

COUNTY GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

National Early Childhood Development Policy Framework in Kenya has been in place since the year 2006 accompanied by a service guideline to promote its implementation. The goal of the policy framework was to enhance access, equity, and quality services for all children from conception through 8 years. Furthermore, a new pre-primary policy was introduced in 2017. However, even with the policies in place there are quality service delivery issues in pre-Primary Schools in Murang'a County. It is documented that pre-primary schools in the County have poor infrastructure coupled with poor delivery of content at this level. The purpose of the present study was to assess the influence of county government support on Quality Service Delivery. Mixed methodology research approach and concurrent triangulation design guided the study. The target population was 1,596 and a sample size of 194 was used in this study. Data was collected using questionnaire for pre-primary teachers', observation schedule for the pre-primary schools environment, interview guides for Early Childhood Development officers, parents representatives and head teachers'/ECD managers. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented in discussion form while quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented using tables and figures. Inferential analysis established that county government support at $p < 0.001$ determined the quality of services delivered in pre-primary schools. Descriptive analysis revealed that more than half of the pre-primary schools sampled had benefited from county government in diverse ways toward enhancing quality service delivery. However, thematic analysis brought out the other issues surrounding the support by county government like inadequate funding and delays in release of funds to schools. In addition, private schools reported that they rarely benefit from county government support. Thus, concluding that goals of the ECD policy may not be realized with the current performance of county government in ECD policy implementation. Subsequently, the study recommends that the County Government should ensure adequate funding for regular monitoring of both public and private pre-primary schools to promote actualization of policy guidelines for quality services and enhanced positive child development outcomes.

Keywords: Kenya County Government, Early Childhood Development, National ECD Policy Framework

INTRODUCTION

County government in Kenya is the decentralized unit of the national government which is meant to take charge of policy implementation of various government policies on the ground. The process of Policy implementation varies from one nation to another since it depends on particular political, economic and social context of a nation. According to Payne (2008) successful implementation of school policies are evidenced by coherence, stability, peer support, training and engagement of the implementers. This implies that for success to be realized a lot of coordinated efforts should be put in place and appropriate model of implementation of policy employed, stakeholders should be held accountable for reaching specific indicators of success within a specified duration and adequate funding should be availed. This requires the support of a powerful actor like the government in order to produce substantial impact through funding and enforcing compliance to the directives of the statutes (Fullan, 2009).

There are several countries with ECD policies that are being implemented effectively and the success is tangible due to effective collaboration among stakeholders involved, effective monitoring and evaluations as well as adequate finance allocations. Consequently, a lot can be learnt from them in implementation of ECD policies. Leading developed nations like Australia, New Zealand, England and Sweden. The ECD programmes of these countries according to policy framework in ECD by UNICEF (2010) are mature and established. This has been catalyzed by adequate financing, adherence to the developed policy framework and appropriate policy focus from sectorial to comprehensive, collaboration and networking as well as monitoring of quality standards consistently and coherently.

Policy context in Australia is also powerfully determined by division of duties among the three government levels which are Federal, state/territory

and local. Many occupations of ECD including instruction, youngster well-being, and household provision are common across authorities and this has consequences on financing and amenity provision and furthermore on supervisory. However, there exist overlapping roles of the three which call for need to agree in order to enhance consistency and coherence. This has been a persistent issue in most nations therefore individual nations should strategize on how to deal with it issues for successful implementation of ECD policies. The success of any nation in management of ECD and delivery of quality services largely depends on how able they are in working differently individually, organizationally and collaboratively hence realizing their goals.

Canada, just like Australia, has three governmental structures involved that is the national government in partnership with the province and territorial government. Canada implements an early childhood model with support for households which encompass pre-natal support; early education openings; great collective, available and suitable nurturing care for all children in rural and urban settings. The country seems to have a rich administration tendency for devolving duty and expertise, reduced community amenities and denationalizes activities as pointed out by (Thompson et al., 1999). However, in some instances the government administrations withholds children and household support for various child related programmes. As a result, community based organizations end up alone in delivery of Early Childhood services. They may be given the obligation to provide amenities and function within the guidelines of the administrative government. In Ontario, for example it is the obligation of the forty-seven municipal authorities to provide amenities for young children. On the same breadth, the regional government centralized additional duties for the institution structures. Financing was lifted from native stuff levies to regional overall returns.

The top-down regional financing method for institutes has forced numerous early childhood care programmes out of school compound. This is common in many countries which thrust ECD programmes to local governments even when they lack the capacity to handle ECD programmes. The local municipal governments in Canada are currently responsible for child care and local school boards without financing power to cooperate and provide programmes responsive to local needs (First Call BC, 2008; Beach and Bertrand, 2000). The scenario is much similar to Kenya currently with county governments which are relatively new and mandated to implement decentralization policy adopted in 1982 but

encountering different contextual dynamics which this study addressed.

Other African countries such as Ghana, Namibia and Mauritania have developed and approved ECD policies but they experience common a number of challenges, including insufficient monetary capitals, minimal administrative support, absence of unified and all-inclusive organizing structures, absence of specific ECD policies and lack of a specific ministry taking the lead in ECD. Furthermore, some ministries continue to work sectorial and lack skilled personnel in ECD from management to grass root level (Torkington, 2001).

According to UNESCO (2004) report on ECD policy development and implementation in Africa, Namibia is highlighted as one of the African countries which pioneered in approving its ECD policy in 1996. Hence, it should be well down the road of policy implementation. The policy provides a compelling and comprehensive vision of what ECD could be in Namibia, but it is not. Another report by Dalais, Etse, Pressoir, Vogelaar, UNESCO and Regional Bureau for Education in Africa and Association for the Development of Education in Africa.(2010) shows that the fabric of ECD support is unsteadily skinny and structures very flimsy. Sometimes one may observe very well thought out ideas being implemented through collaborative effort. However in most instances the momentum is not sustained and what seemed to be a great venture disappears taking back the nation to the drawing board. This shows that there is always lack of commitment and consistency in supporting implementation of ECD policies from both the national government and county government hence the precarious delivery of ECD services.

One of the impetus to such occurrences are changes of governmental structures like introduction of a new ministry, for example shifting of ECD to a new ministry in 1998 saw the advances in ECD like training of trainers vanish in the air due to inaction and mistrust. Also the shifting of government priorities has been an issue where knowledgeable staffs are deployed to other sectors leaving behind knowledge and communication vacuums. These changes take place quite often; some positive and others negative but whichever the case implementers tend to be incapacitated in handling the changes so as to deliver positive outcomes. This indicates a lack of proper planning. Despite the fact that a policy is in place there are always loopholes created which water down effort towards delivery of quality ECD services.

In Kenya, the county government as per the policy should support all ECDE programmes and services

within their jurisdiction, support the inclusion of all children, sponsor pre-primary teachers for training, pay pre-primary teachers, support barrier free infrastructure for ECDE, provide land for recreation, provide recreation facilities and carry out advocacy (Republic of Kenya, 2006a). This is all that is outlined in the policy guidelines but the actualization of the guidelines is still debatable to date.

Statement of the Problem

Effective and efficient county government support would be evidenced by presence of a standard physical environment with adequate physical facilities, hiring of qualified and competent teachers who utilize appropriate pedagogical practices, as well as suitable nutritional and healthy social environment. However, according to Murang'a County initiative (2015) it is documented that pre-primary schools have poor infrastructure and there is poor delivery of content in some schools implying that children are receiving poor foundation of the basic learning concepts. Consequently, Murang'a County has been experiencing low enrollment to primary schools, high levels of repetition and drop-out in early childhood level of Education (Muchau, 2015). The scenario indicates existence of a gap between policy guidelines and practice. This is despite the fact that Early Childhood services are now devolved to Counties and one would expect that the situation has improved. However, observations and reports from the County Director of Education in Murang'a indicate that the status quo has persisted over the last five years. Therefore, the study sought to fill the gap by assessing if county government support enhances delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County.

Theoretical Framework

The study employed two theories; the first theory presented a model of policy implementation since the study was dealing with ECD policy implementation and like any other policy it experiences ambiguities and conflicts during the implementation process. Therefore, this theory illuminates the four levels of the policy implementation process which include administrative, political, experimental, and symbolic levels relating to the policy in focus. In each of the levels challenges are encountered in the process of implementation as well as various participants such as the government, county government and other stakeholders' take different roles in the process.

The second theory is by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1989) who records that individuals go through different experiences in different levels of the environment as they interact with each other. The experiences do impact on an individual as well as the institutions in

terms of development. The theory was relevant to the current study because county government is an institution which interacts with schools and teachers in delivery of services to young children. The support offered by county government to pre-primary schools directly determines the quality of services being delivered hence indirectly influencing experiences of the child at school as well as at home.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Murang'a County, Kenya. The participants included all pre-school teachers estimated at 800 in 614 pre-primary schools in Murang'a County, 614 ECD Managers/Head teachers and 614 parents' representatives and 10 ECD County Officers. All the participants identified are involved in the running of ECDE in the county in different ways. A sample size of 194 was arrived at using various sampling techniques which are stratified random sampling, simple random and purposive sampling. The data was collected using questionnaires for teachers, interview guides for parents' representative and ECD officers and an observation schedule for the pre-primary environment.

This study employed a mixed methodology approach in which concurrent triangulation design was employed. The researchers collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data sets simultaneously in a single data collection and analysis phase. Therefore, timing of data collection, analysis, and interpretation of both data was done at the same time (Creswell, 2008). The collected data was equally weighted since the researchers gave equal priority to both quantitative and qualitative data as both were equal sources of information for the present study.

Furthermore, collected data was analyzed separately then results from both data sets were mixed during interpretation through comparisons in order to establish whether the results support or contradict each other (Weisner, 2005). The rationale for this design is that one data collection form supplied strength to offset the weaknesses of the other form hence depicting a clearer picture of the study problem. According to Creswell (2008) the design was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to gather information that used the best features of both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to: *Find out the extent to which county government support influence quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County.* The collected data was analyzed and presented

descriptively, inferentially and thematically as outlined in the following three sections.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was done using the following terms and ratings; (Never)-1 meaning that the practice is not there at all, (Rarely)-2 indicating that the practice recurs only after a long interval (more than one year),

(Sometimes)-3 implying that the support is occasional and inconsistent, (often)-4 denoting it's done on termly basis and (Very often)-5 meaning the support is on monthly basis. Descriptive analysis yielded frequencies in percentages about involvement of county government in various activities which are meant to enhance quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. The information was as outlined in Table 1.

Table1: County Government support for pre-primary schools in Murang'a County

S/No.	Items	N	R	S	O	VO
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Does the county government allocate resources to your ECD centre?	23%	12%	20%	27%	18%
2	Does the county government conduct advocacy campaigns for children in your locality/school?	29%	2%	24%	27%	19%
3	Do county government officers visit your school to establish if there are children issues in you center which needs advocacy	29%	15%	23%	24%	8%
4	Do county government officers organize short courses which support your continuous growth as a teacher?	49%	11%	18%	15%	7%
5	Do county government officers organize seminar which supports you in enhancing quality instructional environment?	22%	9%	24%	29%	16%
Average		30%	10%	22%	24%	14%

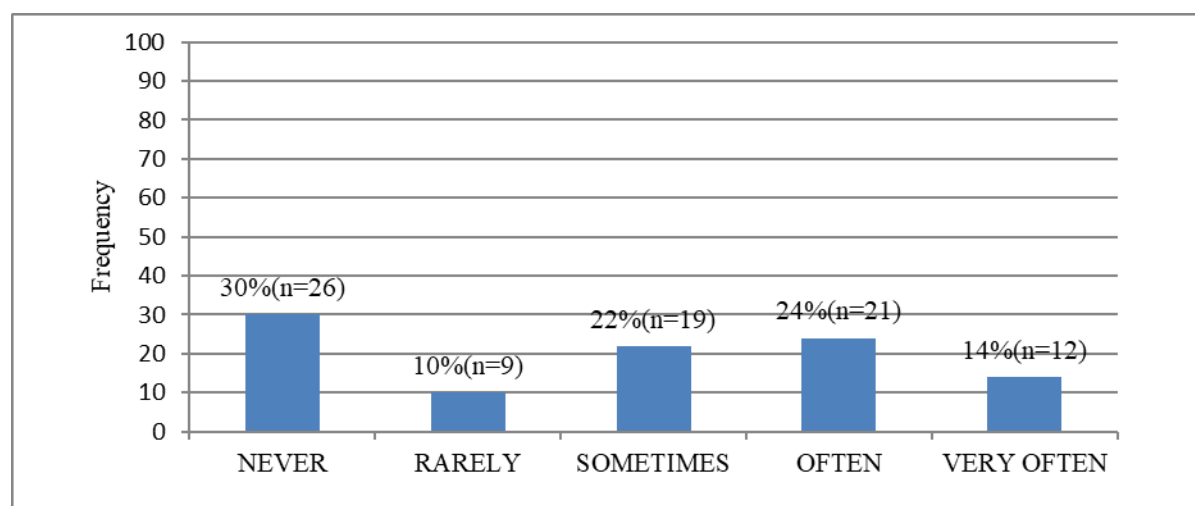


Figure 1: Average Frequencies in % of county government support for Pre-primary schools

The averages in percentage in Table 1 are presented graphically in Figure 1 to clearly depict a picture of the extent to which the county government has been supporting pre-primary schools in Murang'a County.

As per figure 16 it is clear that county government support on average is still minimal since most of the schools that is 30% (n=26) reported that they never receive any support from the county government. Only 24% (n=21) are supported often, 14% (n=12) very often, 22% (n=19) sometimes, and 10% (n=9) are rarely supported. The findings indicate that a

significant percentage of pre-primary schools in Murang'a County do not receive support from the county government consequently creating room for variation in quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County.

The findings contradict the guidelines in the Republic of Kenya (2006b) which outline the roles which should be undertaken by the county government. It is evident that most of the roles are never realised in a significant number of pre-primary schools. This raises concern if the county government is committed to actualization of

the policy guidelines. According to a studies by Beach and Bertrand (2000) and First call BC, (2008) local authorities lack the capacity to support early years programmes. This is attributed to the fact that county government support tends to be erratic characterized by lack of consistency hence impeding delivery of quality services to young children. This implies that a lot ought to be done by the county government especially in planning to ensure sustainable and consistent support for pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. The researcher further established the perceptions of pre-primary teachers regarding the impact of county government support on quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. The average frequencies on pre-primary teachers' views of county government influence on quality service delivery in Table 2 are illustrated in Figure 2.

On average more than half of the pre-school teachers 55% (n=48) agreed that the county government is

working in diverse ways to support quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. This is because 23% (n=20) strongly agreed, 33% (n=28) agreed. This means that there are some milestones that are vivid which the county government has undertaken in support of quality service delivery for example in sponsoring feeding programmes and paying pre-primary teachers' salary a burden that previously used to be on parents. However, a larger percentage of 40% (n=34) of the pre-primary schools have not felt the impact of county government support on quality service delivery since 19% (n=16) disagreed and 23% (n=18) strongly disagreed. The findings present a significant percentage of pre-primary schools not benefitting from county government support and most of these schools are private. Therefore, a dialogue is necessary to ensure that all children benefit even those in private schools since all children ought to access quality services irrespective of whether they are in private or public schools.

Table 2: Pre-primary teachers' perceptions on the influence of county government support on quality service delivery

S/No.	County support	SD 1	D 2	NS 3	A 4	SA 5
1	County government funds some activities in my ECD centre thereby promoting quality physical environment.	26%	14%	2%	36%	22%
2	County government pays my salary or supports my centre in ensuring pre-primary teachers are paid ensuring quality service delivery.	20%	7%	0%	24%	49%
3	County government supports infrastructure development in my centre promoting quality physical environment.	23%	30%	7%	32%	8%
4	County government advocates for children in my centre ensuring every child is healthy to learn hence promoting a healthy environment.	12%	11%	2%	49%	26%
5	County government organizes seminars which help me as a teacher to improve my teaching practices.	14%	14%	6%	42%	24%
6	County government sponsors me for short courses which aid me to improve relationship with my learners.	29%	37%	5%	20%	9%
Average		21%	19%	4%	33%	23%

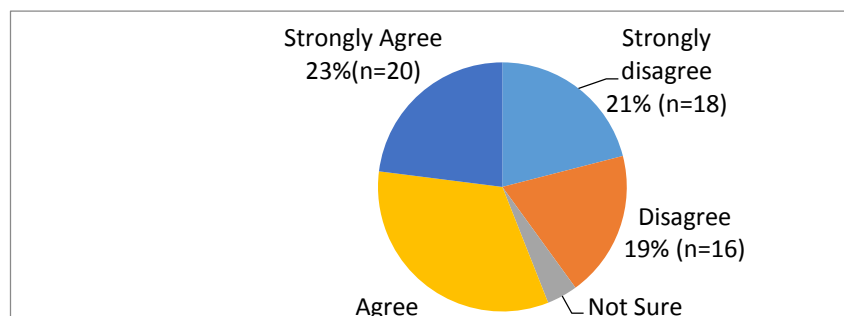


Figure 2: Average frequencies in % on pre-primary teachers' perceptions on county government support influence on quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County

Inferential Analysis on County Government Support on Quality Service Delivery

To establish the influence of county government on quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a the hypothesis below was tested.

H₀₁ There is no statistically significant influence of county government support on quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County.

In analysis of this hypothesis the researcher first run a correlation test to establish if there is any association

between county government support and quality service delivery. This was followed by a regression analysis which was meant to establish if there is any predictive association between county government support and quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. This first step established the relationship between county government support and quality service delivery using Pearson test. The results were as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations between county government support and quality service delivery

		Quality service delivery	county government support
Quality service delivery	Pearson Correlation	1	.529**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	86	86
county government support	Pearson Correlation	.529**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	86	86

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicates that a positive moderate correlation exists between county government support and quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. In addition, the correlation is significant since $p < 0.001$ therefore $p < 0.05$. The findings indicate that as the support of the county government increases on the other hand quality service delivery in pre-primary schools also improves. To investigate if county government supports predicts quality service delivery regression analysis was done and the results were presented in Table 4.

The second step established if county government support predicts quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. To achieve this regression analysis was conducted and the outcomes are as outlined in table 4. Results from Table 4 show that $R^2 = 0.279$ meaning that county government support accounts for 27.9% of the variation in quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. The ANOVA results indicates that the model is significant since ($F=32.573$, $df=1, 84$ and $p < 0.001$). Finally, coefficient of determination results show that $\beta = 0.529$, $t = 5.707$, $p = 0.001$ this indicates that county government is a significant predictor of quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that county government has no significant influence on quality service delivery was rejected.

Thematic Analysis Results on Influence of County Government Support on Quality Service Delivery

The researcher also conducted interviews amongst head teachers, ECD county officers and parents'

representatives to get more in-depth information about the influence of county government support on delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools. The interview guide for parents' representatives had two questions which gathered information on county government support. The first question in the interview guide asked parents: *in what ways does the county government support pre-primary schools* and the researcher probed on some roles as outlined in the ECD policy guidelines.

The responses indicated that the county government has been supporting pre-primary schools in diverse ways as evidenced by the comments received. The majority 75% ($n=6$) of the parents representative reported that the county government supports by funding the feeding program in the school. Though, this was from the majority the findings indicates presence of a small percentage 25% ($n=2$) of respondents who did not acknowledge the fact that they are supported by the county government through feeding of their children. Therefore, this implies that there are some pre-primary schools in Murang'a County which do not benefit from feeding program funded by the county government. This could be attributed to the fact that some schools are private hence they do not benefit from the feeding program funded by the county government as was noted by the researcher during observations.

Table 4: Regression model, ANOVA and coefficient of determination on the influence of county government on quality service delivery

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.529 ^a	.279	.271	17.59418

ANOVA on the influence of county government support on quality service delivery in Pre-primary schools					
	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	10083.2	1	10083.2	32.573	.000 ^b
Residual	26002.6	84	309.555		
Total	36085.8	85			

Coefficients of determination on influence of county government support on quality service delivery					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	132.138	5.296		24.949	.000
county government support	2.009	.352	.529	5.707	.000

Dependent variable: Quality service delivery

Independent variable: County government support

The respondents further identified other ways in which the county government supports which included the following; educating pre-primary teachers' by organizing workshops and seminars this was echoed by all respondents, provision of play and learning materials reported by 50% (n=4), and repairing classes reported by 13% (n=1). The responses indicate that all parents know and appreciate the fact that the county government has been supporting in diverse ways. However, it is important to note that some parents had this to say. Respondent P4:

"The county government provides play and learning materials but not often" while P7 noted that "the county government provides learning materials but inadequate and this happens sometimes".

This means that the support by the county government is not consistent and does not fully meet the needs of children at school hence support from other stakeholders is also essential for delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools.

The second question still under the parents' interview guide asked how the county government support ensures that the school environment is appropriate and suitable for the child. Majority 50% (n=4) of the respondents reported that the support from the county government enhances the instructional environment hence improved academic performance through the provision of learning materials and paying of teachers making sure they are adequately motivated to teach. Also, 37% (n=3) of the respondents reported that quality service delivery is enhanced by the county government through monitoring and evaluation by ECD county officers who ensures that the required standards in school are observed. However, this was contrary to respondent P8 who said:

"The county government does not enhance quality service delivery since even after allocating inadequate resources does not follow up through monitoring".

These sentiments were supported by one other respondent P3 who reported:

"The county government does not support quality service delivery since they rarely monitor the standard of schools".

The comments by these two respondents indicate inadequacy of monitoring and evaluation confirming descriptive analysis findings which indicated that the practice is inconsistent and sometimes not there at all in some schools.

On the same issue 37% (n=3) of the respondents reported that the county government support enhances the quality of physical environment. This is achieved through repairing of classes and furniture's, supporting infrastructural development through construction of classes to reduce congestion in classes. An analysis of the responses indicates that majority of the parents' representative believe that the county government do support in enhancing quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. This confirms inferential analysis findings which indicated that county government support is a significant predictor of quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County.

The researcher further gathered more information from head teachers and ECD county officers about county government support for pre-primary schools. The first question interrogated how the county government was supporting pre-primary schools and the researcher probed about resource allocation, advocacy for children and frequency of training for ECD teachers. The

responses indicated that privately sponsored pre-primary schools are never supported by the county government. Respondent W said that;

“Our school does not benefit much from county government since we are never allocated resources and our teachers do not benefit from trainings by the county government the only support that the school has ever received involved deworming of children”.

This was similar with other respondents who were in private schools who echoed the same sentiments. This therefore pointed to the fact that private institutions do not benefit from county government initiatives which are meant to promote the welfare of young children. The scenario creates room for variation in quality service delivery and to have harmony private schools too should be supported by the county government.

The finding implied that private schools are not supported by the county government. The scenario is similar in Uganda in a study by (Ejuu, 2011) it was established that at the local level individual entrepreneurs do not receive any incentive to encourage the investment in ECD. This works against delivery of quality services and creates room for more discrepancies in implementation of ECD policies. However, the government has a responsibility of guarding education for all children whether in private or public hence a dialogue is important on how to improve partnership since private sector also supports in realization of the policy goals.

On the other hand, respondents in public schools had a different story about the county government support. Both the head teachers and ECD county officers were in agreement that the county government was remunerating ECD teachers which was a significant milestone impressing all the stakeholders especially parents who used to bear the burden of paying teachers. Also commendable was the fact that the county government was funding feeding programmes and as a result increasing enrollment in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. However, it was noted that every interviewee had critiques about the support from county government.

With regards to the feeding programme, respondent X noted:

“Feeding programmes are creating a dependency syndrome and not sustainable”.

Another respondent Y said:

“Funds for feeding programmes are not released on time and they are temporal just being used for political purpose”.

In addition, respondent Z noted:

“Funds for feeding programmes are always delayed and inadequate”.

The voices from respondents indicated that the feeding supported by the county government may not be achieving its intended goal of enhancing nutrition and health of young children since the resources availed do not cover the entire term. As a result some of the children drop out of the school one month down the term once the feeding is disrupted due to lack of finances. It was also noted that the diet was not the best and could not be varied due to the fact that the funds availed could not allow provision of an adequately balanced diet.

On resource allocation, ECD county officers unanimously reported that before introduction of the county government they would get an allocation of funds from the Ministry of Education. This enabled them to conduct sensitization meetings for parents and teachers as well as conduct monitoring and evaluation of the programme. However, currently no funds are set aside for ECD county officers from the county government to facilitate the smooth running of ECD programmes such as the feeding. Respondent Y noted:

“The county government spends a lot of money on primary and secondary schools especially through bursaries and somehow neglects pre-primary schools”.

As a result the ECD county officers are poorly facilitated for field visits and they are expected to operate with their salaries which cannot support visits to pre-primary schools under their jurisdiction. Consequently, the scenario has led to prevalence of some pre-primary schools with classes that are below the standard hence poor physical environment. A certain respondent noted:

“Some classes are like Kalahari desert”.

Though the statement seemed farfetched the respondent meant that some ECD classes had no windows and the floor is usually very dusty hence unhealthy for young children.

The second question established how the county government support influences quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. On enhancing the quality of physical and instructional environment, respondent Z said:

“County government does not support infrastructure development”.

This was reported by all other head teachers and ECD county officers and this implied that some ECD classes were far below the required standards. This was evident even during observations where infrastructure

for other classes would be very well maintained but for pre-primary classes they were quite neglected and the difference would be notable from a distance. It was also noted that some of the schools did not have a kitchen though they had a feeding program. This means that the county government just provides the funds for food but does not bother to establish a suitable place for cooking and feeding the learners. The report was contrary to that of 37% (n=3) of the parent's representatives who reported that the county government aids in instructional development. The contradiction is attributed to ignorance among parents and failure by school administration to fully update parents about funding of projects in schools.

In support of instructional environment it was reported that County government supports through provision of learning materials and developing wash points to enhance healthy environment. However, it was noted that provision of learning materials was well done at the inception of county governance but currently there are no provisions made hence pre-primary teachers have been utilizing resources from the primary section. This brings out the inconsistencies which exist as far as support from county government is concerned. The support is erratic hence cannot be fully relied upon and this has the potential of influencing the quality of services being delivered in pre-primary schools.

The conversations with the head teachers as well as the ECD county officers revealed that the county government has made some attempts to support pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. However, there are many challenges and still a lot is expected from the county government to enhance delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools. Stakeholders have very high expectations from the county government and the issues being experienced can be handled with improved collaborations among stakeholders like teachers' parents, ECD county officers and head teachers. The challenges highlighted are related to decentralization of ECD services and are similar to findings reported by (UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa, 1997). The report documented factors which impede service delivery at the local level like responsibilities assigned without the requisite resources, limited human resource and institutions, inadequate participation of stakeholders, democracy and accountability. All these are the grievances that were echoed by the respondents and they all require dialogue to forge the way forward.

In another study by Ejuu (2011) on determinants of public investment in early childhood development within the education sector at national and local levels in Uganda. It was established that there exists a very

low level of investment in ECD which implies less attention for children's education needs. This agrees with the findings of this current study as some respondents even noted that more resources are directed to primary and secondary schools and very little goes to pre-primary. This points to the fact that support for pre-primary education by the county government is inadequate especially in allocation of funds in support of various activities meant to enhance quality service delivery. Therefore, quality issues in pre-primary schools are likely to persist unless the county and national government increase funds for support of pre-primary education.

Triangulation and Interpretation of Qualitative and Quantitative Results

The analysis of data using the various techniques applied in this study revealed that county government is a significant predictor of quality service delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. Descriptive analysis revealed that more than half of the pre-primary schools sampled has benefited from county government in diverse ways toward enhancing quality service delivery. In addition, most of the pre-primary teachers believe that the county government has the potential to influence delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools. This was confirmed by inferential analysis which revealed that a positive moderate correlation ($r=0.529$) exist between county government support and the support was a significant predictor of quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. Furthermore, various respondents interviewed reported that the county government supports in enhancing quality service delivery. However, thematic analysis brought out the other issues surrounding the support by county government like inadequate funding and delays which were working against efficiency in delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study established that county government support on average is still minimal since most of the schools that is 30% reported that they never receive any support from the county government. Only 38% of the schools which get supported often and very often while the remaining get support occasionally and inconsistently (22%) and some after very long intervals (10%). This indicated that the county government roles are yet to be realized by some pre-primary schools in Murang'a and as a result quality service delivery in some pre-primary schools is yet to be realized.

Regarding the influence of county government support on quality service delivery more than 50 percent of the pre-school teachers agreed that the county government is working in diverse ways to support quality service

delivery in pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. This means that there are some milestones that are vivid which the county government has undertaken in support of quality service delivery for example in sponsoring feeding programmes and paying pre-Primary teachers' salary a burden that previously used to be on parents. However, a larger percentage of 40% of the pre-primary schools have not felt the impact of county government support on quality service delivery. Inferential analysis indicated that a positive moderate correlation exists between county government support and quality service delivery in pre-primary schools. In addition, the correlation was significant hence the study concluded that County government support is a significant predictor of quality service delivery in pre-primary schools.

The study revealed that the county government support significantly determines the quality of services delivered in pre-primary schools. This is despite the fact that the county government have not yet fully taken up all their obligations in support of pre-primary schools in Murang'a County. Therefore, if county government would take up their roles fully more advancement can be realized in delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The county government should empower pre-primary teachers' more through short courses and seminars to keep them abreast with policy issues and to enhance their ability to engage other stakeholders' more through mobilization of resources for augmented quality of physical environment, health and nutritional environment. In addition county government should allocate funds for infrastructural development of school facilities as well as release funds timely to enhance delivery of quality services in pre-primary schools.

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