

**TEACHERS' SOCIAL CONCERNS ON COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION
LEARNERS' OUTCOMES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN
BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION**DECLARATION BY THE STUDENT**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Daughter Shirleen Laisa and Son Dylan Laisa.

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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, a significant knowledge gap exists regarding ECDE teachers social concerns in implementing CBE at the pre-primary level in Kenya, particularly in Bungoma County. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine teachers' social concerns on competency-based education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County. The study objectives were: to investigate ECDE teachers' social concerns on the administrative support in Competency Based Education; to determine ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education; to examine ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education in Bungoma County and to establish strategies that can be used to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in CBE 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 research population included the County Director of Education and ECDE teachers. The study targeted and drew samples from the 802 ECDE centers in Bungoma County which has eleven Sub Counties. The sample size included 80 ECDE centres that were picked following cluster sampling while 201 ECDE teachers 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. Focus group discussions, for pre-primary one (PP1) and Pre-primary two (PP2) parents, document analysis guide and an observation schedule were used to triangulate 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 pre-primary 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 and there was a near absence of digital technology in all ECDE institutions, 142 (74.34%) of the sampled teachers revealed that the parents are not supportive in CBE implementation. Based on findings of the study, the study recommended provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities, provision of digital technology, training of ECDE teachers and improving the teacher pupil ratio in pre-primary education. Further research on enhancing access, equity and inclusion of CBE in pre-primary education is desirable.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BECF	Basic Education Curriculum Framework
CBAF-TE	Competency Based Assessment Framework for Teacher Education
CBA	Competency Based Assessment
CBC	Competency Based Curriculum
CBE	Competency Based Education
CDE	County Director of Education
CEB	County Education Board
CEC	County Executive Committee
CECEC	County Early Childhood Education Committee
CPSB	County Public Service Board
DICECE	District Centre for Early Childhood Education
DECTE	Diploma in Early Childhood Teacher Education
EAC	East African Community
ECDE	Early Childhood Development Education
EYE	Early Years Education
EU	European Union
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEP	Individualized Educational Plan
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary

KEPSHA	Education Kenya Primary Heads Association
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
NACECE	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PP1	Pre- Primary one
PP2	Pre- Primary two
PISA	Programme for International Students Assessment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SNE	Special Needs Education
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction to the Study

The study explored early childhood development education teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya whose findings were generalized to give an understanding of global context.

The chapter focuses on the Background of the study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, Objectives, Research questions, Significance of the study, Justification of the study, Limitations, Delimitations, Assumptions, Theoretical framework, Conceptual framework and Operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

The study began 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 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.

Patrick and Sturgis (2013) point out that, the CBE has been analogized as a revolution where the sun is given its rightful place at the epicenter of the cosmos, rather than the

earth; thus, learners occupy the core of educational programmes. In this approach, learning is structured to achieve the needs of the pupils, it touches on all aspects of the system stretching from the role of the instructors, the structuring of the curriculum, how time is organized and provision of resources. At the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) level, longitudinal studies have affirmed the affirmative role of CBE in enhancing learner experiences and the quality of education. The findings indicated positive impact of CBE on various aspects of ECDE including cognitive, language, academic skills as well as social-emotional skills of the learners (Peeters, 2019; Onyango et al., 2021).

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: 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).

According to Bristow & Patrick (2014), Finland presents a case of "a success story" of CBE, it has been ranked the best Programme by International Students Assessment (PISA). PISA is a recognized global benchmarking survey for assessment examination which has been in place since 2000 and administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In Finland, the teachers' experiences and those of the learners are given consideration and play an important role. The national curriculum framework prescribes the overall education objectives and goals, while the local schools are free to come up with the standards, learning objectives, teaching methods, and detailed outcomes. There are clear rubrics for what it looks like when a learner masters the standards at a high level. The national curriculum framework includes common assessment criteria, but teachers and students have a tremendous amount of freedom in how they teach and learn (Bristow & Patrick, 2014).

Studies conducted at the global level underscore the important contribution early years education makes towards attainment of Sustainable Development Goals. Evidence suggests that this is a stage where meaningful educational foundation is laid in basic mathematics and literacy skills. As such, it is imperative to ensure that interventions are well implemented at this early stage to ensure that young children have strong

foundations in basic skills like arithmetic and literacy (Saeed & Munir, 2021; Davis-Kean et al.,2021). In developed countries, such as Finland and Canada, the Competency-Based Education at the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) level focuses on holistic child development, with an emphasis on social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth. Educators are well-trained and use play-based learning, hands-on activities and individualized instruction that is tailored to the child's developmental stage and interests (OECD, 2017). This approach encourages creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, while also fostering strong partnerships between parents, teachers and communities (Hodges, 2018). High quality resources, ongoing professional development for teachers and clear guidelines for parental involvement are also key components of the CBC system in these countries.

In Africa, the whole issue of what education system is to be taught has been even more perilous.

At independence, most African countries embraced an education system that was content based.

A study by Taasisi ya Elimu (2013), points out that, by early 1990's countries in Africa started to reform their education system to competency-based education in order to deal with developmental needs of their countries since learners lacked appropriate skills and applicable knowledge. In Rwanda, the implementation of CBE began in 2015 in order to deal with scarcity in its education system with emphasis on science and technology. This was in response to its education philosophy of making sure that every child at all levels of learning receives quality education to develop their full potential and relevant skills,

knowledge and desired attitudes that will help them fit in the society and job market (Republic of Rwanda,2015).

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 & 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 entered 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.

In addition, on parental involvement, a study in Tanzania by Nkya & Huang, 2019, examined how much the parents understood CBE. Regarding the content of CBE, majority of the respondents at 80% were not familiar with the objectives of Competency Based Education. Even the basic understanding of the term competency was a challenge

to them. What they know is that their children should go to school and be given knowledge by teachers. Some of the correspondents, 90%, saw the teacher as a sole source of knowledge. This concern on the role of parents in delivery of CBE captures one of the concerns of the study that is the ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the delivery of Competency Based Education.

On the part of the learners regarding CBE content, learners come to class with some knowledge and skills. This prior knowledge which learners bring with them is an important input for effective teaching and learning. In order for the learners to share their knowledge and skills with that of the teacher in the class, teachers must create a friendly and interactive learning environment. Learners should feel free to learn from each other and to contribute their ideas and views regarding the CBE.

In the course of this interaction, teachers need to motivate and honour the contributions learners make in the lesson. In addition, teachers stand as moderators of the interactions going on in the learning process. In this way, learners not only develop communicative competences and confidence in expressing their views but also mastery of the subject matter (Mkonongwa, 2018).

The discussions at the regional level identify the gap in administrative support in areas provision of teaching-learning facilities and training of the teachers who are the implementers of CBE like cited in Tanzania. These areas mark some of the research gaps that were addressed in this study.

In Kenya, there have been initiatives towards education reforms since independence. In the year 1981, a Presidential Working Party was commissioned to examine education

reform in the country (Republic of Kenya, 1981). The Commission also known as Mackay report led to the establishment of a second public university and also recommended the 8-4-4 system of education with a heavy emphasis on Mathematics, English and Vocational subjects that would enable those who do not continue to secondary education to be self-employed through acquisition of technical skills. It was felt then that the eight years in primary school were long enough to allow the pupil to mature and to acquire employable hands-on technical skills. The 8-4-4 system hoped to instil self-reliance in the learners. However, studies by Sifuna (1990) have indicated that the radical changes introduced exerted considerable pressure on the existing facilities, increased the cost of education, brought out the challenge of teacher preparedness for the changes and placed a heavy academic burden on the learner. Further, there were challenges of a mismatch between expected curriculum content and the time allocated within each level and hurried implementation without adequate stakeholder involvement.

While the CBE in Kenya was introduced in 2017 to improve early childhood education, challenges persist at the ECDE level. Teachers often lack adequate training and resources and the curriculum is not always well integrated into the local context (Republic of Kenya, 2020). Parental involvement is also limited due to a lack of awareness and guidance on how to engage in the learning process.

In view of the shortcomings of the 8-4-4 system, the government initiated a number of formative and summative reviews in 1992, 1995 and 2002 to address the said challenges (Republic of Kenya, 2017). A more comprehensive review was carried out by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). In a report documented by KICD (2009), an evaluation of the 8-4-4 system of education by KICD identified the major challenges

including being heavily examination oriented, over-emphasis on content coverage and no opportunity for hands-on orientation, lack of ICT infrastructure and lack of special needs curriculum among others. KICD therefore propounded CBE that is based on the special needs of all the learners and to meet the needs of the 21st century skills.

However, it is important to point out that the Kenyan education system has side-lined ECDE since independence. Right from the Ominde Commission of 1964, the Mackay Commission of 1981, the Kamunge Commission of 1986 to the Koech Commission of 1998 gave far-reaching policy recommendations without paying attention to pre-primary education. It took the Sessional Paper of 2005, the 2006 Early Childhood Development policy framework and the Basic Education Act of 2013 to draw attention to pre-primary education in Kenya. In this context, the study noted that since competency-based education acknowledges the two years of pre-school, it is therefore important to pay attention to its implementation.

Further, the Early Childhood Education Act No. 3 of 2021 was enacted to provide a framework for the establishment of systems for the administration of early childhood education within a County and for connected purposes. Early Years Education in the context of CBE is now referred to as pre-primary or pre-school and mainly comprises of learners in the ages of three to six years.

These are the foundational years in the academic cycle where the child's mental, social and physical abilities are formed as well as fundamental skills of self-confidence, self-awareness, self-expression and self-esteem. It is the crucial stage where the learners develop a basic understanding of their immediate environment, an appreciation of their culture, aesthetic and artistic world and the curiosity to discover and explore the world

around them (UNESCO, 2015). From the above description, therefore, the ECDE teacher is strategically placed at the core of the system and since they are expected to initiate and induct their learners into the core of CBE.

This being the first level of education under the CBE, ECDE is divided into two levels: the first level is pre-primary one (PP1) for children aged four years; the second level is pre-primary 2 (PP2) for the five-year-old children. The learning areas for PP1 and PP2 include Language and Communication, Mathematics, Environment, Religion, Psychomotor (physical activity learning) and creativity (Music, Art and Craft). At this level, the learner is expected to have acquired appropriate communication skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing; basic drawing and picture making skills; painting, coloring, weaving, making shapes, bracelet making and beading; counting numbers, measurements, Kenyan currency identification, patterns; learning basic time and daily routines; start observing proper hygiene, sanitation and nutrition; and demonstrate understanding of religious values and basic knowledge of Christianity/Islamic/Hindu religious education. The expectation on the part of the ECDE teacher is humongous given that this is the basic and elementary level that might not have a precedent level to build on (KICD, 2017). In most of the areas, the ECDE teacher is literally writing on clean slate.

However, the reality on the ground 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 & Waweru, 2019, Momanyi & Rop, 2019 & 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.

Similar issues had emerged in a report by KICD (2017) which indicated that key among the challenges facing CBE implementation was the issue of scarcity of resources to deliver the curriculum especially in public schools and the issue of teachers' knowledge of CBE pedagogy. Similarly, a survey on CBE conducted in Kibera Sub- County in Kenya (Sitenei, 2020) revealed that majority of teacher respondents at 81.6% had attended a one-week training session while another 18.4% had attended a two-week training session on CBE. The finding revealed that the teachers had not received adequate preparation on the competency-based education. Secondly, the finding revealed

overcrowding of classes in Kibera while the teacher-pupil ratio was at 1:80 which strains the teachers' efforts towards classroom management and control. This ratio is above the recommended teacher pupil ratio of 1:25 that Kenya is aiming to achieve in pre-primary education.

In addition, a report on Competency Based Activities presented to The National Steering Committee on 3rd January 2018 cites several concerns by the teachers on CBC based on the pilot study including: handling information that requires digital devices, guiding parents on assessment and homework, grading according to assessment rubrics, changing from thematic to inquiry based approach, large classes, generating key inquiry questions, the classes take a long time to plan, it takes time to assess individual learners and lack of guidance in dealing with learners who exceed expectations (KICD, 2018).

On ECDE, the Senate Standing Committee report (2022), on Education on the ECDE landscape in the country and the status of implementation of ECDE policy and legal framework in the country, noted that the county governments had invested significantly in the development of ECDE centers leading to an increase in the number of ECDE centers by 14.5% between 2013 and 2019.

However, a study by KNUT (2019) on teachers' preparedness in the implementation of competency-based curriculum found out that, ECDE centres lack relevant infrastructures for competency-based education, lack instructional teaching and learning materials, training of the facilitators and public participation and involvement was below expectation, therefore, there was need to address administrative support with regard to both the quality and equity ECDE service provision in the context of CBE.

Grounded on the argument presented in the above studies, the study opines that there is need for an empirical study to look into the ECDE teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing global and national emphasis on Competency-Based Education (CBE), a significant knowledge gap remains in addressing the social concerns faced by Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) teachers in Kenya, particularly in Bungoma County while implementing CBE at the pre-primary level.

While CBE emphasizes the development of critical skills, attitudes and values, the full realization of its intended outcomes is hindered by factors such as inadequate administrative support, limited parental involvement and challenges in fostering social interactions among learners in the classroom.

These factors not only undermine the effectiveness of CBE at the foundational stage but also impact the quality of early childhood education, potentially limiting the future academic and social development of young learners.

This localized teacher-centered focus contributes new empirical insights necessary for refining implementation strategies and informing policy decisions related to CBE at the foundational level of education.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya. These were the social concerns among ECDE teachers in the Competency Based Education, social concerns on administrative support, parental involvement and learner classroom socialization.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study objectives were:

1. Investigate social concerns on administrative support that ECDE teachers encounter in the Competency Based Education in Bungoma County.
2. Determine ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education in Bungoma County.
3. Examine ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education in Bungoma County.
4. Establish strategies that can be used to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in Competency Based Education in Bungoma County.

1.5 Research Questions

The study therefore, aimed at responding to the following questions:

1. What are the social concerns on administrative support that ECDE teachers in Bungoma County encounter in the Competency Based Education?
2. What are the ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education in Bungoma County?
3. What are the ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education in Bungoma County?
4. What strategies that can be used to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in Competency Based Education in Bungoma County?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Competency Based education has been adopted as the main approach to education and training in Kenya. For this reason, the researcher anticipated that the outcomes of the study will supplement in the buildup of valuable information that will be useful for policy formulation and reference point. Pursuant to this, the researcher hoped to deepen understanding among various stakeholders towards better formulation of policy and implementation of CBE by ECDE teachers, particularly as anticipated in Basic Education Curriculum Framework (Gok, 2017) where all teachers' activities will be directed, coordinated, supported and monitored in the pursuit of improved CBE. Further, the country has embarked on a reform journey with the new education system and through an

empirical appraisal of the teething problems as well as the opportunities and pitfalls along the trajectory, valuable lessons can be arrived at. It is therefore, hoped that the Ministry of Education (MoE) will consider the findings of this study instrumental in giving a scholarly and objective evaluation of CBE. This might in turn inform and enhance effective teaching and learning. This study hoped to shed light on social concerns of ECDE teachers in the implementation of Competency Based Education in Bungoma County, Kenya.

This study is about the ECDE teachers' concern on how competency-based education is being implemented in Kenya. The Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) stage plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's foundational knowledge, skills and overall development. It is at ECDE level that the formation of the child begins. Therefore, the focus of CBE on pre-primary education was a significant direction in elevating pre-primary education. During this critical stage of a child's life, socialization is not only a key aspect of their growth but also a primary mechanism through which learning takes place. Traditionally, the socialization agents in a child's life namely the parents, teachers, and the broader school environment are expected to collaborate effectively in creating an optimal environment for learning. However, with the advent of Competency-Based Education (CBE), challenges have emerged, especially at the ECDE level, as these agents of socialization struggle to implement CBE successfully.

The study will also provide critical feedback to other stakeholders on the delivery of competency based education at the pre-primary level. That is, County governments, ECDE teachers, parents and other significant stakeholders like UNICEF, the World Bank and general populace will find the outcome of this study invaluable in informing the way

forward. The study acknowledges that CBE is still at implementation stage and therefore still undergoing some restructuring but goes further to note that the full cycle of CBE will be completed by December 2028 when the debut class completes Grade 12. There is, therefore, the need to establish and document the experiences of participants who are going through process as we approach full cycle. This study thus comes in handy in determining the degree of successful implementation to give impetus for appropriate policy appraisal.

There is the acknowledgement that successful CBE implementation can only be attained when the teachers are positioned in relation to the educational policy at different levels at different stages of their careers, with different amounts of experience, aspirations and competences. It is therefore paramount that teachers are accorded extensive and intensive support in regard to new pedagogical skills required, attitude change and self-efficacies necessary to deliver the education reform to achieve its ultimate objective (Karolina, Michaela and Petr, 2019). The issues raised in these studies reflect on administrative support accorded to the teachers in delivering the CBE and hence one of the objectives of the study.

A study carried out in Nyandarua County on CBE by Waweru (2018) concluded that teachers needed support in infusing core competencies where 69.2% needed support in infusing critical thinking, 50.6 % needed support in infusing creativity and imagination, while 72.8% needed support in infusing communication and collaboration. The study noted that the learners too had a challenge applying knowledge in various contexts and had difficulties expressing themselves well in English and Kiswahili.

The study also hoped to build on to the existing body of knowledge of ECDE. For a long time in Kenya, ECDE has suffered from neglect and low recognition especially under the 8-4-4 system of education where pre-primary education was excluded from the 16 years of education. Now under the CBE that recognizes two years of pre-primary, it is important that empirical evidence is build up to sufficiently inform and guide the way forward for pre-primary. This study set out to particularly provide empirical data on the ECDE teachers' views and also the views of the parents.

This study will therefore be found useful in assessing the progress made, possible areas of improvement and areas requiring evaluation.

The study falls under the academic discipline of sociology of education. It captures key concerns of Sociology of Education including relationship between a society and its education systems, the teacher and the teaching activities and the learners' learning environment. In the issue of education and society for example, this study sought to discover how and to what context other sociological institutions like the family are involved in the growth, provision and general support of educational activities in pre-school. Sociology of education acknowledges that a child is taught by and learns from various institutions, such as parents, family, community members, teachers and by observations. All these institutions form learners' learning environments. The study concluded that these learning environments have the capacity to influence and determine learners' acquisition of mental, physical and social knowledge.

1.7 Justification of the Study

Competency Based Education was introduced in Kenya in 2017 and since then, numerous social concerns have been cited as possible impediments to its implementation. Top on the list was the issue of teachers and parents in terms of their level of preparedness towards CBE. Teachers are the most important human capital in any review and implementation of an education system while the ECDE parents are involved in the day-to-day schooling of their children.

However, studies show that Competency Based Education was rolled out without clear evidence whether ECDE teachers, who are at the epicenter of the teaching and learning process, had the prerequisite awareness for successful implementation in the course of the instructional practice hence the need for this study to interrogate the position of ECDE teachers' social concerns pertaining CBE. Since the rollout of the CBE in Kenya, there have been concerns among the stakeholders about the challenges in implementation and involvement of key stakeholders like teachers and parents.

The study postulates that while as teamwork is critical in any education process, teachers and parents are at the cog of the entire process and their part involvement throughout the process is mandatory. The study findings will make a contribution in enriching the existing body of knowledge on CBE. The education system is relatively new in Kenya and a study on its implementation may form some of the premier reference points for other scholarly discourses. This study will also raise pertinent issues that will inform future review of related literature.

This study was important in providing empirical evidence on implementation of CBE at the pre-primary level. The methodology of the study allowed an in-depth scrutiny of day

to day running of ECDE by employing multiple tools to complement each other in arriving at a wholistic view of the actual practice on the ground. This study went beyond interviews and questionnaires to reflect parental voices in the focus group discussions, review of critical documents on implementation of CBE and making structured observation of day to day running of ECDEs.

In this context, this study is invaluable in providing an academic and objective assessment of this relatively new area of CBE. The study will in turn inform and enhance effective implementation.

The study also offers valuable insights that could go a long way in demystifying the CBE for the ECDE teacher and by extension other stakeholders. Most importantly, the study will help to draw a line between information and misinformation regarding implementation of CBE at the pre-primary level that is still under researched.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

First, when conducting research on views on social concerns of ECDE teachers 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.

Second, in the process of the research, questionnaires were used to find out ECDE teachers' social concerns in Competency Based Education. Studies have indicated that human beings tend to overrate their positive traits and underrate the negative ones (Sharma, 2008). The fear being that a few respondents tended to exaggerate their performance in some aspects of CBE implementation, which could have implications for the conclusions of the study. To deal with this potential limitation, the researcher posed the same question to the County Director of Education to countercheck what had been said by teachers. The researcher utilized direct observation to verify wherever there was any discrepancy.

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. Further, the study utilized Google online questionnaires to get data from the ECDE teachers. However, the study did encounter a few teachers who are not technologically savvy. This challenge was dwelt with by providing hard copies of the same. Furthermore, the google online questionnaire was made available through the mobile phones making it easily accessible

to the respondents. Most importantly, the researcher was physically present during the school visits to help out leading to a high return rate on the research tools.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The study on teachers' social concerns in Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya is an expansive scope and thus the needed to be delineated to three areas as set out in the objectives to be achievable in a single study. Consequently, study set out to establish ECDE teachers' social concerns on the administrative support in Competency Based Education, to determine ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education and examine ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education in Bungoma County.

Further, the study was delimited to public ECDEs in Bungoma County. Although the overall legal regulation of all ECDEs is vested in their respective County Governments, there is some difference in the way public and private institutions are managed. Moreover, this study was also looking at

ECDE teachers' social concerns on the administrative support in Competency Based Education.

The administrative support in this study was defined as assistance given by the County government and heads of institutions, in terms of training in CBE, resource provision and teaching learning facilities. Private ECDEs are regulated by counties but make their own arrangements for provisions of resources and therefore the issue of administrative support would not apply in their case. The study thus focused on public ECDEs since their mode of operation is standardized and provisions centralized.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

In undertaking the study, the researcher made the following assumptions:

1. That the ECDE teachers have social concerns on administrative support that they encounter in the Competency Based Education.
2. That social concerns of ECDE teachers in the Competency Based Education implementation have implications to successful delivery of CBE.
3. That ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education have a bearing on successful delivery of CBE.

1.11 Theoretical Framework

In conceptualizing teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya, this study applied a synthesis of the Symbolic Interactionism and Social Exchange Theory. Symbolic Interactionism and Social Exchange Theory are two influential frameworks in sociology, each offering distinct perspectives on human behavior within social contexts.

The basic tenet of symbolic interactionism is the emphasis on the role of symbols and interactions in the formation of society and individual identities. The theory was developed primarily by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. This approach posits that people act based on the meanings that objects, events and behaviors have for them. The core tenets of symbolic interactionism include the belief that human beings communicate through symbols, like language and gestures, and that these symbols shape our social realities. It also asserts that self-identity is constructed through social

interactions and individuals continuously interpret and redefine their experiences based on social feedback. This theory focuses on the micro-level of human behavior, analyzing how individuals and groups create, maintain and change social norms and institutions.

The sociological foundation of symbolic interactionism suggests that people form meanings and define social realities through communication and social interactions. The primary concern in symbolic interactionism is the role of symbols such as language, gestures, and social norms in shaping individuals' views and behaviors. For ECDE teachers, the meaning they attribute to their work and the support they receive in implementing CBE is shaped by their interactions with various social actors such as administrators and parents. Teachers constantly interpret their roles through these interactions, which influence their views toward CBE. For example, a teacher's view of administrative support may be influenced by the symbolic meanings associated with authority and guidance. If the administration provides strong, visible support through professional development opportunities, resource provision and clear communication, teachers are likely to feel more empowered and competent in delivering CBE. The converse is also true.

In the context of CBE at ECDE, symbolic interactionism helps explain how children learn through interactions that allow them to internalize societal values, norms, and skills. For instance, when teachers engage in meaningful conversations with children, they are not only teaching academic knowledge but also fostering social competencies, like communication, empathy, and problem solving. Through repeated interactions, children learn to navigate their environment, interpret social cues, and develop cognitive and

emotional competencies that are central to their overall development. Additionally, through play and group activities, symbolic interactionism underscores how children create shared meanings and negotiate roles and expectations, which are critical to the CBE framework.

The social exchange theory is associated with scholars like George Homans and Peter Blau. The basic tenet focuses on how individuals make decisions based on perceived rewards and costs in their relationships. It suggests that social behavior is the result of an exchange process, where people seek to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. The central tenets of social exchange theory include the idea that individuals weigh the potential outcomes of interactions, such as social approval, resources or companionship and make decisions accordingly. Another key concept is the notion of reciprocity, which emphasizes the importance of mutual exchange in maintaining relationships. The social exchange theory examines both the personal and collective aspects of interactions, considering how individual actions influence larger social structures.

In the ECDE setting, social exchange theory underscores the importance of the teacher-pupil relationship in competency development. Teachers provide educational resources, guidance, and emotional support, while children reciprocate through their engagement, enthusiasm and progress in acquiring competencies. Similarly, children benefit from positive reinforcement, encouragement and an environment that fosters learning. In this reciprocal relationship, CBE becomes a framework in which all participants administrators, teachers, children and even parents are engaged in an exchange of knowledge, resources and support.

Social exchange theory suggests that enhancing parental involvement requires making it easier for parents to contribute to their children's education. This might involve strategies such as flexible meeting times, clearer communication about the goals and benefits of CBE, and developing parent teacher partnerships that emphasize mutual respect and understanding. When teachers and parents communicate openly and share a common understanding of the CBE approach, the perceived rewards of involvement increase, encouraging further participation.

Moreover, social exchange theory extends beyond the classroom and into the community. Parents, as primary caregivers, may contribute to the competency development of their children by reinforcing learning in the home environment. Teachers and parents engage in exchanges that promote children's learning, and this cooperation helps build competencies that are recognized and valued by society.

The interface between symbolic interactionism and social exchange theory provides an understanding of competency-based education at the ECDE level. Symbolic interactionism illuminates the importance of social interactions and the creation of shared meanings in competency development while social exchange theory highlights the reciprocal relationships that underpin the educational process. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive framework for understanding how competencies are developed through both social interactions and exchanges of resources within the ECDE context. Through these two theories, it becomes clear that CBE is not just about individual achievement but is shaped by a network of social interactions and exchanges that contribute to the holistic development of the young learners.

These two sociological theories helped conceptualize educational issues surrounding the CBE since there are many aspects of the society that need consideration in the unfolding education set up. Education change is an aspect of social exchange involving social interactions within new contexts. The two sociological theories are therefore apt by serving to put the social concerns into perspective including groups and institutions involved in the social interactions and their contribution to the new education system. Core to this process are the teachers, the parents and other stakeholders.

According the KICD (2017), the educational reforms from the 8-4-4 system to the Competency Based education system were informed by the challenges of a rigid system that was too elitist and providing limited opportunities to align with the children's career interests, aptitudes and abilities. The idea was to bring in a system that allows the child to develop seven key competencies of communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn and self-efficacy. On their part, the ECDE teachers are expected to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for effective implementation of the CBE by applying innovative pedagogical approaches and models, demonstrate competencies in assessment and be self-reflective, self-improving and supportive learners themselves. Further, the CBE calls for involvement of the parents who are expected to provide an enabling environment that is conducive to learning, motivating learners to fulfil their potential. They are also expected to monitor and guide their children in completing their assigned tasks, doing homework, providing required materials, collecting and sending evidence for feedback and generally being supportive of the process.

Both theories point to the importance of resources in shaping teachers' experiences. Providing adequate teaching materials, access to technology, and ongoing professional development are critical to minimizing the perceived costs of implementing CBE. When teachers feel adequately equipped, the social exchange is more balanced, with the perceived rewards outweighing the costs, leading to more positive views and practices in CBE.

By combining symbolic interactionism and social exchange theory, the study provided a better understanding of the complex social dynamics that influence ECDE teachers' views on social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya. This theoretical perspective expounded on how ECDE teachers interpret their experiences with administrative support, parental involvement, and the broader CBE process. The theories also offered practical strategies for addressing social concerns, including enhancing communication, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that resources and training are available to teachers. The theoretical perspective, therefore, achieved a deeper understanding of how social concerns affect the success of CBE implementation and how these concerns can be addressed to improve educational outcomes for the ECDE learners.

The CBE therefore establishes a critical relationship between the teacher and the parent that formed the main thrust of this study. The study focused on ECDE teachers' social concerns on the administrative support in Competency Based Education, ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education, ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education and

strategies that can be used to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in CBE in Bungoma County.

1.12 Conceptual Framework

This study examined teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County. In conceptualizing this, the study recognized the ECDE teachers' social concerns towards Competency Based Education as the explanatory factors under investigation. The objective of the study was successful CBE learners' outcomes in early childhood education whose indicators included pupils who are proficient in communication, collaboration among one another, a mind that is innovative and critically engaged, ability to solve simple problems within their purview, awareness of issues beyond their immediate environment and gradually gaining ability for self-direction.

The study acknowledged that there are other factors key to the study that could not be factored since a single study can only cover as much. The study recognized that stakeholders' participation is important in the CBE. The study also acknowledged that the prevailing economic environment in the country does have a bearing on the implementation of competency-based education. The study further acknowledged that the governance and management of ECDE Centers including the policy at the county level bears on the CBE learner outcomes.

The independent variable for this study was ECDE teachers' social concerns in the Competency Based Education. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006: 21), the

independent variables which are also referred to as predictor or explanatory variables are the factors that the researcher thinks explain variation in the dependent variable.

The dependent variable is what is actually studied and sought by the researcher. It is the expected changes or outcomes as a result of the variations to the independent variable. For this study, the dependent variable was CBE learner outcomes in early childhood education since it was the anticipated result of the study.

These variables are expected to provide a bearing to the study for they guide the derivation of the objectives, thematic sub topics in the evaluation of related literature; are captured in the conceptual framework while also guiding the topical areas in data collection, analysis and presentation.

The interchange and interplay of these variables mentioned above and the way they lead to successful implementation of CBE is represented in Figure 1.1 below:

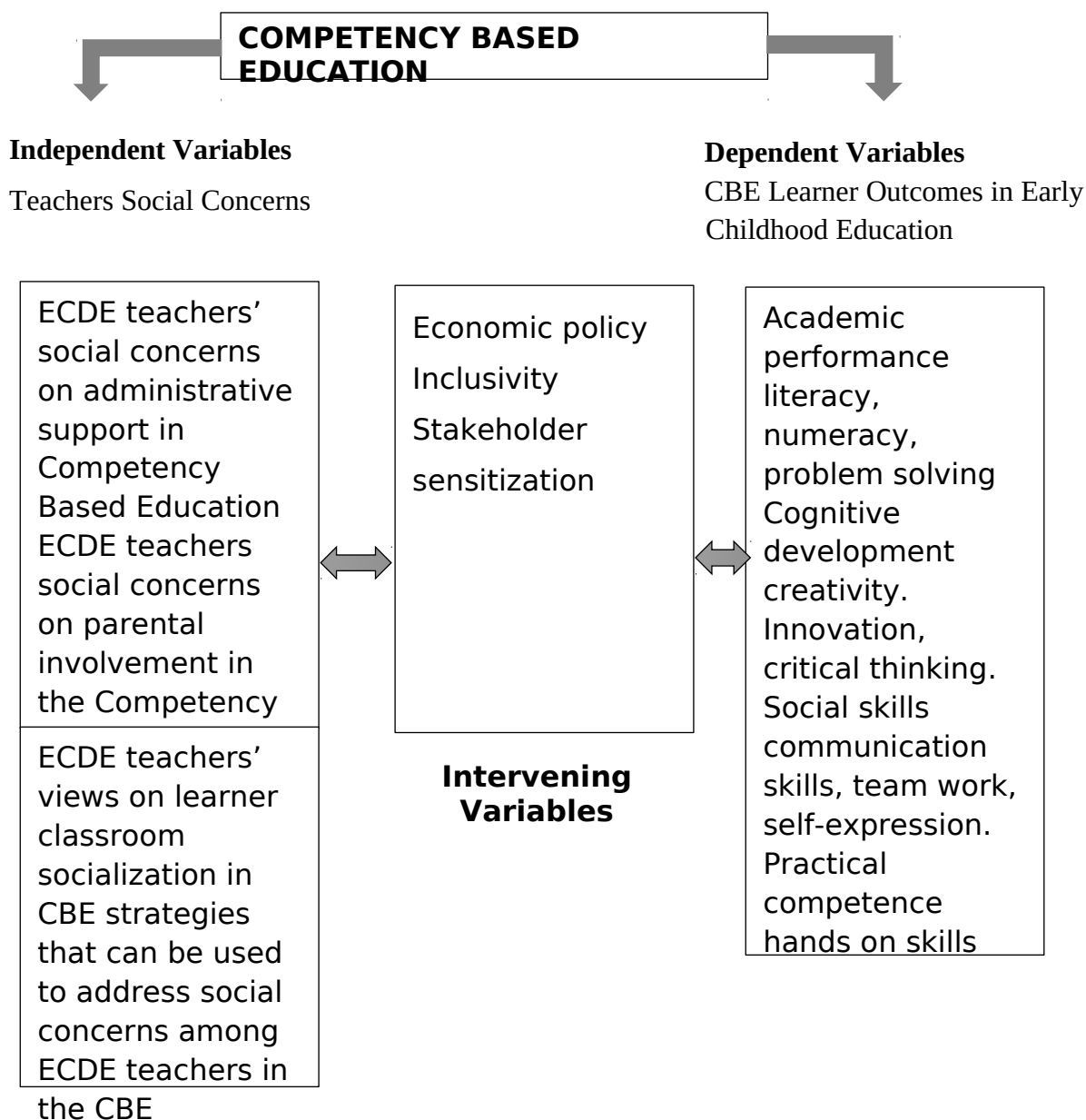


Figure. 1.1 Social Concerns of ECDE Teachers in the Competency Based Education Learner Outcomes in Early Childhood Education

The independent variables include ECDE teachers' social concerns on the administrative support in Competency Based Education; ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education and the ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education. The dependent variable was the CBE learner outcomes in early childhood education.

1.13 Operational Definitions of Terms

Administrative support: Assistance given to ECDE teachers by the County government and heads of institutions, in terms of; training in CBE, resource provision, teaching learning facilities **Competency Based Education:** Is a system of education that is learner centered aimed to develop seven key competencies in pupils, that is, Communication and Collaboration, Self-efficacy, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Creativity and Imagination, Citizenship, Digital Literacy and Learning to Learn.

Heritage: The inherited, tangible and intangible attributes and resources of cultural, historical, archaeological, artistic, and natural significance that are recognized and valued as part of a nation's identity and legacy.

Implementation: Approaches necessary for planning and converting the plans to action in the process of teaching and learning to bring about the intended outcomes in pupils.

Pupil: A child enrolled in Pre-Primary one and Pre-Primary two (PP1 and PP2)

Social Concerns: refers to issues affecting teacher learner interactionst and outcomes of education systems. These concerns include administrative support, parental

involvement and learner classroom socialization. Addressing these concerns requires a focus on creating inclusive, supportive environments where all children have equal opportunities to develop competencies essential for future success.

Subjects: Learning areas and activities given at the pre-primary education

ECDE Teacher: A facilitator in teaching and learning in pre-primary education that has undergone formal training in teacher training colleges or universities and has also received retraining in CBE

Teaching facilities: Resources available to implement the CBE in primary schools, that is, both human and physical resources.

Socialization: Inculcation of knowledge, values, skills and attitudes in learners. Socialization involves the academic work that teachers do and also goes to imparting the values

Strategies: Suggestions and recommendations on how CBE can be improved to enhance teaching and learning.

Views: refers to opinions as shaped by individuals' personal experiences, social contexts and interactions with others. In this study, effective socialization requires aligned beliefs, attitudes and collaboration between parents, teachers and the school environment.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Chapter two involves logical documentation, positioning as well as exploration of evidence relating to teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), contend that the main purpose of literature review is to establish what has been done in relation to the research problem under investigation so that the researcher may avoid redundancy and replication. The sections are arranged thematically as per the study objectives so that previous studies are looked at and study gaps generated for each. It is these gaps that the study sought to address.

2.1 ECDE Teachers' Social Concerns on Administrative Support in Competency Based Education

The 2010 constitution bestowed the management of ECDE on the devolved governments and further, the Kenya gazette supplement number 108, the senate bill number 32 of 2014 describes the County Governments to be responsible for the training, registration, staffing and supervision of ECDE, development of personnel in the county, provide the necessary infrastructure and funds necessary for the development of ECDE centres and for administration of ECDEs within the county. Prior to introduction of CBE, the devolved units were already grappling with this task thus CBE exacerbated the challenge since it required training of ECDE teachers and additional resources. In a study by

Kithaka (2021) on the influence of selected functions of devolved governments on the performance of ECDE teachers, it was noted that since the devolved units were still in the new dispensation their supervision of early childhood education was inept and undermined the performance of the ECDE teachers. The study concludes that Competency Based Education at the ECDE level is greatly compromised at the devolved unit level due to the aforementioned issues.

To begin with, it is important to look at the CBE model which implies two years in pre-primary, six years in primary school from grade 1 to 6, three years in Junior Secondary which is grade 7 to 9, three years in senior secondary which is grade 10 to 12 and three years in either university or vocational institutions. The main objective of the system is to ensure that the learners become competent in seven core competencies of communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, imagination and creativity, citizenship, learning to learn, self-efficacy and digital literacy.

Prior to the inauguration of the 2-6-3-3-3 education cycle, there was the 8-4-4 system which implied eight years in primary school, four years in high school and four years in the university. In essence, this meant that 8-4-4 system did not recognize the pre-primary level that was by then referred to as nursery or kindergarten. The nursery schools therefore lacked well stipulated standards by the ministry of education. One underlying reason for adoption of CBE was to move away from the orientation towards acquisition of content knowledge that the 8-4-4 had been reduced to in favour of competence development. Further, the 8-4-4 system heavily relied on the rote memorization methodology while the CBE champions acquiring skills and competencies that build the capacity to solve real-life problems. KICD emphasizes that competency-based learning

places an emphasis on powerful or rich learning environments that enable teachers and pupils to engage in meaningful learning processes.

The CBE was rolled out in 2017 as an innovative way to efficiently achieve a learner-centric education and fully adaptive to the changing needs of the learner. The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) of 2017, which is the basic document upon which CBE is anchored, spells out the expectations for both the teacher and the pupils. The document envisages a teacher who is highly knowledgeable, reflective, professional teachers that have additional enhanced skills and confidence in a range of modern pedagogical tools such as coaching, facilitating, and mentoring shall be developed and supported. Further, the document expects that the teacher will effectively play the role of mentoring and inspiring the learners, encouraging them and motivating them forward to attain their full potential. The teachers are expected to demonstrate flexibility in adjusting to the new curriculum in order to address the individual learning needs and talents of every child. Additionally, the teacher is expected to continuously make a proper diagnosis of the learner's individualized needs and work in partnership with other stakeholders like the parents, collaborating professionals and the wider community to ensure that these needs are satisfactorily met. Regarding the learner, the mission of the BECF is nurturing their individual potential. The essence being redesigning the education in such a way that it offers opportunities to recognize the latent potential of every pupil and foster the development of the same to its full potential through the learning pathways and tracks provided in the system as they progress. The mission therefore is to guarantee that no child is labeled a failure at the end of basic education (KICD, 2017:10). The

above mission and vision with regard to both the teacher and the pupil definitely places a high premium on the ability of the two stakeholders to conceptualize the CBE.

However, CBE implementation in Kenya faced headwinds. A report by the Taskforce on Implementation of Competency-Based Education led by Professor Raphael Munavo, that was formed in September, 2022 to advise the government on policies, strategies and other pertinent issues in order to ensure effective education reform, came up with a 332-page report that contains a detailed recommendation on implementation of CBE. The report cites financial, infrastructural, human resource as well as operational issues that needed to be addressed immediately. Indeed, this report raises a concern for administrative support towards the implementation of the new system of education. There is therefore a valid motivation in looking at the teachers' social concerns on the administrative support in Competency Based Education.

As argued elsewhere in this study, it is at ECDE level that the child makes a debut entrance into the formal education system. This study posits that this first exposure should encourage the learner to progress with the next levels of education and for that reason there is need for an environment that excites the child. The study therefore looked at ECDE teachers' social concerns on administrative support in Competency Based Education.

Education reform at ECDE level faced significant challenges throughout the counties due to lack of clear management and administration of ECDE owing to inadequate collaboration between the county and national government. The system of management boards took long to be institutionalized in the place of the weak school committees at the

school level. More significantly, disbandment of the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) and District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) in line with the reforms did not factor the need for transition. The NACECE was based at the KICD and served as a centre for ECDE curriculum and curriculum support materials development, resource mobilization and capacity building of the then district officers and other personnel in ECDE. The education system following reforms at the KICD and the transfer of personnel after the devolvement of ECDE to counties, lack of clarity on funding of ECDE and the decision to devolve some functions of education functions while retaining others at the national level compounded the teething problems in the sector (Kwayumba, 2016). It is evident then that the issue of ECDE teachers' social concern on the administrative support in Competency Based Education set in as soon as the reforms were promulgated.

At the global level, studies conducted in Canada province of Quebec articulated that early year's educations had long-term effects on the child's development from preschool throughout adolescence (Baker et al., 2019). Another empirical document Supporting the Teaching Professions for better learning outcomes (European Commission, 2012) noted that teaching staff increasingly needed the competences to find, evaluate and deploy learning materials from a wider range of sources, as well as critical, evidence-based attitudes, enabling them to respond to learners' outcomes, new evidence from inside and outside the classroom, and professional dialogue, in order to adapt their own practices. The expectation then is that the teachers will get the requisite support by the government in order to deliver the Competency Based Education successfully.

Another model is presented in the case of Finland where the role of the teacher is core. Finland's system is widely acknowledged as one of the best in the world and one where teachers work hand-in-hand with the administrators. Finland's national core curriculum has shifted from a highly centralized system emphasizing external testing to a localized one. Armed with a research background in psychology and curricular theory, teachers' now design their own curricula around lean national standards. Local teachers' and administrators define overall educational goals for their schools, assuming responsibility for their own student assessment, school improvement and self-assessment. There is a strong sense of societal trust in the schools and teachers charged with carrying out these responsibilities trust that is critical, yet difficult to gain. A primary ingredient in Finland's success is its investment in teacher preparedness or "professionalization," including a research-based master's degree at state expense. Teachers are selected from the top ten percent of high school graduates.

Further, in Finland, the teacher has been granted greater autonomy. The teacher may then permit learners to choose how they 'show what they know'. As outlined in *Enabling Innovation* (from the same Ministry series), educators have the freedom to: Design, improve on and share learning experiences: Form an extension of standard-based instruction: Emphasize communication, critical thinking, creative thinking and innovation: Maximize the possibilities for innovation, personalization, creative thinking, and collaboration based on the needs of diverse learners in diverse contexts. Learners are thereby encouraged to be actively involved in setting goals, reflecting on their work and taking control of their learning. The approach embraces place-based (experiential, non-classroom-based) learning and inquiry-based learning (Papp, 2018).

The Finland example brought out a contextual gap in this study by alluding to recognition of the idiosyncratic nature of each institution. Each ECDE institution is within unique contexts that should be leveraged to improve learning outcomes. This study takes a position that although the implementation problems cut across the country, each institution is within a unique environment that constitutes both challenges and opportunities. It is incumbent upon each ECDE to look into the unique opportunities that present themselves amid the challenges. Secondly, the role of parents and community is idealized. The Finland example gives the parents and the community more latitude in the affairs of the ECDE as opposed to the Kenyan context where findings of this study indicate lack of proper integration of parents and the community in pre-school. These two gaps of leveraging the immediate context of the ECDE and the enhanced role of the stakeholders in the matters of pre-schooling were acknowledged in the study and adopted as strong recommendations for improvement of ECDE in Kenya.

A similar setting is witnessed in Singapore and Shanghai where CBE succeeds partly because teachers are granted opportunities for lifelong learners. Teachers spend less time lecturing and more time learning, observing and mentoring each other; peer observation and feedback are common. Shanghai approaches all teachers as lifelong learners, and provides systemic and systematic, incentive-based ways to rise through career ladders. In-house professional development is common as part of an ongoing, integrated learning culture as opposed to bringing in external experts or leaving the premises for training. (Tucker, 2014).

The above models set the benchmark for teachers' involvement in the CBE and the support and autonomy provided for success. However, literature review underpins contrasting context between the developed world and the developing world. This marks a gap in the area of inconsistency and contradictions in the studies. Whereas the teachers in the developing countries demonstrate impassiveness since they are mere recipients of policy directions, their counter parts exuded autonomy and commitment in their delivery. Bearing in mind that all education systems are modeled and applied by the teachers for the development and progress of learners, the impassiveness of the teachers in the reform process is of great concern (Jagersma, 2010). This study thus strived to acknowledge and realize an inclusion of the ECDE teachers' voice in the recommendations forward.

Studies show that in Sub-Saharan Africa, teachers have not been well involved in CBE implementation. According to Cunningham (2018), an education system requires increased teacher capacities as well as institutional capacities, yet reforms seldom integrate any planning or budgeting towards increasing these capacities. Aside from developing capacity to implement, teachers seldom lead or are even meaningfully included in curriculum reform endeavors. An empirical study conducted in Tanzania on CBE concluded that the majority of teachers, who are the major implementers of the competency-based education, did not have a clear understanding of the system. In fact, some of them had no idea at all about what CBE means. Moreover, the majority of teachers did not get any training to orient them on competency-based teaching approaches. As a result, teachers' ability to apply competency-based teaching approaches was very limited. Amid knowledge deficit about competency-based education among

teachers, it suffices to conclude that the adoption of competency-based education in Tanzania has yet to translate into quality education in Tanzania (Makunja, 2015).

Furthermore, teaching and learning is changing to keep up with the rapid developments and changes in education and digital technologies. Teachers are therefore expected to continuously develop and improve their professional qualifications. To address the professional teacher qualification some countries have embarked on traditional teacher professional development (Shohel & Banks, 2012). Indeed, studies have established that most of the teachers lacked the essential competence and preparedness for implementing CBE. When the teachers are ill-prepared, they will fall short when it comes to efficient assessment of the learners' performance. Teacher preparedness was thus found to be a major impediment towards the effective implementation of CBE (Chemagosi, 2020; Rop & Momanyi, 2019; Waweru, 2018).

The Kenya National Examinations Council (2022) acknowledges that technology has promoted changes in our understanding of how curricula might be designed and delivered. The use of Information Communication technologies has increased in the 21st century and despite the rapid growth the education sector has somewhat embraced this technology in all aspects of managing education and assessments. Information Communication Technology (ICT) greatly facilitates the acquisition and absorption of knowledge, offering developing countries unprecedented opportunities to enhance educational systems, improve policy formulation and execution. New theories have emerged making the mode registration of candidates, capture of scores, testing, assessment and grading efficient, economical, and effective. The emphasis is that no teacher should be left behind in the digital divide.

According to Kaviti (2018), although the new system of education was meant to address the gaps in the 8-4-4 education system, the implementation of the system was hurried and the stakeholders, especially the teachers, were not adequately consulted. The simultaneous teacher preparation was inadequate and did not provide them with sufficient time to orient to the new teaching and learning platforms. Minimal public participation in curriculum design and implementation is one the challenges that are hampered the implementation of the competency-based education and it has threatened to derail the process (Muneja, 2015).

The new demands raised by the new system further compounded long standing issues that had persisted in the education system for a very long time. The most immediate was shortage of teachers within an environment of large class sizes, shortage of teaching-learning resources and then the emergent resistance by stakeholders leading to perception issues (Onyango, 2020). The cited challenges would be a big impediment to implementation of CBE given that it is both intensive on both human and financial resources.

A pilot study done by KICD and reports by TSC (Teachers Service Commission) indicates that teachers are ill-equipped for the competency-based education. KICD report (2018) indicates that only 3% of teachers feel adequately prepared for the new education system while only 20% were prepared. Questions have come up on the capacity of teachers to implement the new education system. Kaviti in 2018 stated that the system was hastily crafted and rushed through a pilot in 2017 whereby only 2000 of the 160,000 teachers imparting basic education in Kenya were trained (Kaviti, 2018). It was therefore

concluded that teachers were not adequately supported to take learners through the CBE because they did not understand it.

More so, a report on CBE Activities prepared by KICD (2018), following the pilot in 2017, noted that teachers were a crucial ingredient for the success of the education reforms. The report indicated that teachers appreciated an education system that is flexible, learner centered, and focused on instilling values in learners. However, teachers also had a myriad of concerns including: How would they implement this with their current constraints on resources (including a lack of digital resources), and large class sizes? Where would they find time to plan lessons and ensure they integrate the prescribed values and other contemporary issues? In the course of training, monitoring and supporting teachers for the implementation of the curriculum reforms, KICD also noted that teachers were struggling with the pedagogical shift required. The majority of teachers don't have the skills they need to design formative assessments, or to prioritize activity based learning to name just a few.

Additionally, implementation of CBE has been bedevilled by inadequate teaching and learning resources. There are gaps in preparation of books and hurried publications that have not satisfactorily taken cognizance of the learning outcomes. It is important to have the right and adequate resources so that the requisite competencies are actualized (Ondimu, 2018; Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Akala, 2021).

Another competency area is digital literacy and it is therefore anticipated that the teachers will have basic technological skills. However, research carried out on teacher's preparedness for the same revealed that only a paltry 38.7% of the teachers had some

form of ICT training while majority at 61.3% had not been exposed to ICT training (Mosioma, 2018). Similarly, a KICD report (2018) noted that a corresponding figure of 61% of the teachers lacked ICT training. So there seems to be a tacit agreement that teachers are not well prepared to deliver on ICT training. These empirical studies are a serious indictment on the ability of the teachers to deliver on the critical area of digital literacy.

Knowledge and understanding of teachers constitute an important aspect in the implementation of competency-based education during the teaching and learning process. Indeed, the effectiveness and efficiency of CBE delivery depends on teacher's ability to carry out teaching and learning activities responsibly and effectively. Mosha (2012) points out that qualified teachers with ample and appropriate knowledge and skills are one of the pre-conditions for a successful implementation of CBE.

It is evident from the literature review that the training and experience of the ECDE teacher are critical to the success of CBE implementation. It is clearly evident that the ECDE teachers drive the process and as a result should be well conversant with all the tenets of the new system of education. Fostering a learning environment where the ECDE pupil can thrive successful is mainly dependent on the school related factors where the teacher is the main player.

The study, therefore, set to find out the ECDE teachers' social concerns CBE within the context of the concerns regarding the teaching methodology, resources, sizes of classes, teacher training including in-service. The views of the researcher are that the administrative function of induction and orientation of teachers to the new system does

not appear to have been exhaustively and expeditiously carried out in many jurisdictions and which could be an impediment to the teaching and learning process.

Nonetheless, most of the studies appear to focus on provision of general infrastructure for teaching and learning and little has been done on provision of teaching facilities commensurate with CBE. Learning through play enables a child to thrive in the school environment. Competency-based education requires ample learning and play materials for individual and group activities. It is a system that endeavors to develop the self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence of the learner. Consequently, it is resource intensive. There are also, study gaps on teacher preparation in CBE.

Studies noted that most of the county governments organized a day or two training workshops for ECDE teachers that were heavily publicized as readiness to implement CBE. Within the short period, ECDE teachers were expected to understand the CBE framework, teaching methodologies, effective assessment tools, values and community learning activities. One of trainee teachers remarked in a qualitative finding that the opening and closing ceremonies by politicians actually took half of the training time with governors proudly posing for official photo sessions to mark the success of the training. The result was a teaching fraternity that had little idea of what the new education system entailed and effectively left to their imagination and own devices in implementation. This was seen as false start for ECDE implementation owing to lack of proper management clarity on the need for proper induction (Akala, 2021).

A study on influence of devolved government function of supervision on the performance of ECDE teachers in the context of CBE concludes that the supervision of ECDE

teachers was not sufficient which may have been attributed to lack of enough supervisors. This means there is a challenge in implementation of the new CBE system in the ECDE centres (Kithaka, 2021). The Teachers Service Commission was deemed to be more equipped and experienced to provide the requisite administrative support having been in place since its inception by an Act of Parliament (Cap 212) of 1966 and becoming operational in 1967.

The findings on the ECDE teachers' social concern on the suitability and capacity of the devolved units to adequately provide administrative support in Competency Based Education brings out a gap in an area that is under researched. In fact, a study by Ruto-Korir, Jepkemboi, & Boit (2020) indicates that since the decentralization of ECDE to the 47 county governments, there haven't been adequate empirical studies to inform policy and now more glaring in the context of CBE. They recommend more thorough examination of implementation of Competency-Based reform in preschool classes and efforts towards instilling the professional practice of teaching young children and the management of ECDE under county governments.

Most of the reviewed studies have focused on teacher competencies in terms levels of knowledgeable, ability to be reflective, professionalism and confidence in a range of modern pedagogical tools. In this regard, the studies paid a lot of attention to teacher-related factors dealing with their individual attributes and competencies. However, this study paid special emphasis on factors beyond the teacher to look at the administrative function of induction and orientation of teachers to the new system. The study went further to look at ECDE teachers social concern on administrative support towards the implementation of the new system of education at the ECDE level is greatly

compromised at the devolved unit. Even without appearing to exonerate the ECDE teachers, the study sought to fill the gaps in information on what the government is doing to facilitate the teacher to deliver on the CBE. The study identified gaps in the lack of clear management and administration of ECDE due to inadequate collaboration between the county and national government. At the global level, the study identified contextual gaps in the contrasting setting between the developed world and the developing world. While the teachers in the developing countries demonstrate impassiveness since they are mere recipients of policy directions, their counter parts exuded autonomy and commitment in their teaching. These gaps in knowledge informed the choice of the thematic area of ECDE teachers' social concerns on administrative support in Competency Based Education.

2.2 ECDE Teachers' Social Concerns on Parental Involvement in the Competency Based Education

Competency Based Education has parental empowerment and engagement as one of the guiding principles of the system. In this case, KICD defines parental empowerment as the building of the capacity of parents to actively nurture learners' potential by enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices. Parental engagement is defined as provision of activities and opportunities that foster positive parent-learner connections, thereby enhancing learner's competencies (KICD, 2017; KICD, 2019). By providing the guiding principles, KICD confirms that parents are key stakeholders in the lives of their children and their role is not passive but active and deliberate.

The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (KICD, 2017) envisages that since the parents are key stakeholders that influence the child and teachers will plug them into the teaching and learning process in order to deliver and meet the needs, talents and interests of every child as well as constantly diagnosing the learners' needs. Hitherto, the role of the parent was relegated to meeting the financial obligations while largely leaving the teaching and learning process almost entirely to the teacher. Further, a report on Needs Assessment for Curriculum Reform in Kenya (KICD, 2016), underscored the need for learners to be provided with suitable situations in order for them to experience and attain the proposed competencies. Towards attaining suitable and sustainable environments both at home and in school, the parent is key and expected to be the springboard for varied and appropriate experiences that are the hallmark of the CBE. The parents are also expected to enhance a conducive environment for learning.

The study also perused the legal instruments upon which parental empowerment and engagement is premised. The Early Childhood Education Act No. 3 of 2021 on the duty of parents or guardians, states that: (1) Every parent or guardian shall cause to be presented for admission or cause to be admitted his or her child, as the case may be, to an education centre.; (2) A parent or guardian who fails to comply with subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction, to a fine not exceeding ten thousand shillings; (3) Where a person convicted of an offence under subsection (2) is unable to pay the fine, that person is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to such penalty including community service as the Court shall consider fit to impose.

The legal threshold established herein is that it is the duty of the parent to ensure that the child goes to school, failure to which the parent was censured by the state. In this case, the ECDE parent is under legal requirement to present their child to an ECDE institution for learning. The study thus establishes that the parent plays a very important role in the education of their child.

Studies acknowledge the critical role played by the ECDE parent in the growth of the child. The parent is the first care giver and plays a pivotal role in the development of early cognitive and emotional stimulation that is essential for comprehensive childhood development. Parents play a broader role in nutrition, health education and child development through the interactive activities with the child. Children spend the majority of their time in the early years with their parents and their brains are developing at the fastest rate during this period. Equipping parents and caregivers with the often-simple skills, support, and resources to enhance the early development of their children can therefore have tremendous effects on a child's development (ousafzai et al., Rasheed).

In the Competency Based Education, the parent should be empowered and engaged at every stage to realize growth and development in the learner. The parent is the first educator, trainer and foundation of authority for the child. It is anticipated that the parent will have basic understanding on the tenets of CBE and also master their role in the learning process of the child. Therefore, the parents need to understand both the theory and practice of competency-based education. For effective implementation of the CBE, the awareness, involvement and experience of parents are of critical importance since they are at the core of the teaching and learning process. Parents are expected to provide collaborative synergy with other stakeholders. Moreover, character development is at the

core of CBE and the role of the parents towards the same cannot be refuted (Mwenje, 2019). Involvement of parents in ECDE has proved to be a big component of relationship building process and it is important for ECDE teachers to work closely with families. When the partnership between ECDE teachers and the family is successful, this is seen to echo positively throughout the child's life (Alvarado, 2022).

In competency-based education, studies have confirmed that parental involvement expedites the acquisition of literacy skills at ECDE level. Literacy skills are taught in order to assist the child the basic skills of reading and writing. Researchers have concluded that literacy skills instilled in learners early in life form a good foundation for future academic achievement. These studies therefore recommend involvement of parents in developing literacy skills of their children. Parents are expected to reinforce what happens in school by creating a consistent environment at home. It is for example recommended that the reading and writing skills taught in school were confirmed and validated by parents at home (Ingham, 2017; Koch, 2018).

Parental involvement is even more important in the Early Years for CBC where we are dealing with learners aged 3-6 years. The ECDE particularly lays the foundation for all other academic levels. This is a crucial stage since it gives impetus for social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of a child. At this level, parental involvement is key in ensuring that the learners are willing and happy to learn. Parents can come in strongly to enhance practical skills acquisition and to help mould an all-rounded pre-school learner by guiding them on performing basic tasks such as shoe lace tying, zipping, switching sockets on and off, trimming finger nails, among other life skills. To

the little learners, it is always an adventure to learn to perform these tasks that they can relate with what is done within their home and school environment. Such skills instil in our learners a sense of responsibility. These basic but important skills make learning authentic and further help prevent the likelihood of boredom. It is evident that parents can facilitate the implementation of the Competency Based Education by placing it at the heart of the day-to-day activities at home commensurate with what goes on in school (Okeke, 2014; Njeru, 2015). Parents are, therefore, the first teachers and greatly influence the performance of a child in school.

They are not only the primary caregivers but also the primary educators of their own children. Studies have actually identified a positive correlation between parental involvement and the successful adjustment and achievement of early childhood education (Jackman, 2009; Akaneme et al., 2014). Parental involvement in the successful delivery of Competency Based Education cannot be gainsaid.

However, studies show that CBE was rolled out without clear empirical evidence that the parents, who are at the epicenter of implementation, have the prerequisite knowledge and understanding of their role in the entire process. This contextual gap is now manifesting itself with reports that parents feel that the CBE is overburdening them. Teachers feel that the role of the parent is too critical, being at the centre of the cogwheel, to be relegated to the periphery. The concerns raised by the teachers regarding parental role in the implementation of CBE are not without merit and it calls for in-depth study.

A study on challenges facing ECDE centres in implementing CBE cited among others lack of support from parents, poor parental involvement and parents' negative attitude

towards the CBE programme (Kilile, Mwalw'a and Nduku, 2019). It is important to state that any ineptitude on the part of the parents could easily derail the smooth implementation of Competency Based Education. Moreover, the role of the parent in the smooth functioning of the new system will not only enhance institutional capacities towards implementation but also teacher motivation. The gap in information could be bridged by preparing a guidebook that details the expectations on the part of the parent so that it is not left to individual institutions to craft their own sensitization programmes (Alea et al., 2020).

A study on the perceived challenges and opportunities in parental involvement in the implementation of competency-based curriculum in Kenya (Mwarari et al., 2020) identified various challenges regarding parental involvement. The study identified issues of awareness among the parents, communication, learning at home and collaboration with the community. On awareness among the parents, the study revealed that parents were not properly inducted on their specific role and lacked knowledge on how to get involved in the implementation of CBE. The parents also indicated that there was poor communication between schools and parents on matters regarding the implementation of CBE, the parents are also given very short notices on what was expected of them even where they were significant financial implications and increased parental workload in the evening even for parents who work night shifts. Regarding learning at home, the parents decried assumption by the system that all parents were literate enough to understand the instructions and use of some of the materials needed to support homework. The parents were also concerned that the system was demanding too much from their young children. Moreover, the parents noted that the guidelines were not clear enough since the parents

did not have the background information on what was being learned and the objective to be achieved. Parents do not necessarily understand the use of some of the materials asked for, too many activities scheduled for home and the requirements for frequent school visits. Finally on collaboration with the community, the parents expressed concerns about the safety of children in community service, the financial implications of the home study and availability of the required learning materials with the limited time schedules (Mwarari et al., 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic context created a new challenge in CBE implementation. During times of a pandemic and the ensuing containment measures, issues of economic susceptibility often become aggravated. It is the parents who are the first to suffer the scarcity of resources and other effects of adverse disruption in the social-economic fabric. In a scenario where parents are fighting the direct and indirect brunt of a pandemic, they are less enthusiastic to take on any more obligations especially one that may appear to have economic ramifications (Flood, MacDonnell, and Philpott, 2020). Prior to the pandemic, studies indicated the views among parents that education in Kenya bears a heavy burden on the parent. It is against that background that this study underscored the discomfort among parents with an education system that would appear to require more from them.

Given that this is a premier programme, it was plausible to look into having implementation committees that incorporate the parents' thus cascading implementation to the institutional level while at the same time plugging the gaps in the flow of information on the programme. The parents' general awareness and involvement in the implementation of CBE are very important because it is they who are charged with the

demanding task of managing the child at home with regard to CBE (Nyaboke, Kereri and Nyabwari, 2021).

The study gap that emerged in the area of ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education was the training and induction given to the ECDE parents, on their role in CBC. Most of the parents were indicated as lacking time and commitment to be involved in early childhood education. The question that arose then was what the ECDE teachers could do to motivate parental involvement (McDowell, et al., 2018; Koch, 2018; KICD, 2019). Presently, the ECDE teachers are concerned that this key stakeholder seems to be groping in darkness as major milestones are being scaled in the implementation. The study, therefore, looked at what the government and the ECDE teachers could do to come up with innovative strategies for parental involvement. This marks one of the major gaps that the study looked into.

Another significant methodological research gap in looking at ECDE teachers' social concern on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education is lack of parents' voice in the studies.

Parents, especially, have an important role to play in children's education and development and hence, their opinions should be factored in studies. A study by UNICEF (2018) in Narok County, Kenya attempts to listen to local parents' opinions about their ECDE children's participation in preschools and mother tongue education in the rural area of Narok County. The study felt that such perspectives determine the support that parents give and the extent to which they engage in their children's education. However, limited research has been conducted in the rural areas listening to

parents' actual views on pre-primary education (Cumming 2017). This study, therefore, bridged the gap by conducting a focus group discussion with the parents in order to listen to their voices on implementation of CBC in the ECDE context.

Studies conducted in Europe and South Africa on parental involvement in the implementation of Competency Based Education bring out methodological and policy gaps in the study. To begin with, the studies conducted exploratory studies to look into the place across wide geographical boundaries therefore focusing on the macro level. This study therefore adopted a descriptive survey approach to allow for in-depth study of relatively smaller geographical confines to scrutinize the practice at micro level. Further, the studies revealed that in Europe ECDE parents were well informed and involved in their children's education and acted more or less like coeducators. In Norway, for example, parental involvement is institutionalized through formulation of policy documents that spell out the threshold of parental involvement. In South Africa, parental engagement is legitimized through an Act of Parliament. The South African Schools Act sets out the threshold of parental involvement in order to enhance the children's performance and boost their educational pursuit (Ule et al., 2015; Bæck, 2015; Singh et al., 2004).

Most of the reviewed studies focused on ECDE parents failing to provide basic needs for their children. However, this study identified the gap on the level of knowledge and awareness of the competency-based education by the parents. The study also focused on the negative views among the parents towards their perceived increased workload with the onset of CBE. The study identified knowledge gaps among the parents in that the

implementation of the CBE did not pay enough attention to reorienting the ECDE parents on the new system.

2.3 ECDE teachers' Views on Learner Classroom Socialization in Competency Based Education

Learner socialization refers to the delivery of Competency-Based Education itself in terms of learner outcomes and content that is relevant to the age of the learner. In this study, learner socialization is contextualized refer to the process through which learners acquire skills, values, behaviors and competencies necessary for meaningful participation in both classroom and societal settings. It involves how content is delivered to suit learners' developmental stages, ensuring age appropriate and relevant material. This process shapes not only academic outcomes like literacy and numeracy but also social competencies such as teamwork, communication and critical thinking. Effective socialization fosters holistic growth, helping learners adapt to structured environments while internalizing expected norms, responsibilities and problem-solving skills aligned with real-life experiences and societal expectations.

According to RSIS International (2023), a global academic and scientific research organization dedicated to fostering research, innovation and the exchange of ideas among researchers and academicians worldwide, CBE aims to equip learners with abilities that are directly applicable to real-world scenarios, fostering holistic development. Central to this are competencies such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, imagination, citizenship, self-efficacy, lifelong learning, and digital literacy.

The study begins by underscoring the centrality of the teacher in the learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education. The study noted recognized that the ECDE teacher is at the heart of the delivery and therefore it is them who are expected to first understand the system and then deliver on the same. In this respect, a study that seeks their point of view and feedback cuts a niche given that most studies bring out the voice of policy makers.

In view of this discussion, a study by Anderson (2013) noted that teachers must be aware of the domains of education: Affective, cognitive and psychomotor. The affective domain seeks to create personal values or a value system in the learner; Deliver a structured and documented evaluation of learners' accomplishments against quantifiable results; Provide the learner with structured opportunities for role play while appreciating the different backgrounds in values and beliefs and also making them aware of how their differences will lead to differences in attainment of the competences; Arrange conversations on these values and beliefs; Create an effective and dependable evaluation tool for use in assessing aptitude, acceptable conduct and honesty among others. The Cognitive domain seeks to: Develop case studies from real life calling for innovation or creativity-based knowledge to define suitable, proven approach to competency; Provide sessions that are learner centric, organized conversations to deal with real-world circumstances; continuously oblige the pupils' to always give a rationale for the positions they hold on a variety of situations. The Psychomotor domain is meant to: Demonstrate the anticipated method to accomplish a specified skill. Give the learner an opportunity for hands-on experience and allow for feedback on the same or similar task.

In addition, teachers are also expected to creatively come up with teaching methodology that is in line with the content, level of the learner and one that is commensurate with the environment within which learning is taking place. The methodology thus applied should arouse curiosity among the learners while at the same time facilitating acquisition of knowledge, values, skills and broader characteristics for the pupils. The expectations to understand the tenets of CBE are equally thought-provoking. Since the young learners have diverse methods of learning, the impetus is on the teacher to appreciate that CBE demands that the learners be individually engaged and that they be active but not passive observers. Observation, reflection and listening are important learning activities, but competency demonstration is the expected outcome for Competency based education (Anderson, 2013).

The government of Kenya has been instituting major reforms in the education sector, among them being the inception of the Competency Based Education (CBE) as envisaged in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) in 2017. The CBE aims to equip trainees with competencies to cope with the demands of the 21st Century skills and the world of work. In response to these reforms the Government of Kenya through the Kenya Institute of Education (KICED) instituted reforms in the Teacher Education which culminated to curriculum change from Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) Courses to Diploma in Early Childhood Teacher Education (DECTE). In line with the reforms, KNEC developed Competency Based Assessment.

Framework for Teacher Education (CBAF-TE) to guide the assessment of trainees undertaking Diploma in Early Childhood Teacher Education (DECTE) examinations. The CBAF-TE provides for both formative and summative assessments. The assessments

seek to establish the trainees' ability to apply knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and core competencies to successfully perform a task that relates to their day-to-day life experiences as teachers.

According to KNEC Competency Based Assessment Framework for Teacher Education (CBAFTE), DECTE seeks to develop the teacher to act as a facilitator in the learning process into consideration the different abilities and learning styles of individual learners. DECTE curriculum has been designed with an emphasis on experiential and reflective learning to develop appropriate pedagogical content knowledge; hence the emphasis on integrated content and pedagogy for the student teachers while at college. This is to ensure that the teacher is given adequate time to practice facilitating his/her pupils' learning of the different strands prescribed in the curriculum designs. Even in terms of assessment, the teacher is prepared to ensure that he or she involves learners in tasks that reflect real life experiences, enhances inquiry-based learning, gives the learner opportunity to perform different tasks to demonstrate understanding, allows learners to use locally available materials to perform tasks hence concretize learning, promotes collaboration as teacher trainers, parents and the trainees work together in determining and undertaking assessment, focuses on progress rather than weakness, encourages integration of instruction, learning and assessment (KNEC,2022). Therefore, the current training of ECDE teacher is already aligned to the curriculum reforms.

In fact, the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF), which is the guiding document for CBE, expects the teachers to help the pupils experience, express themselves and can bring about several benefits including: Learners gain exposure to different views when interacting with other learners; Through interactions with others,

learners can identify errors and inconsistencies in their thinking; Learners are encouraged to ask questions, develop hypotheses, and draw inferences from information and experiences; Learners collaboratively reach conclusions or solutions through distributed cognition; Learners can develop deeper understanding; Learners can reach higher levels of creativity; Learners gain skills needed for independent problem solving in the future and that learners can improve their meta cognitive skills. The ECDE teachers' views in the Competency Based Education delivery is of critical importance since their experiences in the entire education process form the backbone of this study.

Studies depicting the successes and challenges of implementing CBE in Kenya underscore the central role of teachers' knowledge, views, competencies and skills towards implementation of any education system. Teachers are the last group of professionals that work on the final bit of the education reform before it reaches the consumers who are the learners and therefore their input cannot be taken for granted (Owala, 2021). Studies have underscored the importance of incorporating teachers in the decision-making process of educational reforms for increased teacher capacity and readiness for implementation. Teachers play a significant role as CBE implementers in the schools and it is therefore imperative that they are involved in decisions regarding education change (Kaniuka, 2012; Makunja, 2016; Sossion, 2019).

However, studies on CBE implementation conducted globally and, in the region, have revealed low level of awareness on the CBE content which poses challenges in its implementation and delivery process. Research in countries where CBE has been implemented has shown that teachers lack a thorough understanding of the requirements of the CBE. The repercussions are that the desired outcomes are reduced to mere

checklists and the competencies cannot be mastered as intended (Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019).

According to Franklin & Lytle (2015), there is low level of awareness about CBE content and this makes it difficult for wider acceptance of CBE programmes. Moreover, there is no unanimous agreement among scholars and practitioners on theoretical meanings of competency and related concepts leading to variations in CBE curricular, models, principles and characteristics, learning processes, assessment practices and operationalization of the concepts (Wesselink et al, 2010, Boahin & Hofman, 2012).

In addition to low level of awareness on CBE, Nkwetisama (2012) in his study found that if the teachers do not have a clue of what is in curriculum and what is intended as outcome of study; the objectives of curriculum can't be achieved. Moreover, for a long time, teachers were delivering the content-based education and they had mastered and perfected it. The shift to development of competencies was therefore neither automatic nor a smooth one. The changeover period has been a difficult one for the teacher (Komba & Mwandanji, 2015; Kafyulilo et al. 2012 & Kimaryo, 2011). Through these studies, it is clearly evident that the concept of competency is not well understood by most of the teachers yet it is on them that the greater part of implementation is bestowed.

In other studies on teachers' understanding of CBE, it was found out that majority of them do not understand the tenets of CBE. The main reason why teachers were having challenges in teaching CBE was because they had not internalized the main tenets of the system (Tilya & Mafumiko, 2010). In fact, a good number of them could not explain what CBE is. The findings of the study concluded that the teachers had not received any

training on competency-based education and therefore had no orientation and knowledge on CBE methodology (Makunja, 2015). Given that the teachers are the main implementers of CBE, it is incumbent upon them to be well versed in order to impart and impact.

Studies have also revealed that ECDE teachers are looked upon and viewed of less importance in comparison to other cadres in the same profession. These views lower their motivation and commitment thereby affecting the delivery (Armstrong, 2009; Britton & Propper, 2015; Nduku 2016). One of ECDE teachers is quoted in a study saying: CBE has come with very many changes in the way we teach and assess that require teachers to re-equip themselves with new knowledge and skills. But then, many teachers in Kenya do not have the time or resources to leave their places of work to attend training (Iminza, et al., 2022). This study, thus, identified the role of the ECDE teacher in CBE implementation as a critical conceptual gap in the study.

Therefore, while the CBE offers numerous benefits, its implementation has faced challenges. Many schools in Kenya lack the necessary resources, such as digital devices and adequate learning materials, to fully implement the CBE. There is also the challenge of teacher preparedness where educators need continuous training to effectively deliver the CBE content and utilize appropriate teaching methodologies. Ensuring that teachers are well-prepared is crucial for the success of the curriculum. Alongside this are the assessment methods where transitioning from traditional examination-based assessments to more holistic evaluation methods pose challenges (Sande, 2023).

Studies on ECDE teachers' views in the competency-based education have mainly brought out the voice of policy makers on the challenges and their estimations on what needs to be done. The studies have indicated what teachers ought to do with regard to teaching methodology that is in line with the content, level of the learner and the environment within which learning is taking place. Studies have also emphasized what the government of Kenya is doing to make sure ECDE teachers acquire the skills of producing a learner who meets the demands of the 21st Century. However, the current direction is to allow the pupils some latitude to facilitate the learners as they experience and express themselves in the new form of education and can bring about several benefits including: In the CBE setting, the learners are expected to acquire exposure to different views when interacting with other learners. First, the study identified gaps in studies that call for more autonomy of the ECDE teachers so that they too are incorporated in the decision-making process. Teachers play a significant role as CBE implementers in the schools and it is therefore imperative that they are involved in decisions regarding education change. This study, thus, identified the role of the ECDE teacher in CBE implementation as a critical conceptual gap in the study.

2.4 Strategies that can be used to Address Social Concerns among ECDE Teachers in Competency Based Education

According to the Teachers' Training Manual for Competency Based Curriculum (KICD, 2020), the CBE focuses on equipping the learner with competencies that enable him or her to cope with challenges of life. It is hoped that every Kenya child will become an engaged, empowered and ethical citizen such that they become useful members of the society. The system is premised on the foundation that every child has potential that

needs to be nurtured for success. This is the basic philosophy and ideal behind CBE. For effective implementation, the teacher is accordingly expected to have a good grasp of the curriculum, the curriculum guide which is the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) and the basic tenets including mission, vision, national goals of education, pillars of BECF, core competencies, expected learning experiences and outcomes and learning resources.

This new education system is one that emphasizes the complex outcomes of a learning process (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes to be applied by learners) rather than mainly focusing on what learners are expected to learn about in terms of traditionally-defined subject content. In principle CBE is learner centered and adaptive to the changing needs of learners, teachers and society. It implies that learning activities and environments are chosen so that learners can acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to situations they encounter in everyday life. Competency based curricula are usually designed around a set of key competencies that can be cross-curricular and/or subject-bound (UNESCO, 2018).

The way forward for implementation of CBE is well foregrounded in a study conducted by the University of Nairobi's Institute of Development Studies. In a survey involving a total sample of 2400 respondents, majority of those interviewed at 74% expressed optimism that CBE will improve the quality of education in the country (Institute of Development Studies, 2021). Consequently, it is important for this study to go beyond identifying the challenges of CBE implementation and endeavor to put forward strategies that could be used to actualize CBE.

To this end, studies indicate that right from the word go, there were apparent challenges with the implementation of CBE. These studies alluded to insufficient pilot study and lack of a comparative survey on international best practices. Education reform and implementation is such an onerous undertaking that calls for serious and rigorous needs assessment to ascertain the weaknesses of the current system to avoid ending up with similar flaws and weaknesses of the former. It also calls for the involvement of all stakeholders' right from start so as to ensure involvement and engagement of them all. It is apparent that CBE implementation in Kenyan did not involve all the stakeholders and even where there was involvement, the input of the participants did not appear to have been taken seriously. Experiences have shown that lack of involvement of stakeholders in the education reform process, and especially the teachers, has always led to implementation hitches. The CBE has been seriously faulted for leaving out important stakeholders (Masika, 2021).

Indeed, this study opines that the CBE review process was not inclusive enough and might have been hurried. Stakeholders like Teachers' Unions, academia, parents, publishers and other stakeholders have variously expressed opinion to suggest that they were not adequately consulted.

For example, the Teachers' Union leaders were quoted complaining: "CBE needs parents, guardians, members of Boards of Management and the school community to be sensitized on every aspect of the CBE. Since the ministry and its agencies have failed to address themselves on this, KNUT has no business supporting implementation of CBE" (Sossion, 2019). As a consequence, this study proposes that it is important for the

ministry of education to engage all stakeholders in a conversation on CBE implementation.

Secondly, the study notes that education system review is often driven by the desire for change especially to align with developmental needs and global trends since education is a vehicle for social economic change. In this regard, it behoves the curriculum developers to benchmark the changes they intend to adopt with similar experiences elsewhere. This study calls for proper bench marking of CBE in order to tease out successes for borrowing and failures for lessons. Studies conducted globally and, in the region, indicated mixed fortunes of the CBE.

One of the successful models of CBE education system is Finland. Finland is doing well at nurturing the personal attributes and potential of every child. The Finnish education system is a role model in Europe in the area of competency-based education. Actually, it is generally recognized as one of the best globally. A significant objective is to offer all citizens equal chances; the principle informing the educational reform is equity, and in 2012, there was only a 6% disparity between its highest and lowest performing schools (Gross-Loh, 2014).

Similarly, the learner experiences are well exemplified in Scottish rendition of CBE. Learners have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of standards and expectations in different ways, and as in other examples in the United States and this report, may take different routes through experiences and outcomes, allowing those who may accomplish more to do so. Schools are given explicit flexibility to provide a range of progression pathways appropriate to learners' needs and local circumstances. In particular, they are

granted freedom to allow learners choice in how they demonstrate mastery, from pre-K through the third year of secondary school (Broad General Education) (Ansell, C., & Nicholson, D. 2014).

Regionally, studies indicate that education reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) require comprehensive approaches directed at the complexity of the educational system at large. It requires the acknowledgement of past obstacles and current challenges to reform, as well as the challenges additionally created by the reforms. Human and physical resources, challenges with past reforms and current school and classroom practices determine the limits of what educational systems can absorb in terms of development. Many high political ambitions have implications that are beyond current context and conditions. It therefore makes sense to have realistic ambitions and scope of curriculum reform, because these may increase the potential for successful implementation. (Leyendecker, et al., 2008)

A study carried out in Tanzania captures the essence of CBE in a nutshell. The adoption of competency-based teaching and learning offers a promise for improvement of quality of education. However, in order to implement it effectively, the following recommendations are made: Teachers should be familiar with what competency based teaching and learning entails; The government in collaboration with stakeholders should support schools with enough funds and facilities to enable learners and teachers to implement competency based teaching and learning effectively ; Teachers should be flexible to learn new teaching methods suitable for competency based teaching and learning situations ; Assessment procedures need to be transformed from only pen and paper to multiple forms of assessments so as to accommodate all knowledge and skills

demonstrated by learners; and teacher-students ratios should be emphasized at all levels of education to maximize teacher-student and student-student interactions (Mkonongwa, 2018).

Thirdly, studies have identified the importance provision of adequate and appropriate resources for CBE implementation. A study carried out in Machakos County on implementation of CBE noted that the infrastructures available in schools were not adequate for successful implementation of competency-based curriculum. Most schools had a challenge of understaffing despite having large classes of pupils. Teaching and learning materials available in the schools were not adequate as compared to the number of pupils (Wambua & Waweru, 2019). Regarding instructional materials for primary school learners, studies recommend that they should be age appropriate in terms of language and concept development. The materials should stimulate the learners to think critically, create mental images and develop key competences. They should be relevant to the curriculum and subject syllabus, sufficient, suitable, captivating; learner friendly particularly for the learners with special needs. Suggested materials include: work cards, flash cards, charts, sentence cards and pictures (EAC Secretariat, 2014: 50).

Another challenge revolves around the teaching methodology recommended by CBE. CBE calls for a situation where learners meant to construct knowledge while being actively involved in the learning process. The progression of the learners is expected to be based on acquisition, development, demonstration and accomplishment of competency. The role of the teacher shifts to the cognitive coach, facilitator and guide in the learning process. This shift in teaching methodology involves a massive mandate of

curriculum implementation on teachers who are supposed to be retrained and equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge about CBE (Nyaboke & Nyabwari, 2021).

The issues of teaching and learning strategies are key to the success of CBE. A study on how CBE could accelerate learning brings out the pupils' involvement in the teaching methods. The study postulates that the system gives pupils a high degree of control over their own learning, and over the kind of learning experience they have. By allowing pupils to spend more time on areas they find more difficult – and supporting them by drawing on additional learning materials if required they are set up to succeed. Everyone who completes a course will have done so because they've mastered all elements of it, rather than just some (Jati Suryanto, 2018).

Additionally, there is currently an abundant knowledge-base to inform us that, in schools teachers play the critical role in student learning and achievement. Research reveals how teachers instruct and these interactions with learners are the cornerstone around which to build effective schools. A summary of the available studies accumulated over the past 40 years on a key education driver, teacher competencies offer practical strategies, practices, and rules to guide teachers in ways to improve instruction that improves student performance and the quality of the work experience (Evertson & Weinstein (Eds.) 2013). The expectation then is that teachers and pupils will actively be involved in the CBE right from its conception. Yet, the converse is also true. Pupils have a solid appreciation of procedure and organization of the system. However, when they are not made to feel part and parcel of the curriculum or objectives of a course, they end up becoming obstacles to their own learning by developing disruptive tendencies (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000).

A study conducted in British Colombia marks a significant gap in strategy and the way forward for CBE. The study focuses on making CBE more flexible in order to enable the teachers to innovate and personalize learning. The focus is to offer more autonomy to teachers who permit learners to choose how they will demonstrate competency on deeper learning outcome. The idea is to encourage maximum innovation, personalization, creative thinking and collaboration in order to address the needs of different context (OECD, 2016). This idea of allowing the teacher some latitude in creating local solutions to local problems is a gap in research that could help quieten the hue and cry from stakeholders in Kenya on the heavy resource base that CBE seems to require.

The researcher, feels that allowing the teacher to maneuver with their context while ensuring attainment of set objectives is an innovative strategy. Such a strategy could be blended from the Finland and Scotland experiences. In Finland, the National Curriculum Framework sets out the general learning goals and objectives while the individual local schools set out the learning objectives, standards, teaching methods and detailed outcomes. Similarly, Scotland context gives the schools explicit flexibility to provide a range of progression pathways that are appropriate individual learner needs and local circumstances. The formative assessment is classroom based through distinct pedagogical strategies in line with the set-out goals and objectives (Momentum School, 2015). This study thus set out to look at the amount of space provided to individual schools and teachers, in implementing CBE in the classroom. The idea being that the national education system lays out the goals and objectives while at the same time stipulating the standards and outlining the expected outcome, then allows the teacher to achieve the same with their distinctive environments.

However, research on the early years in England marks a contradiction in the arguments presented hitherto. Parental role and involvement tend to focus on educational or developmentally stimulating parent-child activities, such as reading to a child, playing with letters or numbers, drawing and painting and learning rhymes and songs. It also covers the presence in the home of material learning resources such as books, puzzles and toys. There is also focus on activities such as enrichment outings and computer use for educational purposes which have a relatively huge financial implication (Smees & Sammons 2016). There is certainly evidence of children from advantaged background receiving more enriched home learning while the disadvantaged receive poorer quality home learning (Kelly et al. 2011; Vernon-Feagans et al. 2012; Smees and Sammons 2016). Even in Kenya studies have indicated that CBE is fashioning more disparities in a country where the disparity is already a big problem. Children from marginalized pastoralist communities and humble backgrounds are disadvantaged due to too many children in one classroom, no access to a computer, low PTR and a high incidence of illiterate parents. CBE is seen to favour learners from educated families, where parents are steering learning with adequate materials to support their exposure compatibly (Maxwell and Gelsdorf, 2019).

Another significant gap in this study is inclusive education at ECDE level. A study in Indonesia reveals that inclusive education programmes for ECDE encounter several problems including lack of human resource that has educational background and professional training in special education, the limited access to reliable source of information and language barriers (Sari, 2020). In a similar survey in Kenya, parents indicated the high cost of the new system including buying project material like

gardening and cleaning tools: spades, brooms, rakes, overalls, wheelbarrows, gloves, dustcoats and dust masks. There is also a high cost for stationery that would impact on low-income population. Furthermore, the new education system assumes, without basis, that parents already have a certain lifestyle that can support the requirements made on their children like possession of smart phones, availability of internet connectivity and printing services (Mwarari, et al., 2020).

In a study on parental involvement in ECDE children's home learning activities, the findings revealed that while most of the parents had the knowledge and skills of helping their children with homework, they said that this was also dependent on what it is they were to help with. The reasons they gave was that the content they were taught during their school years is different from what is currently taught to their children. This shows that for a majority of parents to effectively help their children's learning at home they need to be frequently updated on the content and methods currently in use (Sang, & Syomwene, 2018).

In a nutshell, the review of literature underscored the need for a more integrated approach to addressing social concerns in the implementation of CBE. To ensure the successful rollout of CBE, it is essential to address community engagement and awareness campaigns. Increased community awareness about the benefits of CBE and the importance of early childhood education can help create a supportive environment for learning. Schools and local government agencies should collaborate to organize community engagement activities that inform parents and caregivers about the new educational reforms and their role in supporting their children's education. The study also noted the need for improved infrastructure and resource allocation. Investments in

school infrastructure and resources are critical to supporting CBE. The government, non-governmental organizations, and local communities should work together to improve school facilities, provide learning materials, and reduce classroom overcrowding to ensure that teachers can effectively implement CBE. Moreover, ongoing teacher training and support should be enhanced. Teachers require continuous professional development to stay updated on best practices in CBE. Training programs should be designed to address the specific needs of teachers, taking into account the unique social, cultural, and economic challenges they face. In conclusion, the review of related literature provides valuable insights into the social concerns that early childhood development education teachers face in implementing competency-based education. It highlights the intersection of social, economic, and cultural factors that shape the educational experiences of children and teachers in the region. By addressing these social concerns through community involvement, targeted interventions, infrastructure improvements and ongoing teacher training, the implementation of CBE can be more successful and sustainable, ultimately benefiting the ECDE children.

2.5 Summary

The literature reviewed in this study acknowledges that it is at ECDE level that the child gets the first exposure to the formal education system. It is therefore important to ensure that this first experience is meaningful and significant for posterity. However, education reform at ECDE level faced major challenges throughout the counties due to lack of clear management and administration of ECDE owing to inadequate collaboration between the county and national government. Studies reviewed at the global level brought out a contextual gap in this study by alluding to greater involvement and autonomy of the parents and the community in the affairs of the ECDEs. While as the Kenya context

reveals parents' minimal understanding and role in the ECDE, the global context brings out a contrasting environment of more latitude by other stakeholders in the affairs of the pre-schooling environment.

Similarly, the literature reviewed underpins a minimal role played by the ECDE teacher in driving the policy direction of pre-primary education. There is a contrasting context between the developed world and the developing world whereas the teachers in the developing countries demonstrate impassiveness since they are mere recipients of policy directions while their counter parts in developed economies exuded autonomy and commitment in their delivery. Studies show that in Sub-Saharan Africa, teachers have not been well involved in CBE implementation. Furthermore, teaching and learning in the region is struggling to keep up with the rapid developments and changes in education and digital technologies. Indeed, studies have established that most of the teachers lacked the essential competence and preparedness for implementing CBE. Furthermore, the demands raised by the new system further compounded long standing issues that had persisted in the education system for a very long-time including shortage of teachers within an environment of large class sizes, shortage of teaching-learning resources and then the emergent resistance by stakeholders leading to perception issues.

Reviewed studies also acknowledged the critical role played by the ECDE parent in the overall growth of the child. The parent, being the first care giver, plays a pivotal role in the development of early cognitive and emotional stimulation that is essential for comprehensive childhood development. Parents play a broader role in nutrition, health education and child development through the interactive activities with the child. However, reviewed studies cited among others lack of support from parents, poor

parental involvement and parents' negative attitude towards the CBE programme. The review brought out gaps in the training and induction given to the ECDE parents, on their role in CBE. Most of the parents were indicated as lacking time and commitment to be involved in early childhood education. Another significant methodological research gap in looking at ECDE teachers' social concern on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education is lack of parents' voice in the studies. The study felt that the parents' perspectives should be brought out and this study bridged the gap by conducting a focus group discussion with the parents in order to listen to their voices on implementation of CBC in the ECDE context.

Previous studies on the ECDE teachers' views in the Competency Based Education have mainly concentrated on the voice of policy makers on the challenges and their estimations on what needs to be done, what teachers ought to do with regard to teaching methodology that is in line with the content. However, the current direction is to allow the pupils some latitude to facilitate the learners as they experience and express themselves in the new form of education. First, the study identified gaps in studies that call for more autonomy of the ECDE teachers so that they too are incorporate in the decision-making process. Secondly, the study identified gaps in the calling for more autonomy for the child in that in spite of the age, CBE calls for progressive freedom that allows the children to learn without fear and domination. This study, thus, identified the role of the ECDE teacher in CBE implementation as a critical conceptual gap in the study.

Reviewed studies on strategies that can be used to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in Competency Based Education noted that the new education system is one that emphasizes learner centered and adaptive to the changing needs of learners, teachers and society. It implies that learning activities and environments are chosen so that learners can acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to situations they encounter in everyday life. The studies have alluded to gaps in insufficient pilot study, lack of a comparative survey on international best practices and failure to involve all stakeholders from start so as to ensure involvement and engagement of them all. CBE implementation has been seriously faulted for leaving out important stakeholders.

As a consequence, this study proposes that it is important for the ministry of education to engage all stakeholders in a more meaning and inclusive conversation on CBE implementation. Studies have also indicated that learners have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of standards and expectations in different ways, calling for ECDEs to be given explicit flexibility to provide a range of progression pathways appropriate to learners' needs and local circumstances. Studies have also recommended that teachers should be familiar with what competency based teaching and learning entails; the government in collaboration with stakeholders should support schools with enough funds and facilities to enable learners and teachers to implement competency based teaching and learning effectively ; teachers should be flexible to learn new teaching methods suitable for competency based teaching and learning situations ; Assessment procedures need to be transformed from only pen and paper to multiple forms of assessments so as to accommodate all knowledge and skills demonstrated by

learners; and teacher-students ratios should be emphasized at all levels of education to maximize teacher-student and student-student interactions.

A review of study conducted at the global level show significant gaps in strategy and the way forward for CBE. The studies call for more latitude for the teacher in creating local solutions to local problems. This study endorses the proposal of allowing the teacher to maneuver with their context while ensuring attainment of set objectives is an innovative strategy. Another significant gap in this study is inclusive education at ECDE level. Studies reveal indicate gaps in professional training in special education, the limited access to reliable source of information and language barriers.

The findings of this study affirmed the importance of taking into account the unique contexts within which ECDE centres are domiciled and leveraging on the same. Each institution has opportunities that could be utilized for the benefit of the young learners.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter three examined the approach that was utilized in collecting, recording and analyzing data. It presents the methods applied and the justification for such selection. The chapter defines the population selected for the study and goes ahead to present the sampling methods and sample sizes. The chapter is actually a roadmap of the way data was collected from the respondents and the considerations put in place to ensure that was done procedurally, authoritatively and empirically.

3.1 Study Area

The study was conducted among selected ECDEs in Bungoma County. Bungoma County is among the 47 counties in Kenya. It is situated in the Western part of Kenya where it neighbours Uganda to the North West and the three neighboring counties of Busia in the South West, Kakamega in the South West and South East and Trans Nzoia to the North East. Bungoma County is delineated into eleven administrative units of: Bumula, Bungoma South, Webuye West, Webuye East, Bungoma North, Tongaren, Kimilili Bungoma, Bungoma Central, Bungoma West, Cheptais, and Mount Elgon.

From the statistics of Kenya Population and Housing Census of 2019 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019), Bungoma County has a population of 269,473 children who are under the age of five. According to the Department of Education and Vocational Training, Bungoma County, Bungoma County has 802 ECDE centres, most are attached

to public primary schools and few are stand alone. There are about 89,482 ECDE learners of ages 4-5 years who are attending ECD education in public primary schools/ECDE centres. There are about 2,000 ECDE teachers in Bungoma County. Therefore, the locale is ideal for this study given the availability of respondents and adequate sample which in turn facilitates timely completion of the study.

The choice of Bungoma County for the study was based on several significant considerations. To begin with, the researcher folded on pieces of papers the names of the eleven counties and threw the papers up and then picked on one of them which happened to be Bungoma County.

In addition, Bungoma County is strategically located in Western Kenya, bordering Uganda and neighboring counties like Busia, Kakamega, Trans Nzoia and others. This geographical positioning provided a diverse sample of ECDE institutions, reflecting a variety of socio-cultural and economic backgrounds that are crucial for a study in sociology of education which ensured that the research captured a broad spectrum of educational practices and challenges, contributing to a more holistic understanding of early childhood education in Kenya.

The County was, therefore, purposively chosen to enable the researcher access it easily therefore conducive physical and logistical factors for conducting the research. This is enunciated by Singleton (1993), that the ideal location for any research is one that is directly linked to the investigator's interest, reachable without problems and enables the respondents to easily open up and volunteer information. Thus, the researcher picked on the home district for accessibility and familiarity as pointed out by Karugu & Wamahiu

(1995) that being acquainted with the research locality has the advantage of easily achieving acceptance by the respondents. The location of a study is critical for ensuring its relevance and applicability to the research objectives. According to Creswell (2014), selecting a study location should be driven by the specific characteristics or phenomena being examined, ensuring that the setting aligns with the research objectives. The context helps improve the validity and generalizability of the results, making the choice of location a fundamental aspect of the research design.

Further to this, the Uwezo report of 2016 ranked the then Western Region (Bungoma is part of the former Western Region) as being among the regions with lowest literacy outcomes as compared to other regions. Specifically, Uwezo statistics established that a significant 17.6% of learners who were assessed in grade 2 and 3 were unable to identify letters in the region. This study acknowledges that the above national surveys on literacy and numeracy are an indicator of challenges the Early Childhood education. This study therefore picked on Bungoma County as part of the synergy of efforts to look into the challenges for purposes of improvement.

3.2 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive survey design to investigate teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study aimed to explore views of teachers on the administrative support 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.

Bungoma County, located in Western Kenya, has a diverse population with varying social and economic conditions. Like many regions in Kenya, Bungoma is undergoing educational reforms to a competency-based education model. Competency-based education, which focuses on learners mastering specific skills and competencies rather than simply completing academic content, aims to provide a more holistic approach to education that is more relevant to real-world challenges.

The implementation of CBE in early childhood education, particularly in rural areas like Bungoma, presents unique challenges and social concerns that affect teachers' ability to deliver effective learning experiences.

A descriptive survey design is ideal for gathering quantitative and qualitative data from a large group of respondents. In this study, the design made it possible for the study to collect data on teachers' views and experiences regarding the implementation of CBE and the social concerns they encounter. The survey was distributed to a representative sample of early childhood development education teachers across different ECDEs in Bungoma County. The data collection instrument used was a structured questionnaire, which included both closed and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive responses.

According to Kothari (2010) the descriptive survey design is an appropriate method and very vital in all manner while examining the behaviour of a populous group and gives room to the researcher to pose questions to the informants and relate with the variables. This is emphasized by Orodho who affirms that, descriptive survey design is used in

preliminary and exploratory studies to enable researchers to collect evidence, condense, exhibit and understand for the purpose of interpretation (Orodho: 2002). Similarly, Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) point out that descriptive survey research is intended to yield numerical evidence about features of education.

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.

Thus, the researcher adopted a descriptive survey design to gather evidence teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya. This method guarantees an accurate depiction of the state of affairs and a comprehensive appreciation of the situation achieved through a detailed analysis of the situation. Descriptive survey was well-suited for collecting data from a large number of participants. The study targeted ECDE teachers from various sub-counties within Bungoma County, allowing for a broad representation of the population. It focused on collecting factual data from a selected sample of ECDE teachers rather than altering their behavior or environment.

This study made use of the descriptive survey approach utilizing qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data in a single research study an approach sometimes known as mixed-methods research. According to Gorard, 2010; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, good researchers tend to be eclectic researchers who draw from diverse methodologies and data sources in order to best address their research problems and questions.

Accordingly, data collection methodology was aligned to the specific objectives as follows. For objective one on, determining the ECDE teachers' social concerns on the administrative support in Competency Based Education, the researcher obtained both qualitative and quantitative data from the two main respondents, the teacher and the County director of education. Similarly, for the second objective on determining ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education, the researcher employed questionnaires and focus group discussions for teachers and parents respectively. In the same way, to measure the third objective on examining the ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in the Competency Based Education both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The fourth objective on establishing strategies that ECDE teachers can use to enhance the Competency Based Education, both qualitative and quantitative data was sought from all respondents on their estimations of how the system could be improved. For all the four objectives, collected data was triangulated through the voice of the County director of education, document reviews and direct observations.

The descriptive survey design was the most appropriate for this study because it provided an effective means of collecting reliable, representative data from ECDE teachers in

Bungoma County. It allowed the researchers to assess the reliability of the instruments without manipulating any variables, while ensuring the results reflected the true characteristics of the population being studied. The non-experimental, cross-sectional nature, along with the flexibility to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, made it the ideal choice for the research objectives.

3.3 Research Paradigm

In this study, the views of teachers and parents are a reflection of post-positivist paradigm, referring to how people construct the realities around their lives. The post-positivist paradigm helps to explore the ECDE teachers' views acknowledging that reality is socially constructed, shaped by experiences and context. Researchers using this approach value critical reflection, highlighting the complexity of teaching and the influence of cultural, social and institutional factors.

A paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view or framework that guides research and practice in a field (Willis, 2007). This paradigm advocates for a more flexible approach to research, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging different perspectives. Researchers working within the post-positivist framework often recommend use of mixed methods, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, to obtain a more holistic view of the phenomena under study. This paradigm encourages triangulation of data, where multiple sources and methods are used to verify findings and mitigate bias. Ultimately, post-positivism aims to offer a deeper and better-rounded understanding of social phenomena.

In this study the paradigm provided an orientation or perspective for the researcher to use in enquiring on teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education. In education and social sciences, post-positivist is widely used and accepted.

The post-positivism paradigm evolved from the positivism paradigm. The concern was to fill the gap left out by positivism in concentrating purely on objective stance to include subjectivity of reality (Ryan, 2006). This paradigm assumes that reality is multiple, subjective and mentally constructed by individuals. Post-positivism focuses on establishing and searching for evidence that is valid and reliable in terms of the existence of phenomena rather than generalization. Postpositivism is based on a critical-realist ontology that holds that all knowledge is flawed and that reality is not a fixed entity rather, it is influenced by context and purpose. It therefore focuses on researching issues in the context of involving experiences of the majority and announcing the results of what the majority says is acceptable (Phillips & Burbules, 2000; Nel, 2020).

Post-positivism is a useful paradigm for researchers who maintain an interest in some aspects of positivism such as quantification, yet wish to incorporate interpretivism concerns around subjectivity and meaning and who are interested in the pragmatic combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Positivism relies on the hypothetical deductive method to verify a prior hypothesis that are often stated quantitatively, where functional relationships can be derived between causal and explanatory factors (independent variables) and outcomes (dependent variables). Post-positivism, therefore, is broad and general while theory and practice are studied as an integrated unit (Park, et al, 2020).

Towards gathering evidence on, teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya, this study employed post positivism in order to describe the challenges that will emerge out of the empirical study. The main strength of the post-positivist approach is that it promotes the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods that explores the diversity of facts researchable through various kinds of investigations but respecting and valuing all findings as the essential components for the research. This study endeavored to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods and to triangulate various instruments to ensure in-depth research findings. The post-positivism approach fits quite well in the study because it champions working as detached and objective researcher in understanding the teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, conducted additional document analysis and direct observations to bring out a comprehensive and complete picture of the reality on the ground with regard to the research topic.

3.4 Target Population

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 was ECDE teachers and the County director of education in Bungoma County. It is crucial in research as it provides a basis for sampling, ensures the relevance and generalizability of findings and contributes to the precision of the study. Defining the target population clearly allows researchers to focus on a specific group that can answer the research questions effectively (Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2004; Robson, 2011).

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.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the procedure of selecting a subset of individuals, objects or elements from a larger population to participate in a research study. This subset, known as the sample, is

chosen to represent the broader population, ensuring that the characteristics of the sample align with those of the entire group. By carefully selecting participants or items that reflect the diversity and key features of the target population, researchers can draw conclusions that are generalizable. Sampling techniques, such as random, stratified, or purposive sampling, are used to ensure the sample accurately represents the population's main attributes (Orodho & Kombo, 2002).

First, participating ECDE centers were picked following cluster sampling by considering the subcounties to increase statistical precision. The population was first distributed into smaller homogenous clusters in order to arrive at precise representation (Best & Kahn, 2006). Accordingly, all ECDE centers in the County were grouped into the 11 subcounties as follows: Bumula, Bungoma South, Webuye West, Webuye East, Bungoma North, Tongaren, Kimilili Bungoma, Bungoma Central, Bungoma West, Cheptais, and Mount Elgon. The rationale for cluster sampling is to increase statistical precision in the process of selecting ECDE centers. The ECDE centers in Bungoma County have variety in population segmentation in terms of location, gender and ability that should be reflected in the study by ensuring all of them are well represented.

Simple random sampling was then applied for the ECDE teachers within the institutions to avoid chances of bias. According to Creswell (2014) simple random sampling is a method of sampling in which each individual in the population has an equal probability of being selected. It is considered one of the most basic and unbiased methods for obtaining a representative sample. This routine entails assigning numbers to ECDE teachers in the ECDE centers which were placed in a container. Then a number was handpicked by chance with replacement until the suitable sample had been arrived at.

The rationale for this method is to minimize bias in selecting teachers for the study. This way, every ECDE teacher had the same opportunity of taking part in the study.

Purposive sampling was used for the County Director of Education since he is only one in the County and is supervisory of all education activities and thus home to implementation of CBE.

Incidental sampling was used to select parents who participated in the study. This technique refers to selecting those who happen to be available on first come first served basis. The study focused on parents who were available and willing to participate, ensuring their responses would contribute meaningful insights into the objectives of the study. Since some parents sent house helps to take their children to ECDE centres, the researcher, in this case, relied on ECDE teachers to identify the parents. This sampling method was preferred because it took advantage of those who happened to be there to provide relevant and informed perspectives on the educational experiences of their children in ECDEs.

The researcher ensured ten percent samples. This threshold is recommended by Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) who vouch at least 10% of the target population for descriptive research. A sample size of 10% out of 2008 teachers gave a figure of 200.8, which was rounded down to 201 teachers. Hence, the final sample of 201 was statistically grounded and methodologically appropriate.

3.5.2 Sample Size

Table 3.1 Target Population and Sample Size

Respondents	Target Population	Sample Size	Sample (%)
ECDE Teachers	2008	200	10
CDE	1	1	100

3.6 Research Instruments

Taking into consideration the diversity of the sample and the broad topographical range of the target informants, the study employed a variety of research tools to capture comprehensive data.

These tools included questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Questionnaires were used to collect standardized responses from a larger sample, while interviews allowed for deeper insights through one-on-one interactions. Focus group discussions facilitated an exchange of ideas among participants, providing a richer understanding of group shared experiences. Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) emphasize that for social science research, questionnaires and interview schedules are among the most commonly used instruments, offering both structured and flexible approaches to data collection.

3.6.1 Questionnaire for ECDE Teachers

A self-completion survey to solicit information from the ECDE teachers tailored along the objectives. (*As per Appendix A*). This questionnaire consisting of two parts sought qualitative as well as quantitative information. There was part one looking for personal details of the teachers so as to give an overview of the ECDE teacher's experiences with regard to both the institution and the teaching experience. Part two looked at areas of CBE as per the study objectives. The researcher ensured as much information is sought on each objective to enhance the content validity of the instrument.

The second part had seventeen closed-ended and five open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were done along with suitable but restricted choices for the respondents to consider the most suitable in describing the varied situations within their experiences. On their part, the unrestricted interrogations accorded the respondents some latitude to provide information spontaneously. This is important since the issue of ECDE teachers' views of social concerns in the Competency Based Education to capture the teachers' distinctive involvements.

The questionnaire looked into the training of the ECDE teachers on CBE. The document sought to find out if the teachers can explain the basic tenets of CBC. Further, it sought to find out what specific provisions the teachers had made in their teaching methodology to adapt to CBE. These include applying competency-based approaches, selecting learning activities which promote infusion of the core competencies, adapting schemes of work, lesson plans and teaching aids in line with CBE and also engaging the pupils in tangible activities intended to assist them advance their strengths and elicit their self-confidence. The questionnaire also strived for information on provisions made in teaching

methodology, preparation of observation checklists for assessment, integration of digital literacy and pertinent and contemporary issues across all subjects, equipping the learner with basic knowledge and skills for the exploration of the immediate environment as well as learning and enjoyment. In line with the recommendations of CBE, the instrument also sought to find out if the teachers were using the first language of the pupil and engaging them in indigenous language activities. Since the researcher also looked through available documents that were guiding the implementation of CBE in the observation schedule, the questionnaire also asked the teachers on the same information to enhance validity of data.

The questionnaire was deemed to be a suitable tool for teachers because they are a large group and thus easy to reach via this method. During the visit to the schools, the respondents had an opportunity to raise any concerns regarding the instrument therefore improving the face validity of the instrument. The researcher believes that interaction with respondents during the school visits did increase the return rate of the questionnaires.

The interaction between researchers and respondents played a crucial role in improving face validity, which refers to the extent to which a survey appears to measure what it claims to measure. In this study, the interaction ensured that the instrument was relevant, clear and appropriate for the target population. The researcher engaged with respondents to clarify any ambiguity or misunderstanding. Further, the respondents' feedback during pilot studies allowed the researcher to identify questions that might be confusing, leading to revisions that improved clarity. By observing respondents' reactions and gathering their insights, researchers was in a position to assess whether the questions seemed

relevant to the participants' experiences, enhancing the content's validity. This enhanced the overall quality of the data collected, ultimately strengthening the face validity of the instrument.

3.6.2 Interview Schedule for the CDE

The schedule moderating the discussion contained eight initial questions (since spontaneous questions arose in the interview) which guided the conversation with the CDE (*See Appendix B*). The CDE is actually the officer in charge of overseeing the running of ECDE centers at the County level and so has hands on information of the way they are managed on day-to-day basis. The interview was considered suitable because it provided an unlimited space for the CDE to provide any pertinent information regarding CBE. The researcher also had an opportunity to probe the information provided even in other instruments and in order to match the gaps in information.

The interview sought to find out from frontline supervisor how CBE is being implemented on the ground in terms of understanding of the concept across stakeholders, whether there has been training of the instructors, availability of resources and so on. The conversation also sought to find out the kind of feedback given on the involvement and challenges of teachers. Moreover, the officer has first-hand information on challenges of CBE implementation and feasible recommendations. The officer also provides other relevant information that had been overlooked by the researcher that was deemed relevant to the study given that on day-to-day basis; they interact with implementers of the CBE.

According to Kothari (2004), the interview method offers several key advantages, including its flexibility in restructuring questions to suit the flow of the conversation, the ability to observe nonverbal cues such as body language and the opportunity to probe deeper into responses for more detailed insights. These attributes make interviews particularly valuable for gathering rich, refined data. In the context of this study, the interview was strategically used to gather information across all areas of the research objectives. This approach enabled the researcher to explore the perspectives and experiences of the participants in depth, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the issues under investigation. The flexibility of the interview method enhanced the reliability and depth of the data collected.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

The FGD guide involved a premeditated conversation comprising of PP1 and PP2 parents deliberately constituted because they are key stakeholders in the CBE and can thus understand issues affecting CBE (*See Appendix C*). The FGD comprised ten parents purposively selected to suit inclusiveness of the various segmentations.

The researcher enlisted the support of ECDE teachers to assist constitute the panel of parents to take part in the study.

The FGD was considered an apt choice for parents because it availed them an open opportunity to express themselves on the issue at hand. In this kind of set up, they can candidly open up on a variety of issues since they do not feel isolated and where the moderator skilfully makes them feel at home. Further, the researcher had an opportunity to counter check facts provided by other respondents.

This instrument was mainly used to gather data on the parents' guesstimates of the CBE and their reflections on the teachers' concerns. The researcher took them through an introduction to build rapport and then began the discussion on specific areas of the study objectives. The FGD was considered a useful instrument for gathering data because the informants are in their familiar backgrounds and easily discussed on issues in a lively setup as guided by a moderator. The advantage of FGD lies on letting the members to discuss freely and come to an agreement in a way that offers the researcher an understanding of their challenges and practices (Krueger, 2014). In this study FGD helped to explore the range of views and opinions on the parents' involvement in CBE and the challenges they go through and what they think could be done. The CBE does not treat the parents as outsider participant but as key stakeholders whose input is informative of the process.

One key value of FGDs is that parents are central to the learning environment of ECDE children, both at home and in community settings. FGDs allowed the researcher to gather first-hand information about parental expectations, concerns and experiences with CBE in early childhood education. In this study, focus group discussions with parents of ECDE children held significant value as they offered rich, qualitative insights that greatly informed policy recommendations provided. Involving parents in these discussions provided a deeper understanding of their perspectives on their children's development, learning experiences and the challenges they face in the implementation of CBE. Moreover, these discussions created an opportunity for parents to exchange ideas with others, fostering a collaborative approach to problem-solving. In the supportive group

environment, parents identified common challenges and solutions that they hadn't considered before, strengthening their role as partners in their children's education.

3.6.4 Observation Checklist

For the purposes of triangulation, the study further employed an Observation Checklist on the visible indicators of CBE (*See Appendix D*). The study systematically recorded visible signs of CBE teaching and learning in the institutions, providing description of the indicators like numbers, and conditions in order to back up the inferences made through other instruments.

According to Kothari (2004), observation is a scientific tool for data collection because it is carried out as per articulated objectives and is methodically calculated and documented to guarantee dependability of collected information. Therefore, observation enables for independent scrutiny of what is currently happening without enquiring from the respondents.

In this study, observation was utilized to verify evidence from other instruments and to gather additional information on the teaching and learning of CBE. The study also gathered pictorial evidence to collaborate both qualitative and quantitative findings of the study.

An observation checklist plays a crucial role in empirical research by providing structure and consistency to the data collection process. Studies indicate that by using a checklist, researchers can avoid overlooking important behaviors or phenomena during the observation process. "A checklist helps ensure that all relevant data are observed and recorded in a systematic and organized manner" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The checklists also have a standardized format which helps in organizing the data in a way that is suitable for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. "The structured nature of checklists makes the subsequent analysis of observational data easier, as it simplifies categorization and comparison" (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the observation checklist enhanced systematic, unbiased and reliable data collection, ultimately improving the quality of empirical research.

3.7 Piloting of the Instruments

Piloting of the research tools was carried in an ECDE centre carefully chosen to ensure the validity of these tools. The school was a typical representation of the samples but was not involved in the real research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:185), before the actual research, it is important to first carry out a preliminary study on a smaller sample. The sample thus chosen should be as similar as possible to the actual one. A pilot study is an initial tentative investigation conducted on a smaller scale in readiness for the actual study. It helps to check the ease with which respondents understand the questions posed thus removing any form of vagueness and reduces chances that the respondents would misunderstand statements.

So, piloting of research instruments served to enhance the reliability as well as validity of the said tools. Piloting research instruments enhanced reliability by testing the tools on a small sample, identifying inconsistencies or unclear questions. This allowed for revisions to ensure consistent results across multiple administrations. For validity, piloting helped to verify that the instruments measured what they intended to measure. Feedback from experts in the Educational Foundations Department of Moi University helped to check

any items were ambiguous, irrelevant or misaligned to the research objectives of the study. Adjustments were made after piloting to ensure that the instruments captured the intended data effectively, thus improving both the accuracy in measurement and relevance of the questions to the study.

Moreover, in conducting the pilot study, the researcher got acquainted with the procedure and protocols of carrying out research before scaling up. Any challenges arising in these preliminary efforts served to improve the actual study.

A pilot study "acts as a dry run for the actual research, providing an opportunity to identify and address potential issues in research design, data collection, and instrumentation" (Creswell, 2014). It allows researchers to test the feasibility of their methods, refine instruments and anticipate challenges before the full study. According to Polit and Beck (2017), a pilot study "foreshadows the actual study by allowing researchers to assess the practicality of the methods, improve data collection tools and ensure that the study design is sound." Thus, the pilot study ensured the main study was conducted smoothly, yielding reliable and valid results.

3.7.1 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity signifies the extent to which a research tool is able to bring out, with a level of exactness, the results it set out to measure. Face validity denotes the probability that the question posed to the respondents was misread or misconstrued. Effort is therefore made to remove whatever vagueness that may be there. Content validity denotes the level within which the tools are able to incorporate the entire scope of the research such that

after analysis the data, it will be found to have adequately covered all the research questions.

According to Gall, Borg & Gall (1996) validity of research tools is enhanced through professional opinion of scholars in the area. Content validity is achieved when the research instruments encompass sufficient coverage of the research objectives. Validity is a measure of the extent to which the research tools are able to measure what the study set out to measure. It actually indicates the extent to which a research tool brings out what it intended.

In this study, face validity was verified during the pilot study while content validity was first checked by the researcher before the pilot study by crosschecking the areas each instrument covers against the study objectives. Moreover, both content and face validity were certified by scholars in the department of Educational Foundations in the host university.

3.7.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability denotes consistency. It refers to a situation where similar or same results are posted after repeated tests. Reliability is defined by Orodho (2009) as the extent to which research tools produce consistent outcomes in repeated attempts. The research tools' reliability was ascertained through the test- re-test technique. This refers to the process of giving the research tools to the same group again to see the consistency after repetition. The results of the two are compared to see the degree of consistency.

The questionnaires were circulated to the pilot group from selected school and which were not part of the main sample. The outcomes of these preliminary findings were then subjected to the spearman's rank order correlation coefficient to confirm the consistency level. The benchmark set by Orodho (2009), is a coefficient of above 0.8 which is adequate for reliability.

The instruments' reliability was established by carrying out test- re-test method, which is administering the same instrument twice to the same group of subjects. The instruments were administered to respondents selected from one ECDE institution which was not included in the study sample. The findings of the pilot study were analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient. The results showed a correlation coefficient of 0.86 for the ECDE teachers. In calculating the correlation coefficient, the study undertook various steps. To begin with, the data was ranked. The test scores from the ECDE teachers from the first and second administrations of the instrument were ranked separately. Each subject's score was assigned a rank, with the lowest score receiving a rank of 1, and so on. Secondly, a calculation of the rank differences was carried out. After ranking, the difference between the ranks of each paired score from the first and second tests was calculated. Then, a square of the differences and then a sum of squared differences. The spearman's formula was applied to calculate the correlation coefficient. Substituting the calculated values into this formula resulted in a correlation coefficient of 0.86. This score was considered to have met the threshold since scholars like Orodho (2009), acknowledges a coefficient of above 0.8 as adequate for reliability.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

After obtaining requisite authority from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation, the researcher then proceeded to report to the County Commissioner's office to present the clearance. As matter of courtesy and procedure, the researcher then visited the CDE's office in the County. Each of the selected schools were visited for the purposes of self-introduction and acquaintance with the primary participants in the study. In each institution, the main objective of the visit was clarified and evidence provided for authority to carry out the research. The participants were guaranteed of stringent privacy for the information provided.

Researchers point out that following established data collection protocols ensures that the data collected truly reflects the research questions being investigated. As Creswell (2014) emphasizes, "Adhering to the correct procedures ensures that the data reflects what the researcher aims to measure, thus protecting the internal validity of the study." In sum, the study adhered to data collection procedures in order to guarantee the quality, reliability and ethical standards of this study. It helped to maintain the integrity of the data and build confidence in the results, ultimately contributing to the credibility and impact of the entire study.

3.9 Data Analysis

There was both qualitative and quantitative data. First, qualitative data was transcribed; coded and discussed under themes. In qualitative analysis, the focus is on the research

questions and the respondents' explanations, in this case their understanding of the CBE implementation practices at ECDE level. The respondent described their experiences with the implementation of CBE and offered possible recommendations on how it can be improved. The raw data of the interview was first coded along the research questions then reduced to more specific themes.

The value of qualitative analysis in this study was that it helped to identify additional features of CBE implementation at the ECDE level that could confirm or be confirmed by the quantitative analysis. The study took note of what the respondents said as well as how they said. In other words, the individual accounts of the respondents were considered within their contexts so that the full implication of their meaning was not lost. Qualitative findings provided the study the opportunity of interpreting meaning in a more wholistic manner and interfacing with direct observation.

As for the quantifiable data, it was subjected to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26). This model is among the most recent in the market and is user friendly in a way that doesn't call for high technical expertise. Thus, the researcher was in a position to easily describe the scores. According to Gay (1992), descriptive statistics allow the researcher to implicitly outline a lot of statistics with a small number of indices.

The utilization of both qualitative and quantitative analysis helped to develop a more accurate picture of Early Childhood Development Education teachers' views on social concerns in the implementation of competency-based education. Employing the post-positivism paradigm, the mixed approach, brought out the differences between the

expectations of the new education system and the actual implementation on the ground and provided evidence that accounts for this difference.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Written authority to carry out the research was sought from Moi University, School of Education which helped to expedite the process of obtaining requisite clearance from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation. This is a legal procedure and requirement.

At the outset, procedure of collecting data was adhered to ensure unbiased sampling methods and random sampling protocols. The researcher strived to ensure that surveys and interviews were concise and accessible. Further, any barrier for participation was minimized by following up on non-responders to increase the robustness of the data. The researcher also maintained conventional ethical standards of ensuring that the participants do so out of informed consent and guaranteeing confidentiality. Besides, the participants were informed that the main objective of the research as being essentially academic in order to inspire the confidence of the respondents and guarantee that they provide candid responses.

The study also observed the standard practice of protecting the identity of the study participants through anonymity. This is a form of confidentiality where the participants' identities are kept secret (Scott, 2005). One way in which this was achieved in the study was avoiding any personal identification by participants other than their roles as director, ECDE teacher or parent. A study should not collect identifying information of research participants unless it is essential to the study protocol (Scott, 2005). Where photos of

children were taken, the study ensured that their faces were blurred as is the ethical practice.

Moreover, the researcher ensured the credibility and originality of the study by being careful to avoid plagiarism. As recommended by the university, the researcher subjected the thesis to Turnitin anti-plagiarism application to ensure that the document was within the stipulated standards.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the aggregated findings of the study, interpretations and discussions thereof sequenced along the study objectives. The chapter themes are organized based on the objectives of the study in order to present the key quantitative and qualitative findings from the respondents in each thematic area. Consequently, the study was premised on four themes of social concerns on administrative support, teachers' social concerns on parental involvement, teachers' views on learner classroom socialization in CBE and strategies that can be used to address the social concerns. For each of the thematic findings in the google sheets were first collated then stored in a

spreadsheet. The data was then downloaded in CSV format and analyzed using the SPSS. The qualitative data was first transcribed in narrative form from the inferences and opinions of the respondents. A convergence of both quantitative and qualitative findings is then cross referenced with the other researchers in related studies.

4.1 General and Demographic Information

4.1.1 General Information

The study employed a self-completion survey to solicit information from the ECDE teachers tailored along the study objectives. The study also recorded the opinions and ideas from the County Director of Education on social concerns of ECDE teachers in the Competency Based Education delivery and how to improve the same. For the parents, the study utilized a focus group discussion guide to collect views from PP1 and PP2 parents. Additionally, the researcher triangulated the information provided by the respondents by making direct observation and taking field notes during the visit to the schools. A synthesis of these finding is crossed referenced to present a discussion on the way forward for competency-based education in ECDE.

A summary of the survey respondents and the response rate of the instruments is presented in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: A Summary of the Survey Respondents and the Response Rate of the Instruments

Sampled Group	Instrument	Number of Respondents	Participated	Response Rate
ECDE Teachers	Questionnaire	200	191	96%
ECDE Parents	Focus Group Discussion	80	73	91.25%
County Director of Education	Interview	1	1	100

4.1.2 Demographic Data

Based on the responses from the questionnaires, an analysis of the background information of the teacher respondents was carried out. The respondents had been asked to state their gender, how long they had been in the teaching profession, how long they had been in the particular institution and their level of training.

The gender disaggregation of the ECDE teacher respondents was at 97.4% (186) female and 2.6% (5) male. This proportionality reflects the national and global one for early year's education that ILO (2022) estimates about 85% female teachers. For example, in the USA, male teachers make up 2% of all the teachers in preschool and kindergarten according to the Bureau of Labour Statistics (2020). A substantial percentage of the teachers at 85.86% (164) of the respondents had worked for over six years as ECDE teachers and at least 76.96% (147) had been in their current institution for over six years meaning that they had experience and exposure in the research subject matter in their respective institutions.

At the same time, 67.02 % (128) of the respondents held a Certificate in ECDE; 29.32 % (56) held a Diploma in ECDE, while 3.66 % (7) were holders of a degree. These findings are presented in table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: Distribution of ECDE Teachers According to Academic Qualifications

Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	128	67.02%
Diploma	56	29.32%

Degree	7	3.66%
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The findings are further synthesized in figure 4.1 below for a clearer demonstration

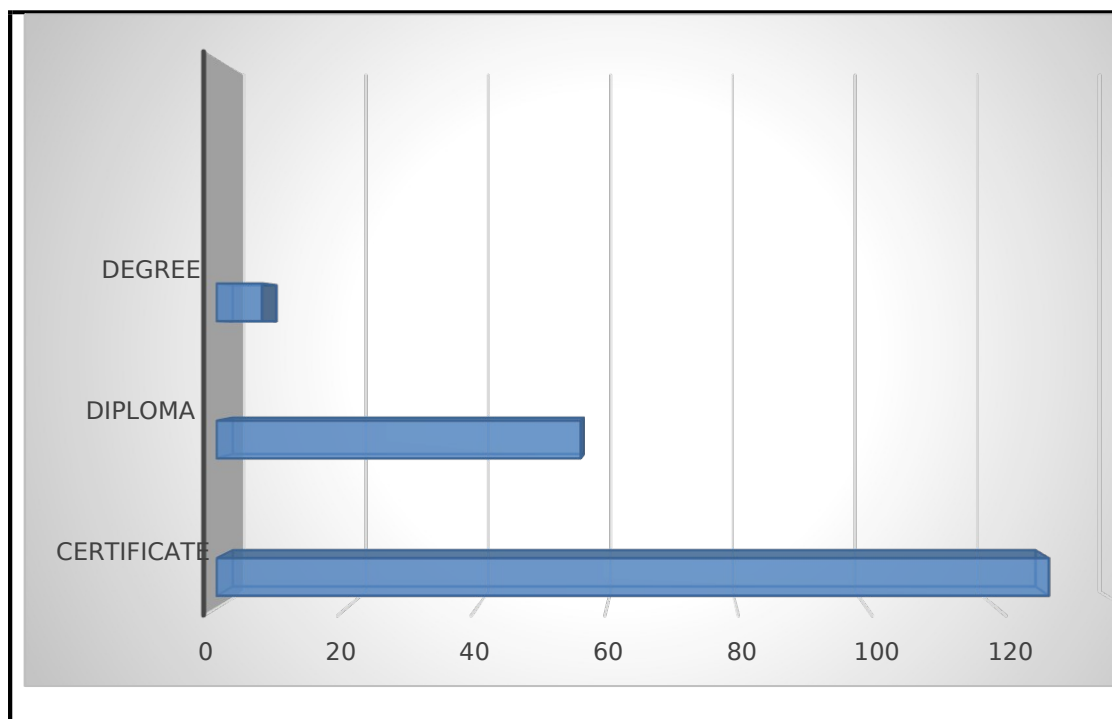


Figure 4.1: Distribution of ECDE Teachers According to Academic Qualifications

In selecting the parent respondents for the study, the researcher allowed for diversity in age, religion, levels of education, social economic status as guided by the teacher in order to reflect an inclusive and comprehensive view of the parental voice in the study. Teachers in the sampled study schools assisted to identify and convene the parents for the discussion. The instrument was found suitable because it provided a relaxed atmosphere for soliciting information and was appropriate for getting candid views which could be counter checked and further used to verify information from other instruments.

Observations were also undertaken in order to get answers to the research questions, by taking note of the actual noticeable traits of the practice of competency-based education. The researcher used observation in order to offer a first-hand account of the situation under investigation. Further, the researcher took photographs to help document various conditions in the school and particularly the classroom. For confidentiality, the photographs made efforts to conceal the identity of the learners.

All the respondents in the study were, therefore, considered suitable and meeting the practical threshold to provide data on the research topic. Their qualitative and quantitative responses formed the main stay of this study.

4.2 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 competency-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 study findings. one ECDE teacher described the classroom conditions as follows:

Some ECDE centres have good classrooms constructed by the County Government which is encouraging, however, these classrooms lack the equipment required for CBE implementation. In other schools, the classrooms remain the old 'mabati' (iron sheets) structures that are unsuitable for children. During the cold season, they are extremely cold; when it is hot, they become uncomfortably hot; and when it rains, the noise makes teaching impossible. Additionally, a good number of these classrooms are not cemented and the conditions are generally unfavourable for 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 4.3 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 4.4 below:

Table 4.4- 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 4.2 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.

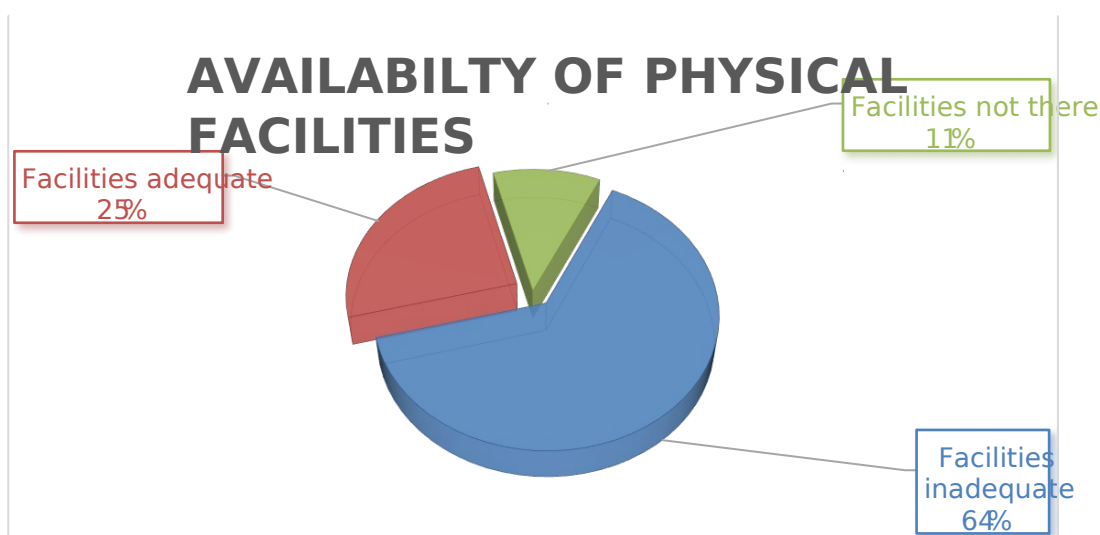


Figure 4.2 ECDE Teachers' Responses on Availability of Facilities for Effective Delivery of CBE

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 CBC 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 education. 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 4.3 below illustrate the situation:



Figure 4.3 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 4.4 below.



Figure 4.4 Photograph of a Dilapidated ECDE Centre and a Latrine

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 4.5 below:



Figure 4.5 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 kinaesthetic, 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 (*Appendix F*). Given that the county is facing a staff shortage of about one thousand teachers, it would be 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 preprimary 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 4.6 below.

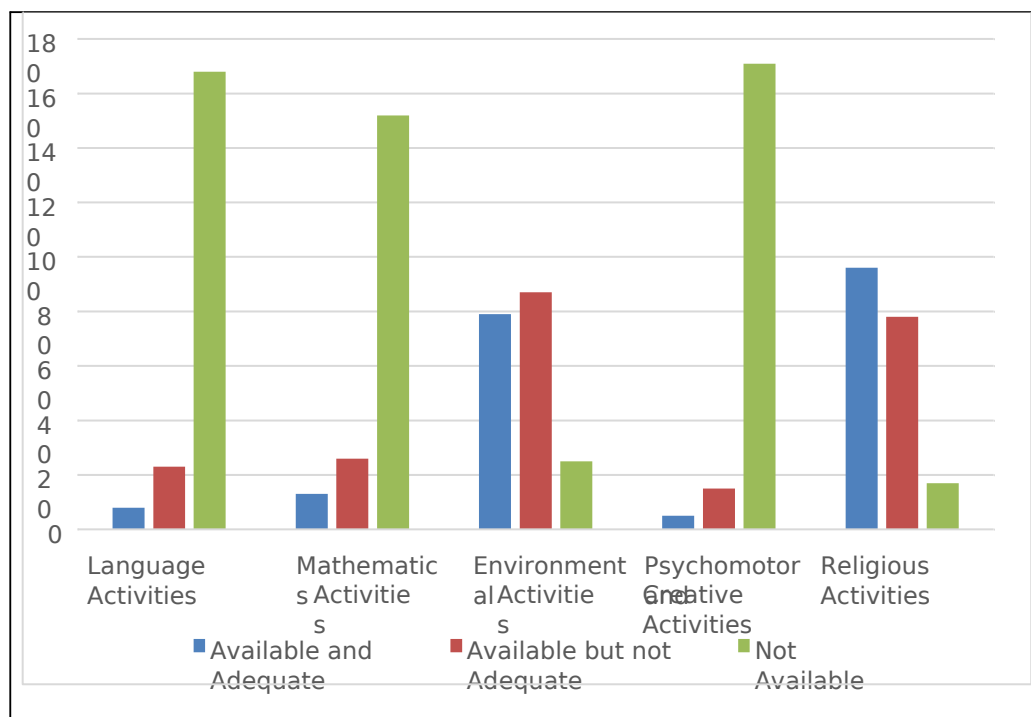


Figure 4.6 Availability of Teaching-Learning Resource Materials

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 digital 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 4.7 below.

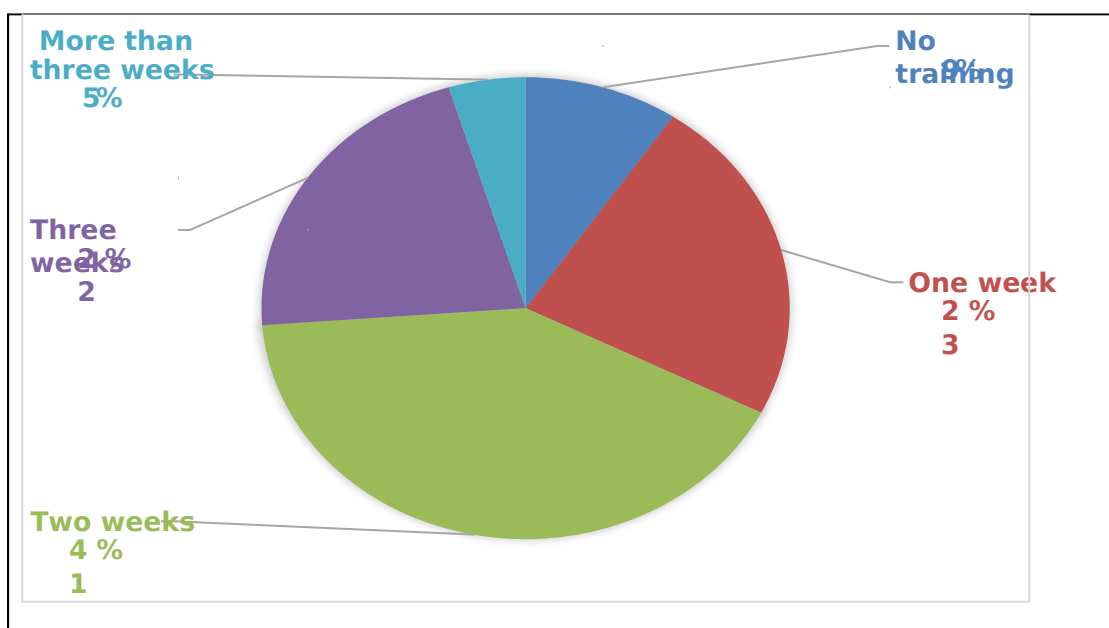


Figure 4.7 In-service Training for ECDE Teachers on Competency-Based Education

The findings indicate that majority of the teachers at 64% received one- or two-week training on CBC 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.

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 experiences, especially in marginalized and resource-constrained settings.

4.3 The ECDE Teachers' Social Concerns on Parental Involvement in the Competency Based Education

The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (KICD, 2017) envisages that since the parents are key stakeholders that influence the child, the ECDE teachers worked collaboratively with them for the benefit of the child. It is expected that the teachers plugs them into the teaching and learning process in order to deliver and meet the needs, talents and interests of every child as well as constantly diagnosing the learners' needs. For example, the teachers write to the parents on areas where they expect the parents to support and supervise homework. Hitherto, the role of the parent was relegated to meeting the financial obligations while largely leaving the teaching and learning process almost entirely to the teacher.

Further, a report on Needs Assessment for Curriculum Reform in Kenya (KICD, 2016), underscored the need for learners to be provided with suitable situations in order for them to experience and attain the proposed competencies. Towards attaining suitable and sustainable environments both at home and in school, the parent is key and expected to be the springboard for varied and appropriate experiences that are the hallmark of the CBE. The parents are also expected to enhance a conducive environment for learning both at home and in school since they are the focal providers of the requisite resources.

Therefore, the study sought to find out from the teachers what they felt about parental involvement in delivery of CBE. The study began by seeking a general picture of the teachers' views on parents' support for CBE implementation in terms of whether they are involved or not. To begin with, majority of the teachers at 79.58% (152) felt that pre-school parents were involved in the education of their children. However, this optimistic picture is watered down when the issue is probed further. The teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that PP1 and PP2 parents were supportive of the implementation of competency-based education implementation. Their responses were in figure 4.8 below:

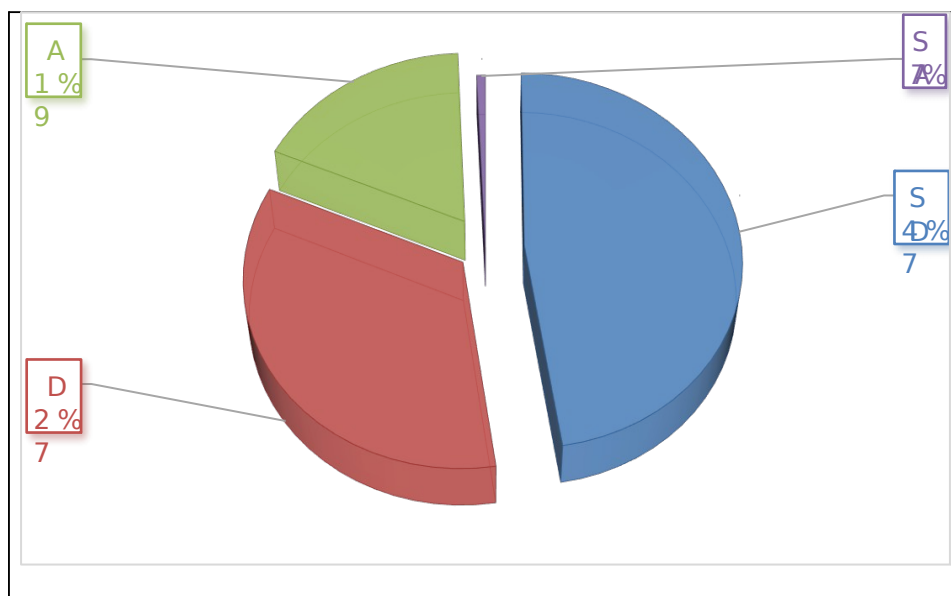


Figure 4.8 ECDE Teachers' Views on Parents Support for CBE Implementation

The implications of these findings were that majority of the teachers at 74.34% (142) opine that the parents are not supportive. It therefore means that even though the parents are involved, they are not supportive. A further probe on the same revealed that the teachers feel that the parents are not in a position to afford the requirements needed for their PP1 and PP2 children. The findings from the key informants of this study were in support. The above findings seem to corroborate with the voices of participants who noted that: -

In a family suffering from poverty, CBC requirements are not a priority

Some children don't even bring maize for porridge to school, others have torn school uniform which is a sign of poverty

I feel parents are struggling with other basic needs. You cannot go to these parents and begin to demand for this or that when you can see for yourself their level of need.

Most of the rural population parents are poor. Poverty makes it difficult for these parents and their children to acquire the most basic facilities for school.

When you make a list of what you want the parents to buy, they openly tell you that they cannot afford. What do you do if they cannot afford.

There are serious economic challenges and the parents definitely give priority to other basic needs of the family. It is us who are affected most as ECDE since parents feel that the county government should provide for their children.

(ECDE Teachers' responses on parental role, October 2023)

These qualitative issues of poverty and financial strain among parents of early childhood education (ECDE) children can significantly impact their views and engagement with competency-based education. When parents are struggling financially, their focus often shifts toward immediate survival needs, such as providing food, shelter and healthcare, rather than educational concerns. As a result, they may view CBE as an added burden that requires additional time, resources or effort they cannot afford.

The study went further to qualify the ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education. The ECDE teachers were asked their opinion regarding the support the parents provided for their children. Based on the responses provided in the pilot study, the following responses were calibrated as the areas of parental engagement. The responses are presented in table 4.5 below:

Table 4.5 ECDE Teachers' Social Concerns on Parental Engagement in Delivery CBE

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Providing financial support	44.52	32.01	19.51	3.96
Providing teaching - learning resources	4.14	20.06	46.18	29.62
Supporting academics like assignments	13.06	39.81	35.67	11.46
Presence in meetings	7.96	36.63	38.85	16.56
General guidance to children	21.34	27.39	47.77	3.5
Participation in management of the institution	9.87	38.85	35.99	15.29
Providing feedback to teachers	45.56	28.66	22.29	3.5
Others like supporting teaching, donations etc	45.86	27.07	22.93	4.14

These quantitative findings were further presented in the figure below to bring out a more explicit depiction of the results as shown in figure 4.9 below:

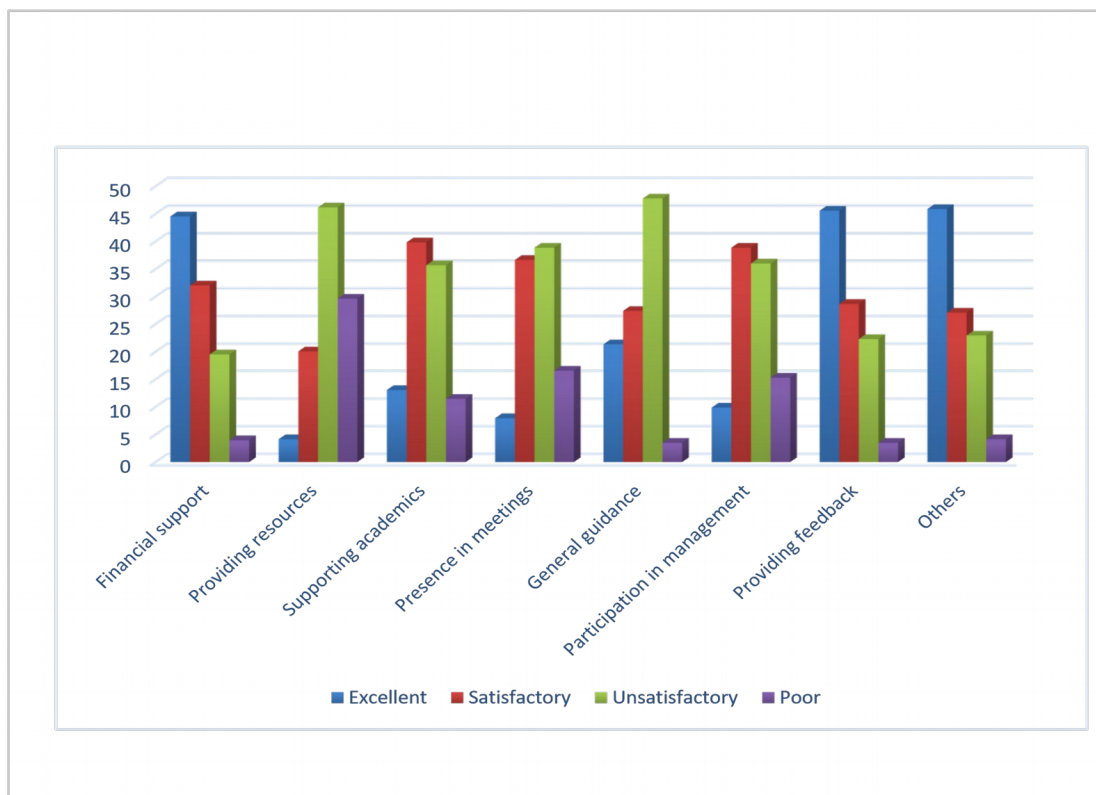


Figure 4.9 ECDE Teachers' Social concerns on Parental Engagement in CBE

There are three principal findings from the quantitative data above. First, the teachers felt that parents are apt in providing financial support, providing feedback to teachers and other forms of support with an affirmative index of 76.53%, 74.22% and 72.93% respectively. This means that the teachers believe that parents are willing to pay the fees, provide the teachers with necessary feedback and other support as indicated in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (KICD, 2017) and the Needs Assessment for Curriculum Reform in Kenya (KICD, 2016).

Secondly, there seems to be a problem when it comes to provision of teaching-learning resources. Majority of the teachers at a high score 75.8% felt that the parents do not provide materials that are needed for teaching the competency-based education. The

implication then is that while as the parents are ready to keep their children in school and providing the basics, they are not willing to engage further in the delivery of CBE. The study notes that this as a big challenge in the implementation of CBE in early childhood education. Competency-Based Education is resource intensive and expects parents to continuously provide teaching and learning resources for the children. In a nutshell, the ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education is that the learners are not well provided with the teaching-learning resources that are imperative for effective delivery. The findings spell impediment to the effective implementation of CBE. It is not enough to pay fees and keep the child at school, the parent needs to ensure that the child has enough learning resources.

The quantitative figures in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.9 below reflect that ECDE parents seem uninterested in the CBE. The financial strain can limit the parents' ability to support their children's learning. They might be unable to provide necessary learning materials, attend school meetings or engage in activities that are part of the CBE framework, which emphasizes active participation, hands-on learning and continuous assessment. This can create a disconnect between the parents and the education system, where the parents might not fully understand or value the benefits of CBE because they are preoccupied with the daily struggles of life.

Additionally, financial difficulties can affect parents' overall engagement with the ECDE schools. If parents have to be working round the clock or dealing with financial insecurity, they may lack the time or energy to actively participate in school activities or engage in conversations with teachers about their child's progress. This perceived lack of

interest might not reflect true disinterest in CBE, but rather a coping mechanism driven by external stressors that hinder their active involvement.

A direct observation in one of the schools on parent's meetings confirmed the low attendance and further observed a heavily skewed attendance towards the female gender. According to the teacher, the meeting expected 86 parents but only recorded 47 parents out of which only 11 were male. The male attendance is paltry 23% in this cited example. The voices of the ECDE teachers weighed on this observation in the qualitative findings:

Parents are willing to escort their children to school in the morning but they do not want to come for meetings

Parents rarely attend our meetings, sometimes we are forced to ask parents to come with their children on the day of the meeting

These meetings are almost left to mothers and we are often asking 'where are the fathers of these children?'

More than 90 percent are mothers yet the percentage of single mothers as per our records is far less

They come just to meet the requirement of being there

(ECDE Teachers' responses on parental role, October 2023)

Document analysis of available records indicates that most of these pupils do have both parents and a few come from single parent homes or are raised by guardians. The concern then was that male parents were avoiding ECDE meetings. The study indicated that parental involvement was not gender balanced, a situation that serves to propagate the negative view that ECDE space is for female gender. While as this is not true; it lowers the esteem and importance of ECDE education.

Qualitative findings from the County Director collaborated the findings:

One of the challenges we have with ECDE is the wrong notion that ECDE is a preserve of women. When you go to most of antenatal clinics, you find the nursing mothers taking care of the children as part of the reproductive roles. Maybe due to the patriarchal male domination in the society, the same is carried forward in pre-primary. Most of the African men have their own definitions of the roles for men and women, and child rearing is predominately in the hands of the mothers. However, we do not experience this in primary and secondary schools. Such a belief denies pre-primary education the due attention. Education stakeholders must find a way to eradicate this gender stereotype.

(County Director of Education, April, 2024)

Thirdly, the findings indicate an ambivalent opinion towards parents supporting academics like assignments, their general guidance to their children and their participation in management of the institutions. In these three areas there is almost a tie in the score for assenting and dissenting at 44.59% against 55.41%; 48.73% against 51.27% and 48.72% against 51.28% respectively. The implication then is that the ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education is one of parents who are merely fulfilling their obligation and not willing to go an extra mile. In the context of CBE, an indifferent attitude on the parents would impede delivery since there is an expanded role on the part of the parent and more is required of them for effective delivery.

The quantitative findings above on ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental engagement in CBE is corroborated by parental voices from the focus group discussions. ECDE parents affirmed their challenges and dilemma in supporting delivery of CBE:

Parents are not trained like the way the teachers are

The teachers went to college but there is no college for parents on CBC

Teachers understand their work in school. Parents understand their work at home.

We should not be asked to work that belongs to the teachers CBC is asking for too much from the parents.

I was assisting my child and she said to me, that is not how the teachers showed us. I said okay and kept quiet. Kazi ina mwenyewe (the work belongs to someone else)

Parents are willing to help the teachers. The issue is that they are demanding more than we can provide.

Parents everywhere are complaining about CBC because we are being asked to do too much. Too much is being expected from us and we have other children and other responsibilities. Parents are calling for more realistic expectations on what they are requested to do. (Parents' voices during Focus Group Discussion, October 2023)

The parental voices in the study blending with quantitative findings are in line with the post positivism paradigm of the study. Post positivism approach promotes combination of qualitative and quantitative methods that explores the diversity of facts researchable through various kinds of investigations but respecting and valuing all findings as the essential components for the research.

The study therefore blended the two to bring out a comprehensive view of ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the Competency Based Education.

The qualitative findings above raised an issue that the study sought to clarify: that the system is placing too much pressure on the parents. The study then summarized the three key areas teased out of the responses from the ECDE teachers as follows: Parents are not willing to participate in CBE activities; Parents are willing but lack information on CBE; Parents are willing but lack resources to support CBE. The study sought the opinions of the ECDE teachers. These responses are important for the internal consistency of the

study since they highlight the responses from parents and constitute a paraphrase to the teachers. The ECDE teachers responded as shown in table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6 Responses on ECDE Teachers Views on Parental Support

S/NO	ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
1.	Parents are not willing to participate in CBE activities	17	30	56	88
2.	Parents are willing but lack information on CBE	9	23	64	95
3.	Parents are willing but lack resources to support CBE	17	35	53	86

The above quantitative findings are presented in figure 4.10 below for a more graphic presentation and clarity. The table presents precise numerical values and in order to complement the Information, the figure provides a visual summary of the same data for easier comparison and recognition of the flow of parental responses. The figures indicating that parents are not interested in competency-based education (CBE) activities may point to deeper underlying social issues that go beyond mere disinterest. As observed in the quantitative finding above, parents are not actively disengaged but are constrained by factors such as financial stress, time limitations or lack of understanding on their role in CBE. Poverty and financial strain divert parents' attention away from educational concerns, making it difficult for them to prioritize or engage with CBE-related activities, even if they value education.

Furthermore, parents indicated lack of full understanding of the benefits of CBE and feeling overwhelmed by the demands of the education system given that they are not familiar with its structure or the active participation it requires. Limited exposure to CBE, coupled with a lack of clear communication from schools leads to misconceptions about its importance or effectiveness.

Therefore, it is not necessarily true that parents lack interest. In many cases, external factors like economic hardship or limited educational resources hinder their ability to engage fully. The issue lies not in a lack of interest but in the systemic barriers preventing their active participation in their child's learning journey.

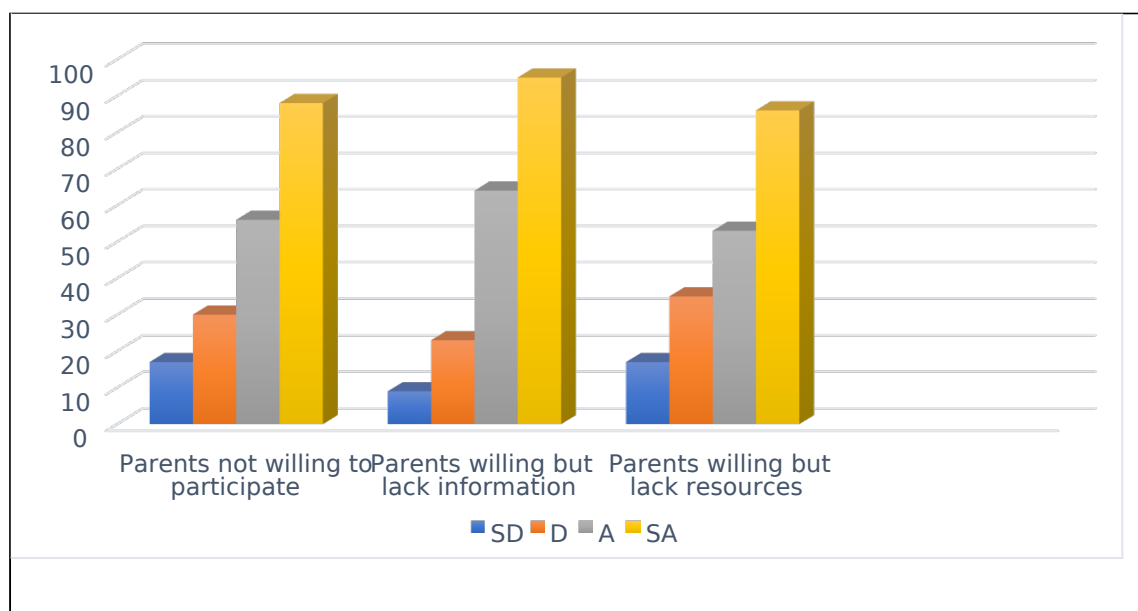


Figure 4.10 Responses on ECDE Teachers Views on Parental Support

These quantitative findings corroborate the qualitative findings from both the ECDE teachers and the parents. To begin with, they confirm parents' unwillingness to participate in the CBE activities.

The majority of ECDE teachers at 75.39% feel that the parents are not willing to participate in CBE activities. Secondly, they confirm ECDE teachers' views that the parents are willing but lack information on CBE. The majority of ECDE teachers at 83.25% believe that the parents are willing but do not have the necessarily information for them to offer their support. Thirdly, they confirm that parents are willing but lack resources to support CBE. The majority of ECDE teachers at 72.77% believe that the parents are willing to offer their support but are constrained by resources.

The main implication of these finding is that the issue of lack of awareness on CBE is the greater problem as compared to lack of resources. The findings belabour the view that the major issue with the parents' attitude towards CBE implementation is the fact that they have not been empowered with information regarding the new education system.

From the findings of this study, details emerge that there was low level of understanding of CBE among the parents and this could impede implementation. Parents are part and parcel of the dayto-day implementation of CBE which they can only do effectively when they have a proper grasp of what it entails and the specific expectations on their part. The attitudes reflected in the study are a reflection of information gaps that exist among the parents. When the parents do not understand, they develop a negative attitude and are unwilling to commit themselves towards the effective delivery of CBE.

The study embarked on content analysis by sampling PP1 Language Activities learning guide to evaluate what it is that is specifically entailed:

Pre-Primary 1

Language Activities

Strand: Listening

Sub-Strand: Common greetings and farewell

The specific Learning Objectives include: Respond appropriately to general greetings at home and at school; Respond appropriately to time related greetings at home and at school; Respond appropriately to farewell at home and at school; Respond appropriately to farewell with reference to time at home and at school; Enjoy responding appropriately to greetings and farewell at home and at school.

The study detailed the above sample where the teacher expects the parents to participate in training their children to acquire common greetings and farewell protocols that can easily be achieved from home-based education. The specific learning objectives aim at what the children should be doing every day including responding appropriately to greetings and farewell at home and at school. It is actually one of the most basic issues that parents should help their children to acquire. The study concluded that most of the tasks are not beyond the parents and are actually within their purview, if they are well inducted into the system. The challenge is not the tasks but mainly awareness on what parents are expected to do and the rationale behind it.

The synthesis of all these findings suggested that parents need to understand both the theory and practice of competency-based curriculum. For effective implementation of the CBC, the awareness, involvement and experience of parents are of critical importance since they are at the core of the teaching and learning process. Parents are expected to provide collaborative synergy with other stakeholders. Moreover, character development is at the core of CBC and the role of the parents towards the same cannot be refuted. So, when they do not attend meetings, the opportunity is lost for them to internalize their roles and seek clarity where they are not certain.

The study findings on the ECDE teachers' social concerns on parental involvement in the delivery of Competency Based Education were synthesized and interpreted revealing that teachers were calling for a fluid ECDE system that embraces more stakeholders. Secondly, the threshold of parental involvement should be defined beyond provision of resources. The teachers' qualitative findings further indicated that since CBE is a premier programme, it would be plausible to look into having implementation committees that incorporate the parents thus cascading implementation to the institutional level while at the same time plugging the gaps in the flow of information on the programme. The parents' general awareness and involvement in the implementation of CBE are very important because it is they who are charged with the demanding task of managing the child at home with regard to curriculum. Presently, this key stakeholder seems to be groping in darkness as major milestones are being scaled in the CBE implementation. It is incumbent upon the government to ensure that the parents are firmly on board for success in CBE implementation.

The County Director of Education confirmed this:

The spirit behind parental involvement in ECDE goes beyond merely dropping and picking the child for school. It is well stipulated as parental empowerment and engagement. Parents ought to be involved even in the delivery of the curriculum itself. In this new dispensation, the parent has a role in the attainment of the learning objectives. An example is environmental education, the teacher can liaise with the parent in the neighbourhood. A well-planned visit to the neighbourhood can achieve the specific learning objectives and provide the child with dynamic and authentic experiences.

(County Director of Education, April, 2024)

The qualitative findings from the director call for enhanced parental empowerment and engagement. The practice has been a passive role by parents but in the CBE setup, there are specific expectations on the parents. Other than not mentioning the pre-primary education level, the 8-4-4 system of education did not explicitly specify the role of the parent beyond provision of learning resourcing for the learner. This gap in parental role is still being felt in the implementation of CBE.

Studies have shown that parental involvement in a child's early childhood education results in quality learning and care outcomes. It leads to better social, emotional and learning outcomes. Parents play an integral role in a child's early childhood education and care. From setting achievable goals to celebrating successes, from providing guidance to creating moments of connection, the power of a parent's presence is tremendous (Dereli, F., & Türk-Kurtça, T., 2022). The age 3 to 6 years is a stage that lays foundations for personal, social and emotional development of the child as well as

language and physical development. Given that these are critical years for providing a firm foundation for learning, a stable and nurturing environment needs to be provided by both parents and teachers. There is need for synergy between what the teacher is doing in school and what the parent does at home. Similarly, it is important to ensure that there is no dissonance between what is reinforced at school and that which is emphasized at home. The child needs consistence in the two environments (Morgan, 2017; Goodall, 2018).

A number of studies have further demonstrated that CBE was rolled out without clear empirical evidence whether the parents who are at the epicenter of implementation, have the prerequisite knowledge and understanding of their role in the entire process (Sari, 2020). This contextual gap is now manifesting itself with reports that parents feel that the CBE is overburdening them. The study opines that the role of the parent is too critical, being at the centre of the cogwheel, to be relegated to the periphery.

Parents also brought out pertinent issues in regarding their empowerment and engagement in CBE context that was well summarized in this qualitative finding:

I have seen the teacher asking parents to take photographs for some assignments. This is okay. But the teacher has already assumed that the family has what it takes to take these photos. But this is not the problem, the real issue is that some of the photos can be personal. Photos taken in the house expose the family background, like utensils, furniture and so on. Imagine a simple innocent photograph of a child making the bed. This photo gets into the family bedroom. How many people are comfortable showing off their bedrooms even to the ECDE teacher. This is different from assignments like cleaning the compound or planting a tree. Am not sure where the teacher draws the line between what is private and what is public.

(Parent' voice during Focus Group Discussion, October 2023)

These are sociologically valid arguments by the parents. While the photos can promote creativity and reflection, it can inadvertently lead to low self-esteem and discrimination, especially along socioeconomic lines. According to symbolic interactionism, the way children perceive and interpret their social world is shaped by the symbols, signs and interactions they experience. When children are asked to share photos of their homes, those from lower-income families might feel embarrassed or stigmatized if their living conditions do not align with societal ideals of wealth or success. These children may interpret their home setting as "less than" or "inferior," which can harm their self-worth and social identity.

Similarly, from a social exchange theory perspective, interactions are based on perceived rewards and costs. If children are from disadvantaged backgrounds, they may feel that their home environment is a source of social disadvantage, where they are not able to present the same "valuable" or "socially acceptable" assets as their wealthier peers. This can lead to a sense of unequal exchange, where they feel their home life offers them fewer "rewards" in terms of status or social capital, reinforcing feelings of discrimination and exclusion. Ultimately, these experiences can negatively impact their self-esteem and social relationships, as they internalize societal biases about socioeconomic status.

The above qualitative findings bring out the issue of the scope of portfolio of evidence that the ECDE teacher seek from the parents. The teachers are provided with suggested activities in the curriculum designs and it is left to their discretion to scope the parental empowerment and engagement. The study identifies this as a gap in the scope of parental empowerment and engagement in the implementation of CBE.

The concerns raised by the parents regarding their role in the implementation of CBE are not without merit and it behooves the policymakers to act with speed. It is important to state that any ineptitude on the part of the parents could easily derail the smooth implementation of CBE. Moreover, the role of the parent in the smooth functioning of CBE will not only enhance institutional capacities towards implementing CBE but also teacher motivation. The gap in information could be bridged by preparing a guidebook that details the expectations on the part of the parent so that it is not left to individual institutions to craft their own sensitization programmes.

A study on the expanded role of parents in the Kenyan education thwarting the new competency based curriculum plan (Orina, 2020) note that parents have found themselves playing the role of teachers. The study cites the e-learning model noting that for the schools that do not offer elearning and assign the same to the parents, it was tantamount to asking the parents to perform the assignments. The parents have to perform the assignments from home by accessing the required materials online. Alternatively, the teachers have to collaborate with the teachers to receive the materials on behalf of the children. The study further notes that only literate parents and those that have the ICT gadgets like a smart phone or other internet connected gadgets. Most parents had to teach their children since they had no alternative. In such a scenario, the social economic inequalities are heightened and children from poor background denied access to digital enabled learning.

Further, the teachers also indicated that Covid-19 pandemic context created a new challenge in CBE implementation. During times of a pandemic and the ensuing

containment measures, issues of economic susceptibility are often aggravated. It is the parents who are the first to suffer the scarcity of resources and other effects of adverse disruption in the social-economic fabric. In a scenario where parents are fighting the direct and indirect brunt of a pandemic, they are less enthusiastic to take on any more obligations especially one that may appear to have economic ramifications. Prior to the pandemic, studies indicated the view among parents that education in Kenya bears a heavy burden on the parent. It is against that background that the study contextualizes the discomfort among parents with an education system that would appear to require more from them.

4.4 The ECDE Teachers' Views on Learner Classroom Socialization in Competency Based Education

Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) lays the foundation for holistic child development. With the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in Kenya, a shift from traditional knowledge-based teaching to learner-centered, skill-based learning has emerged. While as the CBE framework emphasizes the development of core competencies like creativity, communication, critical thinking and collaboration, the ECDE teachers raised concerns regarding its practical implementation. This study presents field data collected through classroom observation and interviews with ECDE teachers on their social concerns about the CBE approach and its impact on learner classroom socialization.

The study began with the teachers' own assessment on their knowledge on competency-based education. It was important to begin with their views as a mark of their confidence in their delivery. This study aligned itself with the post positivism paradigm that focuses

on researching issues in the context of involving experiences of the majority. Accordingly, the study sought to hear from the ECDE teachers their personal experiences. The findings are reflected in table 4.7 below:

Table 4.7 ECDE Teachers' Assessment on their Own Knowledge of Competency-Based Education

No	Information on Competency Based Education	Am certain	Almost certain	Not Certain
1	I understand why the reforms in education were done to introduce Competency Based Education	120 (62.8%)	60 (31.4%)	11 (5.8%)
2	I understand the three levels of Basic Education	153 (76.1%)	45 (22.4%)	3 (1.5%)
3	I can explain the values that CBE seeks to instil in the pupils'	135 (68.8%)	55 (28.1%)	6 (3.1%)
4	I can list the seven core competencies for Basic Education	141 (73.8%)	47 24.7%	3 (1.5%)
5	I understand what the new policy expects of a teacher	132 (69.1%)	54 (28.3%)	5 (2.6%)

The above findings of the study revealed that the teachers had a clear grasp of the information on Competency Based Education with an average of over 70% that they are certain about their understanding of why the reforms in education were done to introduce CBE, understanding of the three levels of Basic Education, understating of the values that CBE seeks to instil in the pupils, understanding of the seven core competencies for Basic Education and understanding of what the new policy expects of

a teacher. These findings paint an optimistic picture with regard to implementation since it begins with conceptualization by the key stakeholders, who are the ECDE teachers.

The study noted that the challenge begins with implementation in terms of making specific provisions in their teaching methodology to adapt to CBE. While most of the teachers at above 70% indicated that they were applying appropriate methodology, selecting learning activities which promote infusion of the core competencies and had appropriately adapted professional documents to the new requirements, only a mere 34 % indicated that were well equipped to evaluate learners using the CBE assessment rubrics.

Qualitative findings of the study collaborated the view on inadequate preparations on the part of the teacher. This is well captured in the following words of an ECDE teacher respondent:

‘The government ought to have started by training the teachers before anything else. After all preparations are done elsewhere, it is the teacher who is left to implement in the classroom. That for me is the major challenge with this education system that put the cart before the horse’ All the plans are put in place so that the teacher can deliver the curriculum. So thorough retraining of the teacher should have been done. Of course, the ECDE teacher should have come first because that is where the implementation was to begin.

The best place would have been to start with the training in college. While in college, the teachers have a good opportunity to comprehend curriculum issues and when they go to the ECDE centers, they are well prepared.

(ECDE Teachers’ responses, October 2023)

Indeed, studies have corroborated this by indicating that it is important to begin with training the teachers. Rwanda is one of the countries in the region cited as having made significant progress in implementing competency-based education. The system began by training the teachers in the colleges to replace teacher centered passive learning approaches with learner centered approach. The process began by ensuring that all teachers were taken through an intensive in-service training on how to implement the new curriculum (Ndayambaje, 2018; Ndiokubwayo, Habiyaemye and Rukundo, 2019; Mugabo, Ozawa and Nkundabakura, 2021). Teacher preparedness is hence a key ingredient towards successful implementation of a new education programme.

The study, therefore, went further to look at teacher preparedness for delivery of CBE in order to provide more exhaustive data on teachers' views in the delivery. Providing that a single study cannot exhaustively look at all indicators of teacher preparedness, this study picked four areas of teaching methodology adaptation. The study sequenced four key areas of the teaching practice in terms of teacher preparation, teaching methodology, classroom practice and assessment then accordingly looked at areas that would bring out a picture of teacher preparedness in terms of: adaptation of professional documents, appropriate methodology, provisions in the classroom and evaluation of learners. The study sought the views of the teachers ranging from Strongly Disagree,

Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree to gauge the ECDE teachers' views on preparedness for effective delivery of CBE. The following are the specific quantitative findings synthesized in figure 4.11 below:

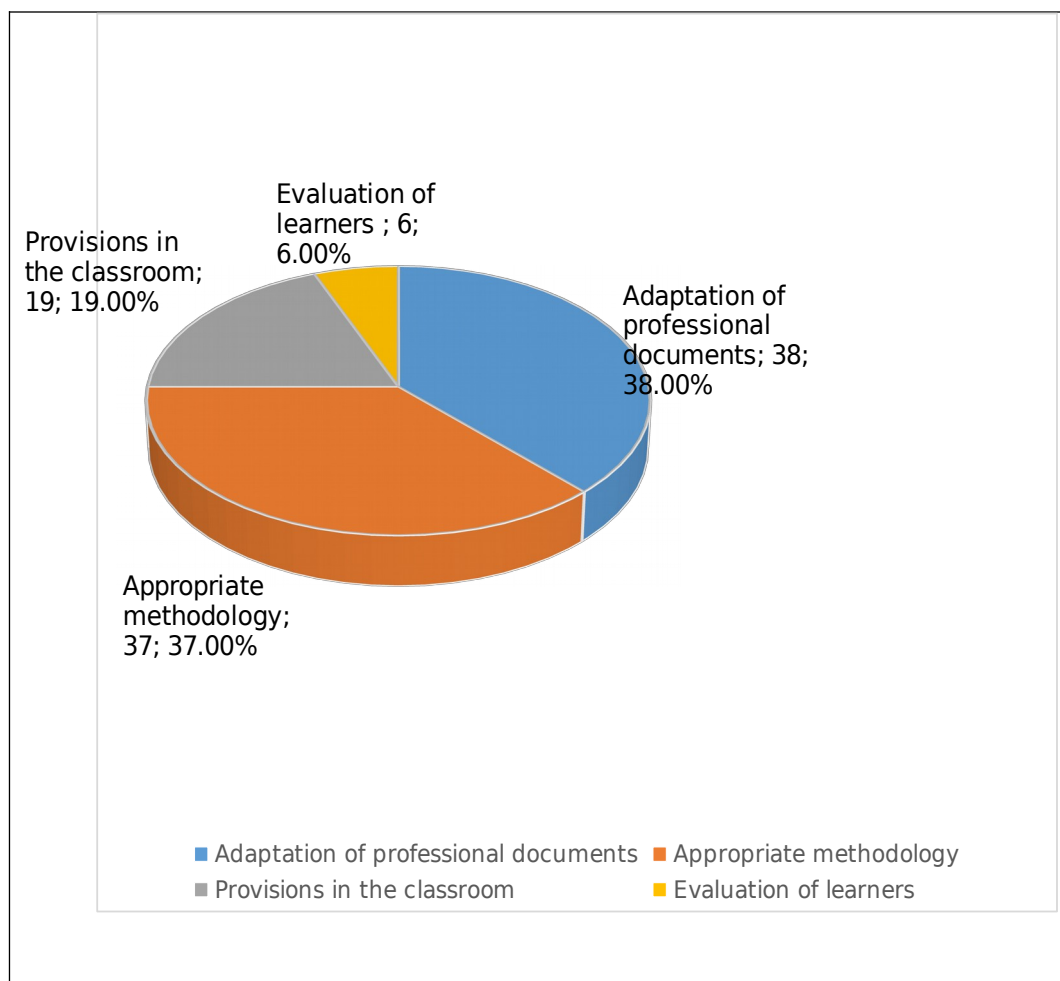


Figure 4.11 ECDE Teachers' Views on Preparedness for Effective Delivery of CBE

The findings indicate the feeling among ECDE teachers that they are well prepared in both adaptation of professional documents commensurate with ECDE and also application of appropriate teaching methodology. However, the teachers feel inadequate in the provisions they have made in the classroom practice as well as evaluating the learners. Given that this is a self-assessment, the researcher takes this an indicator of the ECDE teachers' sense of confidence in the delivery of CBE. The finding thus reveal that the teacher feels confident in the preparations they make and the methodology they employ but feel that they are not well equipped with regard to managing a CBE

classroom and evaluating the learners. The teachers are expected to handle both summative and formative examination at this level.

The quantitative findings are collaborated in the qualitative finding. The recorded explanations of the ECDE teachers on their views in the delivery of CBE were as follows:

That part on assessment and evaluation in competency curriculum is not clear

We are used to marking by making ticks and cancellations and awarding making percentage mark The world of children is not complicated at all, we should avoid complicating it through CBC I was teaching even before CBC. Now there is limited time because of the many activities required by CBC.

Each school can use what they have. CBC should not be difficult

The part on infusing core competencies, achievements, PCIs development and values is a bit vague and not clear to many of us.

(ECDE Teachers opinions, October 2023)

The study emphasized that, the aspect on evaluation in the context of competency-based education is gray area that requires more polishing as per the findings of the study. According to the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF, 2017), there was a shift from the traditional approach that was knowledge-based assessment to the new approach that is Competency Based Assessment.

The new assessment model incorporated both the formative and summative assessments approaches. This new model pays as much attention to the continuous feedback during learning as it does the end of course assessment. The new emphasis on continuous component is premised on the need to improve instruction learning and facilitate the acquisition of the desired competencies. The traditional knowledge-based assessment primarily focused on summative assessment which was a one-off rigid assessment that

determined the knowledge achieved by a learner at the end of a course. The findings of this study indicate that the shift in assessment approaches has not been well imbibed into the ECDE teachers.

Kenya National Examinations Council (2022) provides guidance on attributes of a 21st century assessor as one who knows how the content to be tested is taught and have above average knowledge in educational values that influence teaching and learning. An assessor is one who conscientiously sets out to influence positive classroom practices by designing assessment tasks that assess acquired knowledge, competencies, and values.

KNEC considers assessment to be part of the learning process with the teacher at the steering wheel. The learning process involves acquisition of meaningful feedback on the learner's level of performance with regard to attainment of targeted learning outcomes which entail acquisition of intended knowledge, skills and attitudes. This is the process of Assessment which takes three different forms: (i) assessment for learning, (ii) assessment of learning and (iii) assessment as learning. Assessors play a critical role in the process of assessment by marking and awarding measurement scores to learners' responses. The validity and credibility of assessment outcomes depend highly on the objectivity in marking and grading learners' work (KNEC, 2022). This study notes that there is need to shed more light on assessment for ECDE teachers so that they are squarely in charge of a process that they fully comprehend.

Studies on ECDE carried out in Bomet and Kericho Counties concur that although teachers are generally learning on the job in matters CBC, it is worse for assessment aspect. Most of the teachers have minimum knowledge on how to conduct the assessment

and this was a hindrance to effective implementation of competency-based education in pre-primary levels (Ngeno, 2022; Momanyi & Rop, 2019).

Closely related to this, the study sought the teachers' response on their views of availability of time for delivery of CBE lessons as shown in table 4.8 below:

Table 4.8 ECDE Teachers' Views of Availability of Time for Delivery of CBE Lessons

Ability to write lesson plans with all CBE aspects	Time adequate	Time not adequate	Not certain
Availability of time to make lessons plans for all lessons	37	144	10
Making sure lesson planning does not eat into teaching time	24	159	8
Availability of time to assess individual learners in class	15	174	2

Table 4.8 above is presented to provide a detailed numerical breakdown of ECDE teachers' views on the availability of time for delivering CBE lessons. The table brings out the comparison of teachers' responses across the different aspects of lesson delivery including lesson planning, protection of teaching time and assessment of individual learners. In order to facilitate a more integrated and holistic interpretation of the findings, the study synthesises the raw data into the figure 4.12 below to paint a clearer picture of the situation regarding availability of time for lesson delivery in lieu of the available time.

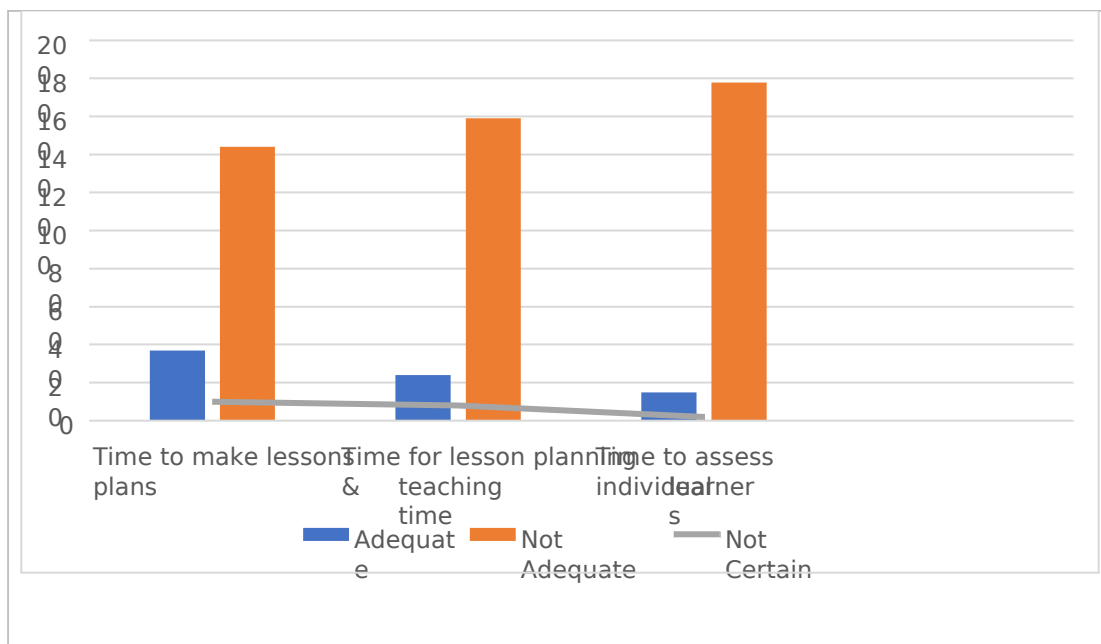


Figure 4.12 ECDE Teachers' Views on Availability of Time for Delivery of CBE Lessons

The findings solidly indicate that the ECDE teacher do not have adequate time to make lesson plans for all lessons, to ensure lesson planning does not eat into teaching time and adequate time to assess individual learners in class. The findings demonstrate that the “Not Certain” responses constitute a very small proportion (approximately 0.017) and thus do not meaningfully affect the interpretation of the results. Further, the findings on insufficient time to assess individual learners in class are comparatively higher than the rest. The issue of assessment is a consistent challenge across the study giving the implication that the ECDE teachers are yet to sufficiently grasp the entire concept. There is a convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings regarding inadequate time for

individual assessment of learners in class as indicated by the opinions of the teachers below:

The mission of CBC is to nurture every individual and their potential. How do you assess 60 learners in a class of 30 minutes and teach.

The subjects have too much to cover and you may not have enough time to assess learners individually

Time availability and the size of the class make assessment in class difficult

The main problem is the number of pupils in class, sometimes they are crowded in a single class making our work difficult.

Preparing for class requires time, for me am all alone in PP2 so I have little time to do all these things at the same time.

(ECDE Teachers opinions, October 2023)

The study conducted a content analysis of Mathematics Activities Assessment for Pre-primary One. The study sampled two sub-strands under the first strand of classification to help paint a picture of what the ECDE teachers' qualitative findings. The findings present the evaluation of the effectiveness of mathematics instruction and assessment practices at the pre-primary level within CBE framework as presented in the table 4.9 below:

MATHEMATICS ACTIVITIES ASSESMENT

KEY: EX- EXCEEDING EXPECTATION, MT –MEETS EXPECTATION, AP- APPROACHES EXPECTATION BE-BELOW EXPECTATION.

Table 4.9 Mathematics Activities Assessment for Pre-primary One

	Tick appropriately under each category to rate learners' ability	EX	<u>MT</u>	AP	BE	COMMENTS
1.0	CLASSIFICATION					
1.1	Sorting and grouping					
	Identify similarities among objects in the environment for distinguishing one object from the other					
	Identify differences among objects in the environment to appreciate their similarities and differences					
	Enjoy sorting and grouping objects in the Environment					
	Group objects according to a specific attribute to create sets of similar objects					
	Appreciate the materials in the environment for their uniqueness and diversity.					
1.2	Matching and paring					
	Identify similarities among objects in the environment					
	Identify differences among objects in the environment					
	Match similar objects in the environment					
	Pair objects according to specific criteria					
	Appreciate the use of different objects in the environment					

Studies concur that the teachers have a challenge with the theoretical underpinnings of the CBE assessment. The Competency Based Assessment Framework for Teacher Education (CBAF-TE, 2017) developed by a collaboration of KICD and the KNEC

indicate that the teachers should be well versed in the Purpose of assessment, Types of assessment, Mode of Assessment and feedback in assessment. This study persistently validates the position that the assessment component of CBE in ECDE is the weaker part of the chain.

These quantitative findings are in tandem with the qualitative findings from the County Director of Education:

The system is yet to fully develop and assimilate quality assessment tools that are in line with Competency-Based Assessment. Since we are still in the implementation stage, I feel that we are yet inculcate into our teachers the skills of making use of Competency-Based Assessment tools for quality evaluation of competencies. There has been a shift from the traditional knowledge-based assessment to Competency-Based Assessment. This shift has embraced both formative and summative assessments approaches and provides continuous feedback that is used to improve instruction learning and facilitate the acquisition of the desired competencies. This area is yet to be well cascaded to the ECDE teachers and is one of the areas we plan to improve on in the coming days. The Ministry of Education is also doing the same in the DECTE programmes.

(County Director of Education, April 2024).

The Kenya National Examinations Council (2022) acknowledges that the use of CBA enables the teacher to understand the different learners' dynamics and facilitate determination of learning needs. This enables the teacher to utilize effective pedagogies that fully nurtures the learner's potentials. An effective education system should aim at equipping individuals with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be productive members of their society and to cope with the social, economic, and environmental challenges of the changing times. At the ECDE level, teachers are encouraged to use authentic assessment approaches in order to assess the learners' competencies effectively.

Authentic assessment determines the learners' performance and understanding on significant tasks that have relevance to daily life. It is a form of assessment that utilizes real life tasks to give the learners an opportunity to demonstrate their competencies. The teacher should ensure that all forms of assessment tasks including the written, performance, oral and acoustic must be authentic in nature.

The study then looked at the teachers' personal assessment of their infusion of core competencies in teaching CBE as a measure of their views in the delivery of Competency Based Education. The findings are presented in figure 4.13 below:

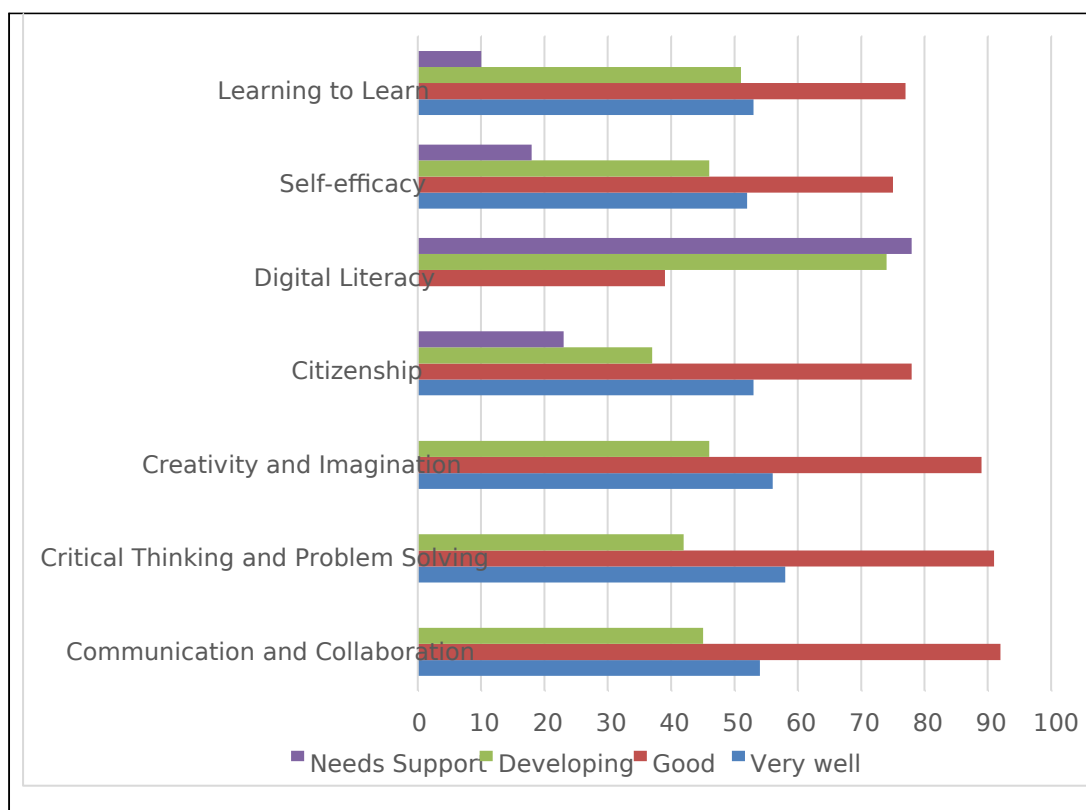


Figure 4.13 ECDE Teachers' Views about Infusion of Core Competencies During

Teaching The above findings indicate that the teachers are confident about their infusion of the core competencies except for digital literacy where it is apparent that they are either developing the skill or need to be supported in the same.

The study carried out observational study to collaborate the self-assessment of the teachers. In one of the schools, the researcher noted a play activity that brought out communication and collaboration in an ingenious manner. The teacher asked the children to form pairs. Then in each pair, the children were asked to sit back-to-back with their arms interlocked with those of their pairing partner. Then the teacher asked the children to support each other in that position to stand up. This was both interesting and tedious and indeed some of the pairs managed to stand. The teacher asked those who had managed to do so to demonstrate to the others how they did it and others were guided to successful completion of the task. The teacher was bringing out communication and collaboration.

In another institution, the researcher observed boys and girls working together in groups like holding hands in groups and singing. The immediate cultural context permits mixing of boys and girls in such contexts. Further, the children would be formed into different groups with one of the children acting as the group leader. More significantly, the researcher observed the teacher asking the group to pick another leader until virtually every child had a chance to play the leader role. Further, the researcher observed another school where children held hands and formed different shapes including tunnels and houses. One of the children was asked to navigate out or around while the other children

paused obstacles in the quest. The teacher was inculcating critical thinking and problem solving at the level of the child.

The findings confirmed that indeed the ECDE teachers were inventing their unique methods of inculcating core competencies in a simple and child-friendly way. There were virtually no digital devices in all the institutions visited.

Qualitative findings from ECDE teachers confirmed that they were finding their way around limited facilities:

An ECDE teacher is down to earth, we teach in many ways to help our children understand. When you come to our classes you see a lot of creativity in the way we teach. Even this CBC is not a big deal for us. Once we know what needs to be done, we work our way towards that using what we have. That is what teaching PP1 and PP2 means.

(ECDE Teacher's opinion, October 2023)

However, observational study in at least two ECDE centres noted that special considerations needed to be designed to accommodate children who are chronologically older than the ECDE going children to meet their specific needs thus ensuring access and equity. The researcher took note of the how the teacher meaningfully incorporated the special children into the learning environment, including special tasks suitable for their ability. ECDE education has the potential to reach and impact learners that traverse different social-economic contexts including the most vulnerable and marginalized groups like children with special needs. The study highlighted the need to localize CBE to reflect the child's immediate environment in a way that factors the context of the child.

This study therefore recommends indigenization of CBE to reflect the contextual environment of the child rather than an attempt to copy paste the system across the country.

Empirical studies have indicated that teachers have challenges incorporating learners with special needs in the regular classes. The teachers noted that maintaining the interest of the children with special needs and guiding them through the learning activities becomes a serious challenge when you have a bigger group to deal with. The reviewed study reported that teachers require special skills and competencies to handle children with special needs. These teachers are required to first understand the special needs of each child in order to give them individualized attention and guidance. It is not easy for teachers who have not gone through the training (Cooc, 2019).

Studies conducted in Tanzania of early childhood education indicate that the challenge of physical infrastructure and teaching learning resources is also a problem in Tanzania. The government and other educational stakeholders have lowly prioritized ECE leading to unqualified teachers and supervisory staff. Furthermore, the majority of ECE teachers adopt didactic teaching styles that give too much emphasis to literacy and numeracy skills and less emphasis to learning through play and discovery (Ndijuye & Rao, 2018).

The study further examined the teaching methodology. According to KICD (2016), CBC requires that teachers are retooled in order to be responsive to the requirements of competency-based education. The orientation moves from focus on content knowledge to

emphasis on 21st century skills, pedagogy and professional competencies where attention shifts from teacher-centred approaches to learner-centered pedagogies.

The ECDE teachers were asked to indicate from a list provided, the various learner activity-based strategies that they use in their classes. The indicated areas were teased out of the options cited by respondents in the pilot study and further refined using literature review. From the findings it was noted the songs were the most popular learner activity-based strategy as indicated in figure 4.14 below:

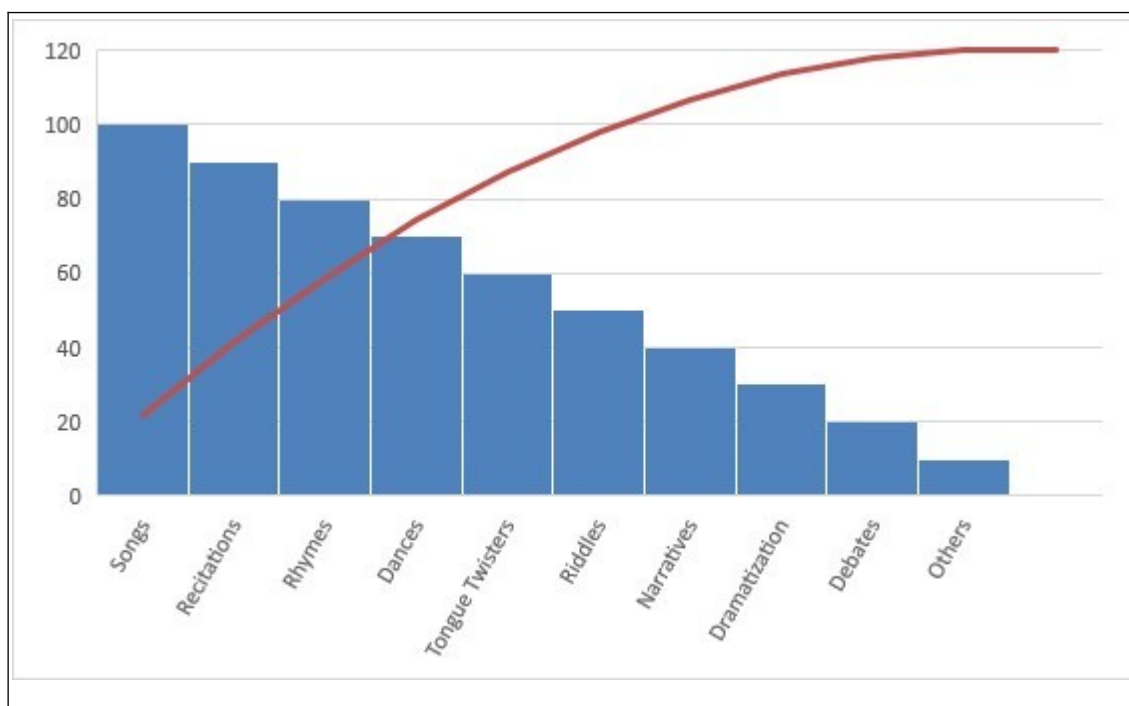


Figure 4. 14 Learner Activity-Based Strategies Used in the Classes

The study emphasized that since ECDE is the earliest form of education, it should help the child to appreciate their cultural identity. It should therefore be deliberate about introducing children to the varied and rich cultural diversity. The songs, recitations,

rhymes and dances are the earliest cultural expressions that child encounters in ECDE. The position of this study is that ECDE education should favour the development of interest among the children, in their own cultural heritage. The study noted that use of songs, recitations, rhymes, dances, tongue twisters, riddles, narratives, dramatization, debates and other forms of oral renditions reverberated the cultural derivative background of the study. The ECDE teachers' responses were triangulated during the observational sessions where the study found out that songs were a common feature in most of the schools. The study observed that most of the ECDEs were lively and enjoyable spaces for the children. The findings indicated that in spite of the numerous challenges sited in the delivery of CBE, teachers were still finding creative and interactive approaches for effective delivery.

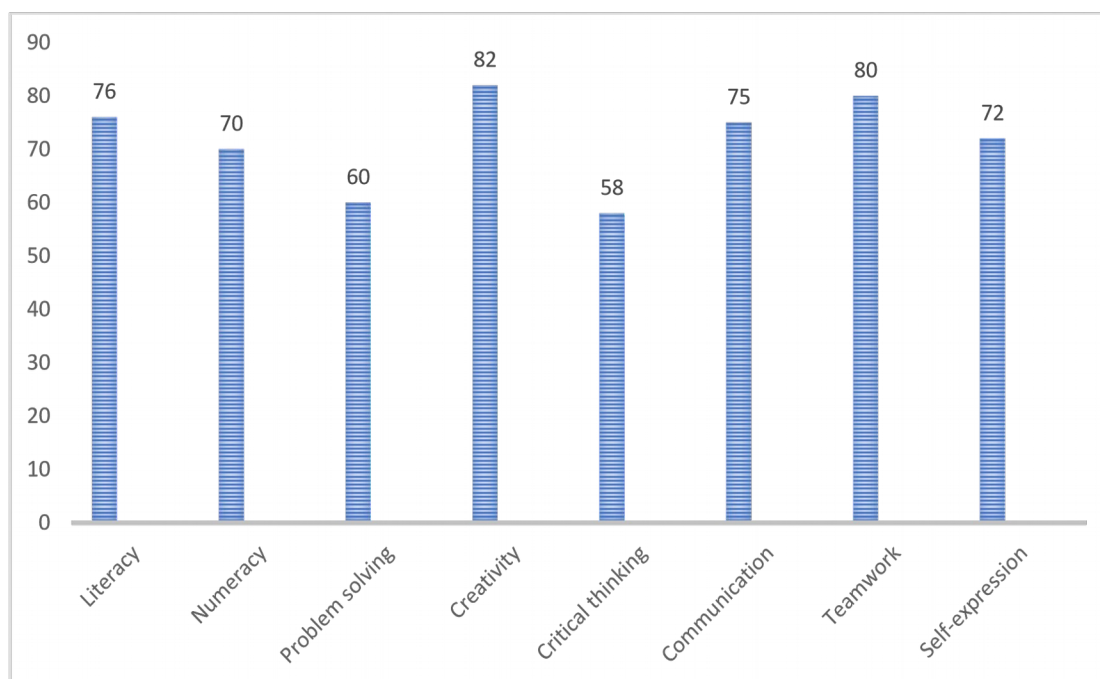
Previous studies also noted that playful learning experience are crucial for quality early childhood education. Foundational learning skills require the teachers to employ pedagogical skills that are child-centred and ones that arouse interest and curiosity from the learners. Learners should be provided with an opportunity to discover knowledge within their environments. This formative stage of the child requires humour and play to sustain the interest of the learners. The ECDE should be a child friendly environment that caters for the needs of all the children (APHRC, 2023).

This study emphasizes the critical role of leveraging immediate environments of the child for effective delivery of competency-based education. In particular, the findings emphasize the importance of the cultural aspects that promote learning and all-round development of the child. The predominant Luhya community situations songs and dance as critical cultural aspects of a child's socialization and development. The study positions

this as one of the key outcomes of this study given that the tendency is to always look at the resources that are inadequate and lacking for effective delivery of quality education.

The study sought the ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization through a Domain-by-Domain Analysis. This is a method of evaluating learner outcomes one developmental area or domain at a time. Each domain reflects a specific skill set that the CBE curriculum aims to nurture in learners. The idea is to assess the teachers' views how well children are doing in each of these areas separately, rather than giving a general overview. In this study, the following domains were analyzed as shown in table 4.10 below:

Table 4.10 A Domain-by-Domain Analysis of Teachers' Views on Classroom Socialization



The study collaborated the quantitative finding by making observations and interviewing the teachers for clarity. On literacy skills, teachers noted the challenge of low exposure to print materials at home affected the speed of literacy acquisition for children from underprivileged backgrounds. On numeracy skills, the ECDE teachers noted that though most of them could count up to 20 easily, but struggle with written numerals and abstract sums. Regarding problem solving skills only a moderate number of learners showed clear problem-solving capabilities. Most struggled with tasks that required multiple steps or reflection. The study noted in one observed activity that the children using blocks to create bridges, only 4 out of 10 groups managed the task independently. On a positive note, on creativity skills, the study noted that it emerged as the highest-performing domain. The study observed learners freely engaged in drawing, dramatization and creating shapes using clay or sand. However, critical thinking appeared to be the lowest performing domain. The teachers noted that most learners could answer "what" and "who" questions but struggled with "why" and "how." In one of the observed sessions, the study noted that when the teacher asked them to explain their drawings is often difficult or what would happen after that, it was difficult. Then on communication skills, the children expressed themselves using short phrases and songs. Kiswahili and local dialects dominated. Teachers used storytelling and pair-sharing to enhance communication. On team work, the study observed activities such as group songs, outdoor games, and cleaning tasks that encouraged cooperation. Observations showed that learners helped each other in group tasks like organizing toys or role-play activities. On self-expression the study noted that teachers used drama, role-play and drawing to

gauge self-expression. In one of the observed class, learners were asked to “draw what makes you happy.” Responses included parents, teachers, and food.

The observational study and teacher feedback affirmed that the CBE framework has the potential to foster holistic learner development in ECDE. Despite challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and limited learning resources, ECDE teachers are employing creative, culturally relevant and learner-centered approaches to build foundational competencies in literacy, numeracy and social-emotional learning. Classrooms observed were dynamic and supportive environments where children actively engaged with one another, their teachers, and their learning materials. While learners showed strong outcomes in creativity, teamwork and literacy, the areas of critical thinking and problem-solving remain areas needing attention. The ECDE teachers expressed serious concerns about resource constraints, large class sizes and the need for more structured training in Competency-Based Assessment. The findings strongly suggest that with adequate support, continued teacher training and contextual localization, the CBE has the potential to deliver transformative outcomes in early childhood education.

4.5 Strategies that can be used to Address Social Concerns among ECDE Teachers in Competency Based Education

To arrive at strategies that can be used to address challenges among ECDE teachers in Competency Based Education, the researcher considered the suggestions made by the respondents on the challenges they encounter, their attempts to surmount them and their estimations on how to improve pre-primary. The proposed strategies are weighed against the recommendations of other studies for functionality and suitability. The findings of

this study align with the post-positivism paradigm that focuses on establishing and searching for evidence that is valid and reliable in terms of the existence of phenomena rather than generalization. When the findings are valid and reliable, the study can base the policy recommendations on these findings.

The recommendations by the teacher respondents on how to address social concerns among ECDE teachers in Competency Based Education were summarized in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11 Policy Recommendations by Teacher Respondents on Addressing Social Concerns

Recommendation by the teacher respondents	Frequency of responses (N=191)	Percentage
Position pre-primary as foundational education and revise the scheme of service for ECDE teachers to enhance prestige	65	34.03 %
Policy reconfiguration of the ECDE pathway to remove governance inconsistencies across national and county governments.	42	21.99 %

Heritage Based Approach to ECDE education would be a fundamental approach in grounding ECDE in the immediate context needs.	25	13.09 %
Policy on parental involvement	19	9.95 %
Establishment of Boards of managements/ Policy on Enhancing Management of pre-primary institutions	15	7.85 %
Enhance inclusivity in ECDE	14	7.33 %
Others: Capacitate ECDE ecosystem through more resource allocation/ Strengthening ECDE, financing and resourcing for sustainability, Exploring Private Public Partnerships Models to empower ECDE,	11	5.76 %

These findings have further been synthesized into figure 4.15 below for a more graphic presentation and interpretation.

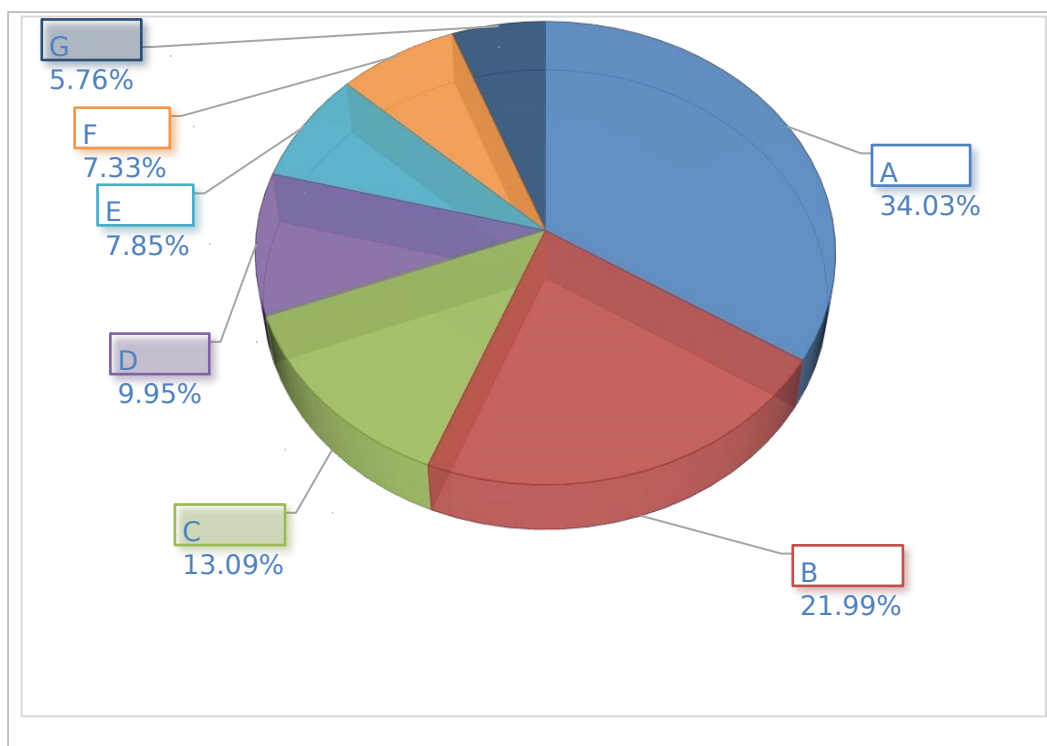


Figure 4.15 Policy Recommendations by Teacher Respondents on Addressing Social Concerns

A-Position pre-primary

B-Policy on governance

C- Heritage Based Approach

D- Policy on parental involvement

E-BOGs

F-Inclusivity in ECDE

G-Others

These responses and their implications are discussed below.

4.5.1 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 year's 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 year's 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).

4.5.2 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 inconsistency 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).

4.5.3 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, October 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 study posits that heritage-based education system is one that grounds teaching and learning in the cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge, values and lived experiences of the local community in order to enhance relevance and learner identity. While teachers are generally encouraged to utilize community resources such as local experts, cultural practices and the immediate environment, effective implementation is constrained by the lack of a clear policy framework. In particular, there is inadequate guidance on appropriate teaching methodologies, learning resources and assessment approaches aligned with heritage-based education, resulting in inconsistent classroom practices.

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.

4.5.4 Policy on Parental Involvement

The concept of parental empowerment and engagement is premised upon the providing linkages between the concepts learned in school and the real-life experiences at home. Learning becomes easier and pleasurable when the learners begin to make connections between what they learn in school and their daily lives. The class teacher is expected to tease out of the curriculum designs, the areas that are most visible for parental empowerment and engagement (KICD,2017).

First, the study sought to hear from the parents their views towards the policy of parental engagement. The qualitative finding captured varied opinions from the parents on what they perceive to be the expectations of CBE towards them. The following are some of the parental voices from the study:

Observation by parents indicate that they are willing to support the education of their children. Infact they acknowledge the need for deliberate and collective action by parents in ensuring that children are getting quality education. Further they acknowledge that CBE calls for behaviour change on the part of the parents because it requires a lot of their involvement in the academic matters of their children. They also acknowledge that most of the parents have the good will. However, they acknowledge a gap in information on CBE. This new system cascaded in a way that did not give them adequate time and information to engage meaningfully with the changes.

‘Parents’ meetings are about money and what the child needs, then the focus should be on change. We expect the teachers now to use these meeting to guide us properly on what is expected of us’

‘Let the teacher tell us what is needed of us, these are our children and we are willing and ready to do what is expected of us.’

‘Parents are busy making money to bring up the child, teachers are trained in their work. It is difficult for parents to do more than we are already doing’

‘If there is any confusion, it was not brought about by the parents, we are only recipients of the whole system. Parents just need to be told what to do and we will do it.’

(Sampled Parent’s Voices in Focus Group Discussions, October 2023)

These candid voices capture the gaps of information and views on the part of the parents. They speak to lack of adequate information on the implementation of competency-based education in a scenario where they are expected to be key participants.

In order to bring into better perspective, the discussion at hand, the study conducted a document analysis on the ECDE teacher communication with the parents for the sampled Pre-Primary School Curriculum Design for Environmental Activities Pre-Primary 1 as published by KICD in 2017 and revised in 2024 as indicated below:

Strand – My home

Sub-strand: Utensils used at home

Specific Learning Outcomes: By the end of the sub-strand, the learner should be able to

- a) Mention utensils used at home,*
- b) Identify utensils used at home,*
- c) Take safety measures when handling utensils at home,*
- d) Appreciate the use of utensils at home*

Parental role: Assist your child to identify utensils used at home and to how to handle each safely

The findings projected a simple requirement of scanning the home environment and picking out the utensils that are used there. The learners are expected to mention them by name, identify them and be guided on the safety precaution taken when using them. In so doing, it is hoped that the children will appreciate the use of these utensils.

The study noted that with good interpretation of the curriculum design on parental empowerment and engagement, the activities at home are easily achievable and mutually beneficial to the parent and teacher. The parental role in the cited example is relevant to the learning area, clear and well within the purview of the parent. Further scrutiny of the curriculum design noted that the curriculum activities require parental involvement but the scope is not spelled out in the curriculum designs. The design assigns the class teacher the role communicating to all the stakeholders. It is therefore the role of the teacher to allocate and scope parental engagement. The study recommends that the ECDE teachers are retooled on parental empowerment and engagement to ensure that their instructions to the parents are not overbearing and beyond scope. The parents should not appear to replace the teacher or be overloaded with learners' activities. The study notes that with clear and regular communication between the teacher and the parent, the goal of parental empowerment and engagement can be smoothly attained as set out in the curriculum designs for pre-primary.

However, a study on early childhood education conducted in Kajiado, Kiambu, and Nairobi counties of Kenya identified low participation of males in the early years'

education. The study cited cultural beliefs, gender stereotyping and lack of adequate information as some of the factors perpetuating the same. The study proposed the use of community dialogue, cultural platforms, use of arts, festivals and social media programmes strategically aiming at engaging the males towards caregiving and participation in the lives of their young children. The study noted that views have to be addressed in a friendly and cordial manner that uplifts all the parties involved without any form of confrontation (APHRC, 2023).

The County Director encourages constant communication between the ECDE teacher and the parents for the best interest of the child.

The County Director of Education called for the need for regular and candid communication between the ECDE teacher and the parents of the children which must be maintained at all times. The ECDE teachers ought to take advantage of available technology in form of the mobile phones to maintain regular communication with the parents. He emphasized that constant flow of communication and feedback among stakeholders was the heart of good relationships and the vice versa is also true. He drew a comparison with the primary schools and day secondary schools where teachers send a verbal message to parents through their children but this was not possible for the young children in ECDE. In order to bridge the gap for those who may not have the technology, teachers should also maintain the written communication with parents. The director also noted the incongruence of devolving some functions like construction of ECDEs yet training of the teachers remains under the national government.

A synthesis of these qualitative findings from parents leads the researcher into making a salient recommendation that entails a conglomeration of the two best practices in teacher-parent communication. The study recommends that ECDE teachers should leverage both written and digital communications in sustaining teacher-parent communication. Advocacy on the efficacy of parental involvement approaches is crucial for a buy-in by the parents. The study noted the need for capacity building to raise awareness and champion parental involvement. From the FGD with parents, it emerged that the significant population that is not aware of the concept of parental involvement needs to be educated to close this knowledge gap.

The importance of parental involvement in ECDE is collaborated by studies conducted in Finland, Ireland, New Zealand and Norway including education and care services, kindergartens, play centers and integrated age setting for 3–6-year-olds. Parental role is critical even in providing feedback during the monitoring and evaluation of service quality. Parental surveys are part of the broad range tools that are used for inspections including rating scales, checklists, observations and results of self-evaluations by staff (OCDE, 2015).

Similarly, an empirical study that drew a comparison between early year's education in Japan and U.S. The study noted that while as the Japan Hoikuen teachers rely on paper-based teacher-parent communication referred to as 'renrakucho' literally translated as 'communication notebook', the America, parents of most daycares use mobile apps to inform parents of important information and in case of irregular incidents. The Japanese notebook requires parents to note details about the child behaviour at home which is juxtaposed with the same information while in school. (Aoyama, et.al, 2008).

4.5.5 Capacitate ECDE Ecosystem through More Resource Allocation, Strengthening ECDE, Financing and Resourcing for Sustainability

A summary of recommendations by the teachers indicates that County Governments should provide sufficient equipment and infrastructure for ECDE programs. ECDE Teachers noted that they were not adept in digital skills required extensive re-skilling in order to leverage on the affordable ICT technologies that could be developed and deployed. The teachers noted that digital skills are fluid and dynamic and ECDEs need to accelerate into the future.

The County Director of Education noted that:

There are significant challenges in the implementation of competency-based education at the ECDE level arising from inadequate of collaboration between the two levels of government. Then, NACECE and DICECE centres at the KICD played a major role in supporting ECDE and should not have been disintegrated. More of administrative. Even the issue of capitation for ECDEs ought to be considered like happens in primary schools. Right now, the funding mechanisms for ECDEs are a bit vague. The problem of low-quality teacher management systems continues to affect the instructional quality of pre-primary education. Even a critical issue like the porridge feeding programme that is key in ECDE lacks clarity and consistency. A lot of policy issues at ECDE are so dependent on the County government in power that it is hard to tell the overall policy direction.

(County Director of Education, April 2024)

Pre-primary institutional management should be enhanced in order to spur the development of creative and robust strategies that focus on and continue to focus on changing institutional vision, mission, values, and their game plan with an emphasis on strategy, targets, initiatives, and strategic outcomes that address the needs of the child.

The study noted that ECDE space is still defragmented in terms of what exists on the ground. Early childhood development education (ECDE) is offered in institutions bearing various names, including ECDE centre, pre-primary, preschool, pre-units, nursery and day care. There is also a lack of effectively established and utilized ECDE boards of management at the institutional level. Since boards of management draw from the human resource capital of the local community, they have the capacity to bring together parents and the immediate community in developing the ECDEs.

Studies concur that ECDEs are poorly resourced. In a study conducted on an urban view of challenges facing implementation of the competency-based curriculum in Kenya (Iasboke, 2021), the ECDE teachers indicated that they experienced difficulties in implementing CBC due to lack of adequate learning facilities such as classrooms, chairs and tables. The teachers reported that most of the public pre-primary schools had high enrollment yet, there were inadequate classrooms to accommodate the high numbers. They further explained that the situation was getting worse each day to an extent that two learners share one chair while others lacked tables to write on. Similarly, the center managers also indicated that lack of adequate infrastructure in public preprimary schools was a big challenge to implementation of the curriculum. They demonstrated that implementation of CBE in pre- primary school was challenged by lack of learning facilities. They cited instances where the available classrooms were not adequate. In one of the examples cited, there were approximately 68 learners in each of the classrooms, PPI and PP2. The extent of these challenges sometimes forced the Heads of institutions to combine PP1 and PP2 learners.

4.5.6 Enhance Inclusivity in ECDE

The teachers decried low prevalence of persons with special needs in ECDEs indicating that parents of these children did not feel comfortable to bring the children to schools as currently constituted. Their specific concerns were:

Where are the special children?

Most of the parents hide them at home

We do not have enough special schools

Children with special needs are not adequately catered for

(ECDE Teachers' voices, October 2023)

"Special children" refer to those with physical, cognitive, emotional, or developmental disabilities, including conditions such as autism, Down syndrome, hearing or visual impairments or learning disabilities. These children often require specialized support and accommodations to thrive academically and socially. They are typically placed in special schools designed to provide tailored curricula, trained staff and specialized resources that cater to their unique learning needs. However, some children may also be integrated into mainstream education settings with appropriate support.

When implementing competency-based education (CBE) at the early childhood education (ECDE) level for special children, there are several concerns. One of the primary challenges is ensuring that the CBE model is sufficiently adaptable to meet the diverse needs of these children. CBE emphasizes individualized learning but it requires teachers to have specialized training to effectively support children with varying disabilities. The curriculum may need to be modified, and additional resources such as

assistive technologies, therapists, or trained aides may be required. As Kauffman & Hallahan (2011) state, "the challenge lies not in the content of the curriculum but in adapting the learning environment to ensure all students can engage and succeed." Furthermore, concerns about accessibility and inclusion arise. Without proper accommodations, special children may struggle to engage with the learning process, leading to potential feelings of exclusion or frustration.

One of ECDE teachers shared a personal experience on children with special needs: *There was a child who was hyper active in my class, uncooperative and did not want to interact with the other children being a bit hostile. Initially, I mistook this for indiscipline. I tried several approaches to deal with the child to no avail. In one of our meetings, I shared this experience with my colleagues. It was then that I learned from a colleague who had encountered a similar case that this could be a manifestation of special needs. It later turned out that the child was autistic. ECDE teachers are the first to encounter all the children that enter school. It is important for us to be supported on how to identify special needs children otherwise they will be mishandled.*

The findings from the teachers are supported by the County Director of Education in noting that as currently constituted, the ECDEs do not inspire the confidence of parents who have special needs children to bring them to school. A case in point is situations where corresponding primary schools have special units yet the ECDE does not have these children since the primary schools are well supported to mount special needs education.

Observations carried out by the researcher noted that all the institutions needed to create a barrier free environment to aid accessibility, findability, and approachability. It was also noted that there need to involve persons with special needs as significant

stakeholders in addressing issues of mainstreaming inclusivity in ECDEs as the mantra goes ‘nothing for us without us’. Therefore, the study calls for capacitating the entire ECDE ecosystem support, technical and pedagogic skills requisite for mainstreaming inclusivity. Inclusivity is premised upon the principle that every child is unique and difference and should therefore be accorded an opportunity to bloom at their own pace while keeping in mind the need for quality in nurturing mental and physical development.

According to UNICEF (2022), Early childhood inclusion is a practice that involves providing children with special needs the opportunity to participate in regular classroom activities alongside their typically developing peers. This approach, which is rooted in the principles of equality and diversity, has numerous benefits for both children with disabilities and their neurotypical classmates. Early childhood inclusion is crucial in promoting all children's overall development and well-being by fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance

Studies conducted in Canada seem to set the benchmark in inclusive classrooms in early childhood education. The Canadian education system recognizes early childhood education as holding immense significance due to the critical role in shaping the child's development and hence a valuable investment. Inclusive classrooms are becoming more prevalent there, requiring teachers with expertise in teaching all children. The purpose of inclusive education in this context is to foster collaborative relationships to facilitate the learning of children from diverse backgrounds. (Seward, Dhuey & Pan, 2023).

4.5.7 Exploring Private Public Partnerships Models to Empower ECDE

Through the voice of the ECDE teachers strengthened by document analysis, the study also recommended that corporates could be encouraged through appropriate legislation to set up ECDE centres.

Workers struggle a lot with their children during the working hours.

Mothers with PP1 and PP2 learners want their children close to them when there are working. It would be a good idea to have more and more ECDE centres.

The workers would be more motivated when they see the companies setting up ECDEs for them close to their working places.

PP1 and PP2 children are heavily dependent on their parents. It would be a good idea to have companies sponsoring ECDE centres.

Some of our ECDE are close to some of these companies and if they partnered well with us, the facilities in our institutions would improve and take better care of their workers' children as well as those of the local community

(ECDE Teachers' responses, October 2023)

The qualitative findings of the study indicate that most of the corporates are well resourced and could enhance provision of sufficient equipment and infrastructure for ECDE programs. This proposal creates a win-win situation in that the corporates will house the children of some of their staff while the ECDEs are better resourced. These findings are affirmed by the County Director of Education:

Our ECDEs should strive to bring partners on board in order to secure funds for retooling trainer of trainers and ECDE teachers on CBE. The partners could also offer other support programmes through comprehensive training, availing and equipping

ECDE centres with learning materials. For example, through partnership with EIDU, 24 ECDE coordinators and more than 100 ECDE teachers underwent training in February and April 2024 on integrating technology in education.

The emphasis is on boarding more partners to help improve pre-primary education.

(County Director of Education, April, 2024)

Coordination, Linkages and Partnerships: Early Childhood Development services are provided by many players without clear multi-sectoral coordination structures. The proposal in the Service

Standard Guidelines National Pre-primary Education Policy 10 National Pre-primary Education

Policy 11 National Pre-primary Education Policy of establishing a National Committee for Early Childhood Development housed at the Department of Children's Services to oversee coordination and implementation of the National Policy Framework was ineffective due to lack of ownership and inadequate technical capacity. As a result, there has been duplication of efforts, lack of synergy and inefficient use of resources leading to low quality services.

UNICEF acknowledges that ensuring that children have access to quality ECDE services is critical to building a strong foundation of nutrition, health, cognitive and socio-emotional development. Such a foundation improves the ability of the child to enter school ready to learn, retention in school for a longer time and improving academic achievement. Yet this can only be achieved with considerable investment of resources

that many communities may not be in a position to raise. The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) plug in to catalyze resource mobilization (Xie, et al., 2022)

Further studies called for the involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as

Save the Children support schools are instrumental in offering support for early year's education. These studies acknowledged that to enhance access, retention and quality of ECDE, it was important for them to be supported to build sustainability, gender equity and build the momentum to meet independently without external support by the NGOs. The studies called for parental involvement to a level that includes decision making as one of the equally important components like governance and advocacy through the school councils, committees, and other structures for parents' participation that provided impetus to reach out to the wide community for support since parents had the necessary networks (Stanikzai, 2013).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study and goes forward to present propositions for further research. The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya. These were the social concerns among ECDE teachers in the Competency Based Education, social concerns on administrative support, parental involvement and learner classroom socialization.

5.1 Summary

The study on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education in Bungoma County, Kenya, was structured around four main objectives. These objectives focused on understanding the social concerns related to various aspects of CBE. To achieve this, the data collection methodology was carefully tailored to address each objective. For the first objective, which aimed at determining ECDE teachers' social concerns regarding administrative support in CBE, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from key respondents: the teachers, parents, 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. The second objective, which focused on determining ECDE teachers' concerns regarding parental involvement in CBE, involved using questionnaires for teachers and focus group discussions for parents. This approach allowed the researcher to gather in-depth insights from both teachers and parents, providing an in-depth understanding of how parental engagement impacts the delivery of CBE. To address the third objective on examining ECDE teachers' views on the on learner classroom socialization in Competency Based Education, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from the same group of respondents. This dual approach ensured that the study captured a broad range of perspectives on the strengths and challenges of CBE delivery from those directly involved in its implementation. The fourth objective aimed to identify strategies that ECDE teachers could use to enhance CBE. Data from all respondents was gathered through both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing for a diverse range of suggestions and solutions. Triangulation of data was used across all objectives to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. This was done by incorporating the insights of the education manager, document reviews, and direct observations. This methodological approach ensured a comprehensive exploration of the social concerns associated with CBE in Bungoma County. The major findings per objective are presented below.

5.1.1The ECDE teachers' Social Concerns on the Administrative Support in Competency Based Education

The study conducted in Bungoma County revealed significant social concerns among ECDE teachers regarding inadequate administrative support in the implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE). Although 87% of teachers reported that classrooms were available, 83% indicated a lack of essential teaching resources,

including instructional materials, play equipment, and child-friendly sanitation. The learning environment was deemed inadequate, with many classrooms in poor physical condition and lacking basic amenities like toilets and clean water.

High pupil-teacher ratios, averaging 1:43, far above the recommended 1:25, further strained delivery, with some classrooms reaching a 1:50 ratio. Moreover, 86% of teachers reported insufficient training and knowledge on CBE, while 64% had only received brief induction training.

Digital integration was nearly absent; most ECDEs lacked digital tools, relying solely on teachers' mobile phones, widening the digital divide. Additionally, although 88.5% acknowledged the availability of CBE curriculum guides, core textbooks and teaching aids were insufficient or lacking. Structural governance issues also hindered delivery, with fragmented management between national and county governments and no formal Boards of Management in ECDEs. Overall, 75% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with administrative support, citing systemic neglect and underfunding. These challenges collectively threaten the successful delivery of CBE and the development of foundational competencies in ECDE learners.

Reviewed literature concurred with the findings of this study. Studies revealed insufficient teacher induction, supervision and professional development, leading to confusion and poor implementation. Despite CBE's learner-centered goals and emphasis on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, many ECDE teachers were unprepared due to rushed training and inadequate support. Globally, countries like Finland and Singapore show strong administrative backing and teacher autonomy, contrasting

Kenya's limited teacher involvement. Additionally, technological gaps persist, with many of ECDE teachers lacking ICT training. The disbandment of national ECDE institutions like NACECE without transitional plans further weakened the sector. Teachers reported being sidelined in curriculum development and overwhelmed by large class sizes and minimal teaching aids.

The study identified systemic gaps in administrative coordination between national and county governments and stressed the need for better training, infrastructure and stakeholder integration. Ultimately, successful CBE implementation hinges on empowering ECDE teachers through comprehensive support and clear, consistent administrative strategies.

5.1.2 ECDE teachers' Social Concerns on Parental Involvement in the Competency Based Education

The study on ECDE teachers' social concerns regarding parental involvement in Competency Based Education (CBE) highlights several key issues. While 79.58% of teachers acknowledged some level of parental involvement, 74.34% felt that parents were not sufficiently supportive of CBE. Financial strain was cited as a major barrier, with 75.8% of teachers reporting that parents failed to provide necessary teaching-learning resources. Despite willingness to support, 72.77% of teachers felt parents lacked the resources and 83.25% believed parents lacked information about CBE. Additionally, 75.39% indicated that parents were unwilling to engage in CBE activities, pointing to an urgent need for empowerment and sensitization.

Parental attendance at meetings was low, with only 47 out of 86 parents attending one session, just 23% were male, reinforcing gender imbalances in ECDE engagement. Parents expressed feeling overwhelmed by CBE demands, citing inadequate training and unclear expectations. Qualitative findings showed that issues such as poverty, privacy concerns, for example a requirement for photograph assignments, and systemic gender roles limited engagement.

The findings suggest that the gap lies not in parental disinterest but in socioeconomic and informational barriers. Addressing these through structured sensitization, resource support and inclusive policy design is essential to enhancing parental involvement and ensuring successful CBE implementation.

The review of related literature also underscored the importance of parental involvement. Competency-Based Education (CBE) in Kenya emphasizes parental empowerment and engagement as key components, recognizing parents as active stakeholders in their children's learning journey. According to the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), parents are expected to nurture learners' potential by acquiring relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes, while also creating conducive learning environments both at home and in collaboration with schools. Legal frameworks such as the Early Childhood Education Act mandate parental involvement, reinforcing their responsibility in educational participation.

Despite these expectations, studies reveal that many parents lack adequate awareness, training and resources to effectively support CBE. Challenges include unclear communication, unrealistic expectations, increased home-based responsibilities and

assumptions of literacy. ECDE teachers also highlight poor parental involvement and negative attitudes as significant barriers.

Furthermore, COVID-19 exacerbated these issues by straining parents' economic capacity and limiting engagement.

Comparative studies show that in countries like Norway and South Africa, parental involvement is institutionalized, unlike in Kenya where gaps remain in policy, practice and awareness. This study addressed these issues by engaging parents through focus group discussions to better understand their perspectives. It recommends improved sensitization, the creation of parental guidebooks and the incorporation of parent voices into CBE implementation to bridge existing gaps.

5.1.3 The ECDE Teachers' Views on Learner Classroom Socialization in the Competency Based Education

The study examined ECDE teachers' views on learner classroom socialization within Kenya's Competency-Based Education (CBE) framework. Results indicate that over 70% of the teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of CBE principles, including its goals, structure, core competencies and professional expectations. Similarly, more than 70% reported applying learner centered methodologies and adapting professional documents to meet CBE requirements. However, only 34% felt adequately equipped to assess learners using the new Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) rubrics, highlighting evaluation as a major challenge.

Teachers raised concerns about large class sizes, limited assessment training and lack of digital tools. Observations confirmed that ECDE teachers used culturally relevant, child-

friendly strategies despite resource constraints. Notably, digital literacy and special needs inclusion remained underdeveloped. Overall, the findings highlighted that while ECDE teachers are creative and resilient, effective CBE implementation requires more training, assessment support and localized strategies to address the diverse needs of learners.

Qualitative insights reinforced these findings, with teachers expressing confusion around CBA, citing lack of pre-implementation training. Limited time for lesson planning and individual learner assessment was also flagged, exacerbated by large class sizes. Teachers voiced the need for training at the college level and during in-service programmes, aligning with successful models in countries like Rwanda (Ndayambaje, 2018).

Observation revealed that teachers innovatively infused core competencies, particularly collaboration, critical thinking, and communication, through interactive, culturally grounded activities such as songs, storytelling and group play. Nonetheless, digital literacy and inclusion of children with special needs remain underdeveloped areas. Teachers also highlighted the lack of resources and infrastructure as additional impediments to effective implementation.

The study concluded that while ECDE teachers are conceptually prepared and creatively engaged with CBE, significant gaps exist in assessment skills, time allocation and inclusion strategies. These findings stress the importance of targeted teacher training, culturally contextualized pedagogy and improved classroom conditions for successful CBE implementation in early childhood education.

Literature reviewed concurred with the study findings. Learner socialization in Competency-Based Education (CBE) involves equipping learners with age-appropriate skills, values and behaviours for classroom and societal participation. CBE emphasizes holistic development through competencies like communication, creativity and problem-solving. Central to this process is the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teacher, who facilitates learning tailored to learners' developmental stages across affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains.

In Kenya, the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) led to reforms in teacher training, replacing ECDE courses with the Diploma in Early Childhood Teacher Education (DECTE), guided by a Competency-Based Assessment Framework. Teachers are trained to apply experiential and reflective methodologies, ensure real-life task integration and focus on learners' progress. Despite reforms, many teachers lack full understanding of CBE principles, posing a barrier to effective implementation.

Globally and regionally, studies highlight challenges such as limited awareness, lack of teacher training and poor access to resources. Teachers have struggled transitioning from traditional content-based methods to CBE. ECDE teachers, often undervalued, face motivation and resource constraints. The study identifies a key gap in involving ECDE teachers in CBE decision-making and calls for their empowerment, better training and inclusion to enhance learner outcomes and meet 21st-century educational demands.

5.1.4 Strategies that ECDE Teachers Can Use to Enhance the Competency Based Education

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. Around 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 study highlights several strategies to strengthen ECDE in Kenya. First, parental involvement is crucial, yet 83.25% of parents cited limited understanding of Competency-Based Education (CBE) due to poor communication. While most parents showed goodwill and willingness to support their children, they requested clearer

guidance from teachers. The study recommends ECDE teachers use both digital and written communication, aligning with global practices seen in Japan and the U.S.

Secondly, resource allocation remains inadequate. Over 70% of ECDE teachers reported lack of facilities, with some classrooms accommodating up to 68 children. Teachers also cited the need for digital skills training and consistent funding mechanisms.

Third, only 7.33% of ECDE institutions cater for children with special needs. Many parents hide such children due to stigma or lack of facilities. Teachers emphasized training in special needs identification, and the study calls for inclusive infrastructure and policy reforms.

Fourthly, public-private partnerships (PPPs) were proposed. Teachers and officials suggested corporates sponsor ECDE centers, enhancing proximity for working parents and improving resources. Notably, partnerships like EIDU's 2024 training of more than one hundred ECDE teachers demonstrate potential. Finally, the study stresses the need for multi-sectoral coordination, clear governance and sustainable investment in ECDE systems.

The findings are in tandem with the reviewed literature. Competency-Based Education (CBE) system in Kenya aims to nurture each child's potential, fostering engaged, ethical and empowered citizens. It emphasizes learner-centered, practical application of knowledge, skills and values for real-life situations. However, successful CBE implementation depends heavily on well-prepared teachers and inclusive stakeholder participation, which has been lacking. Studies show that the rollout of CBE in Kenya was

rushed, with limited consultation of key groups like teachers' unions, parents and other key stakeholders.

Global examples such as Finland and Scotland showcase effective CBE implementation by allowing flexibility at school level and promoting localized teaching strategies. Regionally, countries like Tanzania stress the need for adequate funding, resources and teacher training. In Kenya, challenges include inadequate infrastructure, insufficient instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms and limited teacher preparedness. Moreover, disparities in home learning environments disadvantage children from low-income families.

Parental involvement is crucial but often limited by a mismatch between current curriculum content and parents' educational backgrounds. Inclusive education remains underdeveloped, particularly for learners with special needs. To address these gaps, the study advocates for better teacher training, stakeholder engagement, community awareness and improved infrastructure. A collaborative, context-specific and well-resourced approach is essential for CBE's success in early childhood education.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concluded that ECDE teachers in Bungoma County, Kenya, expressed valid social concerns about the effective delivery of Competency-Based Education (CBE), highlighting several critical challenges that hinder optimal educational outcomes. The research revealed significant policy gaps, particularly in the administrative support provided to teachers, which undermines their ability to implement CBE effectively.

Additionally, there were notable deficiencies in parental empowerment and engagement, as many parents lacked awareness of their role in supporting their children's learning within the CBE framework, limiting the potential for a collaborative approach to education. Furthermore, the study identified a gap in the preparedness of ECDE teachers themselves, as many were not adequately trained or resourced to deliver the curriculum in a way that aligns with CBE principles. These challenges suggest a need for comprehensive policy reform and targeted interventions to strengthen the ECDE sector, enhance teacher preparedness, increase parental involvement and provide better administrative support. Addressing these gaps would not only improve the quality of education in the region but also ensure that the full potential of CBE is realized in early childhood education.

5.3 Recommendations

In the light of the findings, results and discussions of the study, the following recommendations were formulated.

5.3.1 Policy Recommendations

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 four 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. Defining and establishing the scope of parental involvement in early years education

The study emphasizes the crucial role that parents play in early year's education, particularly at the pre-primary level, where children are still too young to make independent decisions about their learning. At this stage, children rely heavily on parental guidance and involvement to support their educational development. However, the study notes a significant gap in the current system, as there is no standardized or documented framework outlining the specific expectations for parental involvement in the context of Competency-Based Education (CBE). This lack of clarity leaves parents unsure of their precise role and limits the potential for meaningful collaboration between them and teachers. To bridge this gap, the study suggests that the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) develops a comprehensive manual detailing the scope of parental involvement in CBE. This manual would not only outline clear expectations for parents but also provide practical guidance on how they can actively engage in their children's learning. It would be a valuable resource for both ECDE teachers and parents, providing them with a shared understanding of the role of the family in supporting educational outcomes. By creating a more structured approach to parental involvement, this initiative would foster stronger partnerships between parents and teachers, leading to more responsive and effective educational practices that enhance the learning experience for the young children.

3. Positioning of pre-primary as foundational education and revision of the scheme of service for ECDE teachers to enhance its prestige.

Historically, pre-primary education in Kenya has often been overlooked, leading to inadequate attention and insufficient investment in this critical sector. For a long time, pre-primary education was perceived as informal and was predominantly taught by untrained teachers, which contributed to its marginalization and underperformance. This perception resulted in what can be described as benign neglect, where pre-primary education was neither prioritized nor given the necessary resources to thrive. However, the study highlights the urgent need to reposition pre-primary education as a foundational level of learning that is crucial for the overall educational system. By recognizing the importance of early childhood education and making proportionate investments, CBE can unlock the potential of this sector. The study emphasizes that countries that have successfully integrated pre-primary education as a key component of their education systems have also seen improvements in their overall educational outcomes. As such, adopting policies that prioritize the growth and development of pre-primary education is essential for national development. One of the most significant recommendations of the study is the revision of the scheme of service for Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teachers. By enhancing the prestige and professional status of ECDE teachers, the country can attract qualified educators, improve the quality of teaching and provide children with a stronger educational foundation. Positioning pre-primary education as a critical and respected part of the education system will not only improve outcomes for young learners but also contribute to the country's long-term social and economic growth.

4. 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.

5.3.2 Recommendations for further research

In view of the conclusions of this study, the following are the projected recommendations for further study:

- (i) Enhancing access, equity and inclusion in pre-primary education.
- (ii) Differential attainment between public and private pre-primary schools.
- (iii) Parental involvement in the teaching and learning of pre-primary education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A-Questionnaire for ECDE Teachers

Introduction

Welcome to this survey and I am grateful for you accepting to take part. This survey is aimed at looking at your social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education and how you think it can be improved. Your views will be treated with confidentiality and will mainly be used to improve the

delivering of Competency Based Education, therefore, feel free to express yourself freely.

Part A: Background Information

1. Please indicate your gender

Male ()

Female ()

2. For how long have you been in the teaching profession? Mark where applicable.

a) 1-5 years () b) 6-10 years () c) 11-15 years () d) over 16 years()

3. How long you have been in this school? Mark where applicable.

a) 1-5 years () b) 6-10 years () c) 11-15 years () d) over 16 years()

4. What is your level of level of training?

Certificate Level ()

Diploma Level ()

Bachelors Level ()

Masters Level ()

Any other, please explain.....

Part B Knowledge on Competency Based Education (CBE)

1. I have information on the competency-based education. Please tick as is applicable.

No	Information on Competency Based Education	Am certain	Almost certain	Not Certain
1	I understand why the reforms in education were done to introduce Competency Based Education			
2	I understand the three levels of Basic Education			
3	I can explain the values that CBE seeks to instill in the pupils'			
4	I can list the seven core competencies for Basic Education			
5	I understand what the new policy expects of a teacher			

Knowledge on Teaching Methodology in Competency Based Education

2. I have made specific provisions in my teaching methodology to adapt to CBE.

Tick as applicable.

No	Provisions in teaching methodology made by the teacher for the learners	Yes	No	What has been done
1	I am applying appropriate methodology as per the CBE requirements			

2	I am able to select learning activities which promote infusion of the core competencies of Basic Education			
3	I have adapted my schemes of work and lesson plans to CBE			
4	I have appropriately adapted professional documents to the new requirements			
5	I engage the learners in a way that helps them to bring out their abilities and boost their self esteem			
6	I have made provisions in the classroom and in my teaching aids in line with CBE			
7	I have prepared observation checklists for assessment			
8	I am able to integrate Digital literacy in the teaching and learning process as required by CBE			
9	I am able to equip the learner with elementary understanding and abilities to appreciate their surroundings while at the same time giving room for enjoyment.			
10	I am able to teach in the first language of the learner and engage them in indigenous language activities			
11	I am able to evaluate learners using the CBE assessment rubrics			

Knowledge on Competency Based Education Teaching Facilities

3. Are there any challenges that you encounter in your institutions in delivering competency-based education?

Yes ()

No ()

If yes, clarify on the specific challenges

.....

4. a) Are there documents available in your school to guide you on the teaching and learning of

CBE in Pre-primary level?

Yes ()

No ()

b) If yes which ones?

.....

c) If yes, what information do they provide?

.....

5. Do you think there are adequate teaching resources to implement CBE at the ECDE level in your school?

Yes ()

No ()

b) If yes, please explain

.....

6. Are there adequate classrooms in your school to accommodate the number of pupils in your grades?

Yes ()

No ()

If yes, please give the teacher/pupil ratio in the concerned grades?

PP1.....PP2.....

If no, what strategies have been put in place to accommodate the teacher/pupil ratio?

.....

7.a) What is the pupil/textbook ratio in the concerned grades?

PP1.....

PP2.....

b) Please indicate the extent to which the following resource materials are available in your grade. Please tick as is applicable.

Course material	Available and adequate	Available but not adequate	Not available
Language activities			
Mathematical activities			
Environmental activities			

Psychomotor and creative activities			
Religious education activities			

c) Are digital devices available?

Yes () No ()

If yes, are they in use?

Yes () No ()

Knowledge on Teacher Preparation in Competency Based Education

8. Have you received any in-service training in the Competency Based Education?

Yes ()

No ()

If yes, please tick how long was the training?

One week () Two weeks () Three weeks () More than three weeks ()

How often is the training?

Just once () Twice () Monthly () Termly () Yearly ()

9. Have you received any in-service training on CBE assessment aspects at the ECDE level?

Yes ()

No ()

If yes, please explain

.....

Views of ECDE Teachers on Learner Classroom Socialization in Competency Based Education

10. Please indicate on availability of time in each of the following aspects in relation to delivery of CBE have been achieved in your lessons. Tick as applicable

Ability to write lesson plans with all CBE aspects	Time adequate	Time not adequate	Not certain
Availability of time to make lessons plans for all lessons			
Making sure lesson planning does not eat into teaching time			
Availability of time to assess individual learners in class			

11. Indicate from the list below, the various learner activity-based strategies you use in class: Debates, dramatization, recitations, songs, riddles, narratives, dances, tongue twisters, rhymes, others

12. To what extent have been able to infuse the following core competencies appropriately during teaching. Please tick as is applicable.

Competency	Very well	Good	Developing	Needs support
Communication and Collaboration				
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving				
Creativity and Imagination				
Citizenship				
Digital Literacy				
Self-efficacy				
Learning to Learn.				

13. Analysis of Teachers' Views on Learner Classroom Socialization

i. How do learners demonstrate collaboration and communication skills during CBE activities (e.g., learning play based activities, group discussions)?

Very often () Sometimes () Rarely () Never () ii. How effective are CBE learning areas (e.g., Environmental Activities, Creative

Activities, and Psychomotor Skills) in promoting peer-to-peer socialization?

Very effective () Somewhat effective () Ineffective () Not sure () iii. What challenges do you face in nurturing positive social skills among learners under CBE implementation?

14. Are parents involved in the education of their children?

Yes ()

No ()

15. To what extent do you agree with the statement that PP1 and PP2 parents are supportive of the implementation of competency-based education implementation?

Using a scale of 1-4 where:

1(***strongly disagree-SD***), 2 (***disagree-D***), 3 (***agree-A***) 4 (***strongly agree-SA***)

What explanations would you give for the above answer?

Views of teachers on Parents' Affordability to Purchase Requirements Needed for their PP1 and PP2 children

16. How would you rate the level of parental engagement in terms of Excellent,
Satisfactory,

Unsatisfactory or Poor in the areas indicated below:

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor
Providing financial support				
Providing teaching -learning resources				
Supporting academics like assignments				
Presence in attending meetings				
General guidance to children				
Participation in management of the institution				
Providing feedback to teachers				
Others like supporting teaching, donations etc				

17. So far, have you encountered any social concerns in the process of
implementing CBE in the ECDE level? (If yes, please explain)

.....

18. From your personal experience as a professional teacher, how do you think
CBE can be improved?

.....

Appendix B-Interview Schedule for the CDE

Welcome to this conversation and I am grateful for accepting to take part. This discussion is aimed at looking at social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education and how you think it can be improved. Your views will be treated with confidentiality and will mainly be used to improve Competency Based Education. This discussion is going to be recorded so that your opinions and ideas can be captured more easily. Therefore, feel free to express yourself freely.

1. Let me begin by asking how long you have been in this County?
2. What is your personal understanding of CBE? (Mission, vision, principles and so on)
3. In view of the laid down implementation at the County level with regard to teaching and learning of CBE, what are the social concerns of ECDE teachers' encounters in this County on administration with regard to:
 - a) Teacher training in CBE?
 - b) Teaching learning facilities to accommodate teacher/pupil ratio
4. What is the situation regarding the funding and provision of resources for CBE for ECDE level in the County? (Source of funding, sustainability...)
5. Has there been any in-service training for the ECDE teachers on CBE in this County? (Please give details)

6. So far, are there any challenges encountered in your County in the process of implementation of CBE at the Pre-primary level? (Please explain)
7. From your personal experience, how do you think CBE can be improved at the ECDE level?
8. Once again from your experience as the County Director, what else would you wish to say about CBE? (Open response)

I am very grateful for your time and your input.

Appendix C-Focus Group Discussion for Parents

Researcher :

Time:

Coded Serial Number of the School:

Introduction:

Welcome to this conversation and I am grateful for you accepting to take part. This discussion is aimed at looking at social concerns on Competency Based Education learners' outcomes in early childhood education and how you think it can be made better. Your views will not be shared with any other person but will be used to improve teaching and learning of CBE. This discussion is going to be recorded so that your opinions and ideas can be captured more easily. However, no names will be recorded and as soon as the information is written down, the tape will be destroyed to protect your identity. Therefore, feel free to express yourself freely and remember to respect the opinions of your colleagues.

1. Self-introduction to the other members of the group.
2. The routine is explained to the participants.

3. Members will be assisted to come up with ground rules to be applied in the conversation like
 - ❖ Allowing the moderator to guide the discussion
 - ❖ Ensuring participation of all
 - ❖ Confidentiality by members after the discussion
 - ❖ Discipline in the discussion
 - ❖ Freedom of expression etc.
4. Members asking any preliminary questions for their understanding of the routine
5. Putting the recorder and starting the discussion taking care to move at the pace of the parents and probing where the need may arise.

Questions:

1. We start the discussion by asking each one of you to tell us what you understand by CBE.
2. How did you feel when you learnt that the education system of your child was going to be different?
3. What were your expectations at that time? How are you feeling now?
4. Do you understand your role as a parent in the CBE and so far and what are your views especially with your child's homework?

5. Do you feel that there are any challenges in CBE?
6. How do you think the government can do to improve this CBE education?
7. Is there anything else you wish to say about CBE or your child's education in general?

The moderator I then conclude and thank the participants for sharing their ideas and once again assure them of confidentiality.

Appendix D-Observation Checklist

Coded Serial Number of the ECDE Centre _____ Date _____

No.	Visible signs of CBE teaching and learning in the institution	Description of the indicators E.g number, condition...	Observation/ Remarks/ Conclusion
1	Institution has a functional team like a steering Committee for the teaching and learning of CBE		
2	Signage within the institution on CBE like values, Pillars of the Basic Education Curriculum Framework etc.		
3	School documents- Circulars, Policy Documents like the Basic Education Curriculum Framework, Books,		
4	Teachers' professional Documents like curriculum designs, progress reports, schemes and so on and their compliance with the CBE		
5	Conditions of the classes as is ideal for CBE teaching and learning- space and furnishings, personal care routines, language and literacy, learning		

	Activities, interaction, free play and group activities.		
6	Messages on notice boards and elsewhere in the compound		
7	Observable social relations		
8	Evidence of the opportunities given to the learners as per the principles of CBE E.g. Talent development		
9	Appropriate infrastructure for implementation of CBE— classes, nature study, realia , outdoor activities		
10	Any other observable traits of CBE		

Appendix E: Research Permit from NACOSTI

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
<p>RefNo: 224244</p>	<p>Date of Issue: 11/August/2023</p>
<p align="center">RESEARCH LICENSE</p>	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Ms. YVONNE NANYAMA CHENANE of Moi University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Bungoma on the topic: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL CONCERNS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION IN BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA. for the period ending : 11/August/2024.</p>	
<p align="center">License No: NACOSTI/P/23/28387</p>	
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THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013 (Rev. 2014)

Legal Notice No. 108: The Science, Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing)

Regulations, 2014

The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, hereafter referred to as the Commission, was established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014) herein after referred to as the Act. The objective of the Commission shall be to regulate and assure quality in the science, technology and innovation sector and advise the Government in matters related thereto.

CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedures, standards, code of ethics and guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of international treaties of which Kenya is a signatory to
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country and shall not in any way;
 - i. Endanger national security
 - ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
 - iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

- iv. Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN). Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
 - v. Adversely affect the environment vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
 - vi. Endanger public safety and national cohesion viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
 4. The license any rights thereunder are non-transferable
 5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if in the opinion of the Commission the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
 6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research.
 7. Excavation, filming, movement, and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
 8. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
 9. The Commission may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project for the purpose of assessing and evaluating compliance with the conditions of the License.
 10. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy, and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) onto a platform designated by the Commission within one year of completion of the research.

11. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice.
12. Research, findings and information regarding research systems shall be stored or disseminated, utilized or applied in such a manner as may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.
13. The Licensee shall disclose to the Commission, the relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee, and the relevant national agencies any inventions and discoveries that are of National strategic importance.
14. The Commission shall have powers to acquire from any person the right in, or to, any scientific innovation, invention or patent of strategic importance to the country.
15. Relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee shall monitor and evaluate the research periodically, and make a report of its findings to the Commission for necessary action.

National Commission for Science, Technology and

Innovation (NACOSTI),

Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,

P. O. Box 30623 - 00100 Nairobi, KENYA

Telephone: 020 4007000, 0713788787, 0735404245

E-mail: dg@nacosti.go.ke

Website: www.nacosti.go.ke

Appendix F: Advertisement for Recruitment of ECDE Teachers



COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF BUNGOMA

COUNTY PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Moi Avenue next to Governor's Office; P.O. Box 2489 – 50200 Bungoma

email: cpsb.bungoma50200@gmail.com



VACANCIES

The County Public Service Board of Bungoma wishes to recruit competent and qualified persons to fill the following vacant positions in the Department of Education & Vocational training as indicated below;

1. V.NO 27/2023 ECDE TEACHERS (DIPLOMA), JOB GROUP “H” (90 POSTS)

Duties and Responsibilities

- Organizing and facilitating play/learning activities to enable children cope with primary school life;
- Caring and nurturing spiritual, moral, social, mental and physical growth of children;
- Managing ECDE centres, keeping professional records (schemes of work and lesson plans) daily programme of activities, ensuring children's safety and security; and
- Preparing and developing play/learning materials.

Requirements for appointment

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have:

- Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Minimum Grade C (Plain) or its approved equivalent;
- Diploma in early childhood development education (ECDE) offered by KNEC or its approved equivalent; and
- Registered by Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

Terms of service: **Permanent & Pensionable**

2. V.NO 28/2023 ECDE TEACHERS (CERTIFICATE) JOB GROUP “G” (110 POSTS)

Duties and responsibilities

- Organizing and facilitating play/learning activities to enable children cope with primary school life;
- Caring and nurturing spiritual, moral, social, mental and physical growth of children;
- Managing ECDE centres, keeping professional records (schemes of work and lesson plans) daily programme of activities, ensuring children's safety and security; and
- Preparing and developing play/learning materials.

Requirements for appointment

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have:

- Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Minimum Grade D (Plain) or its equivalent;
- Certificate in ECDE offered by the KNEC or its recognized equivalent; and
- Registered by Teachers Service Commission (TSC).

Terms of service: **Permanent & Pensionable**

How to Apply

Applications including detailed Curriculum Vitae (C.V), Copies of Academic and Professional Certificates duly certified, Testimonials, National Identification Card or Passport and any other supporting documents should be submitted in sealed envelopes, clearly indicating the position applied for on the top left side of the envelope. Bungoma County residents will be required to indicate their Sub-county and ward of residence to reach the undersigned by **16th November, 2023 at 5.00p.m.**

Hand delivered applications should be submitted to the County Public Service Board Offices located next to the Governor's Office.

Bungoma County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Youth, Women, Persons with Disabilities, Minority and Marginalized groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

PLEASE NOTE: Bungoma County Public Service Board does not charge **ANY FEE** at any stage of the recruitment and selection process.

Canvassing will lead to automatic disqualification

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

The Secretary
County Public Service Board
P.O Box 2489-50200
BUNGOMA

Appendix G: Budget

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
	<u>nt</u>
	100,0
Logistics	00
	150,0
Lithography	00
	150,0
Stationery	00
	100,0
Miscellaneous	00
	<u>500,0</u>
TOTAL	<u>00</u>