

Situational Analysis Of Supervision On The Implementation Of Early Childhood Education In Selected Public Pre- Schools In Homabay Sub County, Kenya

Ajuoga Milcah Aoko
St. Pauls University

Ogunya Raphael Odhiambo
Masinde Muliro University

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to conduct a situational analysis on the educational supervision carried out within the Early Childhood Development Education schools. The study was based on descriptive survey. The study targeted 71 ECDE schools, two County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, four Zonal Quality Assurance Standards Officer's (QASO), 20 Headteachers and 66 teachers in the sampled schools. Simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers and Headteachers for the study. QASO were selected by saturated sampling technique. Two instruments were used in this study which included questionnaire for teachers. Interview schedule was developed for the QASO and Headteachers. The quantitative data gathered from the respondents via questionnaire were organized thematically coded and descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentages were generated before analysis and interpretation. However, qualitative data obtained from the respondents through interviews were transcribed, organized thematically and reported. The findings of the study established that supervision is necessary for an increase in educational quality even though Quality Assurance and Standards Officers contribution is minimal because their visit to the schools are rare, agents who carry out the supervision should have professional competencies, staff development is a stand point whereby the Headteachers who are the unit supervisors do not have ECDE training background coupled with negative attitude. The study recommends training for the Headteachers and QASO in Early Childhood Education and Care giving so as to enable them efficiently guide and counsel the pre- school trained teachers.

Keywords: Supervision, Inspection, Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, Early Childhood Development and Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term Early Childhood Development represents a multi faceted construct that refers to both the developing child and the multi – layered context that influences the child's development. With respect to the child development, science of early childhood defines this age period as extending from the prenatal stage through the transition to primary school (MacBeath, 2006, UNESCO, 2005). According to the government of Kenya, an Early Childhood development (ECD) is a human being from the time of conception to eighth year. The Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) schools are housed in all public primary schools with the head

teacher serving as the unit supervisor. Pre primary is grouped per ages as below:

Age Years	½ - 2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Group	Play group	Baby Class	Pre – Primary	Pre – Primary ii	Std. 1	Std. 2	Std. 3

R.o.K.(2006). ECD Service Standard Guidelines for Kenya

Increasing attention has been paid to Early Childhood Education (ECE) and care givers services by the governments, parents, employers, local communities and by researchers. The reasons have been varied, namely; the importance of early learning has increasingly been recognized because many believe it may enhance subsequent academic performance,

women have joined labour market, the demand for non – parental care has grown, ECE and care services are discussed as a condition for urban and rural development and as part of the social and economic infrastructure of healthy and wealthy local communities (Taguchi, 2010).

ECDE in Kenya is governed by a partnership policy of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) whose main aim is to enhance the provision of ECD services throughout the country. The policy was first stipulated in the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on education and man power training for the next decade and beyond with a view to boosting the sector (R.o.K, 1988). Before enactment of the new constitution in Kenya, which devolved ECDE to the county governments, significant changes have taken place. The National Centre for Early Childhood (NACECE) was responsible for preschool curriculum and material development, training and professional support to DICECE trainers and coordination of research, monitoring and coordination. The above roles have been taken over by the county government under the Director of Education.

Kenya has four curricula for ECE. These are ;Guideline for Early Childhood Development in Kenya, Kindergarten Headmistress Association Curriculum , Montessori, Islamic Integrated Program and the Curricular of Parent and Education Program. The public owned pre schools are implementing the first one. ECDE teachers are using heuristic strategy of teaching (K.I.E, 2009). A major characteristic of pre – school education in Kenya is that pre schools serve a wide cross section of children from different social, economic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Children attending Kenya's ECD services come from a wide spectrum of rich and poor, educated and uneducated families (UNESCO, 2005). It is important to note that majority of public schools represents the rural poor.

According to France and Utting (2003) a good quality early childhood education through effective implementation of the pre school curriculum is a pre – requisite to educational efficiency. Children acquire the basic skills, concepts and attitude required for successful learning and development prior to entering formal education system thus reducing the chances of failure and lay a foundation of lifelong learning. Before the enactment of Kenya new constitution in 2010, the Directorate of Quality Assurance was mandated to establish and maintain educational standards in ECE institutions by; assessing all ECE centres attached to primary schools at regular basis, assessing new ECDE centres for purpose of registration, assess ECE teachers undergoing a two year in – service courses, in service all personnel working in ECE, ensure implementation of curriculum for children and ECDE personnel through regular visits to institution, liaise with other service providers to ensure delivery of quality services and organize follow- up action on quality assessment reports among other duties(R.o.K,2006) .Therefore school supervision and support services are a crucial element in improving the quality of basic education. School supervision is necessary because many basic problems can be solved and monitored at school level.

Supervision is the process of working with teachers to improve their performances in their professional chores. Supervision is a continuous monitoring of ECDE activities to

ensure effective implementation of ECD approved curriculum (R.o.K, 2006). Supervision is an organizational obligation for determining the level of achieving organizational goals. Thus supervision is a process which determines the effectiveness of school activities and whether or not there are any divergence from the aims of the education system. According to Ajuoga, Indoshi and Agak, (2010), they observed that supervision is an educational sub system that guides and counsels the professional development of teachers and offers effective support for educational workers in order for them to achieve their goals. It is furnished with control, guidance and communication tools which promotes an educational training standard in schools (Obiweluzor, Momo and Ogbonnaya, 2013).

Traditionally inspection and supervision of school was seen as aimed at fault finding among teachers (Wanzare, 2006). However, based on the changes and development in the sense of administration, supervision is defined today as an educational subsystem that focuses on improving the process, prioritizing a huge amount of partner engagement and that underlines the strong co-operation between supervisor and the supervised (Memduhoglu, 2012). Thus, the supervision system can be said to be focused on contributing to educational worker's professional development, evaluating students success and teachers performances and improving education over all. Glatthorn (2004) gives perspective of supervision as a process of facilitating the professional growth of a teacher primarily by giving the teacher the feedback about classroom interaction and helping the teacher make use of the feedback in order to make teaching more effective.

In Kenya there are many officials who are expected to supervise ECDE schools. These include County Director, County Quality Assurance Officers, Zonal Quality Assurance officers and Headteachers. Out of all these supervisors, the head teacher is the only one who resides in the school and is in constant touch with teachers. Head teacher oversees teaching and learning process in the school to ensure that quality instruction takes place.

QASO is a recent term coined to refer to the education officers responsible for supervision of curriculum implementation in schools. This is a new term commonly used in place of the traditional term "inspector or supervisor". According to Ajuoga et al, (2010), the term inspector portrayed the QASO as a person who comes from above to see that policies developed at the central education office are being implemented in schools. Teachers tended to shy away from interacting freely with the inspector for fear of fault finding and victimization. The new term of QASO is intended to remove the stigma associated with the inspector and portray the officers as people concerned with improving quality and standards of education by working as partners with the teachers. Therefore, QASO are expected to enhance education effectiveness and efficiency by working in collaboration with teachers and schools.

Globally the notion of school inspection started in England in 1836 (Grubb, 1999) and the British took it with them to their colonies. Missionaries established the formal schools and the clergy acted as the supervisors. France inspection system, whose background goes back to the French revolution has been copied by several of its colonies. Gabriel

and Anton (1987) noted that Algeria for instance, retains much of French inspection practice. Some countries separate administrative supervision from pedagogical supervision. Daily function decentralization of control to school level also involve a change in the approach to quality improvements; there is a shift in many countries from quality control to quality assurance strategy. There is a growing conviction that teachers should be encouraged and separated to gauge for themselves the quality of the service which they have to deliver (Cullinford, 1998).

IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION

Educational supervisors have to increase educational quality and contribute to the professional development of educational workers. Supervision leads to the holistic development of children and promotes personal and professional growth of those involved. It also helps to ensure that children's needs are met. It enables efficient implementation of curriculum, checks whether the objectives have been achieved and identifies strength and achievement. The supervisors monitor the teaching and learning process and inspect facilities and services at pre – schools (UNESCO, 2005). According to Ozdemir and Yirci (2015), supervision is necessary for issues such as increasing educational quality, sustainability of work disciplines, determining to what extent the curriculum achieve their goals and determining and meeting needs of present educational activities.

Supervision should be inclusive addressing importance of supervising education and training activities as well as extra curricula activities in order to provide a more habitable community and for the training of the required skilled work force. Study done by Ozdemir and Yirci (2015) posits that supervision is necessary for fully implementing the required tasks and operation on time, for eliminating possible errors and mistakes, and for setting an order within the school. Based on the change in the function of supervision, the role of the supervisor has also changed. Educational supervision now have to increase educational quality and contribute to the professional development of educational workers. Supervision facilitates evaluation of quality and standards of education and it promotes school accountability towards the government, parents and tax payers.

Supervision is essential in the form of feedback concerning education training activities. Supervision is also crucial in solving problems teachers encounters during practice as a result of these changes. The problems can be overcome through effective guidance provided by educational supervisors. For effective supervision, there should be an unconditional atmosphere of respect between the supervised and the QASO's. Guidance is the central element of educational supervision. When a sufficient amount of guidance is provided, job satisfaction of teachers would increase, a positive contribution to organizational commitment would take place and their professional motivation would increase.

Supervision is supposed to promote teacher growth and motivation. However, study done by Alfred et al. (2015) revealed that head teachers were using models of supervision that did not promote teacher growth. They pegged the

supervision on the interest of the child not of the teacher. They did not recommend for teachers in – servicing. They further postulate that supervision should provide both capable and less capable teachers with information about teaching behaviour so that they can continue to develop teaching skills and improve the quality of their performance. Actually the main purpose of supervision is to aid the teacher achieve self directed growth. According to Ajuoga et al.(2010), head teachers and other quality assurance officers should have competencies in areas such as; human relations , knowledge of the subject and modern supervisory approaches. It is important for QASO who are responsible for determining the extent which teachers master their duties and responsibilities, to have at least the same educational status with the teachers. They should have expert knowledge about their own field.

DRAWBACK TO EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPERVISION

It is known that there are many negative opinions of teachers in the literature regarding supervision. For example educational supervisors displaying unpleasant behaviours during the supervision (Wanzare, 2006). Another drawback is insufficient levels of guidance services. Lack of standards for supervision implementation. The ECDE guidelines book produced in the year 2006 by the MoEST does not explicitly stipulate the supervision guidelines for the pre schools. Head teachers receive training in different programmes of education, therefore they lack knowledge and orientation to supervise pre schools. It is possible that school head teachers would not succeed in supervising classroom civility and pupil's behaviour.

Supervision of education and training activities in schools and all of the extracurricular activities is an essential obligation. Teachers educate pupils in various competencies such as behaviour acquisition, along with teaching children subject activities, gaining a personality and realizing the values of the society. Study findings by Ozdemin and Yirci (2015), reported that expecting recently assigned school principals to carry out both their administrative role and also as a supervisors would not be very realistic. It was emphasized that because school principals work over time to perform their present workloads, it would create a problem for the effectiveness of the inspection as well. This can be interpreted that supervision is carried out superficially.

Specific objectives of the study were to:

- ✓ Establish the contributions teachers, Head Teachers and QASO's make to Early Childhood Education.
- ✓ Determine challenges experienced by the teachers, head teachers and QASO's while performing their duties.

II. METHODOLOGY

VENUE AND SAMPLE

The study was carried out in Homabay Sub County in Kenya. The total number of QASO were six in the county, 20 head teachers and 66 teachers. Teachers and Head teachers were selected by simple random sampling. One QASO was used for the pilot survey.

INSTRUMENTS

Data collection instruments were questionnaire and interview schedule. The interview schedule sought the opinions of the QASO and Head teachers on way they perceive their competence on ECDE supervision on the variables covered in the questionnaires. The interview also gave the respondents the opportunity to identify their own felt needs to be addressed. The questions were open ended to afford the respondents a chance to speak for themselves. The questionnaire were in a likert scale of five designed to establish competencies in human relations, ECDE knowledge expertise and report management.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Three experts on the topic of study at St. Paul's University were asked to examine the instruments in order to establish their face validity. Their judgments' were used to revise the instruments and ensure that they address the objectives of the study more effectively. To establish reliability of the questionnaire was administered twice to the same respondents at an interval of two weeks. The mean scores of the respondents on the two tests were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula, which yielded a coefficient of 0.78. This was considered high enough to judge the questionnaire as reliable.

DATA COLLECTION

The researchers visited the respondents at their places of work and administered the questionnaire and the interview schedule.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Frequency counts were first worked out for the data collected through the Likert scale questionnaire, percentages of each of the respondents on each item of the Likert scale were then worked out. The statements on the Likert scale were scored as follows: Strongly Agree (S.A) = 5points, Agree (A) = 4points, Undecided (U) = 3 points, Disagree (D)= 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1point. In the interpretation of percentages above 50 denoted a positive response, 50 denoted neutral and below 50 denoted negative response. Interview data was analyzed by searching through the interview data to the objectives of the study. The categories and themes were developed as emergent trend that gave meaning to the data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHICS

The study involved 66 teachers in ECDE centres in Homabay County, 64 were female and 2 males. This suggests that ECDE centres are female dominated. All the 63 centres were attached direct to a primary school. A sign that the centres rely on the schools for resources. A good number were either secondary school leavers of diploma holders as

24(38.1%) reported in each case, two were primary education leavers while another two had degree education. This is an indication that most teachers in these centres are able to guide children through the ECD programme. Most 32 (50.7%) teachers had 10 years and above of teaching experience, a good number 18(28.6%) had 2 to 5 years experience while the rest 1 year and below.

ENGAGEMENT OF COUNTY COORDINATORS TO CURRICULUM SUPERVISION RELATIONS

The study sought opinions of the respondents on curriculum supervision relations as carried out by the coordinators. Results were as summarized on Table 1.

Supervision Activity	Opinions				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
i. Nurture conducive relationship with teachers	15 (23.8)	39 (61.9)	08 (12.7)	01 (1.6)	--
ii. Informs teachers in advance about their visit	08 (12.7)	04 (6.3)	07 (11.1)	12 (19.0)	21 (33.3)
iii. Use traditional approach more often	02 (3.2)	09 (14.3)	18(28.6)	20 (31.7)	11 (17.4)
iv. Are ready to accept suggestions	07 (11.1)	14 (22.2)	10 (15.9)	16 (25.4)	05 (7.9)
v. Seek and value teachers' suggestions	07 (11.1)	13 (20.6)	11 (17.4)	15 (23.8)	03 (4.8)
vi. Act as counselors and guide to teachers	20 (31.7)	18 (28.6)	05 (7.9)	13 (20.6)	03 (4.8)

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 1: Curriculum Supervision Relations by County Coordinators

As shown on Table 1, curriculum supervision relations regarding nurturing conducive relationship during classroom observation is exhibited by the coordinators. This was supported by 54 (85.7) of the respondents. However, only 33 (52.3) refuted the fact that coordinators normally informs teachers in advance on their visits. On use of traditional approaches, 31(49.2) of the respondents reported that coordinators do not use this approach, another 18 (28.6) were unable to tell whether they do this. As whether coordinators were ready to accept suggestions from teachers, mixed responses were attracted. Some 21 (33.3) felt the coordinators were doing this whereas another 21 (33.3) felt that were not. A similar scenario was also reported on whether coordinators normally seek and value teachers' opinions during supervision process as 20 (31.7) of them admitted this fact while another 18 (28.6) refuted the same. Respondents' opinions was sought on whether coordinators do act as counselors and guide to teachers, 38 (60.3) agreed they normally do.

Expertise on Supervision	Opinions				
	S.A	A	U	D	S.D
i. Competent in aiding teachers to produce materials	09 (14.3)	19 (30.2)	13 (20.6)	10 (15.9)	13 (20.6)
ii. Organize in-service training on ECE transition	06 (9.5)	04 (6.3)	05(7.9)	27 (42.9)	22 (34.9)
iii. Orientation to beginning teachers	05 (7.9)	10 (15.9)	02 (3.2)	20 (31.7)	26 (41.3)
iv. Handling of modern subject teaching methods	04 (6.3)	17 (26.9)	06 (9.5)	14 (22.2)	11 (17.4)
v. Advice on how to evaluate ECE curriculum	08 (12.7)	26 (41.3)	12 (19.0)	11 (17.4)	06 (9.5)
vi. Induction on how to screen pupils	05 (7.9)	11 (17.4)	08 (12.7)	15 (23.8)	23 (36.5)
vii. Aiding in preparation of professional documents	11 (17.4)	16(25.4)	08 (12.7)	05 (7.9)	23 (36.5)

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U= Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 2: Knowledge Expertise of Coordinators on Curriculum Supervision

Based on the results on Table 2, 28 (44.7) reported that the coordinators are competent in aiding teachers to produce teaching materials. However, 23 (36.5) of them felt that coordinators were not doing this while 13 (20.6) seemed not sure. This suggests that this competency is not effectively exhibited by the coordinators. But regarding organizing for in-service training on smooth transition from ECE supervision to primary one, 49 (77.8) of the respondents seemed to deny this fact. They also reported that coordinators do not give orientation to teachers who have just joined the centres as reported by 46 (93.0) of the respondents. In assisting teachers in handling modern subject teaching methods drew mixed responses, whereas 25 (39.6) of the respondents refuted this claim, another 21 (33.2) of them reported that coordinators were able to do this. Respondents agreed that coordinators were able to devise on how to evaluate ECE curriculum effectively as reported by 34 (54.0) of them. However, they seem to disagree with the fact that coordinators are able to induct teachers on how to screen pupils for program placement as 38 (60.3) reported. Although a good number of them reported that coordinators were unable to aid in preparation of professional documents as another 27 (42.8) seemed to agree with this fact.

The QASO also reported that “At times I have challenges in guiding ECE teachers on how to develop materials for teaching due to my background in education. PLAN International Training is convened to train us but they choose for us the topics or areas to be tackled. They do it their way. The format we use for writing the supervision report is from them too”. This suggests that the skill in report writing among the coordinators of ECE may not be of great help to the teachers. The officer even added that “Reports we write are not given to teachers. We are suppose to call them to the office for discussion though clinical supervision may be more relevant.”

Competences	Opinions				
	S.A	A	U	D	S.D
i. Induct teachers on Report writing	06 (9.5)	09(14.3)	13(20.6)	22(34.9)	19(30.2)
ii. Guide Teachers how to write records	05 (7.9)	10(15.9)	06(9.5)	27(42.9)	13 (20.6)
iii. Provide observation Reports to teachers	02 (3.2)	06(9.5)	09(14.3)	23(36.5)	21(33.3)
iv. Initiate follow-ups based on recommendation	09(14.3)	09(14.3)	04(6.3)	18(28.6)	20(31.7)

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

Table 3: Competence on Report Management

Competence on report management is quite critical to any curriculum supervision since the reports form a basis for reference in decision making towards effective curriculum implementation. From results shown on Table 3, the coordinators seemingly do not induct teachers on report writing as reported by 41(65.1) of the respondents. More specifically 40(63.5) of the respondents reported that they are never guided on how to write health and log book records. They do not also seem to be provided with observation reports as reported by 44(69.8) of them. Seemingly coordinators do not make follow ups on recommendation made during the previous supervision process as reported by 38 (60.3) of the

respondents. This suggests that supervisions seem to be mere routine work of the coordinators not for purposes of providing curriculum improvement but for fulfilling their daily routine activities.

CHALLENGES FACED BY COUNTY ECE COORDINATORS IN HOMABAY

The study sought to find out the challenges faced by the ECE coordinators in Homabay county through interviews the respondents. From the interview, the county QASO reported that she did not visit centres frequently. The following was the statement she made: “I have visited only once. lack of funds to facilitate the exercise is a challenge”. There is no van designated for ECE activities. I have not had opportunity because I am new in the station.” The QASO added that Primary school Head Teachers are also the head of ECE and; some of them want ECE teachers to teach in the primary. There are varied attitude display by some Head Teachers where some of them do not even like ECE children. Early Childhood Education pupils share latrines with primary school ones. Such facilities in some schools are located at the far end of the field away from classrooms. This gives pupils in ECE hard time to access the latrines. Besides, feeding program is a big concern. Initially parents were paying for it and some NGO’s came in but when they faced out, parents refused to take over the payments. So this makes ECE pupils go hungry while primary school counterparts are given food.

ECE pupils do not sit for written examinations, instead areas of competencies are observed and value judgement assigned. The MoEST came up with a tool called Kenya School Readiness Assessment Tool (KSRAT), many ECE teachers are not comfortable to use it instead some are listening to the parents who want see their children sit for exams and report form produced. Salaries of coordinators of ECE are much lower in comparison with their TSC employed counterparts. Besides, no proper structure for promotion developed. This seems to demoralize coordinators in executing their services. As put by one of the head teachers interviewed: “The question of KSRAT and thematic approach always arises. Teachers have problem of scheming using thematic approach and also for teaching, they get confused.” Another head teacher also reported that: “Assessment is an issue, parents want their children to do examinations and teachers are directed to test competencies as stipulated in KSRAT and coordinators rarely visit, have not seen them for the last two years”.

Interviews from head teachers indicated that most of them have fully integrated ECE teachers in the primary school. They share the staffroom, staff meeting and duty roster; mark the professional records at the beginning of each term as well as monitor the professional documents on a monthly basis. The head teachers also seem to help the ECE teachers to interpret the KSRAT and prepare other T/L materials.

Head teachers also reported that the QASO visit the school once per year. They do not take much time to demonstrate to teachers how to prepare the documents. One said that “The report is not availed to me for record filing, they only give verbal report “. This seems to be in agreement with

QASO's sentiments during the interview that they do not visit schools frequently.

The head teachers seem to face challenges on Infrastructure as reported by one of them that: "I have 155 pupils with only two classrooms, no enough chairs and tables, no outdoor fixed play facilities, no enough toilets. As reported by one of them: "I have a total of 1300 pupils, 180 are ECE, One room serves as my office, D/Ht's office and staffroom. ECE has only one class partitioned by mat and the class was built by PLAN International. County Government has done nothing so far. However Plan International has helped in sanitation by providing washing hands tanks and a classroom.

Teaching and Learning materials such as chalk are not there for ECE, the teachers are getting them from primary section. One of the head teachers also quipped: "The county government is reluctant in supporting ECE in provision of materials and even in-service training for teachers."

There is no funding at all for ECE. Besides, the ECE teachers have difficulty in preparing schemes of work using thematic approach and the county supervisors are not helping them much. Even most of the head teachers seem not to be of help to these teachers as reported by one of them as: "I don't check their professional documents, I am shying off because I am not conversant with ECDE, I have assigned a teacher who has a degree in ECDE." This is an indication that even the head teachers need some induction course in ECDE in order to understand what the teachers are doing.

Most ECE teachers are demoralized and the manner in which they are remunerated are questionable. Certificate holders getting higher salary than diploma holder. Some have served on contract for five years.

IV. CONCLUSION

The national government should re – envision ways in which ECE should be transformed in order to help county government address the many cited challenges as reflected in the study.

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