training course on early childhood development, 2 (1.9%) strongly disagreed, 49 (45.8%) disagreed, 6 (5.6%) were undecided, 35 (32.7%) agreed, and 15 (14.0%) strongly agreed.

Table 2: Early years education Teachers Attendance of CPD

Item	SDA	D	U	A	SA	M	SD
I regularly attend seminars, workshops, and forums on the implementation of new early years education curriculum	0 (0.0%)	6 (5.6%)	5 (4.7%)	49 (45.8%)	47 (43.9%)	4.28	.7985
The quality of seminars and workshops that I have attended has been effective in improving my professional competencies	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.7%)	6 (5.6%)	50 (46.7%)	47 (43.9%)	4.31	.7449
I am pursuing an in-service course in ECDE	2 (1.9%)	49 (45.8%)	6 (5.6%)	35 (32.7%)	15 (14.0%)	3.11	1.1921
The head teacher persuades us to attend in-service training often	5 (4.7%)	29 (27.1%)	18 (16.8%)	28 (26.2%)	27 (25.2%)	3.40	1.2578
The county government sponsors early years education teachers for in-service training and seminars	12 (11.2%)	26 (24.3%)	9 (8.4%)	33 (30.8%)	27 (25.2%)	3.34	1.3811
I always plan (myself) to attend professional learning courses during my time out of school (Weekends and Holidays)	7 (6.5%)	31 (29.0%)	10 (9.3%)	33 (30.8%)	26 (24.3%)	3.37	1.3069
There are mentorship programmes for early years education teachers	0 (0.0%)	16 (15.0%)	13 (12.1%)	47 (43.9%)	31 (29.0%)	3.86	1.0007
Composite scores						3.67	1.0974

Key: SDA-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, U-Undecided, A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree, M-Mean and SD-Standard Deviation.

The mean statistics show that early year’s education teachers were undecided ($M = 3.11, SD = 1.19$) on this statement implying some were pursuing while others were not pursuing in-service training courses. Those pursuing could be those who have lower qualification levels, while those who are not pursuing could be those with inadequate finances and those that already possess higher education qualification levels. When early years education teachers were asked as to whether their school head persuaded them to attend in-service training regularly, 5 (4.7%) strongly disagreed, 29 (27.1%) disagreed, 18 (16.8%) were undecided, 28 (26.2%) agreed, and 27 (25.2%) strongly agreed. The results therefore show that sometimes ($M = 3.40, SD = 1.25$) head teachers persuade early years education teachers to attend in-service training to boost their pedagogical competencies, while at times, they do not. Further findings showed that 26 (24.3%) of teachers disagreed that their county government sponsored them for in-service training seminars, while 33 (30.8%) agreed that they did receive sponsorship from the county government. The mean values show that teachers were undecided ($M = 3.34, SD = 1.38$) on county government sponsorship to attend training. The research outcomes show that sometimes early years education teachers are sponsored for in-service training while other times they are not. In addition, the findings would mean that some teachers have not yet benefited from

county government sponsorship while others have not.

When asked whether they had plans to upgrade their professional competencies during holidays and weekends, 7 (6.5%) of teachers strongly disagreed, 31 (29.0%) disagreed, 10 (9.3%) were undecided, 33 (30.8%) agreed, and 26 (24.3%) strongly agreed. The outcome means ($M = 3.37, SD = 1.30$) that some teachers have plans for attending professional learning courses while others do not. This implies that some teachers are not motivated or feel the urge to go for additional training, while others have a personal desire to participate in professional development training. The study also revealed that 47 (43.9%) of early years education teachers agreed, while 31 (29.0%) strongly agreed that there existed mentorship programmes for them. The mean values reveal that most teachers agreed ($M = 3.86, SD = 1.0$) on the existence of mentorship programmes in their schools. Composite data reveal that teachers agreed ($M = 3.67$) to be involved in various continuous professional development programmes, but the standard deviations are high ($SD = 1.09$), suggesting that some teachers were not in such a programme. To establish the relationship between continuing professional development and service delivery in schools, a correlation analysis was computed. The findings are presented in *Table 3*.

Table 3: Effect of Early years education Teachers’ Professional Development and Service Delivery

		CPD	Service Delivery
CPD	Pearson Correlation	1	.391**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	107	107
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.391**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Data (2019)

It is seen that there exists a significant weak positive relationship ($r=0.391, p=0.001$) between early years education teachers’ attendance for professional development programmes and service delivery in their classrooms. The result suggests that an increase in early years education teachers’ attendance at CPDs would lead to an increase in service delivery standards in early years education.

Through open-ended questions, the teachers were asked about their perceptions of CPD and the delivery of the new CBC curriculum in their schools. One said that:

“Has made the teachers be well equipped with proper methods of teaching learners and new skills on handling them”.

Another teacher also mentioned that:

“Helps the teacher to acquire more knowledge on service delivery”.

Moreover, another teacher also indicated that:

“Yes, it improves the classroom delivery and academic performance of learners in school.

The above responses by teachers show the value of teachers participating in professional development programmes in enhancing their skills and expertise in implementing curriculum requirements. It was also seen as a way of empowering teachers with extra skills to deal with early year’s education children. It also keeps them updated with the current state of education development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found out that teachers had positive perceptions towards going for professional development programmes. All respondents in the study indicated that it is imperative for teachers to regularly update their knowledge and skills to match the current demands of CBC. However, research findings showed that inadequate support was provided by the county government for teachers to go for in-service training. The only area that teachers were found to go to most of the time as part of CPD was seminars, workshops, and forums. Less than half of teachers sponsored themselves for in-service training programmes during holidays. Moreover, the head teachers did not offer much motivation or persuasion for their early years education teachers to go for further training. Nevertheless, computed correlation statistics showed that an increase in early years education teachers’ attendance of CPD increased the likelihood of attaining higher service delivery standards in early years education. There is a need for the county government to consider offering full sponsorship for early years education teachers to undertake in-service training courses. The head teachers also need to persuade and educate their teachers on the importance of undertaking continuous professional education to improve their knowledge and skills in classroom instruction.

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