

Physical Facilities and Teacher Trainees Satisfaction with Quality of Education in Early Childhood Training Colleges in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract: Globally, provision of quality early childhood education training remains elusive especially in most developing countries. In Kenya, early childhood teachers for many years were training through the District Centre for Early Childhood Education until recently when the training was shifted to the formerly teacher training colleges due to the ongoing education reforms in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to assess the trainees' satisfaction with the quality of training in Colleges offering early childhood development and education programmes in Thika West Sub County, Nairobi County. The study was premised on Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory of Customer Satisfaction as the theoretical underpinning of the study. Descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The study targeted 424 trainees and 40 trainers from 6 ECDE Colleges from Thika West Sub-County. The findings showed that majority of trainees in the ECDE colleges were not satisfied with the quality of education due to inadequate classrooms and teaching-learning materials. The study recommended that the management of the colleges should equip them with the essential physical facilities in order to enhance the quality of training and education. The findings of the study may be useful to the key stakeholders in establishing approaches towards improving the wellbeing of the trainees in ECDE colleges.

Keywords: Availability of Physical Facilities; Teacher Trainees; Satisfaction with Quality of Education; Early Childhood Development and Education Colleges.

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I. Introduction

Globally, provision of quality early childhood education training remains elusive especially in low income countries where in some countries there is the government support while in others, there is little or no support from the government. High quality training provides a core component of national investment to secure the wellbeing and education of children and secure positive future for them and for the country (Campbell & Scotellaro, 2009). Studies in Europe show that school practice for teacher-trainees in Early Childhood Education has prioritized the interrelationship between the trainers and trainees and self-development in order to establish high quality of education in the ECDE colleges (Farge, Virieux & Doury, 2000). In some European countries, the ECDE sector is fully supported by the state.

The United Kingdom spends considerable amount of money towards young children and ECDE sector. The level of public expenditure for the implementation of ECDE programs is higher (Ermisch, 2008). Training of ECDE teachers in the UK today has been dominated by a project which has conjoined programs for trainees both in primary and secondary education. This is dictated by the proper training of the care givers, provision of the facilities that enhance training, use of communication technology and the learning materials and methods for the ECDE Colleges (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2010). However, the studies were done in England with different socio-cultural and economic conditions.

In Africa, the aggregate provision of a quality education for all is the main governments strategies for reduction of poverty and development in most countries. In South Africa, Du Plessis and Conley (2007) note that ECDE colleges are facing various challenges ranging from financial management, administration, selection and staff recruitment which are determinants of trainees' satisfaction with quality of education. Quality training is any program geared to teach an individual how to have an inquisitive, curious and critical mind that familiarize them with means of detecting, preventing and eliminating, mediocrity and non-quality. Hassan (2007) posits that quality training in ECDE requires well trained, qualified and committed staff. However, this is only established in trainees if they are satisfied with quality of training (Mishra, 2009). This study therefore strived to establish the satisfaction of the teacher trainees with quality of training they receive in early childhood colleges with regards to provision of teaching materials, safe environment, physical facilities and good health.

In Kenya, studies have indicated that education system is permeated with reforms and innovations introduced by the government in 2003 to revamp the education sector. According to Wawire (2006) healthy growth and development among children is determined by education and hence effective training at ECDE colleges should be a priority. Today, education is managed based on the County government following devolution. However, ECDE training has not changed its system and operation as previously advocated in the Basic Education Act, 2013 and the Sessional paper No. 14 of 2012 with respect to management of institutions offering training, coordinated assessment, examination and certification to assure standards, quality and relevance (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Githuthwa (2011) investigated the problems faced in the development of early childhood education in Kiambu County and found that there was a problem of lack of adequate physical facilities and instructional materials, lack of standardized teaching methods, insufficient funds, inadequate skilled personnel, parents' negligence and nutrition and health at the ECDE training colleges. Despite the availability and presence of a substantially body of research showing the link between good quality ECDE and positive child outcomes, the situation on the ground shows that a lot more could be done to improve quality. Studies and reports of quality reveals that ECDE colleges can do better and this cuts across both developed and developing nations.

Early childhood Development Centres of low or poor quality has been documented by various studies such as Mwaura (2009), Kangara (2010), Wambua (2010), Ndani (2008), Makatiani (2008), Koech (2006), Muthoni (2006) and Aila (2000). Some of the challenges facing early childhood education were found to be early dropout, low academic achievement and juvenile delinquency. Studies have also been conducted in other teacher training institutions (Begi; 2007). However, these studies only focused on the use of instructional media. They did not shed light of the satisfaction of teacher trainees with the quality of education in colleges offering ECE courses. It against this background that this study sought to assess teacher trainees' satisfaction with the quality of training in Colleges offering early childhood development and education programmes in Thika West Sub County.

II. Problem Statement

There are various challenges facing implementation of Early Childhood Education despite its growth. This is with regards to training and trainees' welfare and their satisfaction. Environment in ECDE training centres is greatly responsible for determining the welfare of trainees and educational outcome. Following the high demand, many early childhood education centres and colleges have mushroomed to meliorate the shortage of ECDE practitioners by offering training courses that seek to equip men and women with the skills and knowledge to impart and nurture young children. There was need to ascertain whether provision of such facilities as ICT, instructional materials and instructional methods influence trainees' satisfaction with the quality of education in ECDE colleges.

Further, the studies conducted in Kenya related to the quality of training in ECDE training institutions majorly dealt on trainee's experiences (Ndani, 2008; Wambua, 2010). Other studies linked between quality training and positive child outcomes but did not focus on association between trainee's satisfaction and quality of training (Githuthwa, 2011; Begi, 2007). From these studies, it is clear that no study focused on pre-primary school teacher training colleges and the level of satisfaction of teacher trainees. It was against this that the current study sought to investigate the trainees' satisfaction with quality of training in colleges offering ECE courses in Thika West Sub-County.

III. Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To establish the level of teacher trainees satisfaction with quality of education in colleges offering ECE courses
- ii. To determine the relationship between availability of physical facilities and teacher trainees satisfaction with quality of education in ECDE colleges.

IV. Research Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used. This design was used because it enabled the researcher to describe the situation as it was in the natural setting. The independent variables of this study were factors influencing trainees' satisfaction with the quality of early childhood development and education provided by the colleges. The dependent variable was trainees' satisfaction with the quality of training in early childhood development and education, while the independent variable was availability of physical facilities in ECDE centres. The study was carried out in Thika West Sub County, Kenya. The study targeted a total of 424 trainees and 40 instructors from 6 colleges in Thika West Sub-County. Simple random sampling was used to select 4 ECDE colleges representing 66.7% of the total ECDE colleges. The sample size for the study was 120 respondents (100 trainees and 20 instructors) from 4 ECDE sampled colleges. The research instruments applied for the study included

questionnaires, interview schedule and observation schedules. Before the actual study, the questionnaire and the interview schedule were piloted in two ECDE colleges (both private) in Thika West Sub-County which were not included in the final study. Random sampling was used to select a total of 4 trainers and 6 trainees from the two colleges. The researcher visited the sampled colleges and sought the authority to conduct research from the college administrators on a later date. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data.

V. Results and Discussions

The have been discussed under the following subsections:

5.1 Teacher Trainees' Satisfaction with Quality of Education in Colleges Offering ECE Courses

Evaluating the satisfaction of trainees based on the quality of education offered in ECDE colleges is a significant element of enhancing quality of education as a whole. To achieve the objective, the respondents were asked to rate indicators related to satisfaction level using 4-item Likert scale ranging from very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied and 1 point to unsatisfied. The results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Trainee Satisfaction with Quality of Training in ECDE Colleges

Items measuring satisfaction indicators		Response					
		VS	S	U	VU	Mean	Std dev
1. Adequacy of indoor space and outdoor space	F	45	23	55	37	1.82	0.86
	%	28.12	14.38	34.38	23.13		
2. Availability of classrooms and teaching-learning materials	F	12	20	80	48	1.94	0.81
	%	7.5	12.5	50	30		
3. Sufficiency of outdoor play equipment	F	15	35	45	75	1.97	1.03
	%	9.38	21.88	28.13	46.88		
4. Available of toilets, hygiene and water	F	75	15	50	20	2.28	0.89
	%	46.88	9.38	31.25	12.5		
5. Trainer-trainee ratio and number of teachers trainee in class	F	36	55	44	25	2.27	0.89
	%	22.5	34.37	27.5	15.63		
6. Trainers' working experience with teacher trainees	F	40	45	34	41	2.68	1.05
	%	25	28.12	21.25	25.63		
7. Trainer's behaviors in helping trainee to solve problems	F	39	24	45	52	2.67	1.16
	%	24.38	15	28.13	32.5		
8. Stimulating and developmental appropriate activities	F	46	34	55	25	2.71	1.09
	%	28.75	21.25	34.38	15.63		
9. Involvement of trainees in decision making to improve colleges and regular training of teachers trainee progress	F	44	54	40	22	2.70	1.08
	%	27.5	33.75	25	13.75		
10. Involvement of trainees in academic activities as field trips	F	35	33	30	62	2,70	1.08
	%	21.88	20.6	18.75	38.75		
11. Provision of Quality of meals Safety in college	F	40	57	46	17	2.87	1.19
	%	25	35.63	28.75	10.63		
12. Good Relationship of trainers with trainees in work commitment in moral and spiritual values	F	77	34	20	29	2,68	1.24
	%	48.13	21.15	12.5	18.13		
13. Perfectly Syllabus coverage	F	37	45	23	55	2.17	1.03
	%	22.75	28.13	14.38	34.75		

14. Use of ICT components like computers in training and learning	F	34	45	54	27	1.97	1.42
	%	21.15	28.15	33.75	16.95		
Average Score						1.97	1.42

Results indicated that majority 80 (50%) of the participants reported that they were unsatisfied with the item, ‘Availability of classrooms and teaching-learning materials’. The average mean score was computed as 1.97 which implies that majority of the trainees were dissatisfied with quality of training in the ECDE colleges under study. The findings also indicated that the majority of participants indicated low satisfaction with Quality of Training in Early Childhood Education Colleges (Overall mean Mean=1.97 and standard deviation=1.42). The findings further revealed that outdoor play equipment, field trips and syllabus coverage were insufficient in most ECDE colleges. Moreover, 55(34.38%) were unsatisfied with the indicator-items, ‘stimulating and developmental appropriate activities’ and ‘adequacy of indoor space and outdoor space’. Finally, despite the current implementation of ICT in training in most institutions in Kenya, 54 (33.75%) of the trainees were unsatisfied with the adequacy of indoor space and outdoor space. These findings were therefore in line with Mironi (2014) who found that, with regard to how satisfied teachers felt with the physical facilities in school, majority of teachers were very dissatisfied with the physical facilities in training Colleges for teachers. Studies in Kenya also show that availability of facilities is a significant factor to the trainees’ choice of colleges (Abagi, 2009; Oketch et al., 2012). Trainees expect to learn certain concepts and skills the kind of teaching and learning that takes place in a school influences their satisfaction with the quality of education provided by their trainers.

5.2 Physical Facilities and Trainees Satisfaction with Quality of Education

To determine the influence of availability of physical facilities on trainees’ satisfaction with quality of education in ECDE colleges, respondents were asked to indicate the adequacy of Infrastructure and Physical with regard to classrooms, kitchen, toilets, water source, store, office, accommodation amenities, resource centre and playground. Data was collected from 20 trainers from the sampled centres. Observation of physical facilities was also managed and compiled through checklist and physical observation of these facilities. The findings from the observation were summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Adequacy of Infrastructure and Physical Facilities

Physical facilities in ECDE Colleges	ECDE Colleges					
	Have standards facilities		Have sub-standards facilities		No facilities	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Classrooms	1	25%	3	75	-	-
Kitchen	1	25%	-	-	3	75
Sanitation/toilets	-	-	4	100	-	-
Water source	1	25	3	75	-	-
Store	-	-	4	100%	-	-
Office	4	100%	-	-	-	-
Accommodation facilities/ hostels	-	-	3	75%	1	25% 1
Resource centre	2	50%	2	50%	-	-
Play ground	-	-	-	-	4	100%

The findings in Table 2 revealed that all 4(100%) of the ECDE Colleges had no playground at all. The findings further showed that 3(75%) of the ECDE colleges had classrooms but did not meet the required standards. Three (75%) out of the sampled ECDE colleges had no kitchen. Even though all the ECDE Colleges had toilets, they were not sufficient for the big population and did not meet the required standards. In Kenya the

Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2005) recommends that toilets should be adequate and in good sanitary conditions in any training institution.

Findings from interviews with trainers indicated that that learning environment was not friendly. This was confirmed by one of the trainers who reported:

...most of the institutions are located next to littered backstreets, overcrowded market centres and dilapidated buildings. Our institution is also lying on a less than half an acre piece of land leaving no room for playgrounds.

It was further revealed that majority of the colleges lacked adequate finances to improve the facilities and the available facilities were still overstretched. During the interview, the second respondent reported;

“Some students are forced to seek alternative accommodation outside the institution and that pose them to insecurity risks”.

To establish whether there was a relationship between available physical facilities and trainee’s satisfaction with quality of education in ECDE Colleges, mean scores of trainees’ satisfaction level were calculated and presented alongside the availability of physical facilities. Table 3. Presents a summary of findings.

Table 3: Physical Facilities and Trainee’s Satisfaction with Quality of Training

Facilities	Available and standards	Freq	%	Mean score of trainee’s satisfaction with quality of education
Classrooms	Available and meets the required standards	1	25	1.94
	Available and does not meet the required standards	3	75	1.71
	Not available	0	0	0
Kitchen	Available and meets the required standards	1	25	1.19
	Available and does not meet the required standards	0	0	0
	Not available	3	75	1.09
Sanitation/ toilets	Available and meets the required standards	0	0	0
	Available and does not meet the required standards	4	100	0.89
	Not available	0	0	00
Water source	Available and meets the required standards	1	25	1.75
	Available and does not meet the required standards	3	75	0.89
	Not available	0	0	0
Store	Available and meets the required standards	0	0	0
	Available and does not meet the required standards	4	100	1.76
	Not available	0	0	0
Office	Available and meets the required standards	4	100	1.24
	Available and does not meet the required standards	0	0	0
	Not available	0	0	0
Accommod ation facilities/ hostels	Available and meets the required standards	0	0	0
	Available and does not meet the required standards	3	75	1.16
	Not available	1	25	0.29
Resource centre	Available and meets the required standards	2	50	1.87
	Available and does not meet the required standards	2	50	1.86
	Not available	0	0	0
Play ground	Available and meets the required standards	0	0	0
	Available and does not meet the required standards	0	0	0
	Not available	4	100	1.79

The result from Table 3 shows that ECDE colleges that had classrooms, kitchen, water sources, accommodation facilities and resource centres which meet the required standards had a high mean score compared to those

which did not meet standards or were not available. The more the availability of physical facilities the higher the trainees' satisfaction with quality of education in ECDE colleges. There was a slight difference in trainees' satisfaction with quality of education between ECDE colleges that had resources centres with required standards and those that did not meet the required standards.

Further analysis was done to determine whether there was a relationship between availability of physical facilities and trainees' satisfaction with quality of education. To test the result, the following hypothesis was formulated.

Ha₁: There is a relationship between availability of physical facilities and trainee's satisfaction with quality of education in ECDE Colleges was accepted.

Pearson Correlation test was used to find out whether the relationship between availability of physical facilities and trainees' satisfaction with quality of education was significant. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between Availability of Physical Facilities and Trainee's Satisfaction

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Significance (p value)
Availability of physical facilities	0.118	0.15	.001
R ² =.689			
Adjusted R ² =.686			

The results presented in Table 4 showed that availability of physical facilities positively correlate with trainee's satisfaction. Physical facilities were clearly significant and associated with trainee's satisfaction with quality of education. A coefficient of 0.118 means that a unit increase in physical facilities in the colleges enhances the trainee's satisfaction with quality of education at a significance of $p=0.001$ ($p<0.05$). The results show that the relationship between physical facilities and trainee's satisfaction with quality of training was significant. The alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that physical facilities influence trainee's satisfaction with trainee's satisfaction with quality of education. Thus, the more the availability of physical facilities with the required standards the higher the trainee's satisfaction with quality of education in ECDE colleges.

The findings agree with those of Ng'asike (2012) who indicated that inadequate facilities could have harmful effect on the quality of education. He added that failure by any nation to invest in ECDE would lead to continued human wastage in the form of failed development, grade repetition and stunted growth of children. In addition, Jaramillo and Mingat (2006) noted that quality of education results when there is adequate physical facilities and resources, friendly learning environment, safe playground and attractive school buildings. This was also in line with the views of Oketch et al. (2012) who observed that availability of classrooms, laboratories and libraries were symbols of high education quality. Abagi (2009) agreed with the above studies good performance depends on adequacy of facilities in the institution hence a quality standard which is a determinant of trainees' satisfaction with quality of training offered in the centres. Price, Matzdorf, Smith, and Agahi (2003) also found that availability of computers, quality of library facilities, good teaching reputation, availability of "quiet" areas, availability of areas self-study, quality of public transport in the town/city and a friendly attitude towards students influenced of facilities on the teacher trainee choice of Colleges and Universities.

VI. Conclusion

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study.

- i) The study established that majority of the trainees were not satisfied with various physical facilities including adequacy of classrooms and teaching-learning materials, water and accommodation facilities.
- ii) Physical facilities significantly determines trainee's satisfaction with quality of training in ECDE Colleges. This correlation was significant at $p<0.05$ and therefore the third alternative hypothesis was accepted.

VII. Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations based on the research findings.

7.1 Policy Recommendations to the Government of Kenya

- It is evident that majority of trainees are dissatisfied with the quality of training they attain in ECDE Colleges. Thus, the government, through the Ministry of Education need to equip all ECDE colleges with all the essential physical facilities in order to enhance equal education opportunities for trainees and facilitate their full integration into the community.

7.2 Policy Recommendations to Key Stakeholders

- The key stakeholders including the directors and the administrators should collaborate with the community to establish a friendly environment for trainees. This would involve collecting more funds to improve and maintain the infrastructure which support healthy learning in the ECDE colleges.

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