Original Research Article

ECDE Teachers' Social Concerns on Administrative Support in the Competency Based Education: A Case of Bungoma County, Kenya

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Abstract

Competency Based Education (CBE) is a system of education that has increasingly become popular as the preferred mode of delivering education and training locally and globally. However, in spite of the fact that CBE implementation has been initiated in both developing and developed countries, there are social concerns in its implementation that have been alluded to in research. Therefore, the study objective was to investigate social concerns on administrative support that ECDE teachers encounter in the Competency Based Education in Bungoma County. The study was carried out in ECDE centres in Bungoma County. The study was anchored on Symbolic Interactionism and Social Exchange Theory. Descriptive survey research design was used. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The sample size was 201 ECDE teachers who were identified through simple random sampling and County director of education was purposively sampled. Data was collected through questionnaires for ECDE teachers, interview schedule for the County director of education and focus group discussions for preprimary one (PP1) and Preprimary two (PP2) parents. An observation schedule was used to triangulate the findings. Pilot study was conducted to enhance validity and reliability of the findings. Qualitative data was scored manually then organized and analyzed systematically as per thematic areas in a narrative form. Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26). Among the major findings 159 (83%), revealed that there were inadequate teaching and learning facilities. The teacher pupil ratio for preprimary education was 1:43 far above the recommended ratio of 1:25 learners, 17 (9%) did not have any training on CBE while 164 (86%) lacked adequate training on CBE. Based on findings of the study, the study recommended provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities, training of ECDE teachers and improving the teacher pupil ratio in pre-primary education.
Keywords: Competency Based Education (CBE), Kenya, ECDE teachers, Symbolic Interactionism, Social Exchange Theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study begins by acknowledging that Competency Based Education (CBE) is increasingly gaining mileage as the preferred mode of delivering education and training locally and globally. It is intended to underscore the importance of developing skills and knowledge that will ensure that these aptitudes can be applied to actual situations in life. The teacher is expected to facilitate learning by encouraging autonomy among the pupils' while igniting passion and creativity in the pupils. The education system presents the teacher with an opportunity to offer individualized learning methods.

However, concerns have been raised regarding the implementing of Competency Based Education at the ECDE level. Therefore, this study focused on the implementation of CBE at the pre-school level. In the current system, ECDE is offered at two levels: Pre-Primary level one (PP1) and Pre-Primary level two (PP2). This study focused on both PP1 and PP2 levels.

At the global level, the challenges of implementing CBE have been alluded to. In Europe, the effective role of the teacher in CBE is still a challenge in that, the expectation is that the teacher as the key implementer of the system and the basis for successful instruction ought to be proficient in subject matter, methodology and hands-on skills but this was not the case in the many sampled schools. (European Commissions, 2015). The roles of teachers and schools are changing, and so are expectations about them:

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teachers are asked to teach in increasingly multicultural classrooms, integrate students with special needs, use ICT for teaching effectively, engage in evaluation and accountability processes, and involve parents in schools (OECD, 2009). Furthermore, the World Summit on Teaching noted that teachers' need to help students acquire not only "the skills that are easiest to teach and easiest to test" but more importantly, ways of thinking (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and learning); ways of working (communication and collaboration); tools for working (including information and communications technologies); and skills around citizenship, life and career and personal and social responsibility for success in modern democracies" (OECD 2011).

At the regional level, a study by World Bank (2011) state that, in Tanzania CBE was initiated in secondary and primary schools in 2005 and 2006 respectively. With regard to the new reforms in education, the Ministry called upon the people to perceive these reforms as a strategic agent for mindset transformation and for the creation of a well-educated nation. The Ministry expected to mount an education system that would enable the Tanzanians to be adequately equipped with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the development challenges which were facing the country. However, a few years later after the implementation of the Competency based education in Tanzania, studies carried out by Tilya and Mafamiko (2010) found out that some teachers were not implementing some aspects of CBE effectively because of lack of clarity among potential implementers and even curriculum developers and book writers have yet to grasp the meaning of CBE and of the student-centered approach. This study agrees with that of Nkwetisama (2012) who documents that, for a long time, in Cameroon, teachers were delivering the content-based curriculum and they had mastered and perfected it. The shift to development of competencies was therefore neither automatic nor a smooth one. He argued that, if the stakeholders do not have a clue of what is in the education system and what is intended as outcome of study; the objectives of CBE cannot be achieved.

However, the reality in the Kenyan context shows that the implementation of these competencies is inconsistent across the country. A study by Orodho (2020) indicates that many ECDE teachers are inadequately trained to effectively deliver the CBC curriculum, particularly in areas like Psychomotor and Creativity, which require specialized skills and resources. The lack of proper teacher preparation, coupled with insufficient teaching materials, hampers the effective delivery of these competencies. Additionally, research by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in 2021 found that schools in rural areas face significant challenges in terms of access to learning resources, which further affects the implementation of creative learning activities such as Art and Craft, Music, and physical activity learning.

The fact is that, in spite of the fact that CBE implementation has been initiated in both developed and developing countries such as Europe, Finland, Rwanda and Tanzania, there are concerns that still persist thereby affecting its appropriate delivery in Kenya. Studies by Wambua and Waweru, 2019, Momanyi and Rop, 2019 and Mwarari, *et al.,* 2020), found out challenges of lack of the general understanding of CBE concept coupled with slow and the small scale of induction of key stakeholders, large classes that do not allow for individualized learning, inadequate teaching-learning infrastructure, lack of enough teachers to lower the teacher-pupil ratio and other administrative issues became apparent as impediments to smooth implementation of CBE.

The concern of this study is exacerbated by a lack of adequate involvement and preparation of teachers in the implementation process, leading to gaps in the desired outcomes of socializing children into the CBE system. This concern comes in the backdrop of the important role played by pre-primary education in laying the foundation of the child. Early Childhood education has recently received more attention in the field of education particularly in policy because of its perceived role in contributing to overall healthy development of the child and the effects it has on the later life of the child. This study emphasizes that it is at ECDE that the child gets the first impression of formal education and this exposure shapes the views and attitude towards education going forward.

1.1 Objective of study
The main study objective was to establish social concerns on administrative support that ECDE teachers encounter in the Competency Based Education in Bungoma County.

1.2 Limitations of the study
First, when conducting research on views on social concerns on administrative support that ECDE teachers encounter in the Competency Based Education in Bungoma County, Kenya, the study strived to ensure validity of information. Studies have indicated that respondents often tend to feel like their weaknesses are being uncovered when looking at the shortcomings of implementation. In areas involving views on administrative support in CBE, the study was conscious that some wanted to project an untruthful image to avoid looking inadequate. To nurse and mitigate this, the researcher first ensured a sample size of 10 percent to increase precision while at the same time crosschecking the evidence by way of triangulation of research tools.

There was the challenge of scheduling appointments with the respondents given their tight daily schedules. Unavailability of the respondents would have

impeded the study due to cancellations or delay in data collection. The study counter checked this by making prior visits, establishing rapport and seeking the concurrence of the respondents in setting up schedules. The study also noted that it was important to arrive for appointment in good time and wait for the respondents. Moreover, flexibility was maintained in favour of the respondents.

1.3 Assumptions

In undertaking the study, the researcher made the assumptions that the ECDE teachers have social concerns on administrative support that they encounter in the Competency Based Education.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive survey design to investigate teachers' social concerns on administrative support in Competence Based Education in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study aimed to explore perspectives of the ECDE teachers on the sociological issues that arose when CBE was put into practice in early childhood settings. This research is essential as it provides insight into the challenges that teachers face, the impact of CBE on their teaching practices and the broader implications for early childhood education in the region and beyond.

Descriptive survey design is a type of research method commonly used in educational research, to describe the characteristics, behaviors, attitudes or opinions of a particular population. This design involves collecting data from a sample or a population to understand various phenomena without manipulating variables. It is primarily focused on providing an overview of the current state of affairs and gathering detailed, factual information. Descriptive survey typically collects data through structured tools such as questionnaires, interviews and observations. These instruments are used to gather information on specific variables or characteristics from a sample of the population.

2.2 Population and Sample

The target population in research refers to the specific group of individuals or units that a researcher is interested in studying and making generalizations about. It represents the larger group to which the research findings are intended to apply. Defining the target population is a critical step in the research process as it helps ensure that the results are relevant and applicable to the specific group under investigation.

The target population for this study included, the County Director of Education and ECDE teachers in Bungoma County.

The County Director of Education was rightfully picked because the office is supervisory of all education activities and thus home to implementation of CBE. On their part, the ECDE teachers are expected to be the frontline officers ensuring that policies are delivered and therefore have hands-on experience of CBE teaching and learning process. The ECDE parents cannot exonerate themselves from the education of their children since they interact and interface with the CBE on day-to-day basis. Their views are therefore of critical importance in the study.

The target population was therefore considered to be representative of the entire population on the CBE at the pre-primary level. The target population also aligns well with the objectives and research questions of the study. They were considered to be the most suitable to answer the research questions of the study. The target population for the teachers was considered to be homogeneous since the training of ECDE teachers is standard in the country.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

The study utilized a variety of research instruments to collect comprehensive data from a diverse and geographically dispersed sample. These included questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and observation checklists. The questionnaire for ECDE teachers gathered both qualitative and quantitative data, addressing teachers' experiences, understanding, and application of Competency-Based Education (CBE). It included closed- and open-ended questions to ensure depth and breadth of responses. Interviews with County Directors of Education (CDEs) provided detailed insights into CBE implementation, training, resources, and challenges from a supervisory perspective. FGDs with parents of ECDE learners captured rich qualitative data on their perceptions, involvement and expectations regarding CBE. These group settings encouraged open discussion and shared understanding among participants. An observation checklist was used for triangulation, documenting visible indicators of CBE teaching practices. A pilot study was conducted in a representative ECDE center to test the instruments for clarity, validity, and reliability. Feedback from experts and respondents led to revisions that improved the tools. Validity was established through expert review and alignment with objectives, while reliability was confirmed using the test-retest method, yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.86. Data collection followed ethical procedures and proper approvals, ensuring quality, consistency, and integrity of the findings.

2.4 Data Analysis

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data on the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) at the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) level. Qualitative data, drawn from interviews, was transcribed, coded, and organized into themes aligned with the research questions. Respondents shared their experiences with CBE implementation and offered

recommendations for improvement. This data provided insights into contextual and individual interpretations, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation process.

Qualitative analysis was particularly valuable for identifying unique features of CBE that could complement the quantitative findings. The study carefully considered not just what respondents said, but also how they said it, preserving the depth and meaning of their responses.

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS Version 26, a modern and user-friendly statistical tool. This allowed the researcher to describe data using descriptive statistics, providing clarity and summarization through key indices.

By integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches under the post-positivism paradigm, the study was able to reveal discrepancies between the goals of the new education system and its actual execution. This mixed-methods approach offered a fuller, evidence-based picture of ECDE teachers' perspectives on the social issues affecting CBE implementation

3. RESULTS

3.1 The Social Concerns on Administrative Support That ECDE Teachers Encounter in The Competency Based Education

The study undertook to assess the administrative support in terms of the infrastructure and the learning environment towards delivery of Competency Based Education in Bungoma County. The study sought the views of the ECDE teachers on their social concerns on administrative support that they receive. In this study, administrative support was looked in terms of provision of essential infrastructure, space, furnishings and crucial instructional resources to support teaching and learning. The study also looked at availability of official documents for guiding the teachers on implementation and also in-service training of teachers. The study examined the management and coordination of early childhood education since these elements play a crucial role in shaping the social environment in which CBE is implemented, influencing both its effectiveness and the overall educational experience. By exploring these factors, the study highlights how leadership structures and decision-making processes can significantly impact the delivery and outcomes of early childhood education programs, ensuring that they foster a supportive learning environment.

To begin with, an overwhelming 87% (166) of the teachers felt that there were adequate classrooms in their schools to accommodate the number of pupils in pre-primary. On the contrast, almost an equal number at 83% (159) felt that pre-primary institutions did not have adequate teaching resources to implement competency-based education. The teachers explained that their institutions lacked enough instructional resources and had unfriendly learning environment due inadequate and inappropriate sanitary facilities. They decried lack of play material, no sleeping bags for children and assistive devices for pupils with special needs. They implied that the main focus of the administration was on building of classrooms with little focus on provision of resources commensurate with competence-based education.

In the context of competency-based education, enhanced interaction in early childhood education is fostered when there is adequate space and comfort, which encourages active engagement and learning. A well-designed, flexible environment allows children to explore, collaborate and engage in hands-on activities, crucial for developing competencies. When children feel comfortable and have room to move, they are more likely to express themselves, interact with peers and develop essential skills. This supportive environment aligns with CBE principles, promoting individualized learning pathways (Hughes *et al.,* 2019).

The qualitative findings as observed by the ECDE teachers substantiated the findings:

> *Some ECDEs have good classrooms constructed by the County Government which is good but these classes lack equipment that are required for training CBC. In other schools, the classrooms remain the old 'mabati' (referring to iron sheets) ones that are not good for children. During the cold season, they are very cold, when it is hot they are uncomfortably hot and when it rains, the noise does not allow you to continue teaching. A good number of the classes are not cemented. The conditions in these classes are not good for the children.*
> (ECDE Teacher's responses, October 2023)

The information provided by the respondents was triangulated by making direct observation and making field notes during the visit to the schools. There was a clear challenge in most of the schools with space and furnishings commensurate with CBE. There was evidence of inadequate furnishings for play and learning, the child related displays would not adequately spur interest and provide opportunity for motor play as shown. Most of the schools lacked child-friendly toilets and safety health practices around the institutions. The free play and group activities in most of the schools lasted around ten to fifteen minutes and this was deemed as insufficient since.

To give further credence to the above findings, the teachers were asked to clarify on the specific challenges they encountered in their institutions in delivering competency-based education. A summary of problems they listed was tallied and itemized as tabulated below:

Table 3.1: ECDE Teachers' responses on the challenges they face in implementation of CBE

Challenges Faced by Teacher	N=191	%
Lack of adequate information on CBE	164	86
Lack of adequate training on CBE	164	86
No model institutions to benchmark	191	100
Little help on CBE by MoE	164	86
Lack of adequate resources	147	77
Crowded classrooms	164	86
Heavy workloads	109	57
Some learners have low motivation and enthusiasm for education	109	57
External factors like poverty affecting access and retention	191	100
Lack of parental support	122	64
Low funding by county government	191	100

From the above findings, it is clear that the issue of funding and constrain in resources is a recurring issue. This recurrence is a mark of internal consistence of the findings since the same findings are repeated. Significantly, 86 % of ECDE teachers indicated lack of adequate information as well as lack of adequate training on CBE. It would therefore mean they have little understanding of what they are at the forefront of implementation. According to UNICEF (2022), teachers are the single most important factor in the effective delivery of education. The study, therefore, noted that it is difficult for the ECDE teachers to implement CBE where they have little information coupled, with little or no support from other stakeholders and without provision of resources.

From the questionnaires, the teachers also enumerated the following as basic amenities in an ECDE institution which are critical for effective teaching and learning: classrooms, furniture, office, stationery, textbooks, teaching aids, toilets, clean water, playing field, games equipment, and special education equipment. The quantitative findings of their responses are presented in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2: ECDE Teachers' responses on availability of facilities for effective delivery of CBE

Physical Facilities	None % N=191	Adequate % N=191	Inadequate % N=191
Classrooms	0	67	33
Furniture	0	33	67
Office	0	33	67
Stationery	0	67	33
Textbooks	0	33	67
Teaching Aids	0	33	67
Toilets	0	13	87
Clean Water	0	87	13
Playing fields	33	13	54
Games Equipment	0	13	87
Special Education Equipment	0	0	0

The above data is easier to conceptualize when summarized and synthesized into a pie chart *(See Figure 3.1 below)*.

The implementation of competency-based education in early childhood education relies heavily on basic teaching and learning amenities, as these resources create an environment conducive to effective learning. Symbolic interactionism highlights how interactions within these spaces shape children's development, with teachers and peers influencing learning through their behaviors and communication. Social exchange theory emphasizes the importance of reciprocal relationships in educational settings, where children, teachers, and caregivers engage in meaningful exchanges that enhance learning outcomes. Adequate amenities such as learning materials, safe spaces, and proper classroom setups foster these positive interactions, ensuring CBE's success in nurturing competencies. The ECDE teachers' concern on availability of these amenities are therefore a valid social concern.
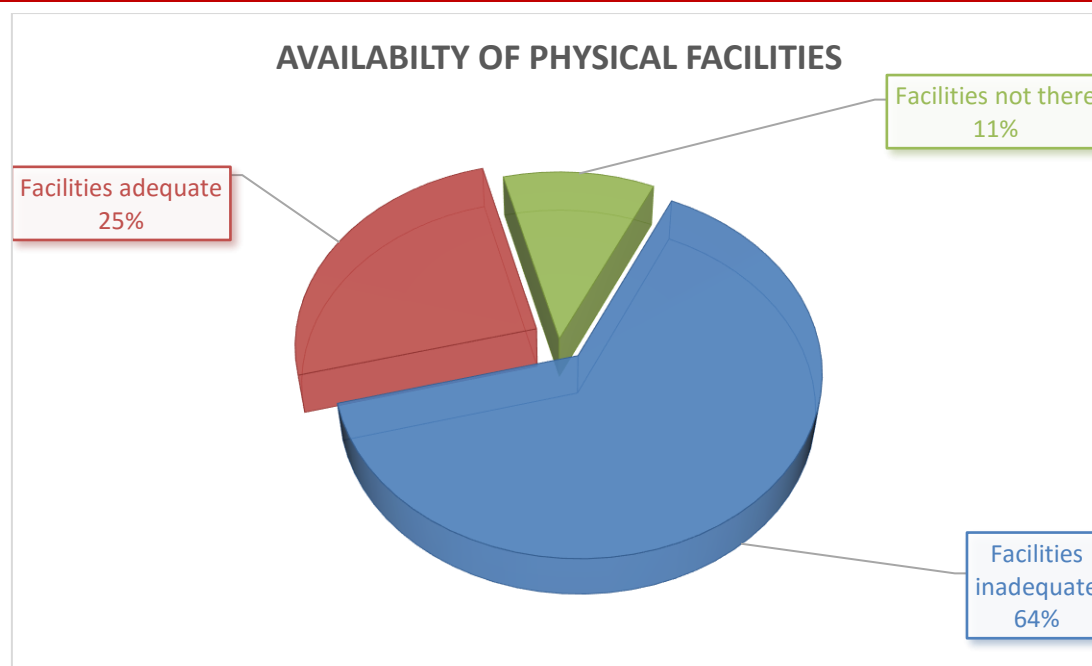
Figure 3.1: ECDE Teachers' responses on availability of Facilities for effective delivery of CBE

The findings of the study validate the social concerns on lack of sufficient administrative support that ECDE teachers encounter in the delivery of Competency-Based Education. The score for combined inadequate facilities and none at all stands at 75% against a dismal 25% views of adequate facilities. The teachers also indicated that since CBE was new in the country, there were no model ECDE CBE centres where they could go for bench marking. It therefore appeared to them like each institution was literally on its own in charting the way forward for CBE in an environment shrouded with mystery, misinformation and gaps in information.

Qualitative findings through the parental voices in the Focus Group Discussions collaborated the above quantitative findings:

> *"After 10 years of devolution, it is unfortunate to see that most of the Early Childhood Education Centres are still in a sorry state. The way they talk about CBC, I think it is not possible to implement it in this state. "*
> *"Several ECDE centres are sharing the same land with their mother primary schools. The area member of parliament can easily develop the primary school but leave the ECDE in neglect. You can imagine what this does to the young children."*
> *"When you look at the ablution blocks, you cannot fail to notice that our children have been subjected to unacceptable learning conditions."*

> *"It appears like since independence, the government has not paid proper attention to ECDE. Then with devolution, it was again left to the county government that are struggling with resources while the rest of basic education remained in the national government with the highest allocation of national budget. The policy reads discrimination against our small children."*
> *"We are told that CBC is activity based but we do not see the equipment to achieve this. Our children in PP1 should be spending a lot of time playing outside but where are the facilities?"*
> (Parents' voices during Focus Group Discussion, October 2023*)*

The parental voices in the FGDs speak to lack of enough facilities for effective delivery of CBE. The study noted even where the hardware of CBE implementation in terms of classes was available, there was no commensurate provision of the software in terms of basic facilities for effective implementation of competency-based curriculum. The study therefore indicated that many ECDEs lacked the prescribed facilities and equipment for effective delivery of CBE.

The study then embarked on an attempt at triangulating these qualitative findings that indicated inadequate physical facilities for implementation of CBE through direct observation of visible indicators of the same. The study recorded some of the features in photographic form. The images presented in figure 3.2 below illustrate the situation:

Figure 3.2: Photograph of classrooms showing inadequate space and furniture

The photograph illustrates congestion in the classroom, which significantly limits interaction among learners, teacher access and effective classroom control. In an overcrowded environment, children struggle to engage with one another or with the teacher, restricting opportunities for collaborative learning and individual attention. This lack of space impedes the teacher's ability to facilitate meaningful interactions, a key aspect of competency-based education (CBE), which emphasizes personalized learning and active participation. In such settings, learners may feel overlooked or disconnected, hindering their development of essential skills.

Furthermore, limited space affects the teacher's ability to manage the classroom effectively. With overcrowding, it becomes difficult to maintain order, provide individualized support or monitor each child's progress. The disordered environment can disrupt learning, as learners may find it hard to focus in a crowded space, while the teacher is overwhelmed by the demands of managing too many learners at once.

The social exchange theory underscores the importance of reciprocal interactions in the learning process. In a congested classroom, these interactions are diminished, preventing the establishment of meaningful teacher-learner and learner-learner relationships. Symbolic interactionism also suggests that the quality of these interactions' shapes children's development; therefore, an overcrowded environment stifles the social and cognitive growth necessary for competency-based education to thrive.

The internal environment seems to be replicated in the external environment as seen in Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3: Photograph of a dilapidated ECDE Centre and a toilet

The qualitative and quantitative findings of the study concur that there are inadequate facilities for effective delivery of CBE in the County. However, the study also noted that some ECDEs were going through renovations courtesy of the County Government of Bungoma through the respective offices of the area MCAs. The evidence is captured in the photograph of a classroom under renovation in Figure 3.4 below:

Figure 3.4: Photograph of Classrooms under Renovation in the County

The County Director of Education confirmed that most of the ECDEs were in dire state of neglect and a few of them were even condemned by the public health for closure. Nevertheless, the County was on a programme to gradually upgrade the facilities to ensure they are modern and learner friendly. The renovations were work in progress.

Studies have brought out the deficiencies in teaching and learning materials for ECDE in Sub-Saharan Africa. These educational materials and resources that teachers use in class to support delivery of specific learning objectives are important in assisting the learners to acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes. In a holistic education system, teaching and learning materials for ECDE are designed to enable the child to acquire linguistic, logical, mathematical, musical, spatial and environmental concepts. In addition, the materials enable the child to engage and enhance their kinesthetic, visual, auditory, touch, tasting and smelling senses as appropriate and to develop interpersonal, intrapersonal and other social attributes. These materials including books, use of modelling clay, manipulative objects, games, visual aids like posters, charts, graphs pictorials, teaching tools, digital training and learning media including audio content, video materials, games, animations, electronic toys and a host of other teaching learning content are key for effectively teaching and learning today. The online content is readily and freely available online but most of the ECDE teacher are not well facilitated in terms of training and appropriate digital technology to navigate this space (Galevska & Pešić, 2018).

Then the study looked at the pupil-teacher ratio for the Bungoma County that stood at average 1:43 as per the various respondents. The findings on pupil-teacher ratios are collaborated by document analysis of Ministry of Education documents (2022), KNBS, Economic Survey of 2022 and Council of Governor Survey Reports of 2022. According to the Basic Education Statistical Booklet (2020), the pre-primary education level, the standard pupil-to-teacher ratio is one teacher and an assistant teacher for every 25 learners (1; 25. On average, the PTR for early childhood development centres in the entire county was 43 (1; 43. Bungoma county is cited as one of the counties registering an over enrolment in pre-primary education.

The County Director of Education confirmed the findings on high pupil-teacher ratio in public ECDEs:

For some individual ECDE centres the pupil-teacher ratio is as high as 50 pupils for one teacher. What learning can we expect to take place in such an environment? The policy is that each ECDE should have at least three qualified teachers, one for PP1, another for PP2 and the assisting teacher. The County government is trying to deal with this bit by bit but of course it is work in progress. It is within our strategic plan to have attained the recommended ratio of 1:25 by the year 2030. The county has a staff shortage of about 1,000 ECDE teachers. I believe it is achievable. (County Director of Education, April, 2024)

The study confirmed through document analysis that the County Public Service Board of Bungoma had advertised for 200 positions for diploma and certificate ECDE teachers in November, 2023. Given that the county is facing a staff shortage of about one thousand teachers, it would mean that even after the recruitment, there would be still be a shortage of about 800 ECDE teachers. The problem of staff shortage is one that the persisting problems in the county. The implications of high pupil-teacher ratio is that the children do not get the personal attention they need at their age which in turn affects the quality of education. On the part of the teacher, the crowded classes impede delivery and is a demotivator.

Studies indicate that high pupil-teacher ratio had negative effect on the implementation of competency-based education. The high pupil-teacher ratio was frustrating for both the teacher and the pupil. On their part, the ECDE pupils are at the stage where they need individual attention to conceptualize what is being taught. Secondly, the pupils have a short attention span and when they are not given individual attention, they lose concentration. High pupil-teacher ratio has been linked to low graduation rates among the ECDE children. On the part of the teacher, large groups are exhausting to handle leading to low morale (Ngirera, 2018; Kyambi's, 2019).

On the issue of availability of guiding documents, the ECDE teachers agreed that there were documents available in their schools to guide them on the teaching and learning of CBE in pre-primary level with 88.48% (169) accepting. The researcher had an opportunity to peruse available documents including KICD curriculum designs for pre-primary, Ministry of Education circulars detailing information like annual calendar of events and term dates. The teachers felt that they had the requisite information base for effective delivery of CBE given that most of the documents are easily accessible online. The study found that all institutions had curriculum designs. The teacher's guide books and activity books, however were scarce. In most of the institutions, the researcher noted that there was only the teacher's book. For example, the main textbook for the teacher for each subject was Skill grow language activities, mathematical activities, environmental activities and CRE activities.

According to UNESCO (2019), it is a requirement that every school going child should have at least a text book. The provision of books for the early grades should be the highest priority; this is when well-designed teaching materials have a large impact on

learning. Children in the early grades need a wide variety of books for reading instruction and practice. Unfortunately, in most of the developing countries less than 20% of the children have textbooks for the language of instruction when they come to school.

One of the indicators and expectations of administrative support for ECDE teachers towards the delivery of Competency Based Education is provision of teaching-learning resource materials. The teachers were accordingly asked to indicate availability of course materials for Language activities, Mathematical activities, Environmental activities, Psychomotor and creative activities and religious education activities. Their responses are synthesized in figure 3.5 below.
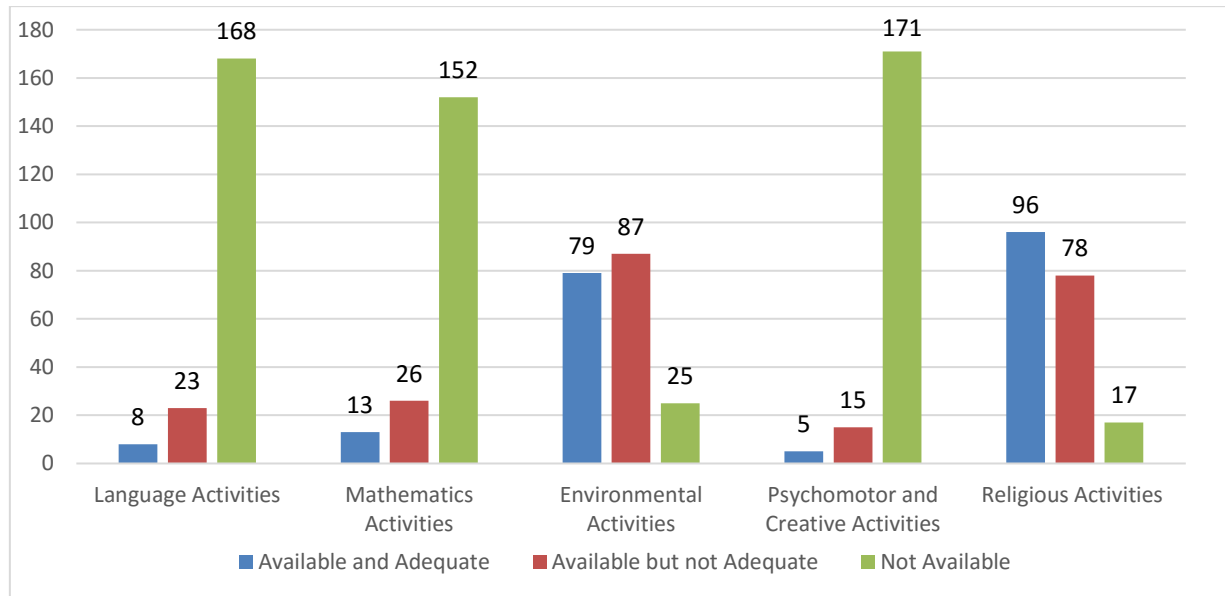

Figure 3.5: Availability of Teaching-learning resource materials

There are two main implications of these findings. First, the score on 'not available' is the highest across the board except for environmental and religious activities. Secondly, the score on 'available but not adequate' is the second highest across board this implies that even where the teaching learning resources are available, they are not adequate. The findings presented above can be generalized to paint a picture of pre-school institutions that have insufficient teaching learning resources.

The scenario is worse for digital devices where all institutions indicated that the only digital device was the teacher's mobile phone as observed by the parents' voice recorded below:

CBC is encouraging use of technology in education
Now who will guide us on which technology to use for our children
The phone is usually the only digital tool available in the house.
These children are digital natives, they do not require a manual to operate any technology
My worry as a parent is how to regulate and control what they do with the phone
We have some good content like Babusa TV, Akili kids that has content that is tailored to the child, they teach using songs and this is good.

Parents need to be assisted on what to look out for
There is a digital divide between us and our children
What is the government doing to help us with this technology issue
Technology can also be misused
Why not allow our children to experience nature first then technology later
There are advantages and disadvantages of introducing technology early
Teachers have to be careful
(Parents' voices during Focus Group Discussion, October 2023*)*

The study observed a near absence of digital technology in all ECDE institutions. The study notes that generally Bungoma County faces a digital divide across locations and social-economic class and CBE needs to make efforts to bridge this gap in order to accommodate diverse learners. It is therefore imperative to reform and recalibrate the curriculum in tandem with the realities of the diverse social-economic situation. Further, the ECDE institutions should look at the digital devices that are readily available within their immediate environment. If they embrace the technology around their unique heritage, they cover the gaps in the digital divide. This calls upon the ECDE teachers to become innovative within their space to deal with the divide.

However, the parents' critical observation on the role of digital technology in early years draws a reserved caution on the need for more responsibility in its infusion. The caution being that too much technology could stop children from playing naturally to take on things that need to be done. The parents' voice seemed to indicate that the heavy responsibility of infusing technology could easily become a distraction and information overloading that could easily erode the natural authenticity, vulnerability, emotions of laughter and tears that characterizes the ECDE space. The demands of the curriculum could easily render the teacher more analytical and setups are likely to become more challenging. Being in the analytical mindset suppresses emotional feelings that should naturally engulf the teacher thus losing what makes children in the ECDE world.

Studies conducted in other jurisdictions actually collaborate these mixed feelings about the educational benefits of digital skills in early years. For example, a study by Griffith *et al.,* (2020), on the use of interactive educational apps among age 3 to 6 years noted that it was beneficial in the development of mathematics and literacy skills. However, another study by Outhwaite *et al.,* (2022) found out that the educational software apps often present the skills of mathematics and literacy in isolation and therefore do not always embed the learning content in meaningful contexts that promote generalization of knowledge.

An analysis of the findings suggests that good practices in the infusion of digital skills would emerge out using the digitals tools in a supplementary way to support other teaching resources. Moreover, their use has the potential to increase attainment when they are integrated with other pedagogical practices. Pre-primary teachers must be cautious about the age-appropriate form and content.

These findings on the need to understand infusion of digital skills as per the individual contexts of each institution resonates with post-positivism paradigm that was utilized to explain the study. In a nutshell, post-positivism views reality not as a fixed entity rather it is influenced by context and purpose. Post-positivism recommends careful scrutiny of individual contexts before generalization. In this respect, the study recommends sanctioning and adoption of age-appropriate digital content.

The County Director of Education brought out a new dimension to the issue of digital devices available to the teacher as observed below:

> *There is a lot of information available online for the ECDE teacher. Most of our ECDE institutions do not have digital device except the mobile phones. My interaction with the ECDE teachers indicates that majority of them are not familiar with the vast information provided by KICD online. KICD is the national curriculum development centre established through the KICD Act No. 4 of 2013 of the laws of Kenya. The Institute's core function is to initiate and conduct research to inform curriculum policies, reviews and development. The Institute is charged with the development, evaluation and approval of curricular and curriculum support materials for all levels of education except for university level. It would be important that ECDEs have computers and internet available to the teacher so that they keep themselves abreast with the changes initiated by the government.*

(County Director of Education, April, 2024)

The director confirmed that there are online resources available to the teacher if only the teacher is facilitated to access them. The use of online resources even for the teacher does not appear to be a prevalent practice in ECDE. The study recommends that administrative support be provided to the ECDE teachers to leverage available teaching-learning resources for enhanced delivery of CBE.

The study then embarked on finding out whether the teachers had received any in-service training in the Competency Based Education as a measure of administrative support extended to them. The findings are presented in figure 3.6 below.
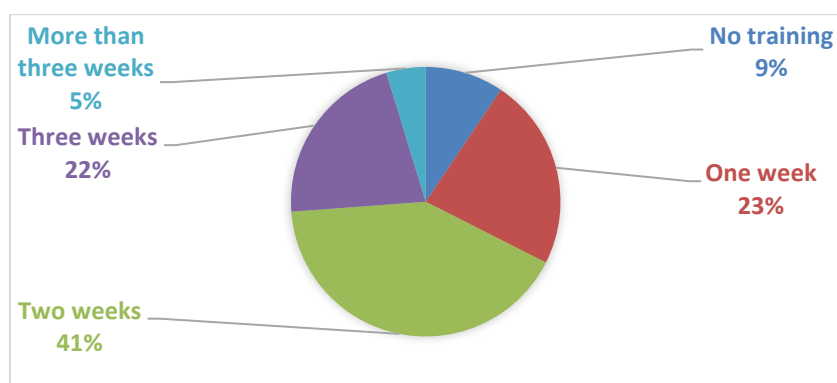

Figure 3.6: In-service training for ECDE teachers on Competency-Based Education

The findings indicate that majority of the teachers at 64% received one- or two-week training on CBE upon induction. Since then, only there has been no training except briefs during termly meetings with education officials. As noted above, 9% of the sampled teachers had not attended any training or orientation on the CBE yet they are expected to be part of implementation. All the teacher respondents called for training on the CBE so that they can understand it well and thus implement it well. This is the only way teachers can embrace and further employ their professional competency and innovation to take the CBE to another level. The Global Monitoring Report: Education for All, 2000-2018, pointed out that teachers needed to go for in-service training in order to strengthen their skills and competencies.

In citing some of the challenges they face, the teachers variously mentioned lack of a clear structure in the management of pre-primary education. In their own words:

> *Most ECDEs are within primary schools*
> *You wonder whether you are under the county government or the national government*
> *You are answerable to the head teacher of the primary school*
> *If we are within primary school, why are we not employed by TSC*
> *Some ECDEs are managed by parents, others by churches*
> *It appears like there is no clear structure*
> (ECDE Teachers' responses, October 2023)

In the above qualitative findings, the teachers are speaking to lack of policy coherence regarding implementation of ECDE in Kenya. There seems to be defragmentation in the structure and management of pre-primary education in Kenya. The researcher's synthesis of the current situation notes that whereas policy sits at the national government, services and implementation is devolved to the county level. A document analysis of the National Pre-Primary Education Policy August, 2017 takes notes of the inconsistence beginning with an attempt to establish a multi-sectoral County Early Childhood Education Committee (CECEC) comprising of line ministries, key departments and other stakeholders in the county. Currently, the said committee has not been established and even attempts to establish it seems to be potentially problematic by creating defragmentation of pre-primary education. Primary school education in general, is usually well structured with well-established hierarchy of authority and chain of command.

Secondly, pre-primary institutions lack boards of management to help streamline their management and for resource mobilization. In policy, the ECDEs are supposed to have boards of management like the primary and secondary schools. Boards of management are important in streamline the running of institutions and in resource management. Lack of boards in ECDEs is therefore a big impediment to the management of these institutions.

The County Director of Education confirmed this gap in the qualitative findings:

> *Most of the public ECDEs were started by their respective primary schools and even housed in those primary schools. Consequently, the boards of management of primary schools served both institutions. However, when the two functions were delineated, primary schools remained in the national government while ECDEs shifted to the devolved units. That is the point at which ECDEs were without boards of management. This policy gap is being addressed although it is not easy. The position of a board member in an ECDE is not perceived to be as prestigious as it is in other levels like primary and secondary. There is also the issue of shared land and facilities such that ECDEs can only enjoy semi autonomy from their mother primary schools. In fact, some ECDE teachers who are paid by parents are actually paid from the primary schools. The management of ECDEs in Kenya still has space for improvement in the new dispensation.*
> (County Director of Education, April, 2024)

The Ministry of Education National Pre-Primary Education Policy Standard Guidelines of 2018 have stipulated the standards for quality and relevance of ECDEs. These guidelines provide the required standards on establishment, registration, management and accountability in pre-primary education institutions. They also stipulate standards on curriculum and pedagogy, learning materials, physical facilities, health and nutrition, quality of teachers, role of stakeholders, children's rights, inclusivity, safety and protection. The standards are meant to ensure effective implementation of pre-primary education programmes. The study established that this document was neither in the schools nor was any reference made to it. The guidelines are maintained at the directorate offices in the County government. The implication then is that a lot administrative support to the ECDEs is not forthcoming.

The findings of this study are supported by previous studies indicating that with onset of devolution in Kenya and subsequent transfer of ECDE functions to the county governments, there have been gaps in administrative and governance structure of ECDE leading to lack of basic resources and facilities for effective implementation of competency-based education for pre-school. The Basic Education Act of 2013 transferred the responsibilities of pre-school education to the devolved units but did not expressly devolve the requisite funding for the same. There has therefore been a significant gap in the mobilization of

funds for early childhood education in Kenya (Odundo, 2018).

Empirical surveys by the World Bank (2020) that indicates that management and coordination of early childhood education in Kenya suffers inconsistency and lack of clarity on how the education should be delivered and managed. The functions that are shared between the national and county governments need clearer structures and coordination. Policies, standards, monitoring and evaluation, institutional arrangements and systems for delivery need better integration. There are several policy gaps that could be an impediment to delivery of early childhood in Kenya.

There are, therefore, valid social concerns on administrative support that ECDE teachers encounter in the Competency Based Education in Bungoma County Kenya. From the structure of the administrative support itself to the actual provision of the same, the study identified various gaps that need to be addressed for effective delivery of ECDE. The study revealed significant gaps in administrative support affecting the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in Bungoma County. While classrooms exist, most lack essential teaching and learning resources, including instructional materials, play equipment and child-friendly sanitation. High pupil-teacher ratios (1:43), inadequate in-service training and limited access to guiding documents hinder effective delivery. Digital resources are largely absent, with teachers relying on mobile phones and lacking capacity for online content integration. Structural confusion also exists due to fragmented management between county and national governments, further worsened by the absence of Boards of Management in ECDEs. These challenges collectively undermine CBE delivery, demotivate teachers and compromise early learners' educational outcomes, especially in marginalized and resource-constrained settings.

3.2 Strategies that can be used to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in Competency Based Education in Bungoma County

3.2.1 Position Pre-Primary as Foundational Education and Revise the Scheme of Service for ECDE Teachers to Enhance Prestige

The teachers opined that pre-primary education in Kenya is not as esteemed as it ought to be. In their own words they indicated the following:

> *ECDE education is not taken seriously in Kenya*
> *People do not see like ECDE is as important as other levels of education*
> *Even the former system 8-4-4 had not considered pre-primary*
> *The ECDE teacher is seen like a person who is out to play with children the whole day*
> *We are among the lowest paid*
> *Lack of a scheme of service for ECDE teachers*
> *SRC appearing discriminative of ECDE*

> *Everyone going up while ECDE going down*
> *Does it show that they do not value the work of the ECDE teacher?*
> (ECDE Teachers' responses, October 2023)

The findings confirm that the teachers were tying together the prestige and pay for pre-primary. The argument by the teachers was that since pre-primary is undervalued, even the pay was commensurate with the low prestige associated with the level of education.

The COG should come in to harmonize and work on a scheme of service that provides incentives for the ECDE teachers to make the profession competitive and attractive.

> *There is an unfortunate but complex stereotype perception that ECDE space is for women. This elementary level of education has for a long time been viewed as part and parcel of being a mother and left out to women. This negative view often undermines the prestige and confidence in this profession. One of the ways to deal with this is creating a competitive scheme of service that empowers the ECDE teacher. At a policy level, it is important for Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) to create a scheme of service for ECDE teachers that is commensurate with their qualifications.*
> (County Director of Education, April, 2024

Indeed, previous studies have correlated the view that ECDE was a mere preparatory level, low pay and gender imbalance in teaching. For a long time, ECDE centers were not differentiated with Baby Care Centres, where children are taken by their parents to while away the day as their parents went to work.

Studies on early years education carried out in Europe over the last three decades indicate that despite significant differences across countries, a common pattern of increased access and quality is emerging. The rise in ECEC provision over recent decades is strongly correlated to the increase in women's participation in the labour force, particularly for mothers with children under the age of three years. Countries with higher enrolment rates of children under the age of three years tend to be those in which the employment rates of mothers are highest (OECD, 2018). Similarly, a joint report of the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council in the United States of America recommended that all teachers in state-funded preschool programs should receive compensation that is comparable to that of teachers with similar qualifications in other levels of education to enhance the prestige and quality of early years education (National Academy of Sciences, 2020).

Other studies corroborated the challenge of insufficient teaching-learning resources hindering the effective implementation of the competency-based

education. The studies established that teachers faced a lot of challenges which impeded effective implementation of the curriculum in teaching and learning including lack of sufficient instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated infrastructure. In the light of the findings, the studies recommended the Ministry of Education should devise ways of providing instructional materials which are consistent with the CBC (Hipolite, 2019; Ndayambaje, 2018; Makunja, 2016).

3.2.2 Policy Reconfiguration of the ECDE Pathway to Remove Governance Inconsistencies Across National and County Governments

The pre-primary teachers in their qualitative responses used words like, we do not know where we belong, ECDE not known whether in national or county government, confusion between county and national government, chain of command not clear, some ECDEs are independent while others are in primary schools and so on.

The ECDE teachers noted that their counterparts in primary schools had a clear structure under the Teachers Service Commission. They pointed out that sometimes they received contradictory information from the county government and the ministry of education officials. They noted that even the ECDE children suffered similar fate. According to the teachers, primary school pupils received books from the government while ECDEs do not. This contradiction was not lost on the children since they have siblings in primary schools. The issue of domiciling ECDEs at the devolved units' level and the rest of the basic education in the national government may have created governance inconsistencies for pre-primary.

The County Director of Education in acknowledging the governance inconsistencies noted that:

The Constitution 2010 devolved the ECDE function to the county government. This means that, for example, the ECDE teachers are now to be hired by the County Public Service Board instead of the Teachers Service Commission. However, it appears like the Early Childhood Education Act Number 3 of 2021, put the administration of ECDEs under the Ministry of Education. You see there is what they call the letter and the spirit. Even the fact that the national and county governments are distinct and interdependent is a concept that is yet to become clear in Kenya. Sometimes, the ECDE teachers and parents have a problem understanding this arrangement. Take a case of a primary school that is also running an ECDE Centre. How do you explain to the stakeholders that this is to be done by national government and this is to be done by the county government? What happens when one level of government is performing better than the other

and there is apparent neglect in the other? It appears that there is need for more clear pieces of legislation to iron out the gray areas.
(County Director of Education, April 2024)

The study conducted a document analysis to understand this challenge and to trace the genesis of the problem. Available documentation indicated that the responsibility for the provision of ECDE was passed to Counties in 2013 as part of the new constitutional arrangements set out under devolution. However, these new arrangements were not matched with a clear quality standards and policy approaches over how these responsibilities should be carried out. This has resulted in drastically different approaches in how Counties apply their duties, with some moving forward with local legislation and others holding back. Between 2013 and 2020, at least 15 Counties have enacted local legislation to regulate ECDE provision. In some cases, Counties have legislated to take on curriculum development despite this responsibility sitting with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. This has resulted in confusing institutional frameworks. Moreover, the various national and regional bodies and institutions responsible for delivering ECDE are not working together effectively. This is partly attributable to the incoherent policy framework. For example, while ECDE is a county function, many centres are located in primary schools which are the purview of national government. This complicates infrastructure investment and the allocation of resources such as building age-appropriate classrooms and toilets. Unclear policy also led to a disagreement over who is responsible for hiring teachers, with the National Union of Teachers challenging counties in the courts. The court ultimately ruled that while County governments had the authority to hire pre-primary teachers, they could only do so through the register of trained teachers held by the Teachers Services Commission.

The findings reveal that devolution of ECDE is a tremendous opportunity to reach every ECDE child. However, issues of governance of ECDE need to be addressed given the inconsistence in national government and county government structures. It is also important to address occupational related issues that may discourage male participation in this field. The study further calls for revision of the scheme of service for ECDE teachers in Kenya. There is need for a more coherent policy framework with regard to pre-primary education in Kenya.

Studies conducted in Japan confirm the need for political priority in the care of young children. The studies underscore the need for sustainable public funding towards recruitment of competent and qualified staff in order to guarantee quality educational programmes and promote their development. The financial investment in Early Childhood Education Care setting and equipment is considered a key requirement

for the development of good and high-quality learning environment (Fujisawa, Fukai, & Nakamuro, 2023).

3.2.3 Adoption of Heritage-Based Education

The teachers did not directly mention adoption of heritage-based education but described the concept in their submissions. In a nutshell, heritage-based education means taking advantage of what lies within the immediate environment for effective and efficient delivery of CBE. The curriculum designs prepared by KICD for PP1 and PP2 also encourage that the learners are guided to appreciate the rich and diverse cultural heritage in the local environment.

The qualitative findings of the study indicated this as follows:

> *Our environment has opportunities for teaching and we always make use of them for CBC*
> *When we are teaching colours of the rainbow, we go out with the learners and pick the colours from nature. The children come back to class with a bunch of flowers in their fists and in all types of colours.*
> *ECDEs can visit each other, some of them are not far from each other. In our town, we have like six of them. We can visit each other sometimes.*
> *The culture of the community is also useful for teaching our children*
> (ECDE Teachers' responses, 0ctober 2023)

This study, thus, recommended the adoption of heritage education in order to nurture a sense of identity and ownership among ECDE learners. People value what they own and they develop what they value. Heritage-based education is premised upon the ability of people to understand their cultural and spiritual identity and diversity. In the Kenyan context, this refers to an education that selectively taps from the rich diversity of history, traditional knowledge, festivals, rituals and cultural backgrounds towards the future. This study puts forward a position that pre-primary education should leverage what is available within each ecosystem. Resources are available everywhere and what is required is mapping and valuation. This study calls for configuration of local heritage within the skills development milieu. Education should invest on and in what is available within their unique heritage ecosystems. That way, ECDE enables for the configuration of available resources since people value what they own and they develop what they value. An education system that is heritage-based nurtures a sense of ownership.

Based on the findings of direct observation, the researcher noted that ECDEs should leverage what is available within their individual ecosystems. Teaching and learning resources as prescribed in the curriculum may not readily be available but each institution is within an environment milieu where general resources are available and what is required of teachers to map out and evaluate their usability. The researcher therefore calls for configuration of local heritage within the CBE implementation. The study calls for investment on and in what is available within their unique heritage ecosystems. One of the strong recommendations of this study then is an education system that is heritage-based in order to leverage available resources to boost self-confidence of the young learners in their immediate surroundings.

Qualitative findings from both teachers and parents in this study expressed the need for use of text books which are relevant to the local needs of the child. They noted that most of the ECDE reference materials are imported from other countries. Clear guidelines on textbooks had not been provided. According to them, some of the available books were hurriedly published for CBC and are not well suited for the level. They called for text books that resonated with the child and their immediate environment.

This study noted that pedagogy in ECDEs has maintained a traditional orientation characterized learning that is almost entirely institutional based. There is need to explore and aggregate learning around available resources in the immediate context of the school. ECDE teachers will scan their ecosystem and see what is available to support delivery of CBE. The researcher noted that the recommendation dovetailed into that on parental involvement.

The findings recommending heritage education resonate well with post-positivism paradigm that was utilized to explain the study. The paradigm encourages focusing on the context of the issue under study and involving experiences of the respondents. In the same way, the study recommended the adoption of heritage education in order tap into the social-cultural context of the immediate community. The study called for configuration of local heritage in order to leverage available resources since people value what they own and they develop what they value. That way, the education system that is heritage-based nurtures a sense of ownership.

The study thus notes the need to adopt heritage-based training for relevance to local experience and optimal utilization of local resources. UNESCO acknowledges that the healthiest policy in education is that people acquire awareness and thus manage to own their cultural heritage. Right from childhood, it is important for the education system to adopt cultural background of the society to which the children belong and for bringing the realization of the importance of all kinds of cultural background which forms the foundation of the contemporary identity (Vargas-Barón *et al.,* 2022). Another study notes that children explore the social values and rules in the curriculum, coming to better

understand the cultural practices of the community in which they live (Fleer, 2017).

Similarly, a study carried out in West Pokot County, Kenya shows that incorporating cultural activities like herding, fruit gathering, milking drumming and other related traditional skills into the children play activities stimulates interest and enhances curiosity for learning among the learners. The study notes that children are more likely to identify with their immediate environment thus facilitating learning (Andiema, 2020).

Another study that reviews the growth of early childhood education in Kenya (Wanjohi, 2018) makes a strong case for heritage-based education. The study notes that Kenya's early childhood program has grown because it is rooted in the community. Parents and the community take part in collecting, telling and demonstrating stories, songs and dances in their respective mother tongue. The incorporation of tradition and folklore into the curriculum makes the community feel proud of their contribution to the learning process and development of their children.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The study on early childhood development education (ECDE) teachers' views on social concerns regarding administrative support in CBE focused on understanding the social concerns related to various aspects of CBE. To achieve this, the data collection methodology was carefully tailored to address this objective. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from key respondents: the teachers and the County Director of Education. The inclusion of different perspectives helped to paint a comprehensive picture of the administrative challenges faced by teachers in implementing CBE.

This study highlights three main strategies to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in Competency-Based Education (CBE) system. First, positioning pre-primary education as foundational is vital, as 34.03% of teacher respondents felt ECDE is undervalued, reflected in poor remuneration and prestige of the profession. Teachers linked this to societal stereotypes and called for a revised scheme of service through the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) to enhance status and attract qualified professionals. Second, reconfiguring ECDE policy to eliminate governance inconsistencies between county and national governments was emphasized. 21.99% of respondents expressed confusion over their employment structure and lack of clarity in roles, pointing to a fragmented system post-devolution. The County Director noted legislative contradictions and unclear responsibilities between agencies, leading to resource allocation and administrative challenges. Third, the adoption of heritage-based education was recommended

to utilize local culture and resources. Teachers shared examples of using nature and local traditions to teach, promoting identity and ownership. Studies from West Pokot (Andiema, 2020) and OECD countries reinforce that heritage-based, community-rooted approaches enhance engagement and quality.

The salient findings of this study will provide policy makers with foundational evidence for decision making and designing policies to enhance the delivery of competency-based education at the ECDE level not only in Bungoma County but in the entire republic of Kenya. Accordingly, the study entrenched the following two major policy recommendations that form the take outs of the study in the order below:

1. Adoption of Heritage-Based Education in pre-primary education.

The study places significant emphasis on the adoption of Heritage-Based Education in pre-primary education, recognizing its potential to offer localized solutions to the unique challenges faced by communities in Kenya. By utilizing locally available resources, such as the rich cultural diversity, traditional knowledge and historical heritage, heritage-based education fosters creativity among stakeholders and encourages the development of context-specific learning approaches. In Kenya, where diverse ethnic communities exist, this approach can help children connect with their cultural roots, enhancing their sense of identity and belonging. Heritage-based education prioritizes understanding one's cultural and spiritual heritage, which is essential in building self-esteem and pride from an early age. It recognizes the importance of local ecosystems—both natural and social—and integrates these into the curriculum. This way, education becomes not only a tool for academic learning but also for community cohesion and preservation of traditions. By incorporating local stories, songs, dances and traditions, children are introduced to valuable cultural practices, allowing them to appreciate and respect diversity. Furthermore, heritage-based education helps to strengthen community ownership of the education system, as it reflects the unique needs and values of the community. Teachers can work with parents and local leaders to develop context-relevant content that reflects the community's heritage while addressing future aspirations. Ultimately, the adoption of Heritage-Based Education contributes to a more meaningful, engaging, and sustainable learning experience for ECDE children.

2. Reconfiguration of the governance structure for the ECDE pathway to remove the existing administrative inconsistencies across national and county governments.

The study highlights the need for a comprehensive reconfiguration of the governance structure overseeing Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) in Kenya to address existing administrative inconsistencies between national and

county governments. Currently, the ECDE sector is characterized by a fragmented system, where multiple stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, County Governments, the Children's Department, private sector actors, religious organizations, development partners and other community players, each have their own roles and responsibilities. This lack of coordination often leads to inefficiencies, miscommunication and gaps in service delivery, which hinder the effective management of ECDE programs. The study calls for a streamlined governance framework that aligns the efforts of these diverse stakeholders to create a more cohesive and unified approach to managing and delivering ECDE services. By reconfiguring the governance structure, the study suggests that greater synergy can be achieved, ensuring that all players are working towards a common goal with clear roles and responsibilities. This reconfiguration could involve establishing a central coordinating body that would oversee and regulate the ECDE sector, creating standardized policies and procedures across both national and county levels. Furthermore, this approach would help to minimize bureaucratic inefficiencies, improve resource allocation and ensure that the needs of children and teachers are adequately addressed. Ultimately, a more integrated governance structure would enhance the effectiveness and quality of ECDE provision, contributing to the overall improvement of early childhood education in Kenya.

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