

## **FACTORS THAT HINDER MALES FROM TEACHING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION (ECDE) CLASSES IN EASTERN ZONE OF NAKURU MUNICIPALITY**

**Samwel Njenga Njoroge<sup>1</sup> & Catherine Wambui Njuki<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> School of Education, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya  
<sup>2</sup> Blue Bells Teachers College, Nyahururu, Kenya

Received: August 6, 2018

Accepted: August 13, 2018

Published: August 31, 2018

### **Abstract**

*There has been a steady increase of male teachers training in ECDE courses over the school holidays. However even after graduating these male teachers do not take up the ECDE classes to teach. Therefore this necessitated this study that sought to find out the factors that hinder male teachers from teaching ECDE classes. Literature review shows that the ECDE teaching has all along been seen as a feminine job. It has been perceived as an extension of the female role of giving birth and taking care of the young children. This negative perception has discouraged male teachers even after training in ECDE certificates from teaching in these classes. The research design adapted for this study was a mixed research methods approach. Simple random sampling was used to sample the participants. Questionnaires were then used to collect data. The findings showed that negative attitude among male teachers towards the very young children and the activities done in ECDE classes which are viewed as childish; discourage male teachers from teaching these classes. The society also has a low opinion over teachers who handle ECDE classes. The study recommended that male teachers should be guided and counseled on the importance of their teaching in ECDE classes as well as the critical role they would play in modeling the character of specifically the boy child.*

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Development Education, Males, Teaching, ECDE classes

---

### **I.Introduction**

Children develop rapidly during their early years and positive or negative experiences have subsequent implications on children's wellbeing, school readiness and later success in life. Early childhood encompasses the period of human development from the prenatal stage through the transition into the early primary learning. During the early childhood years, there are four main critical domains of development: physical, cognitive, linguistic and socioemotional. The Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) is a key component of the primary school teaching. It is now given special attention because of the impact it has on early childhood and later years of an individual.

According to Kabiru and Njenga (2009) ECDE is now given special attention and recognition because of the impact it has on early childhood and later years of an individual. These authors note that the early years are crucial for the formation of a child's intelligence, personality and social behaviour. They further state that ECDE programmes promote social and economic equity as children from disadvantaged families are given opportunities to catch up early with their counterparts from more advantaged families, in terms of mental development and readiness for school and life.

There are many factors that affect learning in ECDE centers as observed in the study module for Diploma in ECDE. They include: heredity, environment and gender among others. It is

important to appreciate that children inherit different potentials from their parents in relation to intelligence, physical looks and temperaments. Therefore there is an input that the learners can receive from teachers of both genders during their formative years in ECDE classes (Kabiru & Njenga, 2009).

The environment that a child is introduced to at the ECDE classes helps the child realise his/her full potential in life. Both male and female teachers need to inculcate certain values to the children in ECDE classes by providing them with different stimulating experiences and molding the learners' behaviour in relation to their roles as female and male teachers. Children of all gender should be exposed to all types of learning. There should be no discrimination between boys and girls and by extension between male and female teachers teaching in the ECDE classes (Kabiru & Njenga, 2009). Girls should not be over burdened with home chores while boys are allocated only a few. Boys need to be trained to carry out all home chores early in their lives from the ECDE classes. This will sink well and have much positive impact on the boys if they are taught by male teachers in their ECDE classes. Being instructed by male teachers in ECDE classes helps both boys and girls in the formation of the concepts of the importance of the roles of males and females in the upbringing of the children in our society. Children taught in ECDE classes by both males and female teachers will grow to appreciate that even in adulthood, the role of raising children is not only a females duty but both gender have a part to play.

The problem of very few male teachers being represented in the teaching of ECDE classes is well captured in the piloting of in-service training for the Primary Maths and Reading (PRIMR) program. This is a program that is geared towards changing the methodology of teaching Maths and languages (English and Kiswahili). This program brings together the entire (ECDE) teachers from the fifteen schools in the Eastern zone of Nakuru Municipality. Only two male teachers availed themselves implying that they were the only ones who teach in the ECDE classes in the whole zone out of more than one hundred and twenty ECDE teachers in Eastern Zone of Nakuru Municipality. This observation shows a vast majority of male teachers even after undergoing training in ECDE colleges do not teach the ECDE classes. This study therefore sought to find out why male teachers don't teach in ECDE classes.

In the social learning, children learn many things by merely observing behaviour of their superiors (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2010). Their behavioural pattern is therefore modelled by observing their teachers. Thus, if they are only handled by female teachers at the ECDE level, they may miss the masculine touch which is also very important in the development of their personality at their formative stages at ECDE classes. The teachers of ECDE and the primary school teachers who have been trained in handling ECDE classes have the answer to the question as to why male teachers do not teach in ECDE classes. These are teachers who have been trained in modern ways of handling these learners and their contribution to the learners can help them to develop holistically: mentally, socially, physically, spiritually and emotionally.

## **II. Research Objective**

To find out the factors that hinder male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes in Eastern Zone of Nakuru Municipality.

### **III. Research Question**

What factors hinder male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes in Eastern Zone of Nakuru Municipality?

### **IV. Literature Review**

A lot of literature has pointed to diverse reasons why there are many female teachers handling ECDE classes. However, there is minimal literature showing why the male teachers are not well represented in teaching in the ECDE classes. The literature reviewed in this section attempts to explain the phenomenon that makes male teachers to shun teaching ECDE classes as well as the gap that the current study sought to fill.

#### **The Feminization of Education**

Depaepe et al. (1993) and Roots (2002) have observed that the process of the rise in number of female teachers started earlier. This feminization has often been presented as a problem in the lower primary specifically. Worries are expressed that education loses quality, that boys lack role models at their formative stages of learning. According to Shiundu and Omulando (1992) the reason why there's feminization of early childhood education is that, females have lower qualification and other socio-psychological causes. This is partially true when it comes to the ECDE teachers especially of the pre-school of the yester years, but the assertion does not hold water today because when teachers go to ECDE training, both genders are selected using certain parameters which dictate the entry behaviour of the student teachers in terms of grades for certificate courses, Diploma courses and even Degree in ECDE. These teachers are also equally represented without any favouritism.

#### **Status of Teaching in ECDE Classes**

Lahelma et al. (2000) argues that the consequences of having many female teachers in a given level of education and in this case the ECDE classes are: a decline in the social status of teaching compared to the work of men; the jobs of women in ECDE classes are mostly perceived as less important or not even as real professions; teaching is labelled as a women's occupation (Acker 1995)

Thungu et al. (2011) observe that the current feminization trends in the teaching force are widely regarded as a key factor in lowering the professional status of teachers. As a general rule, the lower the level of schooling, the higher the proportion of women teachers employed. Teaching therefore, recruits a higher percentage of women than men especially at pre-school and primary school level, giving the erroneous impression that it is a mere alternative to housewifery. The truth of the matter is that whereas there are more female teachers in primary schools, this is not a strong reason as to why male teachers are hindered from teaching in ECDE classes even after undergoing training in Diploma in ECDE. This thus necessitated the current study.

Teaching particularly of the small children is perceived as the extension of the "natural" roles of a woman. Kabiru and Njenga (2009) observe that programmes for young children must involve parents, communities and institutions. The authors do not discuss ECDE teaching in terms of a given gender but note that the process should incorporate the whole community. On the same note both male and female teachers have attended course in ECDE training. During the teaching practice which is mandatory to all teachers, both male and female teachers practice with the ECDE classes meaning they are well trained and able to handle these classes without problems.

### **The Society's Attitude towards ECDE Teachers**

Acker (1995) discusses what is referred to as "Negative thesis" where it is argued that females lack authority in regard to big male pupils, have low career aspirations, are less involved in their main focus, are on housekeeping and raising their own children. These worries were expressed particularly at the start of the twentieth century. Although this observation portrays female teachers in very traditional roles which are not true in the contemporary society, the discussion does not show how male teachers are hindered from teaching in the ECDE classes. This is the mandate of the current study.

Recent studies Lehelma et al. (2000) and Bailey (1996) indicate that some of the reasoning that the young children are only suitably handled by the female teachers still exists in the minds of teachers and parents today. The society views female teachers as people who are inept in handling senior classes in primary school where a lot of content is taught. This is a perception because on the ground female teachers compete with their male counterparts on an equal footing and sometimes they even teach better than the males as seen after the release of the national examination results.

Langeveld (1963) observes that no country should pride itself on its educational system if the teaching profession has become predominantly a world of women. The above literature has shown the perception of the society towards the female teachers handling ECDE classes. However they have not delved into the reasons that hinder men from teaching the ECDE classes. In this study therefore, the researcher was interested in finding out what hinders male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes.

### **Gender Stereotype**

MOEST (2001) shows that gender stereotype is a fixed opinion or belief which is applied to a group of people or individual within a group. Examples of gender stereotype are the belief that only women can teach ECDE classes. Girls and women maybe represented only doing stereotypical jobs like looking after babies. This definitely will influence their mentality even as they grow up to believe that they can only handle ECDE classes while males may feel out of place when teaching in ECDE classes. These stereotypes have no scientific backing and are therefore constructs of the society. Whereas they maybe one of the reasons why males are hindered from teaching ECDE classes. There is very little information in the literature to prove this observation.

Nias (1989) is a proponent of the opinion that women have innate capacities for working with small children. Caring is also seen as an essential part of the teachers self and of education to small children. This fusion of caring and teaching dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century prescriptions for middle class mothers and the theories of Froebel and other reformers but still exists in popular culture and in the heads of teachers (Acker, 1995).

Research on men who choose to teach small children and consequently do not fit into this picture, show that they are often thought of by parents or colleagues as incompetent for this kind of work or are even under suspicion of sexual perversity (Sargent 2000 & Meiners 2002). Acker (1995) avers that these maternal images have been criticized especially on grounds of tendencies towards essentialism (the idea that women are like this naturally) but knowing this view is still common, a higher valuation of most feminised areas in teaching at ECDE classes are understandable. The current research sought to find out why men are poorly represented in the ECDE classes.

## **V. Research Methodology**

This research study adopted a mixed research methods approach in order to provide an in-depth perspective to determine factors that hinder male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes. Creswell and Clark (2011) justify the use of mixed methods because the combination of qualitative and quantitative data provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself. The target population of the study was all the 120 ECDE teachers in the fifteen public primary schools in Eastern Zone of Nakuru Municipality. The total sample size for the study comprised 80 (66.6%) ECDE teachers randomly sampled from 10 randomly selected public primary schools in the Zone. The instrument used to collect quantitative and qualitative data was self-administered questionnaires.

## **VI. Research Findings and Discussions**

### **Gender of the Participants**

Findings from this study show that 76.67% of the respondents were females while 23.33% of the respondents were males. This means more female teachers are undertaking ECDE courses compared to their male counterparts. This study therefore supports the observations made by Njoroge (2012) in his research where he also observed that there is a bias in gender in so far as the training of ECDE teachers is concerned with a majority of ECDE teachers in Nakuru Municipality being females.

### **Certificate Undertaken by the Respondents**

This study sought to find out the certificate which the respondents undertook in ECDE course. The study shows that 20% of the respondents studied at the Certificate level. 56% of the respondents studied at the Diploma level while 23.3% of the respondents studied for a Degree in ECDE. This shows most of the respondents were studying for Diploma in ECDE with the number of those taking certificate and degree being more or less the same. This mixture of respondents with different qualifications in ECDE was good for this study as it enabled the research to have responses from people with vast qualifications hence enriching the findings.

### **Male Teachers in ECDE Colleges**

In relation to whether the respondents trained with males, 87% observed that there were male teachers who trained with them in ECDE. 13% observed that there were no males during their training in ECDE colleges. The big number of the respondents observed that male teachers were also trained in ECDE courses. This is good as it helped the researcher to seek to find out what hinders the male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes.

A participant observed that:

*Much as we the males were fewer, less than half of those in our training for ECDE courses, we were represented in those courses. I went for the training with an aim of getting a certificate for promotion and not to teach in ECDE classes.*

### **Classes Taught by Male Teachers during their Teaching Practice**

From the study, a whopping 94.7 % of the respondents observed that the male teachers taught in lower primary classes during their teaching practice. This means they are well equipped to teach the ECDE classes during their training. This observation is important in the current research because it helped the researcher to find out the factors that hinder male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes even after they have done their teaching practice in these classes.

The above findings are supported by a teacher who responded to the open ended question this way:

*Sometimes I find it hypocritical because male teachers who have trained in ECDE and we did teaching practice with them in the ECDE classes are not willing to teach in those ECDE classes. Male teachers need to teach in those young ones the way they did during teaching practice in college.*

### **Rating of Male Teachers Teaching in ECDE Classes**

This research study shows that when asked how they would rate male teachers teaching in ECDE classes, 2% of the respondents observed the male teachers do very good in ECDE classes, 46% rated males as good, 26.7% rated males teaching in ECDE as appropriate 20% rated them not good.

These observations depended on how the male teachers organized their classes, how they were able or not able to create a rapport with the very young children especially during their short stay in the ECDE classes during their teaching practice.

A respondent had this to say on male teachers not being good enough to teach in ECDE classes:

*During our teaching practice my partner in class who was a male was very harsh on children especially those whose work was dirty. Children feared him and when his turn to teach them reached children shied from answering questions. He was teaching by terror.*

### **Reasons for the Rating Males who Taught in ECDE Classes**

The respondents explained briefly why they had rated the teachers. Results show that 20% of the participants observed that males have little patience with the very young children, 20% observed that the few males who teach in ECDE classes excel. Therefore they were rated as appropriate and not appropriate. 26.7% of the participants observed that male teachers are role models for the boy child, 33.3% observed that more ECDE trainees are females. The above reasons show how male teachers are perceived to handle ECDE classes when given an opportunity.

Analysis of the qualitative question corroborates the above assertions. A respondent said that:

*Most males do not have time to keep repeating in order for the young children to understand because repetition is the mother of learning in ECDE classes.*

Another respondent said that:

*Due to our familiarization with children from home, we ladies are more understanding to the young children unlike males who find it difficult to come to the level of the young children found in ECDE behaviour wise and soft language.*

### **Male Teachers in ECDE Classes**

From the responses it is evident that 6.7% of the respondents observed in affirmative that there are male teachers who handle ECDE classes in their school. This is in contrast to 93.3% who observed that there were no male teachers handling ECDE classes in their school. This shows that a very small number of male teachers teach in the ECDE classes.

One of the participant's response on males in ECDE was that:

*In my school there is only one male teacher who is different from other males I know. His commitment to children is great. The children view him as a grandfather but his class always tops in the ECDE in our school. His class is best in academics, sports, cleanliness, and in discipline.*

### **The Number of Male Teachers in ECDE Classes**

This research study found out that 93.33% of the respondents observed that there is no single male teacher who is handling the early childhood classes in their respective schools. It is only 6.67% of the respondents who observed that there are male teachers handling ECDE classes.

The above disparity of males who teach ECDE classes in relation to the response given in the above discussion where 86.67% of the respondents observed that they were in training in ECDE courses with male teacher therefore helps to strengthen the argument that male teachers even those who have been trained in ECDE do not teach in ECDE classes. This informs the current study that there are certain factors which hinder males from teaching in ECDE classes.

A respondent observed that:

*The reason why I think we don't have male ECDE teachers in our school is that males want something that will give them challenge. Content in ECDE classes is not challenging hence most males especially the young and energetic may feel wasted in those ECDE classes.*

### **Why there are more Female Teachers in ECDE Classes**

In response to a question as to why there are more female teachers teaching in ECDE classes, 13.3% of the participants observed that there is stereotyping of the ECDE teachers to be failures in their final national exams, 26.7% of the participants observed that ECDE teaching is perceived as a feminine job while 60.0% of the participants averred that Females are viewed to be socialized to have patience and love towards the very young children.

The observation supports the literature review where it came out clearly that there's a societal stereotypic tendency where female are taken to be only able to deal with the very young children. It is therefore viewed as an extension of the females' role of giving birth and rearing the children. This therefore is part of the factors that hinder male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes.

### **Factors that Hinder Male Teachers from Teaching ECDE Classes**

This research study set out to find out the factors that hinder male from teaching in ECDE classes even after they have undergone training 23.3% of the participants observed that Males perceive activities in ECDE classes to be childish. A lot of activities at this level include plays and games in order to sustain the learners' attention during the whole lesson. The teacher must go down to the level of the learners which puts off a lot of male teachers.

Findings also show that 26.7% of the respondents observed that the society's culture perceives teaching ECDE classes to be a females job. This means the society will definitely look down upon a male teacher who teaches in ECDE classes. The society looks at the work of teaching the very young children as a feminine duty (Shiundu & Omulando 1992).

The other 50% observed that Negative attitude of the male teachers towards teaching the very young children is a factor that hinders males from teaching in ECDE classes. Male teachers are proud and therefore they feel they will be despised if they teach in ECDE classes. Male also think in terms of more challenging tasks which are not found in these ECDE classes. This influences them negatively not to teach in ECDE classes.

### **Suggestions to Attract Male Teachers in ECDE Classes**

Findings show that 10% of the participants suggested that the county governments should employ all the ECDE trained teachers. This is because currently especially in pre-school, teachers are employed by the Parents Teacher Association. If the county government would take over the duty of employing the ECDE teachers more males would be attracted to teach in the ECDE classes.

Another 10% of the respondents suggested that the government should encourage more male teachers to set up their own ECDE centres in order for them to appreciate the ECDE teaching. This if done will help to increase the number of male teachers in ECDE classes hence helping in the process of moulding the young learners view that the duty of bringing up children is not only for females but it is a duty for both the genders.

The study shows that another 13.3% of the participants' suggested that ECDE teachers should be given attractive remuneration. As observed above the pre-school teachers are employed mainly by the parents who give them meagre salary. This discourages men who in most cases are the bread winners from taking up this work. However if the government would pay the ECDE teachers well, this would definitely attract more male teachers in ECDE classes.

On the same footing of suggestions 16.7% of the participants show that the society should accord ECDE teachers respect through their change of attitude towards ECDE teachers as people who are also learned. It is an open secret that the society perceives teachers who handle ECDE classes as people who failed in their exams. This assertion which is definitely wrong therefore hinders male teachers from teaching ECDE classes. If this perception can be changed by enlightenment of the society on the important role that ECDE teachers play, it would attract more male teachers as the society would appreciate their work.

Another 20% of the respondents suggested that more male teachers should be encouraged to train in ECDE courses through Guidance and Counseling. Male chauvinism is a character where males pride themselves in being masculine. This leads them to develop negative attitude towards teaching the ECDE classes. However through guidance and counseling the male attitude can be changed so that they realize they also have a duty to inculcate in the young children certain character traits that can only be done by male teachers at the formative years of the ECDE classes' children.

Another 30% of the participants suggested that the government should In-service male teachers and sensitize them through seminars and workshops on the need for them to teach in ECDE classes. By in-servicing male teachers on the essence of their teaching in ECDE classes, this will help change their attitude and also the stereotypic mind the society has inculcated in them which have no place in the modern society. This change of mind through sensitization would ultimately help male teachers appreciate teaching in ECDE classes and start teaching there.

### **VII. Conclusions**

The study concluded that the following were factors that hinder male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes. They include;

- i. The male teachers' negative attitude towards activities which are carried out in the ECDE classes which call for the teacher to go down to the level of these very young children.
- ii. The society view ECDE teaching as an extension of the child rearing process. Therefore the society perceives it as a feminine duty to teach the young children. This stereotype has gotten into schools because some participants observed that female teachers have love for the young children and are friendly because they are socialized to be motherly.
- iii. The county government is slow in employing the pre-school teachers. Such teachers are mainly employed by the parents who often pay them lowly. This discourages male teachers from teaching in ECDE classes.

### **VIII. Recommendations**

There is great need for a solution to be found as far as feminization of ECDE teaching is concerned. The male teachers need to be involved in teaching these young children in order for them to act as role models to the young children (especially boys) at their formative age. The baby boys will also grow up knowing that the duty of bringing up the young children and teaching them is for both genders.

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

- i. There is need for male teachers to be guided and counseled on the importance of their participation in teaching in ECDE classes as they help the very young children especially boys in character formation. This should also aim at helping them to change their societal pre-conceived negative attitude on the young children.
- ii. The society should be educated on the important role played by the ECDE teachers during the formative years of these children. This will help bring change in societal attitude towards teachers who handle the ECDE classes, and more so the male.
- iii. The county government should employ all the ECDE teachers and remunerate them well so that males who are mostly bread winners for their families can also work in pre-school.

### **References**

- 1) Acker S., (1995). Carry on caring: the work of women teachers. *British Journal of Education* 16(1), 2136.
- 2) Bailey L., (1996). The feminization of a school. Women teachers in a boy's school. In *Gender and Education*, 8(2) 171-185.
- 3) Gray, L. (1986). *Educational Research competencies for analysis application* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Columbus: Oluo Meli.
- 4) Kabiru M., & Njenga, A. (2009) *Foundations of Early Childhood Development and Curriculum Development*. Nairobi; Focus Publishers.
- 5) Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research methodology, methods and techniques*. New age International (p) Limited.
- 6) Langeveld M., J. (1963). *The psychology of Teachers and Teaching Profession* in: Bereday G., Z., F. and J., A LAuwers (Eds) the yearbook of education 1963. *The Education and Training of Teachers*. London: Evans Brothers.
- 7) Meiners E., R. (2002) Disengaging from the legacy of lady bountiful in teacher education classroom. *Gender and Education* 14(1) 85-94.

*Factors That Hinder Males from Teaching Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) Classes in Eastern Zone of Nakuru Municipality*

---

- 8) Mugenda, O.M. & Mugenda, A.G. (1999). *Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Nairobi: Africa Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) press.
- 9) Nias J., (1989) *Primary teachers talking: a study of teaching work*. London: Routledge
- 10) Ngau and Kumssa, (2004). *Research, design, data collection and analysis. A training Manual*, UOM print shop. Nairobi.
- 11) Njoroge (2012) *A Survey of the Student-Teacher Training and Implementation of Classroom Management in Public Schools: A Case of Nakuru Municipality*. CUEA Nairobi. A Published Thesis.
- 12) Ornstein, A. C. & Hunkins, F. P. (2010). *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles and Issues*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- 13) Rollnick, R. (2011). *Nakuru Kenya: cleaning a town, from the ground up*. Retrieved from [www.Un.org/./151 city 4.html](http://www.Un.org/./151 city 4.html) on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013.
- 14) Rots I., Sabee E., Aelterman A. (2002) *The Feminization and the Social Status of the Teaching Profession*. Paper presented at the European conference on educational Research, University of Lisbon.
- 15) Shiundu J., S., (1992) *Curriculum Theory and Practice in Kenya*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- 16) Thungu, J., Wandera, K., Gachie, L., Alumande, G. (2011) *Mastering PTE Education*. Nairobi; Oxford University Press.

**How To Cite This Article;**

Njoroge, S. N., & Njuki, C. W. (2018). Factors That Hinder Males from Teaching Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) Classes in Eastern Zone of Nakuru Municipality. *Journal of Education and Practices (JEPs)*, 1(1), 53-62.