

Implementation Of Government Policies On Classroom Organization In Early Childhood Education Centres In Bungoma East Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract: Early childhood education plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for further education and character formation of children. For children to achieve good results in any early childhood class, a good classroom organization plays a role in helping children develop positive attitudes towards learning and it offers ideal opportunities for children to achieve social interactions. Policies are important as they tend to focus on how teachers act toward classroom organization. This study sought to analyze the teaching and learning aids arrangement and display in early childhood centres in relation to the government policy in Bungoma East Sub-County. The study was guided by cultural lag theory. The study employed a cross-section descriptive design on 15 ECE centres, 15 ECE headteachers, 60 ECE teachers and 3 ECE officials. The research instruments used were questionnaire for teachers, interview schedules for headteachers and ECE officials, observation checklist and document analysis. Quantitative data were coded and summarized into frequencies and percentages with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Qualitative data from the questionnaire, interview schedules, document analysis and observation checklist were summarized into themes as they emerged from responses and presented in a narrative form. It was revealed that in both urban and rural ECE centres in Bungoma East Sub –County, the implementation of arrangement and display of teaching and learning materials policy is low; the policy on seating arrangement is to a small extent being implemented in urban ECE centres as compared to rural ECE centres where implementation is low and in both rural and urban ECE centres the implementation of the policy on grouping of children and material distribution is equally low.

ECE centres have been compromised due to low levels of implementation of government policy on classroom organization in ECE

I. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood Education (ECE) has continued to attract the attention of educationists, researchers, and government's world over (Copples & Bredakamp, 2009). It is noted that the success of good education in later years of one's life is largely determined by the quality of education received in early schooling. For instance, children who go through ECE have been found to have a more sound foundation and are better prepared to start primary school education (Makatiani, 2008; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). Research on ECE schooling has further revealed that ECE plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for further education and character formation (MoE, 2010). There is a growing body of evidence about the

impact of education on young children outside their homes. Perhaps why researchers such as Minneapolis, and Nobel Prize winner Professor James Heckman argued that the returns on investment in ECE far exceeds the returns on most other projects funded for economic development (Calman & Tarr-Welam, 2005 ; Grunewald, 2003).

After World War II in 1945, people's aspirations and demand for education heightened (Coombs, 1985) and early childhood education was given emphasis in many western countries. One of the strongest desires after the war was increasing access to education which found expression in international declaration, notably the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights which stated that everyone has the right to education (UNO, 1948). The importance of ECE

was emphasized in the Dakar Framework for Education for All. The first goal of the conference was to expand and improve comprehensive ECE (Vargas-Baron, 2005).

The 1989 United Nations convention of the Rights of the Child (UNO, 1989), the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), all express the importance of incorporating ECE into the overall development of national systems of education.

According to World Bank (1997), it is important that the classroom should be safe, clean, comfortable, attractive, well-organized, and stimulating. It should have objects, well-organized for children to manipulate and have a chance to explore. To ensure a proper classroom organization and hence quality services, countries have policies on ECE classroom organization. Policies are important as they tend to focus on how teachers act toward classroom organization and consistency in their implementation is essential to effective class organization (Nakamura, 2000).

Official policies for ECE began to emerge in developing countries such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia around the 1960s and 1970s. These policies were cross-sectorial. Policies for ECE in Sub-Saharan Africa began in 1970s when Bernard Van Leer and other donors supported the programmemes across the continent (Vargas-Baron, 2005). Indeed, at the 1990 World Conference on EFA, a precondition for educational quality, equity, efficiency was set in ECE (Little, 1994). Some of the policies that were laid down specified that an ECE centre should have rich teaching and learning materials.

In Kenya investment in ECE depends mostly on donors and multilateral organizations like World Bank, United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNESCO. As part of the efforts to achieve EFA goals, the Kenyan government has taken a bold step to implement a broad national policy on ECE through Sessional Paper Number 1 of 2005. As a result, a National Early Childhood Development Policy Framework was initiated and finally launched (RoK, 2006). This policy document is operationalized through Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP 2005-2010).

However, research has shown that for children to achieve good results in any early childhood class, a good classroom organization plays a role. As claimed by (Copple & Bredakamp, 2009), classroom organization helps children develop positive attitudes towards learning and offer ideal opportunities for children social interactions. Through social interactions, children increase their knowledge and understanding as well as develop critical thinking skills that support lifelong learning (Copple & Bredakamp, 2009). Despite the above measures, access, equity and quality in this sub-sector in ECE centres remains constrained by various factors that include: limited teaching, learning materials, inadequate community participation; lack of a clear policy on transition from ECE to primary school; lack of enough trained teachers; lack of terms of services and predictable employment for ECE teachers (RoK, 2006).

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for further education and character formation of children (MoE, 2010). The effective delivery of ECE

curriculum largely depends on a well-organized classroom and which is done in line with laid-down policies (World Bank, 1997). Classroom organization is important as it helps a teacher to achieve the set objectives and thus effective implementation of policies (McDavid, 2004). Also a well organized classroom helps children develop positive attitudes towards learning and offer ideal opportunities for children social interactions. Through social interactions children increase their knowledge, understanding as well as develop critical thinking skills that support lifelong learning (Copple & Bredakamp, 2009). Thus the study aimed at analyzing the teaching and learning aids arrangement and display in early childhood centres classroom in relation to the government policy

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study focused on classroom organization in ECEs in Bungoma East Sub-County of larger Bungoma County, Kenya. It was a cross-sectional comparative study involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study targeted 15 ECE centres, 15 ECE head teachers, 60 ECE teachers and 3 ECE officers as the key informants. Interview schedules, questionnaires, document reviews and observations were employed as data collection techniques. Documents that were reviewed included; The ECE syllabus and teacher's guides, class registers and financial plans that helped provide information on population and the availability of funds for provision of teaching and learning resources, expansion or improvement of existing physical facilities and the influence they had on teacher's professional work. There were one-on-one interviews with the three ECE officers in the sub-county. There was a questionnaire for the ECE teachers who were responsible for organizing the ECE classroom and who were handling the class at the time of the study. It sought information on: the respondent's 'opinions' about the ways in which, under ideal conditions, government policies on classroom organization in an ECE centre ought to be implemented, the available ECE infrastructure, facilities and teaching-learning aids. Observation checklist was used in getting the real extent to which government policies on classroom organization were implemented in ECEs. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were first coded then entered in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 for analysis. Data was summarized using descriptive statistics (Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation). Qualitative data was analyzed as themes as they emerged

III. FINDINGS

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	2	4.3
Female	44	96

Age bracket (in years)		
<30	27	59
31-40	5	11
41-50	10	23
>50	4	9
Training		
Certificate	35	77.1
Diploma	9	20.8
Degree	1	2.1
Teaching experience		
1-5	27	59
6-10	15	36
20 and above	4	9

Table 1: Distribution of background information for ECE teachers

Among the participants who participated in the study, 44(96%) were female and 27(59%) were aged below 30 years. As regards professional training, 35 (77.1%) of the participants had obtained certificate level. In addition 27(59%) of the participants had teaching experience of 1-5 years.

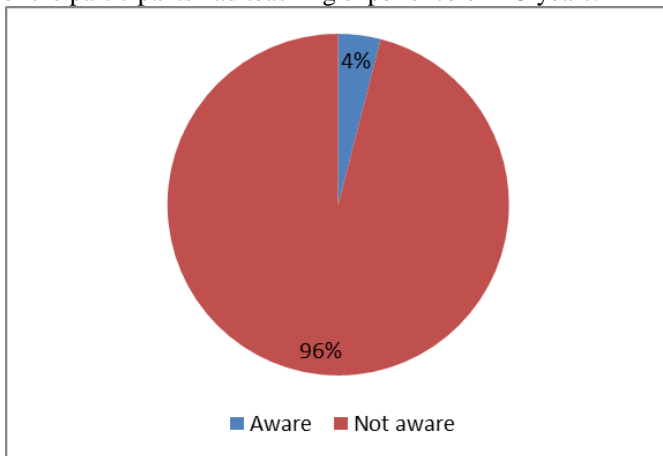


Figure 2: Policy Awareness

As indicated in figure 2, 96% of the participants reported that they are not aware of the government policy that guides them on classroom organization. This finding can be attributed to the fact that these teachers have not attended refresher courses as it was established on Figure 4.1 and thus they are not equipped with current education policies in ECE. Yet, education policies are vital as they promote order in the classroom and policies also provide an environment conducive to learning. Further, policies laid down by an educational body support teaching and learning and they provide students with clear expectations as claimed by (Levin & Nolan, 2004).

	Strongly Agree		A		UN		D		SD	
	R	F%	R	F%	R	F%	R	F%	R	F%
Teaching and learning materials are important in an ECE centre	11(34.4)	11(34.4)	12(38)	12(38)	4(13)	4(13)	4(13)	4(13)	1(3.1)	1(3.1)
Teachers in our ECE centre organize learning and teaching materials into various	9(28.1)	9(28.1)	2(6.2)	2(6.2)	0(0)	0(0)	15(47)	13(41)	6(19)	6(19)

corners										
I organize the corners into various themes as per activity learnt	8 (25)	8(25)	3(9.4)	3(9.4)	4(13)	4(13)	13(41)	13(41)	2(6.2)	2(6.2)
The corners in my ECE centre are permanently established	2 (6.3)	1(3.1)	4(13)	3(9.4)	0(0)	0(0)	20(63)	21(66)	3(9.4)	1(3.1)
In my ECE centre, there are various displays on the walls (writing, drawing, number work)	22 (63)	18(56.3)	2(6.2)	5(4)	1(3.1)	0(0)	7(23)	6(19)	0(0)	1(3.1)

Table 2: Learning and teaching aids arrangement in ECE centres

As indicated in Table 2, 23 (72.4%) of the participants in rural ECE centres in Bungoma East Sub-County, agreed that teaching and learning materials are crucial in an ECE centre. This finding could be attributed to the fact that learning materials support teaching by making ideas and concepts clear and equally materials (teaching aids) make learning interesting and vivid as established by RoK (2006). Further, according to this author, learning and teaching materials are valuable in promoting motivation and retention of children on an item learnt. Twenty one (66%) of the participants in rural ECE centres, disagreed that they organize learning and teaching materials into various corners. This state was also observed by the researcher as presented on Table 3; where only 1 (14.3%) of the centres sampled had a modelling and a construction corner established in the classroom using realia. This finding could be attributed to the fact that since 96% of the participants as shown on Figure 2 reported that they are not aware of the policy that guides them on classroom organization; perhaps they may not make any effort to establish the corners.

The above finding differs with the government policy governing ECE centres which states that teaching and learning materials are to be put into learning corners or centres (KIE, 2010). Well-arranged, corners according to (Peck, 1990) encourage growth of children's self-esteem, their cultural identities, their independence and their individual strengths. Table 2, shows that 11(34.3%) of the rural participants agreed that they organize learning materials into various corners. Further, interviewed ECE officers said that "any ECE Centre where you can find established corners definitely there is a teacher on teaching practice" (Three ECE officers Bungoma County, 2014). This finding implies that if continuous teacher development is stressed among ECE teachers, implementation of the policy will be improved as reported by Sarah (2007).

Eleven (34.3%) of the rural participants agreed that they organize corners into various themes as per activity learnt. However, 15(47.2%) of the participants disagreed that they organize corners into various themes. This finding implies that majority of the rural ECE centre teachers assume that teaching and learning can take place without learning aids yet according to Jill (2012), materials organized into themes form an excellent teaching method as they make teaching real hence high retention among children. This author claims that

teaching aids make learning to be orderly. In addition, 23(72.4%) of the participants disagreed that corners should permanently be established in an ECE Centre. This implies that teachers in rural ECE Centres are aware that each year they admit children with different learning abilities and therefore they should not always use permanently established corners as this may not be catering for different abilities among children. However, 6(19.3%) of the participants agreed that corners should be permanently established in an ECE Centre. This finding is in line with the government policy which states that some corners may be made permanent and others less permanent depending on the theme under study (KIE, 2010).

It was shown that 24(69.2%) of the participants agreed that they have various displays (language, number work) on the walls. However, from the observation checklist presented on Table 3, the researcher observed that only 3 (43%) of the sampled centres had number work and language activity display. As observed by the ECE officers, it could be that these centres had at one time teachers on practice who made the displays for the purpose of assessment, because as observed by the researcher the displays looked old, some torn, falling off from the walls and some looked like they have not been used for some time from the way they were rolled up and mixed with outdoor play things like tyres hanging on the same nail on the wall, such that they could not be meaningfully be put to use by the small children. Four (57.1%) of the ECE centres did not have any displays, it may imply that teachers did not try even to improvise some of the teaching-learning aids as stipulated by the policy for display.

On the other hand, 23(72.4%) of the participants in urban ECE centres as well as those in the rural agreed that teaching and learning materials are important. This finding implies that ECE teachers in both urban and rural centres are aware that learning and teaching materials help to raise curiosity of a child and thus improvement in retention as asserted by (KIE, 2010). As indicated on Table 4.2, 11(34.3%) of the participants agreed that they organize the teaching and learning materials into various corners, whereas 19(60%) of the participants disagreed that they organize materials into various corners. This finding was validated by the observation from interviews with the ECE officers who indicated that “most ECE centres lack the required materials that the ECE teachers can organize into learning corners and that some are just so demotivated and too lazy to improvise the teaching-learning aids”.(Three ECE officers, Bungoma County).

Through observation checklists (Table 3), the researcher observed that out of the recommended seven corners by the Ministry of Education, in urban ECE centres, only 1(14.3%), had a modelling and construction corners on realia. The other corners (five) as it was the case in rural ECE Centres were non-existent. The implication of this finding is that in both rural and urban ECE centres the policy on organizing materials into various corners on realia is not being implemented yet according to (Gandini, 1998), well-arranged classroom corners encourage the growth of children’s self-esteem, their actual identities as well as their independence. Further, Opit and Ford (2002) also claimed that centres promote creativity and allow learners of various abilities to work together.

According to Table 4.2, 15 (47.2%) of the participants disagreed that they organize various corners into learnt themes. The reason that could be attributed to this finding may be that these urban centres as those centres in the rural setting have not established the corners and thus they have nothing to organize into themes. This finding disagrees with that of (Festinger, 1962) who established that an ECE class/centre whose corners are arranged into themes suggests that there is a holistic learning (social, emotional, intellectual and physical development) taking place.

Data on Table 4.2 show that 23(69.1%) of the participants as those in rural ECE centres disagreed that corners in ECE centre should be permanently established. However, 4(12.5%) of the participants in urban ECE centres agreed that corners should be permanently established. This finding is in agreement with an earlier finding by (Roskos & Neuman, 2000) who reported that permanent corners in an ECE learning environment capture children’s interest and provide new challenges thereby motivating new learning. According to data on Table 4.2, 23(60.3%) of the participants in urban ECE centres agreed that they have wall displays such as those of number work, drawing, language and science. This finding implies that teachers are actively involved in improvising the learning materials as from general observation by the researcher; most of the writings and drawings were done on empty nylon sugar or maize bags and manila papers. Further, through observation results on Table 4.3 the researcher found that 7(87.5%) of the urban sampled centres had number work chart and language displays on walls. There were more displays on walls in the urban ECE centres as compared to the rural ECE centres. The reason that may be adduced to this finding could be that the urban ECE teachers were well facilitated due to availability of funds and improvised to creatively come up with teaching –learning aids as stipulate in the policy (KIE 2010). Also most of the urban ECE centres had teachers on practice.

Item	Available Rural		Available Urban	
	F	(%)	F	%
Number work display	3	(43)	7	(88)
Language activity display	3	(43)	7	(88)
Science displays	3	(43)	4	(50)
Environment study corner	2	(29)	1	(13)
Painting, drawing, coloring	2	(29)	7	(88)
Home corner	0	(0)	1	(13)
Shop corner	1	(14.3)	2	(25)
Water play corner	0	(0)	0	(0)
Modeling corner	0	(0)	2	(25)
Construction corner	0	(0)	0	(0)

Table 3: Learning and teaching aids and displays in ECE centres

In all the rural ECE centres sampled it was observed that at least in 3 (43%) centres, there were number work, science and language activity displays on walls. Two (29%) centres had environmental study, painting, drawing, and coloring displays on walls alone whereas one centre had a shop and modelling corner displays on realia and wall displays. However, it was observed that in all the centres, there were no water play corner, modelling and construction corner displays, either with realia and wall displays. Any material found was in

a dusty disorganized dirty heap such that it lost meaning to learning.

Comparatively in all the urban centres sampled for this study, 7(88%) of the centres had number work, science as well as language activity, painting, drawing and colouring displays on manila papers on walls and strings across the classroom. As regards environmental displays, 4(50%) centre had displays while 4(50%) did not have any as shown on Table 3. The researcher observed that home corners, painting, colouring and drawing corners on realia were available in only 1(13%) centre. The other corners like the water play and construction were not available as it was the case in rural ECE centres. According to observation results, only 2(25%) of the urban centres had shop corners with realia. These displays were mostly on manila papers, improvised maize bags and in one case soft board and hanged on walls, but use of realia set on the floor was not embraced. The ECE officers noted that “most of the materials used by the teachers to improvise the teaching-learning aids are perishable/temporary and cannot last”, (Two ECE officers Bungoma County, 2014). The interviewed officers noted that “most centres do not have the materials for the ECE teachers to organize into displays in corners particularly on realia and the headteachers do not make any effort to provide because they do not understand the ECE syllabus and the importance of ECE in a child’s life” (Three ECE officers Bungoma County, 2014). This common occurrence in both urban and rural ECE centres as regards arrangement of corners and displays may be an indicator that the policy on classroom organization has not been embraced despite the fact that this policy has been put in place (KIE, 2010). This may be an implication that even if the Ministry of Education has laid down policies to govern classroom organization on materials, the policy has not controlled the ECE teachers in regard to material arrangement. As such, the children may not be exposed to the expected learning experiences.

GROUPING OF CHILDREN AND MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION IN RURAL AND URBAN ECE CENTRES IN BUNGOMA EAST SUB-COUNTY

The policy stipulates that children are to be grouped into various categories based on age and be put into three levels of baby class, middle class and top class. Further sub-division is to be done in the various classrooms based on ability, interest and sometimes friendship to create a conducive environment for some children to learn. Grouping enables sharing of the teaching and learning resources which in most cases are scarce to ensure every child gets exposed to a variety of learning experiences. The third objective of the study sought to assess the process of grouping children in rural and urban ECE centres. The participants were asked to respond to items on a questionnaire and the results are shown on Tables 4.6.

GROUPING OF CHILDREN AND MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION IN RURAL AND URBAN ECE CENTRES IN BUNGOMA EAST SUB-COUNTY

The participants were asked to indicate the various categories into which they group children. The results were

meant to be used in making comparisons between rural and urban ECE centres. The results of the participants are as shown on Table 4.6 below.

Statement	SA R	U	A R	U	U N R	U	D R	U	SD R	U
	F (%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
Grouping of children into various categories is important	20(91)	23(94)	1(5)	1(5)	1(5)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(8)
In our ECE centre children are grouped into three levels (Baby, Middle, Top)	5(23)	17(60.3)	0(0)	7(21.2)	1(5)	0(0)	4(18.2)	2(8.1)	13(59.1)	0(0)
Children in my ECE centre are grouped based on ability	2(9.1)	1(5)	1(5)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	19(86.1)	20(87.4)	0(0)	1(5)
When grouping children in our ECE centre we consider friendship	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(5)	0(0)	20(91)	23(95)	1(5)	1(5)
The population of children in our ECE centre is of the right number as per the ECE policy	0(0)	20(87.4)	1(5)	1(5)	0(0)	0(0)	2(9.1)	2(8.1)	19(86.4)	0(0)
We have enough teaching and learning materials in our ECE centre	0(0)	1(5)	1(5)	3(11.1)	0(0)	1(5)	16(70)	8(25)	5(23)	1(5)
Teachers in my ECE centre involve children in distributing learning materials	0(0)	16(58)	0(0)	1(5)	0(0)	1(5)	19(86.14)	4(16)	0(0)	1(5)

Table 4: Grouping of children in ECE centre

Data on Table 4 indicates that 21(96%) of the rural participants agreed that grouping of children into various categories is important. This could be due to the fact that teachers are aware that when children are grouped, they think more, learn more, remember more, take greater pleasure in learning and spend more time on a task as reported by (McClellan, 1994). It also shows that 17(77.28%) of the rural ECE participants disagreed that an ECE centre should have three different levels of children, namely: baby, middle and top. The researcher observed that in most of the rural ECE centres, all the three levels were placed in one classroom. It was interesting if not a surprise to find three teachers in one space with all the three levels under one roof with each teacher shouting to teach his/her children. Under such circumstance one is left to wonder whether any meaningful teaching-learning was taking place. This was in line with the observation made by the ECE officers who said that “most ECE centres are overcrowded having as high as 90 children in a space due to lack of classrooms and so all the three levels are taught in one class”, (Two female ECE officers Bungoma County). The implication of this finding could be that teachers are not aware of the government policy that guides them on how to categorize children (KIE, 2010), or lack of classrooms. However, this finding disagrees with that of (Diane & Susan, 1999) which established that teaching children of varied ages

in one classroom affects their pre-social behaviour particularly that of sharing learning materials.

Nineteen (86.4%) of the rural participants disagreed that children should be grouped according to their abilities. Further, interviewed headteachers said that "Using abilities to group children is discriminatory and it demoralizes them" (Four headteachers, rural ECE centres, Bungoma East Sub-County 2014). This finding differs with an early finding by (Gakii, 2003) who established that grouping children according to their abilities enables the teacher to attend to an individual child's need and thus it promotes academic achievement. Further, KIE (2010) established that categorizing children by abilities discourages rote learning by some children. It was found that 21(96%) of the rural participants disagreed that children should be grouped based on friendship. This finding is contrary to the ECE grouping policy which states that sometimes a teacher is required to allow children to work among friendship groups so as to allow them to feel secured (KIE, 2010). It is indicated in the same table that 21(95.5%) of the rural participants disagreed that the population of children in rural ECE centres is not in line with the policy and thus grouping of children is not easy. Further, according to the document analysis, the researcher established that in rural ECE centres where baby classes existed the population ranged between 34-40 children instead of the recommended number of 25-30 (KIE,2010). In the centres where there were established middle classes the population ranged 34-40 instead of the recommended 25-30 (KIE, 2010). In rural centres where top classes existed, the population was that of between 45-60 instead of the recommended 35 children (KIE, 2010). From this finding it could be adduced that teachers lacked enough space and thus grouping of children was difficult. The other implication of this finding could be that the policy of having the right number of children at each level is not being implemented in rural ECE centres.

Twenty two (95%) of the participants disagreed that they do not have enough teaching and learning materials at their rural ECE centres, therefore, had nothing to involve the children in distribution. Further, from the observation checklist, the researcher observed that only 3(43%) of the sampled centres had class displays and specifically those of number work, language activity and that of science and that various learning corners were non-existent. The respondents indicated that they do not involve the children in distributing the materials because they are not available. The researcher further observed that if any, the only material that the children assisted in distribution were the counters for number work and crayons for colouring. However, interviewed headteachers explained that, "ECE teachers are supposed to improvise the materials since most of them are locally available" (Six head teachers, Bungoma East Sub-County 2014). The implication of this finding may be that teaching and learning in rural ECE centres is not from known to unknown because according to (KIE, 2010 & NACECE, 2009), young children learn better when their thinking and most importantly, learning materials capture their attention because the materials easily enable them to link the learnt concept. According to Table 4.6, 23(94%) of the urban respondents as those in rural ECE centres agreed that grouping of children in an ECE centre into various categories is important. This finding is in line with

government policy which states that the act of grouping children is important because it enables children to get an equal opportunity to be exposed to learning materials which may be scarce (KIE, 2010). However, 1(5%) of the urban participants disagreed that grouping of children is not important. The implication of this finding could be that these might be among the batch of teachers who are not aware of the policy.

Twenty four (83%) of the participants in urban ECE centres as those in rural ECE centres agreed that children in ECE centres should be categorized into baby, middle and top classes. This finding may imply that teachers are aware that when children are placed in their rightful classes, syllabus coverage is a little bit easier unlike when they are lumped. This finding is in agreement with that of (Antony, 2011) who established that when children are in one class, a teacher is not able to cater for individual differences. Further, an interviewed ECE officer explained that "when children are placed into their rightful levels, academic achievement is promoted", (One male ECE officer, Bungoma County). Twenty one (92.4%) of the participants in urban ECE centres as those in rural ECE centres disagreed they do not group children according to their abilities. Yet, according to KIE (2012) when learners are grouped based on their abilities, they learn to respect each other's abilities. Further, this author expounds that grouping of learners according to abilities enables the teacher to attend to their individual weaknesses or differences.

It is shown in table 4 that participants reported that in their urban ECE centres, the population of children is as recommended by the government policy. However, through data on document analysis, the researcher established that in baby classes, there were 31 children while the policy recommends a maximum of 30 (KIE, 2010). In top classes, there were 43 children but the policy recommends a maximum of 35 children (KIE, 2010). The implication of this finding may be that teachers lack enough space and thus implementation of the grouping policy is likely to be affected. This finding is in line with (Antony, 2011) who asserted that tiny classrooms do not enable teachers enough room to group children into various categories. Nine (30.5%) of the urban participants as those in rural centres disagreed that they have enough learning and teaching materials. This state was further observed by the researcher (Table 4) whereby it was noted that only one 1(13%) urban centre had the following corners; painting, drawing and coloring corner, home corner, 4(50%) of the centres had a modelling corner while three centres did not have any corner. The implication of this finding could be that the policy on material availability in urban centres is not largely being implemented.

Lastly, 5(21%) of the urban participants as those in rural centres disagreed that they involve children in distributing teaching and learning materials. The reason that may be attributed to this finding could be that since the ECE centres do not have adequate materials (Table, 4.), probably they may have nothing to allocate children to distribute. Thus, the policy on distribution of materials is not being implemented in rural as well as urban ECE centres in Bungoma East Sub-County, yet according to (Antony, 2011), involving children in material distribution helps in training leadership and

responsibility. It also ensures that materials are distributed in groups for learning within the shortest time possible.

IV. CONCLUSION

Policy awareness plays a significant role in the implementation of government policy on ECE classroom organization. To achieve the intended purpose of quality ECE, there must be frantic effort for the classroom environment to be in line with policy requirements. The study results indicated that the quality of ECE centres in Bungoma East sub-county has been compromised due to low levels of implementation of government policy on classroom organization in ECE. While teachers value the need to organize classrooms, their practices were observed to be contrary to their perceptions

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the following are the recommendations for the various stakeholders:

- ✓ All the stakeholders need to be informed through workshops, seminars, in-service courses and training of professionals to put in place the policy requirements.
 - ✓ MoEST should deploy more personnel who will provide an extensive ECE training to target all ECE teachers. The programme should be modelled along practical approach which should involve a practical setup of an ECE classroom to include all the nine activity areas and classroom corners with a variety of teaching-learning aids and their use.
 - ✓ The ministry should deploy more ECE officers if the policies on classroom organization are to be effectively put in check. Consequently, the study recommends that MoEST should devise better ways of monitoring and evaluating the ECE policies on classroom organization to ensure they are being implemented.
 - ✓ ECE centres should integrate an ECE classroom organization strategy into the institution's overall strategies which include coming up with a policy to guide acquisition of material for classroom organization to be used in teaching and learning.
- ✓ Head teachers need to work with the ECE teachers and parents as a team to ensure sufficient provisions of the teaching-learning aids. This is in an effort to provide the children with an appropriate learning environment that can expose them to the right learning experiences.
 - ✓ ECE teachers need to attend ECE in- service training, seminars and workshops to keep abreast of the new developments in classroom material organization as used in teaching and learning.

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