



AN ASSESSMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ON FINANCING PUBLIC PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN ELDORET EAST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) refers to the education that children receive during the early stage of their childhood. Early Childhood Education could also be a major input into a child's formal education. The main purpose of this study was to investigate efficacy of County Government on financing public pre-school education in Kenya, a case of Eldoret East Sub-County, Uasin-Gishu County. This study was guided by the following objectives to assess the influence of administrative support on financing public pre-school education in Eldoret East Sub-County. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study targeted 1 sub-county education officers, 174 Head Teachers, 174 Pre-school teachers and 174 SMC chairpersons in the Eldoret East Sub- County. It used a purposive sampling for the 1 sub-county educational officers and simple random sampling for the 52 Head Teachers, 52 Pre-school teachers, and 52 SMC chairpersons. The researcher used questionnaires. With the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) descriptive (Percentage, frequency, means, standard deviation) and inferential statistical methods (Pearson Correlation Coefficient) were used to analyze and present the results. The study findings indicated that there was significant relationship between administrative support and financing pre-school education. The study concluded that infrastructural development funds for ECDE schools in the county were mainly from the County government and parents. Not all financial transactions were recorded in ECDE centers and at the same time, audits were regularly conducted on all projects. The study recommends that strategic mechanisms be put in place to lobby for financial support of ECDE programs from different stakeholders. It is further recommended that training of ECDE centre committees on financial management skills be done so as to improve on financial management. It is

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hoped that the findings of this study will be of great importance to policy makers on understanding the best strategies that if implemented will promote efficacies in the administration of ECDE funds.

Keywords: assessment, administrative, financing, pre-school

1. Introduction

Researchers believe that if individuals who have higher levels of financial knowledge would have made more fiscally responsible decisions they would not suffer the consequences of the economic downturn (Lusardi, Mitchell & Curto, 2010). The probable benefits of financial literacy have led many organizations and states to begin developing, promoting, and implementing financial education programs for individuals of various ages. It is evident that many head teachers and managers still lack the skills required to effectively manage resource funds (Chetambve & Sakwa, 2013; Kasoa, 2012). Mestry (2006) in a study also revealed that in schools in South Africa, budgets were poorly compiled or non-existent and if budgets existed, then variance in reports were never compiled, bank reconciliation statements were rarely compiled, signatories to the school fund account were questionable, finance policies and control measures were non-existent, cheque and cash payments were generally made in the absence of payment authority and supporting documents and procurement procedures were highly questionable.

In addition, Kiayiapi as cited in the Republic of Kenya (2011) also asserts that the children of Kenya deserve quality service delivery and education resources should be managed in an efficient and effective manner. Owens (2006) posits that training is regarded as a tool that can assist organizations built committed and productive workforce. Employees consider training as an investment, updating of skills, and enhancing competence to handle tasks (Meyer *et al.*, 2004). According to Silverthorne (2004) the study reveals that employee organization strategies will influence organization performance and its delivery of services. Nevertheless, financial literacy has been linked to positive financial outcomes (Lusardi, 2008). Superior financial knowledge has been linked to less risky money-management, and is thought to reduce the chances of future economic problems. Research has also found out that financially educated teens save more money during their adult years (Bernheim, Garrett, & Maki, 2001). Financially literate individuals have also been shown to be more financially secure at retirement (Gale, Harris, & Levine, 2012). Improving financial literacy and financial organization can have many benefits for consumers. Learners will access the teaching and learning resources in time and this will promote standards in education. From this backdrop, there is need for ECDE managers to adopt prudent financial strategies which will promote financial efficiencies hence improve on access and equity of scarce resources. This can only be practical if management committees follow the required guidelines while undertaking financial procedures as stipulated by the policy guideline (MoE, 2006).

Moreover, efficiency is when an organization is producing at its maximum in relation to its input. This could be attributed to its specific characteristics especially when it comes to estimating efficiency in a non-profit making association whereby a number of complications appear and one of them is to set goals that are possible to follow up (Coelli, Rao & Battese, 2005). It is paramount to note that if non-profit making organizations justify their existence on the grounds of efficiency alone, they may lose out in the end (Anheier, 2000). In addition, studies by Frumkin and Andre-Clark (2000) state that non-profits have too many constraints attached to their market behaviour to compete with profit making organizations in the same market. However, despite such promising conditions, there are issues still affecting growth: that they have disadvantages in their ability to raise capital, to introduce incentive schemes, and that they face the additional penalty of loss of legitimacy and decline in volunteer input. Frumkin and Andre-Clark concluded that economizing alone will not help non-profit organizations it may only serve as vehicle to extinction or transformation.

In addition, the ability and willingness of communities to finance and manage their pre-schools was also identified as the critical factor affecting quality and sustainability. However, this is significant because childcare costs households on average about US\$10 per child per year. In addition, studies of childcare costs in Kenya estimate that a minimum adequate package of child development services will cost US\$ 20 per child per year. The government of Kenya expenditure (based on a centre enrolment of 1 million children) works out to only US\$ 0.50 per child. The corresponding investment at the primary, secondary and university levels are US\$ 17, US\$ 168 and US\$ 418 for households and US\$ 38, US\$37 and US\$ 1,400 for the government (World Bank, 2010). Moreover, teacher qualifications, motivation and supervision were other important factors identified.

Other issues of concern affecting support to ECDE programmes include: change in family structures and child rearing practices and development by improving health, nutrition and learning potential to those who survive beyond the first year of life (UNESCO Early Childhood Policy Review Report, 2010). It is also clear that, most governments recognize the importance of improving the overall education and economic growth targets and social economic development, a high priority need to be placed on accessibility and retention of learners at levels of education (Lang, 2008). The key issue that will always affect the above is how resources and especially finances are managed so as to realize organizational goals.

In this regard, bilateral and multilateral development partners have supported ECE programs through resource mobilization, capacity building, advocacy, technical support and funding ECE and ECDE programs through the ministry of Education. For instance, the community support grant from the World Bank has assisted improve infrastructure in ECDE centers especially in marginalized and pockets of poverty areas impacting positively on participation and quality of services offered (RoK, 2007). All in all, parents are expected to provide financial resources which are used to procure teaching/learning resources, pay teachers' salaries, provide physical facilities and feed the children (MoE, 2005). The community provides physical facilities like land and

buildings, mobilize resources, initiate and manage community based services for young children such as provision of clean and safe drinking water and meals. Community members also provide building materials and provide free labour during construction. The Ministry of Education on the other hand provides policy guidelines on capacity building of ECDE personnel, develops curriculum, supervises ECDE programs and registers ECDE centres (RoK, 2007).

However, it is also important to note that in the context of the present study the term 'efficiency' is viewed as the blend of knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors needed to carry out tasks successfully so as to attain organizational goals. According to Politis (2001) managerial efficiency depends on both skills and knowledge based on understanding. Nevertheless, efficiency may also include the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations. Effective financial management systems are required to maximize the efficient use of resources, create the highest level of transparency and accountability in organization's finances and to ensure long-term economic success (Burke, 2001). Financial management and administration comprises the downstream activities of budget execution, control, accounting, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Financial administration is one of the core elements of an effective management system (Allen, 2004). In ECDE centres this includes the ability or strategy of the management committee to ensure that it collects all cash owed to it, plans, organizes activities, co-ordinates management strategies and controls finance utilization effectively. Yavarkovsky (2002) found that in most schools this involves collection of cash, cheques or bank orders and taking them to the bank at specific intervals or after the cash equivalent reaches a certain range. While the contribution of ECE towards broader social, economic and education goals is being recognized (OECD 2009), the sector remains under-developed in a number of countries especially in provision and inadequate quality in services due in part to a lack of investments.

From the above backdrop, it is clear that financial management strategies are crucial for efficiency to be realized in the administration of finances in ECDE centers. Eldoret East Sub-County therefore has eight zones with 57 public ECDE centers entirely spread across. Most of these centers operate in dilapidated conditions marked by poor infrastructure, stalled projects to poor service delivery. However, many factors may have contributed to this hence there is need that a study of this nature to be undertaken so as to provide information geared towards promoting efficacy of county government on financing public pre-school education in Kenya, a case of Eldoret East Sub-County, Uasin-Gishu County

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Policy Framework for Education and Training in Kenya-sessional paper number 14 of 2012 recognizes that devolution of ECDE education came with a myriad of challenges ranging from unclear policy framework on issues of management, underfunding of ECDE programmes (Elimu-Yetu Coalition, 2014). To this end, world Bank report (2010) indicate that most public ECDE centers in Kenya have stalled programmes marked by irregular and delay of teachers' salaries, inconsistent feeding programmes, poor

infrastructure and unclear policy guidelines. It is therefore clear that children in ECDE Centers will continue to operate under dilapidated conditions for longer periods against the Education Policy (2006) and the Education Act, 2012 which demands that children of school age going have a right to education in safe and conducive environments. This study explored existence of the effects of organization strategies on efficacy in the administration of finances in public ECDE centers in Kenya.

1.2 Objective of the Study

To assess the influence of administrative support on financing public pre-school education in Eldoret East Sub-County.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between administrative support and financing public pre-school education in Eldoret East Sub-County

2.0 Research Methodology and Methods

Creswell (2009) defines research designs as plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design enables the researcher to describe the state of affairs as they are and report the findings (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). According to Kothari (2008), such design is efficient method of collecting descriptive data regarding the characteristics of populations to justify current conditions and practices. Moreover, descriptive surveys allow rapid collection of data from a large sample within the shortest time possible by use of questionnaires,

This study used Questionnaires to collect data; the questionnaires provided the quantitative aspects. Quantitative research has typically been directed at theory verification. This data collection instrument was used mainly to review the effects of organization strategies on efficacy in the administration of finances in public ECDE Centers in Kenya. The questionnaires were used to get information from Head teachers, ECDE teachers, and School Management Committee chairpersons.

3. Findings and Discussion

The study sought to assess the influence of administrative support on financing public pre-school education in Eldoret East Sub-County. The findings are presented below.

3.1 Influence of Administrative Support on Financing Public Pre-School Education

To achieve this objective, first the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five point likert scale items in the questionnaire. Their responses were tabulated and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Administrative support and Financing Pre-School Education

Statements		SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std Dev
Pre-school lack basic physical infrastructure, like drinking water, toilets, buildings and classrooms due to inadequate funding	F	7	12	22	59	39	139	4.00	-1.187
	%	5	8.6	15.8	42.4	28.1	100	80.0	
Pre-school teacher remuneration is poor as it depends largely on availability of parental contributions	F	6	17	21	84	11	139	3.55	-0.969
	%	4.3	12.2	15.1	60.4	7.9	100	71.0	
Pre-school teachers' salaries are not stable and fluctuate each month depending on the level of contribution from parents and other stakeholders	F	6	17	21	84	11	139	3.55	-0.764
	%	4.3	12.2	15.1	60.4	7.9	100	71.0	
There is lack of opportunities for professional development of pre-school teachers due to inadequate funding	F	15	23	28	70	3	139	3.16	-0.606
	%	10.8	16.5	20.1	50.4	2.2	100	63.2	
The provision of finances by the county government has enabled the acquisition of learning materials and resources in pre-school education centres	F	0	3	21	60	55	139	3.11	-1.446
	%	0	2.2	15.1	43.2	39.6	100	62.2	
The government has introduced grants to provide free meals to children in pre-schools to improve the nutritional needs of disadvantaged children	F	7	7	16	58	51	139	4.13	-0.860
	%	5	5	11.5	41.7	36.7	100	82.6	
Payment of teachers' salaries has been hampered by the effect of Free Primary Education (FPE)	F	0	0	5	47	87	139	4.12	-0.936
	%	0	0	3.6	33.8	62.6	100	82.4	

The study results on the effect of administrative support on financing pre-school education revealed that 80.0% (mean=4.00) were of the opinion that pre-school lack basic physical infrastructure, like drinking water, toilets, buildings and classrooms due to inadequate funding, 71.0% (mean=3.55) were of the opinion that pre-school teacher remuneration is poor as it depends largely on availability of parental contributions, 71.0% (mean=3.55) were of the opinion that pre-school teachers' salaries are not stable and fluctuate each month depending on the level of contribution from parents and other stakeholders, 63.2% (mean=3.12) were of the opinion that there is lack of opportunities for professional development of pre-school teachers due to inadequate funding, 62.2% (mean=3.11) were of the opinion that the provision of finances by the county government has enabled the acquisition of learning materials and resources in pre-school education centres, 82.6% (mean=4.13) were of the opinion that the government has introduced grants to provide free meals to children in pre-schools to

improve the nutritional needs of disadvantaged children whereas 82.4% (mean=4.12) were of opinion that payment of teachers' salaries has been hampered by the effect of Free Primary Education (FPE).

The study findings showed that ECDE teachers and SMC chairpersons believed that the government had not introduced grants to provide free meals to children in pre-schools to improve the nutritional needs of disadvantaged children. This implies that the feeding program in ECDE centres depends on parents and local organizations of the ECDE teachers and SMCs. This strains the merger resources that the parents contribute to ECDE centres. When this is the case, priorities for the most pressing needs like payment of teachers' salaries and payment of bills would be considered at the expense of feeding programmes. This compromises or stifles growth, reduces enrolment as many children are attracted to enroll through feeding programs. This is consistent with the findings of Sitati *et al.*, (2014) which pointed out that most ECDE centres in Kenya had implemented the feeding program through parental and other stakeholder participations. However, this is contrary to the national strategy that has been introduced in Ghana by the government which aims at providing free meals to children in schools to improve the nutritional needs of disadvantaged children as noted by Kwadwo-Agyei, (2008). The study found out that through this initiative, the country of Ghana experienced an upward trend in enrolment of approximately 40% in primary schools. Moreover, Waithera (2004) and UNESCO, (2004) noted that ECDE centers had implemented feeding programs although there are disparities in the implementation in private and public centers. This implies that private ECDEs have succeeded in implementing feeding programme due to financial ability as opposed to the public ECDEs who struggle with the little finances which is mostly used for the most pressing needs like payment of teachers' salaries, purchase of instructional materials and payment of bills. However it is important to note that through the government's initiative of 'tayari' programme, they are purchasing text books for learners meant to improve reading skills hence the burden may soon be lighter so that schools can sustain feeding programmes (MOE, 2015). This is also in agreement with what the head teachers echoed in their interviews that ECDE centers are underfunded and the burden of running programmes is thrown to the parents who are already overburdened.

3.2 Inferential Statistics

The study performed ANOVA and regression analysis to estimate the relationships between the study variables.

H₀: There is no relationship between administrative support and financing pre-school education in Eldoret East Sub-County. The study results were as tabulated in table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA Model

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.936 ^a	0.877	0.868	0.0868	99.676	0.000 ^b

The ANOVA model indicated the simple correlation was 0.936 which indicates a degree of correlation. The total variation in financing pre-school education was 87.7% explained by efficacy of county government (R Square=0.877). The study results further revealed that the ANOVA model predicted financing pre-school education significantly well (p=0.000^b). This indicated the statistical significance of the regression model that was run and that overall the regression model statistically significantly predicted the financing pre-school education

The positive correlation was contributed by the attempt of the school management to source for funds from parents and well-wishers to run ECDE programmes in addition to lobbying for payment of fees by parents and championing for support from ECDE sponsors. It also emerged that management committees took the forefront to lead parents in supporting existing programmes in the various ECDE centres. Although these attempts have been made, there is need to improve on administrative support by building consistent networks among donors so as to have enough funding, provide training to management so as to utilize resources cost effectively hence attract funding and above all provide income generating activities in the ECDE centers to boost financial performance. In a study by Arasa and K'Obonyo (2012) coordination and control of organization's activities aids in decision-making throughout the organizations' implementation process and forces the setting of objectives which provides a basis for measuring performance hence improve on efficiencies. In this study therefore, co-ordination strategies provide a link in the way finances are utilized to service ECDE programmes hence promoting efficiencies in financial utilization.

4. Conclusion

The study showed that majority of the respondents believed that signatories to the pre-school accounts were not people with good integrity. Further, majority of the respondents believed that the SMCs in pre-schools in Kenya did not adhere to financial policies and control measures guiding financial management in pre-schools. In addition, majority respondents believed that procurement procedures were not followed by SMCs while procuring ECDE goods and services. It implies that financial transactions made in public pre-schools do not follow the due process provided by the policy document regarding spending hence may give leeway to fraud, misappropriations, waste and embezzlement of public resources. Similarly, majority of the respondents believed that financial reports presented to SMCS are not interpreted well and therefore the SMCs make uninformed decisions on financial spending. This implies that SMCs lack basic financial management skills and therefore are not effective

in managing ECDE finances and therefore needs to be trained on issues related to financial management so as to curb waste. Lack of such vital skills is likely to create avenues of misappropriation from those committee members who have an upper hand on issues of financial management or ECDE committees would repeat the same mistakes while managing finances if they neither went through nor implemented the auditors' reports. The study further found a statistically significant but negative relationship between organizational strategies employed and efficacies in the administration of finances.

5. Policy Implication

Based on the findings, the study recommends that; Administration of financial management efficacies in public ECDE centres should adopted a survey research design and it was restricted to practices in One County. However, studies involving a number of public ECDE centres in other counties and probably using a different research design (a case study) could be conducted for in-depth and access to a wider scope and generalization of results.

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